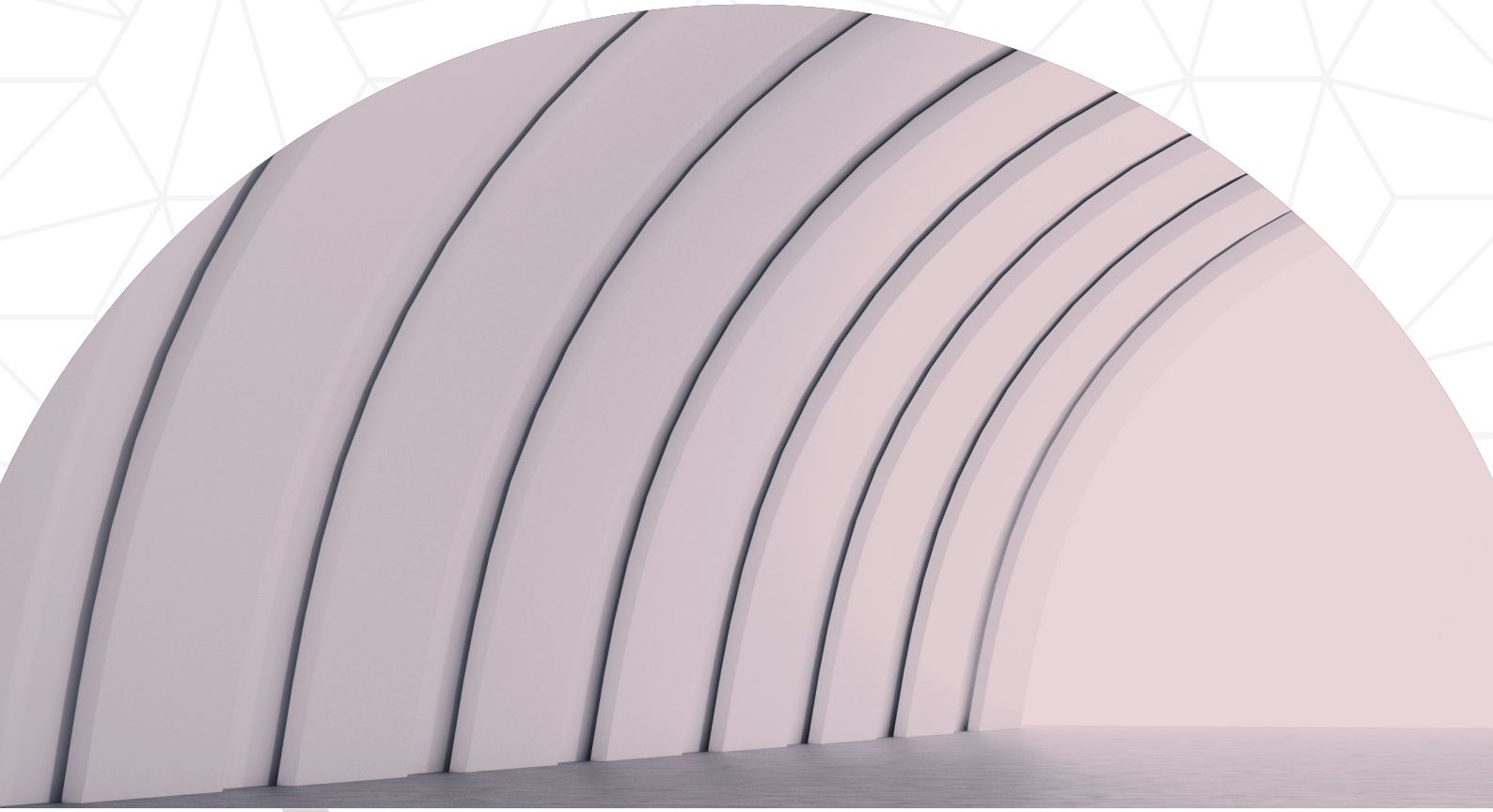
EQUIS

# STANDARDS & CRITERIA

## EFMD accreditation for international business schools



# LIST OF ACRONYMS

Document version 2026

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|---|---|
| EE | Executive Education |
| ECTS | European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System |
| EMBA | Executive MBA |
| EQUIS | EFMD Quality Improvement System |
| ERS | Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability |
| FTE | Full-time Equivalent |
| ILO | Intended Learning Outcome |
| KPI | Key Performance Indicator |
| MBA | Master of Business Administration |
| ODR | Online Document Repository |
| OER | Open Educational Resources |

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## IMPORTANT NOTES

### 1. Privacy

All individuals participating in the EQUIS process must respect the confidentiality of the information available to them. The only information in the public domain is the list of EQUIS-accredited schools along with the period of accreditation.

All members of the EQUIS decision-making bodies, peer reviewers and EQUIS advisors are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement (see Annex 22) and confirm that there is no conflict of interest with the school concerned (see Annex 23.) The school should inform the EQUIS Office when it is aware of any conflict of interest for any of the proposed EQUIS advisors or Peer Review Team members.

EQUIS ensures the anonymity and confidentiality of data provided to EFMD and processed in the framework of the EQUIS accreditation system. Any reporting of business school trends uses aggregate data to ensure no individual school data is identifiable.

Learn more about EFMD privacy policy at https://efmdglobal.org/privacy-policy/.

**2.** The **EQUIS Core Documents Package** is available for download on the EFMD website

and consists of:

1. EQUIS Standards & Criteria
2. EQUIS Process Manual
3. EQUIS Process Manual Annexes

The EQUIS documents are revised periodically at the beginning of each calendar year, and it is the responsibility of the school to always use the latest version of the document.

# Introduction

# Introduction

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

EQUIS is an international quality assessment framework embracing strategic review, quality improvement and accreditation for schools. It applies to schools in any cultural environment in any region and is uniquely international, designed to offer a powerful tool for cross-border development of excellence.

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

True to its international mission, EQUIS balances the need for excellence standards which respect diverse cultural and educational contexts. EQUIS does not emphasise any particular model for business schools, with EQUIS-accredited schools ranging from private business schools focusing on postgraduate and executive education to public university faculties of business and management with a broad portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. No specific programme type is a pre-condition for entry into the scheme.

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

The next five chapters look at the quality of the school's resources and operations. These relate to Programmes, Students, Faculty, Research and Resources and Administration and may be considered central in defining the academic quality of the school.

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

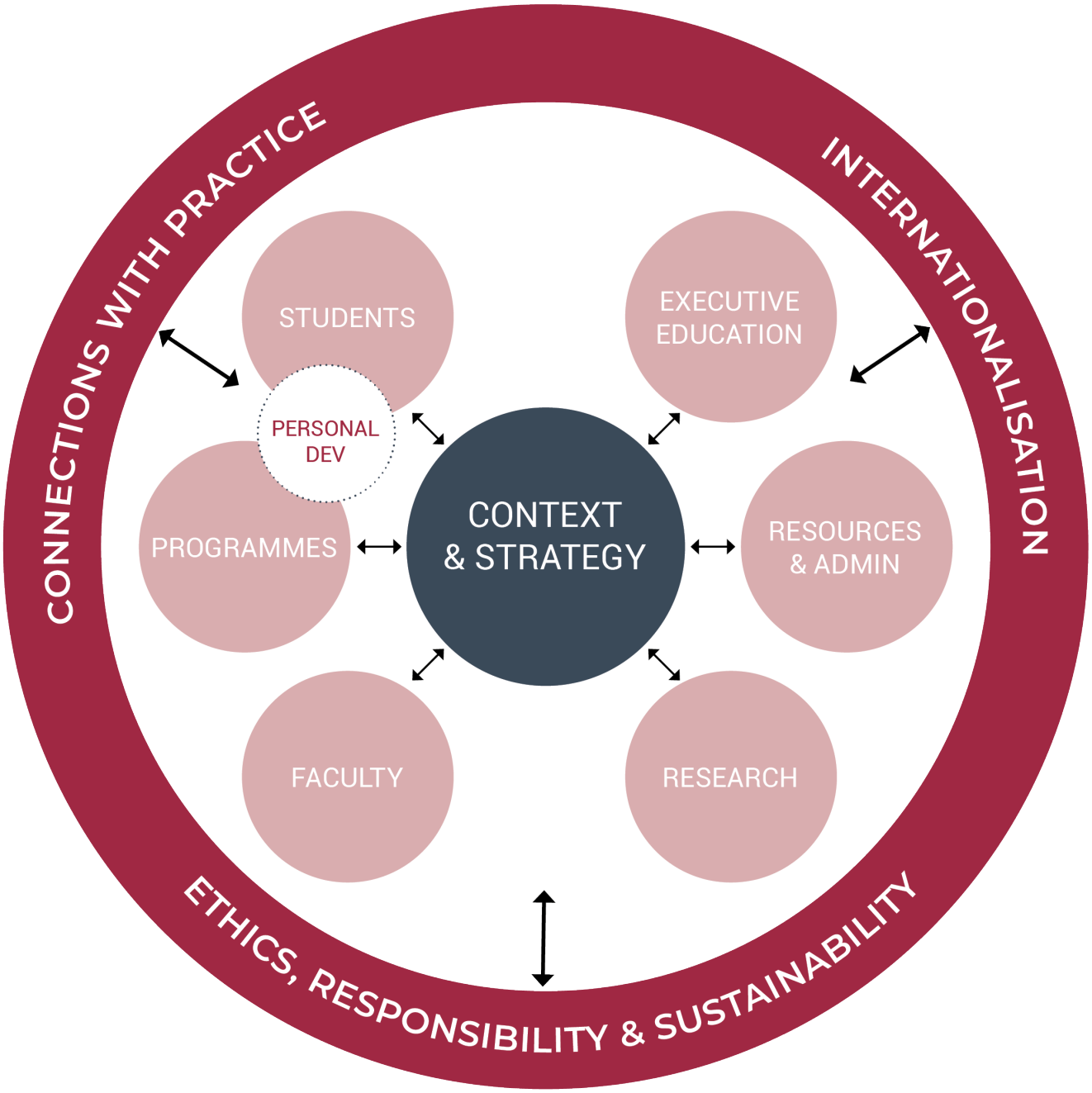
An important distinction of the EQUIS approach is the inclusion of the next three chapters, dealing with transversal dimensions of Internationalisation, Connections with Practice, and Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability. The origin and differentiating characteristic of EQUIS is its international focus as an accreditation system which promotes and enables the promotion of the internationalisation of the schools with which it works, advocating the development of an international mindset, fostering intercultural learning, valuing diversity and recognising multicultural and internationally-connected environments. Similarly, EQUIS encourages a vision of management education where a balance is struck between academic quality and managerial relevance. Accordingly, EQUIS has expanded its coverage of Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability, reflecting the need of business schools to contribute to the resolution of societal challenges and to act as 'good citizens' in the environment in which they operate. These dimensions are woven through all the chapters. However, the purpose of the three separate chapters is to allow a focussed overview of the school's strategy and achievements in these areas and to address the policy issues raised.

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

In order to guide schools in the preparation of supporting documents and statistics, there is a section indicating the material that should be included in the Self-Assessment Report itself and a section specifying the material that should be made available in the Online Document Repository before, during and after the Peer Review Visit – for more information see Annex 14 of the EQUIS Process Manual. In most chapters, there is a section entitled Notes in which definitions or explanations are provided. In some chapters, an additional section Key Indicators has been included as a reminder of the points that are of particular importance in making an assessment regarding a particular criterion. Other supporting documents to the Self-Assessment Report should include information on all campus operations and collaborative activities – as described in full detail in Annexes 20 and 21 of the EQUIS Process Manual.

# EQUIS
# Standards & Criteria

# EQUIS Standards & Criteria



Chapter

# 1

# Context, Governance and Strategy

# Chapter 1: Context, Governance and Strategy

## The EQUIS Standard

EQUIS embraces a pluralistic approach to strategy development whether led by a school's management team or embedded in the empowerment of teams – or units – to cultivate strategy across the school. Strategic planning processes may set over-arching objectives to provide direction for the school, while recognising that they may also need to adapt to dynamic contexts. EQUIS' approach to strategy, therefore, encompasses schools' development of cohesive purpose with flexibility for organic development and creativity.

**MISSION:**

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

**GOVERNANCE:**

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

**STRATEGY:**

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

## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Since EQUIS assesses whole schools and examines all its activities, the effectiveness of the governance and decision-making processes is an issue of paramount importance. Experience has shown repeatedly that ineffective managerial processes are a major handicap in achieving quality in management education. The school should show how it operates with reasonable decision-making autonomy in setting its own strategy for future development, in establishing its portfolio of programmes and in the management of its resources. The report should provide a full description of the system of governance, both in terms of external control over the school and in terms of internal management processes.

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

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

The school should also describe its strategic vision for future development, with a realistic appraisal of the steps to be taken to achieve its objectives. It is understood that some initiatives are not undertaken as part of a pre-defined strategic plan and that schools will seize opportunities as they arise and then integrate them a posteriori into their portfolio of activities. EQUIS recognises the view of emergent strategy and encourages schools to describe how they develop and adapt strategies which best fit their unique goals and operational contexts, while still providing a credible, consistent and coherent strategic intent. In summary, a school may have its own particular approach to strategy development, however, it is expected that any approach will result in actions which are consistent with its intended outcomes and are not random or haphazard.

Also in the strategy section of the Self-Assessment Report, brief mention should be made of developmental initiatives in areas such as learning and teaching, programme development, research, internationalisation, ethics, responsibility and sustainability, connections with practice, and management of people. This is especially important in those areas where the achievements of the school are still limited.

Finally, the school should explain its policies and processes in quality assurance and how its progress is monitored. It is expected that the school's major stakeholders, and in particular its students, should be involved in these processes.

## The Assessment Criteria

### THE KEY AREAS ARE:

- A Environment
- B Institutional status
- C Governance
- D Mission, vision & values
- E Current strategic positioning
- F Strategic consistency
- G Strategy process
- H Quality assurance
- I Internationalisation
- J Ethics, responsibility & sustainability
- K Connections with practice
- L Digitalisation

## A Environment

- Provide general information on the environment in which the school operates, such as:
  - The national educational system(s) within which it operates and grants degrees
  - Regulatory frameworks
  - Programme features pre-determined by the national system and environment
  - Student selection requirements within the national system
  - Degree certification procedures and the status of the degrees granted by the school within the hierarchy of existing national degrees

    - Does the school have a keen awareness of the environment in which it operates, including the constraints which the national or regional environment imposes on the school's activities, particularly in terms of:

      - the degree of freedom to innovate
      - access to resources and support (financial, human, physical) access to students
      - pricing of programmes
      - internationalisation.

- Briefly describe the history of the school since its creation. It is often helpful to provide a one-page summary table illustrating the evolution and salient events in the development of the school.
- Provide a description of the national market and the nature of competition within the national system which should include statements on:
  - Key stakeholders, funding agencies and competitors
  - The interface of the school with the job market for which it trains graduates
  - The prevailing quality norms within the national system.
- Describe the school's competitive environment in all relevant market segments (including online or blended provision).
- Describe the current demand and trend regarding programme delivery (on-campus, online or blended) in the school's market segments.
- Describe the societal environment of the school relevant for the school's mission.
- Describe the school's response to an education market being reshaped by digital technologies.

## B Institutional status

- Provide a clear explanation of the school's legal status and affiliation within its national system to include:
  - Type of institution (public, private, regulated/non-regulated, profit/not-for-profit, business school within a wider university framework)
  - Parent organisation
  - Legal status and by-laws
  - Relation to the national or regional educational and accreditation bodies
  - Sources of funding which derive from the above
    - Do the legal status and by-laws for the school allow it freedom to pursue its mission?
    - What constraints do the legal status and by-laws place on the activities of the school?
- Based on the above information, identify the key factors which underpin the school's recognition and legitimacy within its own national context.

## C Governance

- Describe the formal mechanisms through which the school is externally governed, either by the governance system of the parent university or by a governing body in the case of an independent business school with no university affiliation. This includes:
  - To whom the dean or director of the school is accountable
  - How the governance function is exercised and what it covers, including financial and strategic oversight
  - How external academic oversight is exercised.
- Identify the school's principal stakeholders and assess their impact on key issues to include strategy development, autonomy and funding matters covering:
  - The extent to which external stakeholders such as companies, national education authorities and government agencies are involved in the governance of the school
  - Whether the school has an advisory body providing input that is external both to the school and the university.
- Describe the mechanisms for ensuring student participation in the school's governance.
- Describe the school's internal organisational structures and decision-making processes, with an evaluation of their effectiveness in contributing to the overall strategy, such as:
  - How internal decision-making structures and processes are reviewed and improved

- How the current organisational structure and job responsibilities for individuals support the achievement of the school's strategic objectives
- How the school applies the principles of ethics and social responsibility in its governance.

- Describe the interface between the external governance system and the school's internal management system, including:
  - How are decisions that require negotiation between the two levels taken
  - Whether the school is able to demonstrate operational autonomy within this context.

## D Mission, vision and values

- Define the school's mission and explain how it relates to its identity.
  - Does the school have a clear sense of its own identity and is this expressed in the mission? Does the mission of the school clarify its role in society, its activities and its markets?
  - Does the school have a mission statement that is published, periodically reviewed and revised as needed?
  - Is the mission consistent with the parent organisation's mission and resources?

- Describe the school's vision.
  - Is it clear and widely known what the school aspires to be in the future? How challenging and realistic is this vision?
  - What evidence is there for progress towards meeting the vision?
  - What steps are taken to acquire key resources required by the vision?

- Describe the school's values.
  - Does the school have articulated core values?
  - Do the school's core values include an explicit commitment to ethically and socially responsible behaviour in the management profession? Do organisational members have a clear understanding of them?

## E Current strategic positioning

- Provide a clear description of the school's current strategic position in its national and international market, such as:
  - Identification of the strategic group to which it belongs and identification of key competitors.

- Explanation of the school's resources available, programmes offered, ability to generate intellectual output, target markets and populations, and employment markets served.
- The evolution of the school's strategic position over the past five years.
- An explanation of the main strategic actions over the past five years.
  - Is the school able to clearly define the strategic position it occupies and its differentiation from other institutions?
  - Who are the main stakeholders it serves? What is their relative importance and how is this reflected in the development of the strategy and the allocation of resources?
  - Has the school identified an appropriate set of measures to accurately pinpoint its competitive position in the market and its success in achieving the mission?

- Provide a brief analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses in maintaining this strategic positioning.
- Explain the school's approach for pedagogical innovation.
- What strategic and tactical role do online or blended forms of delivery have?

## F Strategic consistency

- Demonstrate how the activities or initiatives already undertaken and those planned are consistent with the mission, vision and values of the school.
- Explain how the activities or initiatives already undertaken and those planned are consistent with the current or intended strategic positioning of the school.
- Describe the relationship between the school's activities and initiatives and the availability of resources. Identify the key constraints which limit future activities and initiatives and any planned actions to mitigate or decrease their impact.
- Clarify how the school monitors the impact, effect and outcomes of its activities or initiatives.

## G Strategy process

- Describe the process by which its mission, vision, values and strategic objectives inform plans for activities and initiatives.
  - How are the plans reviewed and updated and by whom?
- Give a broad description of the strategy for the coming years.
  - Does the strategy reflect appropriate awareness of the geographical, regulatory and technological context?

- Are there specific activities and initiatives for areas such as:
  - Learning & teaching
  - Research
  - The management of people
  - Marketing
  - Internationalisation
  - Connections with practice
  - Digitalisation

- How will the intended future development change the school's current strategic positioning?
- Does the school have the financial resources and staff that will be necessary to deliver on its activities and initiatives?
- Are the activities and initiatives clear and communicated effectively to all concerned?
- How is the school responding to opportunities and challenges of digitalisation?
- How well does the school integrate its strategy processes into other improvement activities?
- Explain how the school takes advantage of opportunities as they arise, and how or whether the resultant activities are eventually incorporated into the strategy.
- Describe the principal strategic risks that the school faces or may face in the future.
- List any policy and procedure documents that have been developed to support the implementation of the strategic plans.

## H Quality assurance

- Provide a brief description of the formal mechanisms for internal quality assurance.
  - How do the formal quality systems fit the context in which the school operates?
  - What policies are there for periodic reviews of academic departments, subject areas, research centres, programmes, etc.?
  - What general processes ensure the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning (including online or blended provision)?
- Explain the processes and indicators used to monitor overall performance.
  - What methods does the school use for tracking progress and completion of individual objectives?

- What are the key performance indicators?

- Describe the ways in which students participate in quality assurance processes.
  - How are students represented in the school's principal decision-making committees, either as voting or as non-voting members?
  - Do students participate in internal strategic reviews or in the preparation of material for external accreditation?
  - How has student input contributed to the preparation of this application for EQUIS accreditation?

- Describe the ways in which other key external and internal stakeholders participate in quality assurance processes.

## I Internationalisation

- Describe the school's international purpose, strategy, and resources allocated to internationalisation (see also Chapter 8).
  - Does the school have a clear purpose for internationalisation?
  - Does the school have a formalised international strategy, clarifying its ambition and goals? Are there defined KPIs to monitor the international strategy implementation?
  - How is the international dimension/perspective integrated in the school's governance?
  - Does the school have an international advisory board?
  - What resources are specifically allocated to the management of the school's international activities? Does the school have an adequately resourced international office?

## J Ethics, responsibility and sustainability

- Summarise the evidence that ethics, responsibility and sustainability (ERS) are reflected in the school's mission, vision and strategy (see also Chapter 9).
  - Are ERS integrated into the school's mission and vision?
  - Does the school have an explicit policy and strategy for ERS?
  - Are adequate resources allocated in support of this strategy?
  - What is the role of digitalisation in the school's ERS strategy?

## K Connections with practice

- Summarise the evidence that the school's connections, its engagement with practice and its intended influence on practice are reflected in the school's governance, culture and strategy (see also Chapter 10).

  - Which practitioners (business leaders, entrepreneurs, business-government policy developers) from outside the school participate in its governance structures?
  - Does the school have an explicit policy and strategy for managing its interface with the world of practice?
  - What is the role of digitalisation in the school's connections with practice?

## L Digitalisation

- Explain how the school uses digitalisation as an integral, enabling factor, focusing on the following questions:

  - Does the school have a clear digitalisation strategy? Is digitalisation, broadly defined, an integral part of the current strategy? Does the management team have a consistent and clear approach to digitalisation? How is this approach communicated to key departments in the school?
  - Is the school able to effectively execute this aspect to its strategy? Has the school developed credible initiatives in this regard? Have the necessary resources for implementation been secured? Are the required competencies and capabilities already available or how are they being developed?
  - Is there an appropriate quality assurance framework in place? Are relevant activities monitored?
  - What is the school's cyber security protection?

These questions may apply to all activities of the school.

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

- History of the school (1-page summary table)
- Organisation chart showing reporting lines
- Chart showing the committee structure

## Documents to be Provided in the Online Document Repository

- Documents describing the school's strategic plans and related policies, to be available in English
- List of members in the school's governing body or advisory board, indicating name, position, organisation, nationality, year of appointment

  *Double passport holders should always be counted as nationals, if one of the passports is the domestic one.*
- Cyber security policy
- Risk register

## Note

### 1. Mission

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

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

### 2. Vision

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

### 3. Strategy

It is the role of the strategy to envisage the activities and initiatives required to chart the path toward realising the vision, while staying within the scope of the mission. EQUIS expects schools to have a credible, consistent and coherent strategy, realistically reflecting its market positioning, resources and constraints.

Chapter

# 2

# Programmes

# Chapter 2: Programmes

## The EQUIS Standard

Programmes should be well-designed with a learner-centred focus, clear learning outcomes and an appropriate balance between the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Delivery methods should be diverse and reflect current educational practice. The curriculum should emphasise student learning and allow for practical work. Rigorous assessment processes should be in place to monitor the quality of students' work. Programmes should undergo regular and systematic evaluation, incorporating feedback from students and other stakeholders and demonstrating measurable long-term impact on students' knowledge, skills and attitudes, their career success, and their overall satisfaction with their educational experience. Programmes should be adequately staffed, managed and administered.

### INTRODUCTION

Given the cultural diversity that exists at an international level, the aim of the EQUIS process is not to establish a common standard for the design, content, delivery and assessment of programmes. EQUIS respects national and local diversity while recognising that, for many schools, the international positioning of their programmes has become a much more pressing concern than in the past. As an international accreditation system, EQUIS will seek to understand how schools are adapting their programmes to make them internationally relevant.

The design, content, delivery and assessment of programmes consist of an integrated set of core processes, each contributing to the entire value chain. The concern of EQUIS will, therefore, be to measure how each core process contributes to the overall learning experience of students, to effective learning, and to learning about processes and environments. Additionally, EQUIS assesses the extent to which programmes reflect a concern for quality in all aspects.

The school should be able to demonstrate the quality of learning and teaching in its programmes, as well as the quality of processes for managing those programmes. There should be clearly defined roles for academic leadership and administrative responsibility for all its programmes. The process of designing programmes should be rigorous and include feedback from students and representatives of the world of practice. Each programme must have clearly stated aims, objectives and learning outcomes and potential indicators of impact. Students should also be given guidance on how the school recognises, develops and assesses intellectual, analytical, personal, and entrepreneurial qualities as well as the subject-specific knowledge and skills to be developed in the programme.

The design and content of programmes should embrace a comprehensive range of theory and research, firmly connected to the practical world of business and management in both local and international contexts. Research conducted at the school, whether academic or practice-oriented, is expected to drive and be highlighted in the programme and course design.

Ethics, responsibility and sustainability should be integrated into the design, delivery and assessment of all programmes offered by the school, and all courses, regardless of academic discipline, should incorporate the school's sustainability agenda.

## Pedagogic development and innovation

The school is expected to design its programmes in such a way that students and participants develop the appropriate competences expected at their level of development (i.e., with a learner-centred focus). EQUIS recognises a wide variety of pedagogical approaches. Traditional lectures, case discussions, project work, web teaching, flipped classrooms, experiential learning, and action learning are some of the more apparent methods present in schools. Internships, extracurricular activities, and other forms of less traditional academic activities can be excellent educational resources as long as they are properly designed and evaluated to enhance the learning processes and the practical application of achieved learning outcomes according to the specific needs of the audiences they serve.

Schools are encouraged to develop teaching cases on appropriate business challenges, including text, video, and the use of digital tools, and publish them for the benefit of the peer community. At the same time, pedagogy is a fertile ground for creating and experimenting with new models. A good indicator of the school's commitment to high-quality and innovative provision is its ability to experiment with novel and original pedagogies. The school is therefore expected to report on the significant initiatives it undertakes, whether in processes or infrastructure, and their impact on the portfolio of courses and programmes.

The development and dissemination of open educational resources (OERs) has significant value in widening access to high-quality learning materials and fostering collaboration among educators. EQUIS encourages partnerships with other business schools, universities, and research centres to facilitate the exchange of good practices, collaboration on pedagogical projects, and the dissemination of knowledge about pedagogical innovation. In addition, the wider impact achievable through conference presentations, workshops, webinars, and other such forums where educators can present their findings and engage in continuous professional development is considered beneficial.

In addition to recognising the diversity of pedagogical approaches, EQUIS recognises that different audiences will be exposed to different methods, appropriate to the content, interests and competences sought. Therefore, a combination of pedagogies may well be present, and the school should be able to provide a clear pedagogical strategy with appropriate short and long-term impact measures.

Design competence at the programme and course level needs to be supported by technology and infrastructure. The school is therefore expected to provide appropriate support for its educational activities and demonstrate how it develops and innovates its pedagogical processes and internal competences and how these are integrated into the programmes.

There should be a culture of ongoing assessment and improvement of learning and teaching practices, drawing on research findings and feedback from students, faculty and other stakeholders. Faculty development should be an integral part of actualising the innovative pedagogies that the school may be using.

## Digitalisation

Digitalisation has added and facilitated a variety of learning designs that can enhance the synchronous or asynchronous processes and broaden the scope of learning and teaching. EQUIS does not require online learning to be used in any particular way or to any particular extent. Online learning should not be seen as a goal, but rather as a tool to support the school's learning and teaching strategy.

Online learning in programmes and courses must meet the same quality standards as regular on-campus provision. In cases where the school offers online learning activities in cooperation with a non-academic organisation, the school must provide evidence of the value added by the technology. Annex 21 of the EQUIS Process Manual should be considered.

## Assessment

The assessment system used to grade student work should support the course design in terms of its objectives and pedagogy, but should also be proven to be rigorous, valid and reliable. On the other hand, assessment is an integral part of the learning process and therefore appropriate and timely feedback is expected. As a general principle, the relative weighting in the assessment of coursework should provide a good balance between intellectual development and the acquisition of managerial competence.

The school should have processes in place to ensure the quality of its programmes, including the relevance of course content, the quality of teaching, and the effectiveness of learning and skills development.

## Selected Programme

To evaluate the effectiveness of the programme design, delivery and assessment processes, EQUIS examines one sample programme in depth as a check on the effectiveness of the overall programme portfolio management. The school should propose three of its major programmes (no programmes abroad) such that there is a variety of programme types, e.g. an undergraduate (bachelor), a pre-experience postgraduate (specialist master) and a post-experience postgraduate (MBA). One of these will be selected by the EQUIS Committee on the advice of the EQUIS Office. The overall portfolio and **a summary of the Selected Programme should therefore be described in the Self-Assessment Report** and they will then be assessed during the Peer Review Visit. Reference is made to the EFMD Programme Accreditation Standards & Criteria, Chapters Two to Five, which provide general guidance on the type of information that is useful for EQUIS regarding the Selected Programme. The guidance is indicative, schools may address the points that are relevant to their context. For mandatory Selected Programme requirements, see the list on page 38 below and Annex 14.

## The Assessment Criteria

### THE KEY AREAS ARE:

- A Programme portfolio
- B Programme design
- C Pedagogic development & innovation
- D Programme content
- E Skills acquisition
- F Programme delivery
- G Student assessment
- H Programme evaluation
- I Internationalisation
- J Ethics, responsibility & sustainability
- K Relevance of connections with practice

## A Programme portfolio

- Describe how the strategy of the school is reflected in its programme portfolio.
- Describe the policies and processes used to develop the portfolio in line with the school's strategic objectives.
- Describe the role of online learning for the school. How does it relate to the overall strategy of the school, including research, executive education and support processes?
  - What kind of opportunities has the school recognised for itself regarding the provision of such programmes?
  - What kind of risks does providing/not providing such programmes constitute for the school?
  - Have specific target groups of participants been defined for such programmes?
- Describe the overall portfolio of programmes that the school currently offers. Explain the school's policy as regards the balance between programme offerings at various levels – undergraduate, master, MBA, doctoral, executive education.
  - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the present portfolio and how are these assessed?
  - What are the criteria for assessing the overall coherence of the portfolio?
  - How are decisions regarding the positioning of programmes made?
  - What constituencies and markets is the school serving?
  - How does the school measure the impact of each programme on its constituencies?
- Explain how the programme portfolio has changed over the past five years.
- Summarise plans for future programme creation, discontinuation, repositioning or development.
- Describe the school's system for managing its programmes.
- Explain the school's principles regarding the balance between programmes with different delivery modes.

## B Programme design

- Describe the process for designing programmes. Explain how the school ensures that programmes are designed with a learner-centred focus and meet the needs of the market and of participants.
  - How does the development and review cycle ensure that the programme objectives and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) , as well as content, delivery methods and materials for programmes are relevant, up-to-date and of high quality?
  - Where the design of programmes is strongly modular, are participants provided clear guidance on how to achieve the integration of individual subjects?
  - How do programmes provide for interdisciplinary integration?
  - Which pedagogical approach underpins the programmes' learning activities?
- Identify the key changes in programme design that have occurred in the last five years, together with an identification of key problems in the resourcing or design of current programmes.
  - What steps does the school take to keep up-to-date with best practice, major trends and significant innovation in similar programmes around the world?

## C Pedagogic development and innovation

- Describe the school's overall policy for promoting pedagogical innovation.
- Describe the school's processes for development and innovation in learning and teaching.
- Describe the school's assessment of teaching practices.
- Summarise key achievements in pedagogical innovation, including the development of new courses, educational materials, and new learning and delivery methods.
  - List the number of new teaching cases developed by faculty in the last 5 years, highlighting the formats used (video, text, simulation, digital tools, etc.).
  - List the case publications in peer-reviewed journals or case repositories.
- Collaboration and dissemination of pedagogical innovation
  - List the usage and adoption of cases by other institutions.
  - List the open educational resources developed, adapted, or shared by the institution.
  - Identify the metrics used for OERs, such as downloads, views, or adoptions by other institutions.
  - Provide evidence of qualitative feedback from educators and learners on the quality of the cases and effectiveness of the OERs.

- Identify the stakeholders involved in pedagogic innovation.
- List the school's partnerships or collaborations with other higher education institutions or research centres for pedagogical development and exchange.
- List the school's initiatives, joint research projects, and publications related to pedagogical innovation.
- List the number of conference presentations, workshops, webinars, or other events focused on pedagogical research findings.
- Provide evidence of impact and reach of dissemination channels, including recognition or citation in other research or educational materials.

- Describe the resources available to support pedagogical innovation.

- List recognition or awards for teaching excellence received by faculty members.

- Describe how the school assesses long-term pedagogic innovation and the impact of programmes.

## D Programme content

- For each programme:

  - Describe the nature of the degree or qualification, its level of recognition in the national and international context, together with details of equivalences as compared to other qualifications. Outline the qualifications that can be obtained after the successful completion of online programmes, if any. Do these comply with the general system of the school?
  - Provide a summary of the course philosophy, key programme objectives and ILOs. Do the learning outcomes of online programmes, if any, match those of equivalent programmes offered in traditional formats?
  - Define the core content, options offered, and the pedagogy adopted.
  - Describe the course work involved and details of extracurricular or special activities involved in the programme.

    - Does each programme have clearly stated objectives and learning outcomes? Are staff and participants fully aware of these and do they explicitly explain to participants what they are expected to know and be able to do at the end of the programme?
    - How are the programme objectives and ILOs translated into the practical aspects of programme content?
    - Are any programme requirements set by the nature of the employment market? How are these considered and monitored?
    - Does the design and content of the programme embrace a comprehensive range of relevant business and management theory, which is firmly connected to the practical world of management?

- Does the school make clear in which way it recognises and assesses personal skills and qualities as well as the subject-specific knowledge and skills being developed by each course?
- Does the programme design and content explicitly include aspects of social responsibility?
- Does the programme enable the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies required in a digitalised world? Does the school provide the students with opportunities to experience technologies to prepare for the future workplace, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics?
- Does the school provide its students with full information about the programme?

## E Skills acquisition

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

- Are students provided with adequate opportunities to conduct practical project work?
- What opportunities are provided to allow students to benefit from group work and practical experience?
- Do students receive training in research and consultancy skills?
- Do students receive training in online collaboration skills, and if so, how are these assessed?
- What new pedagogical approaches are used to assess skills acquisition?
- What new impact measures are being used in collaboration with students' employers?

## F Programme delivery

- Describe the teaching methods currently used in programme delivery: lectures, case studies, business games, group work, project-based learning, tutorials...
  - Does the school employ a sufficiently diverse range of learning and teaching methods to optimise learning and practical application of learning outcomes? What is the balance between different methods and how does this support programme objectives?
  - To what extent is there an emphasis on learning as well as teaching?
- Regarding the use of technologies in online programmes, if applied:
  - Explain how the delivery of online programmes is leveraged by technologies:
    - What kind of opportunities for interaction do the school's online programmes offer? How is student-teacher and peer interaction facilitated?
    - Describe the mentoring and academic support provided to participants of online programmes.
    - How does the school ensure that participants are sufficiently skilled to manage and use technologies? What remedial support is in place for those who are not?
    - Are processes in place to ensure the quality of online programmes?
    - How does the school support students with challenges or specific accessibility requirements?
    - What data is collected on students in online programmes and for what purpose?
- Identify the main constraints that limit the range or scope of teaching methods and materials employed in the school's programmes.
- Describe processes for the allocation of staff to programmes.
- Describe the mechanisms for maintaining quality control on an on-going basis. Explain how the criteria and processes used to monitor programme quality relate to the programme objectives and the pedagogical approach in use.

## G Student assessment

- Describe the assessment system for monitoring and grading students' work and progression through the programme, including assessments used for online learning.
  - How does the school ensure that participants meet the agreed objectives and learning outcomes for individual awards?
  - Does the assessment regime support the programme design in terms of its ILOs, objectives and general philosophy?
  - Does the assessment regime explicitly identify the criteria for assessment and the range and relative weighting of the various assessment methodologies employed?
  - To what extent does the assessment system distinguish between the attribution of a grade and marking designed to help students understand their shortcomings and improve? Is all assessment integral to learning? Are formative rather than summative methods used?
  - What provision is made for re-sitting assessments or examinations? Is this appropriate and does it support the programme's aims and objectives?
  - How does the school ensure that the assessment regime is applied with sufficient rigour? Describe the process that ensures sufficient rigour when assessing students' work in an online context.
  - How is the degree-awarding function managed by the school? What mechanisms are used to protect the integrity and validity of the process from abuse by individuals? What steps are taken to ensure objectivity in terms of the standards being applied?
  - Can the school provide evidence that the assessment regime itself is evaluated rigorously, particularly when new or innovative approaches are being applied?
  - What measures are taken against cheating or plagiarism? How does the school deal with such cases?
  - How does the school respond to gaps between ILOs and actual assessment results?
- Demonstrate that the quality of the students' work is appropriate to the level of the programmes.

## H Programme evaluation

- Describe the processes for the evaluation of programmes. Explain how the school ensures that programmes meet the needs of the market and of participants and includes key stakeholder groups in the process.
  - How does the school evaluate the quality of the teaching input, in addition to evaluation by students? Is the feedback of participants used effectively in the reviewing process?
  - How does the school assess the quality of online learning and of new pedagogic formats?

- How does the school measure the impact of the programmes on its constituencies? How does the school monitor the alignment of the programme's development with the school strategy?

- Summarise the evidence for satisfaction on the part of key stakeholder groups regarding programme design, content and delivery.

- Describe the process for the review and revision of programmes.

  - What mechanisms exist for assuring consistency with programme standards required by external bodies? What have been the most recent actions in this area?
  - What adjustments to the programme design have been made in light of feedback from programme teams and key stakeholders?

## I Internationalisation

- Describe how the school ensures that the international mix of learners, learning materials and experiences, contribute meaningfully to intercultural development and an international mindset.

- Explain how the school's programmes are positioned internationally.

  - Which programmes are targeted at international students?
  - How attractive are the school's programmes to international students?
  - How are languages strategically used in the programme delivery, consistent with its international purpose and strategy?

- Provide a set of statistics indicating international student enrolment in the school's various programmes over the past three years. If appropriate, cross-reference to Chapter 3 Students.

- Describe the current arrangements with other business schools and academic networks for joint delivery of programmes.

- Describe the opportunities for student exchange provided within the school's programmes and present a table with appropriate statistics for the past three years. If appropriate, cross-reference to Chapter 3 Students.

- Describe if and how technology has been used to provide an international learning experience.

- Describe how the school accounts for the quality of the virtual experience and the goals achieved when compared to more traditional exchange opportunities.

- Explain how the school ensures the same quality for its collaborative or off-campus operations (see EQUIS Process Manual, Annex 21: Policy on Accreditation of Collaborative Provision).
  - What are the quality assurance mechanisms in this area?
- Describe the opportunities for international project work provided within the school's programmes (online or face-to-face).
- Describe the opportunities for students to participate in learning experiences offered in collaboration with or by other academic institutions.

## J Ethics, responsibility and sustainability

- Describe how ERS are integrated into the design, delivery and assessment of the school's degree programmes.
  - Are there programmes that specifically address questions of ERS? Describe their orientation and content.
  - How are ERS integrated into the other programmes? Describe their content.
  - How does the school assess ERS-related competencies?

## K Relevance of connections with practice

- Summarise the relevance and relationship of programmes with the practice of business and management.
  - Describe how perspectives from practice are built into the definition of learning objectives and into curriculum design.
  - Does the school have formal processes for involving practice-related stakeholders in programme design and monitoring?
  - To what extent is the management community satisfied with the school's programmes and graduates and how is this evidenced?
  - How is the school measuring the impact of the programmes in the world of practice (students' performance and employers' satisfaction)?
  - Summarise the extent of practitioner input into the delivery of the school's programmes.
  - Does the school have joint programmes with practitioners?

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

- A list of international academic or non-academic partners with an indication of the type of cooperation (joint degree, student exchange, research collaboration, faculty exchange, course or programme delivery)
- A table indicating international student enrolment in the school's various programmes over the past three years. If appropriate, cross-reference to Chapter 3 Students
- A table indicating student exchange flows in the school's various programmes. If appropriate, cross-reference to Chapter 3 Students
- A table indicating the international academic content used, naming the content (for example, learning materials, cases) and programme, and quantifying the number of students impacted

## Documents to be Provided in the Online Document Repository

Underlined documents should be available in English

### General Programme Portfolio

- Learning and teaching strategy (provide any available formal documents)
- List of programmes
- For each of the programmes:
  - Aims and objectives
  - Programme intended learning outcomes (ILOs)
  - Curriculum structure and rationale
  - List of component courses
  - Examples of international academic content
- Descriptions of the overall assessment regime and grading system and their relation to the programme ILOs (provide any available formal documents)
- Teaching evaluation questionnaires for completion by students
- Description or reports of regular programme reviews
- Code of ethical conduct or similar document

- Description of the pedagogical initiatives or projects or innovations undertaken in the last 5 years

## Selected Programme

The term Selected Programme refers to the programme chosen for more intensive assessment during the Self-Assessment and Peer Review Visit. For this programme, the documents listed below should be made available.

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

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

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

  - the assignments/exams set
  - 6 graded samples of the major assignment (exam, dissertation, project report, etc.) for each course matching those assignments/exams and illustrating the range of achievement on

the part of the students. The Peer Review Team needs to see the quality of the students' work and of the assessment/feedback provided. These 6 scripts should include the highest mark, the lowest mark and 4 from close to the pass mark for the course (i.e., marginal scripts). If there are no failed papers, the sample should consist of the 2 highest and the 4 lowest marks or grades.

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

## Note

- All degree programmes should be included for assessment in this chapter, including those offered to practitioner markets such as the EMBA or in-company MBAs. If an accredited school introduces new programmes to its portfolio, it will be sufficient to report on these changes in the next re-accreditation.

- "Certification" programmes, i.e., programmes offered on the continuing education and practitioner markets, should not be included since these awards are not recognised university-level degrees and have no official recognition outside the school itself. These programmes should be described in Chapter 6 on Executive Education.

- Schools are invited to refer to the EFMD Programme Accreditation criteria, which may be of assistance in preparing the content of this chapter (available from the EFMD website).

- Please refer to the Policy on Accreditation of Collaborative Provision in cases where the school offers its programmes in other locations outside its main campus in collaboration with other schools (see Annex 21 of the EQUIS Process Manual).

- In all EQUIS documents, 'programme' refers to a structured period of study, usually for a duration of one or more years, leading to a degree qualification as in MBA programme, undergraduate programme, master programme, etc.

- The term 'course' refers to a single unit of study in a particular subject within the programme as in 'Foundations of Marketing' or 'Corporate Finance & Risk Management'. Each course is usually assessed separately and leads to a grade and a pre-established number of credits.

- The term ‘module’ is sometimes synonymous with ‘course’ and sometimes used to refer to an organised sequence within a course. In this sense, a course may be structured as a series of modules.

- In the case of more loosely organised programmes that may not have a strict course structure, the term ‘module’ may refer to short sequences focusing on a particular topic. For example, an executive MBA programme may be organised into a series of one to three week modules over a period of two years.

- It is useful to distinguish ‘programme objectives’ and ‘intended learning outcomes’ (ILOs). The programme objectives are general in nature, covering, for example the target market, the profile of students to be recruited, the jobs for which students are to be prepared. The ILOs are more specific and relate to what students are expected to know, what they are expected to be able to do, and how they are expected to behave upon successfully completing a programme, course or module.

Chapter

# 3

# Students

# Chapter 3: Students

## The EQUIS Standard

### STUDENT QUALITY:

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

### PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS:

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

## INTRODUCTION

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

Where possible, the school should explain how the criteria for student selection, particularly to its programmes at the master or postgraduate level, relate to its target market for these programmes. EQUIS recognises that selection upon admission is not always possible, for example in many public universities in Europe. In these cases, the onus will be upon the school to demonstrate that high standards for progression through the programmes and for graduation at their end will compensate for the absence of selectivity upon entry.

The notion of quality in looking at the student body also encompasses students' motivation, commitment and seriousness of purpose as regards their programme of studies. The Student Report is intended to encapsulate the students' perspectives on the school and therefore must be

produced independently of the school's leadership or other external support, by strictly following the guidance outlined in Annex 15 of the EQUIS Process Manual.

The international profile of the student body is a key feature of a school which may be conveyed through the diversity of nationalities represented, the international experiences students bring, and the mobility opportunities available to them. A culturally diverse cohort, whether present on campus or engaging virtually, enriches learning by introducing a wide range of perspectives on business practice and global issues.

A focal purpose of an international mix of students is to prepare all learners to lead and manage in a global environment but EQUIS also requires schools to demonstrate how the international mix of learners contributes meaningfully to their intercultural development and global awareness. Schools are expected to show how they encourage academic and social interaction between international and home students. Schools should also report if and how they support students to experience other national contexts through study or work abroad.

With regard to incoming students, be they exchange or enrolled, it is important that schools demonstrate how they are integrated into the school's norms and expectations, and how their progress and engagement are monitored.

An important indicator of student quality is their employability upon graduation, as evidenced by time to employment, level of employment, and salary. The school should show it has the professionally qualified resources to help students in their search for a job, through career counselling and placement services. It should proactively manage the interface with the world of practice to bring students and employers together. It should further demonstrate that it maintains a statistical record of employment results for each graduating class. This chapter will also look at the way in which the school maintains contact with and supports its students after graduation and mobilises alumni in the pursuit of its strategic objectives in a process of lifelong learning.

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

EQUIS expects that the development of skills relevant to international management will feature among the explicit objectives of an institution's programmes. Learning in a digitalised world, language skills, inter-cultural sensitivity, the ability to function in a diverse multicultural environment are important attributes that the school should promote.

A further expectation is that the school will educate its students to act ethically in their professional lives. Values such as integrity, respect for others, socially responsible action, service to society should be an integral part of the personal development agenda. In sum, business education institutions play a key role in developing personal awareness and the appropriate attitudes, values, skills and behaviours to equip students in their professional lives as managers. Schools should be able to demonstrate a concern for the type of managers they are trying to educate, backed by suitable processes for helping students to manage meaningful change, direct their energies and personal skills, and define their own future.

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

## The Assessment Criteria

### THE KEY AREAS ARE:

- A — Target profiles & criteria for selection
- B — Course preparation & progression
- C — Support & counselling services
- D — Personal & professional development
- E — Career placement & support
- F — Alumni relations
- G — Internationalisation
- H — Ethics, responsibility & sustainability
- I — Connections with practice

## A Target profiles and criteria for selection

- Describe the target markets and profiles for incoming students in the school's various programmes.

- Describe the target profile for graduating students in terms of knowledge, values, managerial skills, professional competences, and entry level into employment.

- How does the school consider different types of prior knowledge and the broadly diversified expectations of students?

- Provide a description of the selection processes and show how these relate to the objectives set for the school's different programmes.

  - What steps does the school take to ensure that individuals are selected based on their expected contribution to programmes and on their capacity for personal development?
  - Can the school produce evidence that the procedures and standards applied for admission for each programme are rigorous, fair and appropriate?
  - Are there standardised tools the school uses in evaluating the readiness of candidates to successfully complete the programme of study for which they are applying (e.g. aptitude tests, language tests)? How do these contribute to the quality of the student selection process?
  - How do intake profiles relate to the target profile in the school's different programmes?

- Describe the results of the selection for the different programmes, including the number of applications, the number of students to whom a place was offered, and the number of students effectively enrolled for each of the past three to five years.

  - How selective is the admission process for the school's different programmes?
  - Is there an adequate pool of candidates to ensure a sufficient number of students of the right quality? Do the selection and enrolment ratios support this conclusion?
  - How does the school evaluate the effectiveness of its selection criteria and processes? Is information for all programmes analysed in sufficient detail to improve the targeting and effectiveness of programmes?

- In cases where selection upon entry is not possible, explain how quality is assured.

  - How does the school manage the impact on the quality of the education of all students?
  - How does the school assure the quality of its graduating students?

- Describe the current student population in terms of origin, previous study, age, and gender. For post-experience programmes such as the MBA, indicate the number of years of professional experience before admission. This information should be presented in a table with statistics for the past three to five years.

- What trends emerge from the above statistics?
- What future changes would the school like to see in the student mix?
- What actions are planned to address issues in recruitment?

- Describe the mechanisms in place to ensure that socially disadvantaged students have access to the school's programmes.

  - Are scholarships available to help financially disadvantaged students?

## B Course preparation and progression

- Describe the processes used to prepare students in advance of their entry into their course of study.

  - How does the school ensure that all students are adequately prepared and informed about course requirements before enrolment?
  - How does the school ensure that all students are adequately prepared for studying online?
  - What steps are taken to identify barriers to learning or progression as early as possible?
  - To what extent is assistance provided to students who experience difficulties or problems? How is the effectiveness of this support evaluated?
  - What actions are conducted by the school before the formal start of programmes to convey their sense of mission and core values to students?

- Describe the school's policy on credit transfer and exemptions.

  - Are the processes used to manage credits or exemptions explicit, valid and reliable?

- Provide a summary for each of the main programmes of progression, completion, failure and drop-out rates. This should be accompanied by an explanation of these trends and the action taken to respond to them.

  - How is student progression through their course of study monitored?
  - Are drop-out and success rates acceptable? Are there any fluctuations or trends in time and across programmes?
  - How does the school evaluate the match between its selection processes and the subsequent progression/performance of individuals? Is information for all programmes analysed in sufficient detail to improve the targeting and effectiveness of programmes?
  - How does the school evaluate progression, completion, failure and drop-out rates including special arrangements for students on online courses, if any? What data and analytics are used to monitor student retention and progression?

## C Support and counselling services

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

## D Personal and professional development

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

## E Career placement and support

- Provide statistics on the employment of graduates, such as:
  - Distribution of employment by market sector and function
  - Distribution of salaries offered to graduates
  - Geographical distribution
  - Percentage of employment on graduation and six months after graduation
  - List of major employers over the past five years
  - How do these employment trends meet the stated programme objectives?

- Describe the arrangements for career development support for students and the alumni.
  - What services are provided to help students identify job opportunities and prepare themselves for interviews?
  - Can students obtain counselling in defining their career objectives?

## F Alumni relations

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

## G Internationalisation

- Provide evidence for the nature of the student body, such as:
  - International marketing of the programmes
  - Admissions procedures
  - International mix in programmes
  - International placements
- Describe the school's policy as regards language and intercultural skills.
  - Do language skills and international experience figure among the admission criteria?
  - How does the school define the extent of language skills it believes should form an integral part of its programmes? What support is provided to achieve the agreed standards in language fluency? How successful are these?
  - How does the school help its students to acquire inter-cultural skills?
- Assess the intercultural development and global awareness of students.
- Assess the readiness of the school's graduates to work and lead with the global context in mind, supported by the evidence gained from the student body and from employment destinations.
- Describe the school's policy regarding international student exchange. Provide a table with information about outward and inward flows of exchange students.

- How is the student exchange managed to provide an international learning experience to incoming and outgoing students?

- Describe the school's policy regarding internships abroad. Provide relevant data conveying the activity of the school in this respect.

- Describe the service provided to incoming international students.
  - Does the school have an international student affairs office?

## H Ethics, responsibility and sustainability

- Describe how ERS are integrated into student recruitment, admissions and management (for example, scholarships, awards, diversity).

- Describe how challenges relating to ERS are integrated into the personal development of students.

- Describe the curricular and extracurricular engagement of students in the areas of ERS.
  - Describe student organisations and initiatives focused on these areas.
  - How do school and faculty support these activities?

## I Connections with practice

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

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

- A table providing for each programme numerical data about the selection and admissions process (applications, offers, acceptances, enrolment, full-time equivalent in the case of part-time students)

  Note: If the school has filled out Table 8 in the accompanying SAR Datasheet completely, it is sufficient to insert a reference here: "Please, see Table 8 in the datasheet for this information"

- A list of major employers over the past five years

- A table describing the outward and inward flows of international exchange students, with a breakdown by programme, by country of destination or by country of origin, by partner school, by length of stay for the latest, complete year

- A Student Report is required from students at the school on issues of key interest in the EQUIS accreditation process. For more information see Annex 15 of the EQUIS Process Manual.

## Documents to be Provided in the Online Document Repository

- Documents relating to the selection process: information packs, application forms, interview reports, test material, process documents, etc.

- Orientation documents for incoming international students

- A description of the school's alumni association, (including, chapters, services, activities, events, donations, and so on, in the past five years). Alumni directory, if available

- A table – in English – showing the profile of each student cohort within the school's degree programmes (previous study, age, gender, percentage of international students, etc.). Also, indicate the average number of years of professional experience for MBAs

- A table for each programme detailing the job placement record of students graduating in the previous academic year

Chapter

# 4

## Faculty

# Chapter 4: Faculty

## The EQUIS Standard

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

### INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Again, the profile of the faculty will depend on the mix of activities. A school with a primary focus on executive education will require a quite different faculty skills profile from a school that mainly offers full-time degree programmes. Schools in a process of strategic change,

for example seeking to expand their activities into more market-oriented sectors through executive education or to strengthen their international positioning will have to adjust the size and composition of the faculty in line with the strategic objectives.

Technological developments will lead to new structures relating to the academic value chain, in learning and teaching, research and executive education. These developments require new forms of specialisation within the faculty and the development of novel support functions for or within faculty, which might include specialising in technical support for new teaching formats or supporting research in digitalisation and its impact. schools should ensure faculty sufficiency and demonstrate how they support personal and professional development of faculty with digitalisation in mind.

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

The school should be able to demonstrate that it has a faculty strategy, including plans for recruitment, performance appraisal, compensation, promotion, succession, and faculty development. The faculty strategy is normally part of the school's strategic agenda and supported by an adequate budget. The school's faculty development plan should also reflect the institutional objectives with respect to ethics, responsibility and sustainability.

## The Assessment Criteria

### THE KEY AREAS ARE:

- A — Faculty size, qualification & composition
- B — Faculty management
- C — Faculty development
- D — Internationalisation
- E — Ethics, responsibility & sustainability
- F — Connections with practice

## A Faculty size, qualification and composition

- Provide a full description of the current core faculty as defined above, including the following information:

  - The number of faculty members holding a doctoral degree
  - The number of faculty members currently working towards a doctoral degree
  - The distribution of the faculty by subject specialisms
  - The organisation of the faculty (departments, chairs, professorial ranks)
  - The age distribution of the faculty
  - The gender mix of the faculty
  - The distribution of the faculty by nationality and international experience
  - The flows of new appointments and departures over the past five years

    - How does the school justify the current size, composition and qualification of the faculty?
    - What is the profile of the faculty in terms of expertise, academic qualification, business experience, etc.?
    - Are the size and the composition of the faculty in accordance with the strategic objectives of the school?
    - What learning and teaching qualifications or experience do the faculty have and are they appropriate to support the school's pedagogic approach?
    - Does the school align the faculty competence with the requirements involved for the digitalisation of learning and teaching as well as research?
    - Does the teaching faculty in terms of numbers and qualification ensure adequate coverage of the principal management disciplines?
    - Does the teaching faculty have an inter-disciplinary approach i.e., is it able to integrate a broad range of themes that transcend disciplinary boundaries?
    - What are the principal strengths and weaknesses of the current faculty?
    - What are the key areas of shortfall in faculty expertise and what actions are being taken to address these problems?
    - How has the faculty evolved over the past five years?
    - What is the student/core faculty ratio? How has this evolved over the last five years?

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

- When appropriate, explain the impact of the national environment as regards the organisation of the faculty: civil servant status, promotion procedures, tenure, career tracks, remuneration, etc.

- Provide a full description of the non-core teaching resources available.

  - How are these additional resources recruited and integrated into the school?
  - What learning and teaching qualifications or experience does the non-core teaching resource have?

- How does the school coordinate the contributions of non-core faculty within programmes?
- How does the school evaluate the effectiveness of non-core faculty contributions?

- Describe the school's current deployment of teaching resources, including both core faculty and non-core faculty, within its different programmes.

  - What proportion of the total learning and teaching provision is entrusted to non-core faculty? Is this balance considered to be optimal?
  - Does the school's workload model allow participants sufficient access to faculty for tutoring and counselling?

## B Faculty management

- Describe the management processes governing the operation of the faculty.

  - How is responsibility for the management of the faculty allocated within the school? Is there a dean of the faculty with overall responsibility?
  - Does the planning process integrate all the requirements needed to meet the strategic objectives, the balance in core activities and the international purpose of the school? How are conflicts between strategic demands resolved? Is there a faculty resourcing plan which addresses all these issues?
  - Does the school provide a consistent framework of policy and practice which addresses the issues of school culture, workloads and the integration of faculty into the total learning and teaching environment? Does this consistently reflect the strategic plan?
  - Is there an adequate balance within core faculty members' workload between:

    - direct teaching and tutoring (both face-to-face and online)
    - programme administration
    - innovation, course development and the production of learning materials
    - research and publications
    - service to the profession and the wider community?

  - How are workloads managed?

- Describe the current policy and practice regarding the recruitment and induction of faculty members.

  - Is there a policy for the recruitment and selection process? What are the key factors that attract high quality faculty to the school? Can the school recruit faculty of a quality which is consistent with the strategy and programme requirements?

- Explain the processes in place for evaluating individual faculty members in both on-campus and virtual learning environments.

- Explain the processes in place for evaluating individual faculty members.
- Describe the processes for retention and promotion of faculty members.
- What are the formal processes for obtaining feedback from faculty members on critical issues?

## C Faculty development

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

## D Internationalisation

- Describe the international dimension of the faculty.
  - What is the nationality mix of the faculty?
  - How many international visiting or adjunct professors engage in the school's activities?
  - What percentage of the home country faculty have had significant international exposure, including virtual engagements and experience?
  - What are the foreign language skills of the home country faculty?

- Is the current level of internationalisation of the faculty in line with the school's international purpose and strategy?

- Describe the opportunities for faculty to serve as visiting professors abroad.

- Describe the active engagement of faculty in international academic institutions or networks, that foster collaboration, promote quality enhancement, and support the ongoing development of collegiate practices.

## E Ethics, responsibility and sustainability

- Describe how the school integrates ERS into faculty training and development.

- Describe how the school recognises and supports community and public engagement of faculty.

## F Connections with practice

- Describe the extent to which the school's faculty are connected to the world of practice.

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

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

- A summary list of the core faculty indicating academic rank, highest degree, where degree obtained, nationality and international experience, subject area, date of appointment, percentage of full-time engagement in the case of contracts that are less than full time, i.e., 75%, 50%, etc.

- A table showing faculty staffing levels over the past five years, including the number of new appointments and the number of departures for each year, with a breakdown by category or rank
- Distribution of the core faculty by academic department when appropriate

  Note: If the school has filled out Table 3 in the accompanying SAR Datasheet completely, it is sufficient to insert a reference here: "Please, see Table 3 in the datasheet for this information".
- A table setting out for the current year the key statistics for the faculty: gender distribution, age distribution, nationality mix, number of PhDs, etc.

## Documents to be Provided in the Online Document Repository

- Strategic plan for faculty management, development and promotion, in English
- Copies of the faculty handbook or other documents setting out the missions, rights and responsibilities of the faculty
- CVs in English for all the core faculty members including publications over the past five years (recommended format: two pages of CV plus publications list)

## Note

- Core faculty members are employed to conduct research or to teach within the school. Core faculty members are qualified academic staff employed on a permanent basis and for whom the school is the sole or principal employer. Permanence is indicated by an open-ended contract or by a fixed-term contract of a minimum of 2 years.
- The term "non-core faculty" is used to designate any person employed on an occasional basis to teach or to conduct research. These persons may have an annual contract with the school, but the school is not their principal employer. They include, for example, practitioners from business and the professions, academics from other institutions, and visiting professors.
- There will always be grey areas in the description of an institution's faculty resources, for instance, between the notions of core and non-core faculty when it is hard to locate a part-time academic in one category or the other. In these cases, it is incumbent upon the school to explain clearly on what basis it has allocated a person to one group or another.

- In describing the size of the faculty, the "full-time equivalent" (FTE) is the total of faculty weekly contract days divided by 5, if 5 is 100% employment. For example, 5 faculty members with 3-day contracts would be the equivalent of 3 faculty members with 100% contracts. In this case, the headcount is 5 but the FTE is 3. The percentage of full-time employment refers to the number of contract days in the case of faculty members who are employed on a part-time basis. A four-day contract is thus the equivalent of 80%.

- The students/core faculty ratio is calculated by dividing the number of FTE students by the number of FTE core faculty. Calculating the FTE for students is obviously a question of reasonable estimation. For instance, the total number of part-time students on a two-year executive MBA programme can be divided by two to approximate the full-time equivalent. The resulting ratio has, of course, to be interpreted in the light of other variables such as the contribution of a well-structured non-core faculty. However, the ratio is useful as one indicator to measure faculty sufficiency.

# Chapter 5

# Research

# Chapter 5: Research

## The EQUIS Standard

Schools should regularly produce original contributions to knowledge that are effectively disseminated. These should demonstrate impact on one or more constituencies that are strategically important for the successful development of the school: academic peers, management professionals, students and other societal stakeholders. A school should also evidence the involvement of such stakeholders in knowledge creation, development and diffusion processes.

### INTRODUCTION

Research excellence contributes to the school's brand, its ability to recruit high quality faculty and good students, the quality of its programmes, its potential for attracting funding, and delivering actionable knowledge and new management practices to its clients. Overall, the research effort enables a school to fulfil its societal mission and to better serve its chosen markets.

EQUIS considers that, in addition to proper attention to method and rigour, the usefulness and relevance of academic research to policy and practice are important.

EQUIS defines "research" as a broad spectrum of intellectual endeavour, ranging from academic publications aimed primarily at the academic community to professionally relevant publications and activities aimed at organisations and business practitioners.

As well as classical recognised fields of management and business research including marketing, management, finance and so on, topics of contemporary relevance such as ethics, responsibility and sustainability (ERS), internationalisation, pedagogical developments, digitalisation, advances in AI, or geo-political and economic challenges, all have implications for society as well as an impact on business and management in higher education. Addressing these complex issues often requires multi-disciplinary approaches to research. EQUIS therefore values a broad view of research and development encompassing a diverse range of activities, all of which enlarge managerial knowledge and understanding, and improve the quality of a business school in contemporary society.

Moreover, EQUIS requires attention to research teamwork, infrastructure, workload allocation and other support for research and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in reporting the context for all research activities. EQUIS pays particular attention to a school's commitment to research

ethics, through the extent to which policies, processes and practices are in place to ensure the integrity of its research activities.

EQUIS recognises the need to move to holistic means of research evaluation, and understands that, while there is no common global framework, broad platforms that that look beyond traditional, quantitative bibliometrics for assessing research can be of value. Two examples of such platforms are both the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA). These and other initiatives may be of value in helping frame the reporting of their activities and outputs in ways that are relevant for their individual contexts and the impact they seek to achieve.

The objectives, recipients, and types of research vary among EQUIS-accredited schools, due to their different missions, strategies, and geographical and institutional contexts.

EQUIS classifies research activities into two categories – academic and practice-oriented research – with the understanding that the boundaries between them will often overlap as determined by the school's research strategy and purpose.

It is therefore critical that a school documents its research purpose and strategic positioning in terms of available resources and the relative strength of research activities and engagement with a range of stakeholders, including the world of practice.

The strategy will include the vision for future research development and the steps to be taken to achieve the objectives including faculty support, its underpinning structures and its links with programmes.

A school may have greater or lesser strengths in these two categories reflecting its research strategy's alignment with its overall positioning and context. EQUIS does not privilege one type of research over another; theory building is considered to be of equal value to practice orientation.

## 1. Academic research

In assessing research, EQUIS considers the particular circumstances of each school in its geographical and institutional context. There are no EQUIS-accredited schools, whether part of a larger institution or not, that do not excel in academic research, nor are there any whose only activity is academic research.

Academic research is usually supported by a variety of rigorous methodologies involving scientific conceptualisation, modelling, data collection and analyses. EQUIS advocates scientific pluralism, eschewing a preference for any particular methodology and invites schools to report on their activities and outputs in a way that demonstrates their quality, scientific merit and significance. High quality academic research may be based on a variety of epistemological approaches and diverse research methodologies.

The quality of academic research is assessed by its impact on the international academic community. In addition to this impact being measured by how often a publication is cited by other academic researchers or whether an article has been published in a widely read and reputed journal, schools are encouraged to consider alternative indicators that are consistent with their research purpose and strategy. Besides those mentioned earlier, Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) or Responsible Research in Business and Management (RRBM) may be useful in this regard.

Over and above publication, further indicators of research quality include grant awards from national and international research funding agencies as well as funding awarded to create and support research centres or endowed chairs and projects.

## 2. Practice-oriented research

Business schools have both a professional and a practice-oriented mission, therefore new knowledge contributing to the effective advancement of management practice is central.

Business school research can leverage distinctive expertise to resolve some of society's most pressing social, technological, economic and environmental challenges. Further, activities undertaken by business schools to exchange knowledge, models, methods, or resources arising from research can ultimately lead to transformative change with, and in, their communities. Impact on practice is partner to the academic impact of research in business schools.

Practice-oriented research comprises three domains that interact with, and are based on, academic research, under the guidance of a research strategy that reflects the wider strategy and purpose of the school.

These three domains are:

- Partnerships and collaborative projects,
- Actionable insights,
- Dissemination.

### 2.1. Partnerships and projects: collaboration with the world of practice

Partnerships and collaboration with the world of practice need to draw on and are normally inspired by academic research to create unique value for partners. Equally, these partnerships and collaborations inspire academic research by helping to define and adapt research questions for relevance and validity, or by providing access to research data. Partnerships and collaborations also offer insights that reveal new problems that can prompt original research.

### 2.2. Actionable insights

Actionable insights are a key component of research relevance and a close companion to effective dissemination. They articulate the organisational and societal relevance of business school research. These insights provide evidence of how a business school's research relates

to the current and future challenges of its stakeholders, through a growing number of channels, including commercialisation, intellectual property, and consultancy. Actionable insights capture the direct translation of business school research into practice-oriented knowledge with a high degree of relevance for a school's stakeholders.

### 2.3. Dissemination

Broad and inclusive dissemination of the knowledge created by the school, beyond academic publications and increasingly through digital channels, is a valid indicator of impact on business school stakeholders. This wider dissemination brings newly created insights to a population that is unlikely to be able to access and interpret academic publications, and provides an opportunity for impact that surpasses the traditional channels of knowledge dissemination and potential innovation.

Such dissemination of research underpins the organisational and societal relevance of business schools and promotes a school as a source of thought leadership. Complementing other activities in the research system of the school, distribution using means other than academic publications allows business schools to be inclusive and transformational on a large scale by sharing ideas that have value and application for their stakeholders.

EQUIS assesses the quality of practice-oriented research by its impact on practitioners; however, there are fewer universally accepted indicators of practice-oriented research than the commonly used indicators for academic research. This impact can be guided by each of the three domains described above, including, for example, the number and scale of collaborative projects, research grants, the number of white papers and policy reviews, number of trade publications, patents, IP licenses and related funding, handbooks, and books produced for practice or the wider community, start-up and scale-up companies.

In terms of practice-oriented dissemination, participation in industry or government conferences, colloquia, congresses, and briefings can serve as indicators of impact. Metrics include contemporary measures of media reach including digital and print.

Evidence of impact on practice can also be demonstrated through contributions to policy and legislation that create public good by addressing economic, technological, social or environmental challenges. Relevant prizes, awards and honours from the world of practice are additional indicators of the impact of a school's work, as are funding for research centres, doctoral research, commissioned or organisational research sponsorship projects and endowed chairs.

The school should be able to describe its research activities and outputs by clarifying the objectives of its intellectual activity, the intended audience, the target outputs, and the outlets. The mix of activities and outputs and the emphasis between academic and practice-oriented research categories will depend largely on the type of school, the profile of its faculty, the funding available, the markets served and the strategic choices that it has made. Whatever the approach adopted by the school, EQUIS looks for evidence of intellectual activity with measurable outcomes. The key measures of quality for both categories of research are the relevance, rigour and impact of the output for the different stakeholders served by the school.

Schools should have an explicit strategy and policy for research across the range of activities and outputs described above. Accordingly, EQUIS expects schools to demonstrate their productivity across their range of intellectual endeavours and to describe the processes in place for managing and monitoring them, including the allocation of time and resources to support faculty in the pursuit of their stated objectives. Whatever the focus chosen by individual schools, intellectual engagement is seen as essential to keeping abreast of current developments in their key disciplines.

In most schools, the overall research effort requires planned direction and support, including incentive systems, rewards, targeted specialisations, dedicated research centres, and encouragement of collaborative research.

EQUIS seeks a balance between academic and practice-oriented research considering the specific positioning and strategy of the school. In all cases however, schools should be committed to knowledge creation as the foundation of quality in higher education.

## The Assessment Criteria

### THE KEY AREAS ARE:

- **A** Research strategy
- **B** Research activities
  - Academic research
  - Practice-oriented research
- **C** Research management
- **D** International features of research
- **E** Ethics, responsibility & sustainability

## A Research strategy

- Describe the school's overall research strategy and policy. Explain how the research agenda contributes to the strategic objectives of the school.
  - Is there a clear research strategy and plan that identifies strengths and weaknesses and articulates the current and intended research positioning of the school?
  - Describe the ways in which research has contributed to the accumulation of distinctive expertise within the school.
  - What are the principal types of research conducted by the school?
  - What does the school consider to be its competitive performance in terms of research, nationally and internationally?
  - How are content and mix of priorities established within the research strategy of the school?
  - What are the plans for future development of the school's research?
  - Describe any nationally organised research assessment schemes, such as the ERA in Australia or the REF in the UK.
  - Are resources aligned with key outcomes?

## B Research activities

- Summarise the research conducted by the core faculty over the past five years.
  - What strengths and weaknesses emerge from this data?
  - What have been the significant trends during this five-year period? In what areas has progress been made? In what areas has output or its quality declined?
  - What proportion of the core faculty can be considered active in research and intellectual activity?
- Describe the research activities of the non-core faculty to the extent that they contribute to the quality of the school's profile and to its ability to serve its chosen markets.
- Does the school's research strategy and activity consider the increasing digital impact on research, business and society?

### Academic research

- Describe the research disciplines or areas of the school.
- What are the methods used to assess the quality of the school's academic research output?
- What is the relative emphasis given to recommendations for academic research assessment such as those proposed by DORA or CoARA, for example?

- What is the relative emphasis given to citation indices (e.g., NCI, FWCI) or journal guides (e.g., AJG, ABDC list, FT 50 list, UTD journal list)?
- Describe the quantity and quality of academic research using the school's assessment methods.
- Describe the school's activities related to external funding applications for academic research projects.
- Describe external research income and funding for national and international academic research projects.
- How have the level and source(s) of external funding for academic research projects changed over the last five years? Describe the extent of faculty involvement in editorships, conference chairing, leadership roles in learned societies or scientific associations.

### Practice-oriented research

- Describe any research activities that relate to global challenges or other topics of global impact.
- Describe any research activities run in collaboration with the world of practice (e.g., companies, policy organisations, not-for-profit organisations or entrepreneurs).
- Describe research activities that are supported by these groups.
- Indicate the type of support provided (e.g., financial resources, such as matching funds, financing research centres or doctoral research, or other resources, such as distinctive spaces, and interactions for knowledge exchange).
- Are there any joint research centres of endowed chairs?
- Is there any direct input from the world of practice into the work of the school's research centres?
- How, if at all, does consultancy contribute to the school's knowledge exchange?
- Are practitioners involved in the research outputs of the school (e.g., joint articles, reports, seminars, webinars, commercialisations, digital media contributions, start-ups, incubators & accelerators)?
- What is the number and quality of white papers and policy reviews, trade publications, patents, IP licenses, handbooks, and books produced for practice or the broader community?
- Provide factual data on the school's involvement in industry, policy or governmental conferences, colloquia, congresses, briefings, and invited speeches.
- What use does the school make of digital, social and print media in its wider dissemination of practice-oriented research findings and what evidence is there of target audience engagement with these efforts?
- What evidence exists of the school's impact on practice (e.g., demonstrated contributions to policy and legislation)?
- Are there any joint research centres?
- Are there endowed chairs, prizes or awards from practice or policy organisations

## C Research management

- Describe how research is organised within the school.
  - Is there a dean or director of research?
  - Is there a research or scientific committee?
  - Are there self-standing research centres or institutes within the school?
  - To what extent is the research agenda managed?
- Describe how research is supported in the school.
  - Describe how research activity is integrated into the workload of individual faculty members.
  - What is the link between the faculty developmental budget and research policy?
  - Explain how research is internally funded, if at all (e.g., budgetary allocations, research incentives, sabbatical leave, faculty development initiatives).
  - How does the school support those faculty applying for external funding?
  - Are there any further ways in which the school supports research activities of its faculty (other than those listed above)?
- Describe the processes for monitoring and evaluating research.
  - What role does research play in the school's recruitment, promotion and retention of faculty?
  - What methods have been used to attract key research staff to the school in recent years?
  - What processes are in place for the evaluation of research centres' activities and outputs?

## D International features of research

- Summarise the contribution of the school's research to the implementation of its international strategy.
- Describe the international scope of the research.
- Give details of faculty involvement in cross-border research projects or networks, consortia, and thematic groups.
- Describe the contribution of international academic visitors to enhance the research of the school.
- Describe the involvement of faculty in international research organisations and the extent to which faculty are engaged in international visiting appointments.
- List research topics addressing international challenges or informing policy debates, or influencing practice across different countries.

## E Ethics, responsibility and sustainability

- Describe how the school actively promotes and integrates ERS into its research activities.
- Describe any of the school centres, institutes or research groups addressing ERS issues
- Describe the fundamental principles of research integrity that underpin the research work of the school's faculty. What policies, processes and mechanisms are in place to assure good practice in research activities, publication and dissemination of results?

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

- Numerical data on research outputs over the past five years.
- A table listing funds received from research grants, commissioned research or organisational research sponsorship over the past five years and financial support for endowed chairs, research centres, and doctoral research.
- If appropriate, details of any commercialisation projects resulting from the school's research (e.g., software, frameworks or tools…).

## Documents to be Provided in the Online Document Repository

- Examples of materials published (e.g., articles, books, reports, white papers, IP licences, policy reports)
- Evidence of dissemination via and engagement with social, digital and print media, in English
- Any documents regarding research strategy, policy and processes, in English
- Up to 5 summary examples of the work of research centres, institutes, or collaborative projects, with a maximum of 750 words each, in English
- Membership of the research or scientific committee

## Note

Data on research and publications should only be reported for the core faculty, defined as those members of the faculty employed on a permanent basis and for whom the school is the sole or principal employer. Permanence is indicated by an open-ended contract or by a fixed-term contract of a minimum of 2 years. The publications of part-time staff from other schools, adjunct faculty, visiting professors, or business practitioners should not be included in the narrative.

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

## Key Indicators

- A coherent strategy and plan for research, aligned with the overall strategy of the school.
- Effective processes for delivery of the research strategy.
- The volume of intellectual output from the school as a whole.
- The quality of the production as measured by its academic and practice-oriented dissemination and impact: academic recognition, relevance to and engagement by the school's markets and stakeholders, contribution to business and management policy and practice.
- The percentage of research active faculty.
- Distinctive expertise (e.g., research focus, methods or practice).
- Adequate funding to support the research effort.

Chapter

# 6

# Executive Education

# Chapter 6: Executive Education

## The EQUIS Standard

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

### INTRODUCTION

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

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

The chapter covers the principal areas of the EQUIS framework from the specific perspective of EE: strategic positioning, the programme portfolio, programme design, marketing and corporate relations, services to participants, programme quality, digital integration such as online and blended learning as well as content on digitalisation, faculty and staff, on-campus and digital resources, ethics, responsibility and sustainability. The criteria consider the fact that the education of working adults is different from that of full-time students. The faculty

require an additional set of skills geared to the expectations of a very demanding audience. Programmes, particularly customised programmes, must be designed to integrate both the organisational development objectives of the organisation and the personal development needs of the individual participants. This process requires an ability to understand the structure and strategy of the organisation and to propose appropriate education solutions to the expressed learning objectives. A strong customer orientation is essential.

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

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

Note on the potential exclusion of EE:
If a school has EE activities, even of negligible size, it should always describe them in the Self-Assessment Report using the assessment criteria below.

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

If the EQUIS Committee excluded EE assessment for schools going through an initial accreditation cycle, the school should still summarise the current state of EE activities.

Schools going through a re-accreditation cycle should indicate whether there have been significant changes in their EE activities. In any case, the school should still summarise the state of EE.

## The Assessment Criteria

### THE KEY AREAS ARE:

- A Positioning within the school
- B Product portfolio
- C Programme design
- D Marketing, sales & corporate relations
- E Digital integration
- F Participant management
- G Programme quality & impact
- H Faculty
- I Research
- J Internationalisation
- K Ethics, responsibility & sustainability

## A Positioning within the school

- Explain how EE fits into the school's overall strategy.
  - Can the school show that its EE contributes to its strategic objectives beyond mere income generation?
  - How is EE integrated into management systems?
- Describe the positioning of the EE provision within the school's organisation chart: department responsibility or dedicated centre, division, business unit, subsidiary, etc).
- Indicate the faculty and staff allocated specifically to the running of this activity.
- Describe the onsite facilities and digital tools available for EE programme delivery.
  - Does the school offer a well-designed learning environment with sufficient dedicated facilities to support high quality EE?
  - Does the school dispose of adequate digital tools and skills to deliver effective online or blended programmes?

## B Product portfolio

- Describe the portfolio of programmes and services offered in EE.
  - Type of programmes: open/customised
  - Face-to-face/online/blended
  - Duration: short/long/modular
  - Content: functional, general management, issue-based such as digital transformation, skills workshops, action oriented, etc.
    - In the case of open programmes, how is the range of offerings determined? What process does the school follow to introduce new programmes and remove existing programmes?
    - How often is the programme portfolio renewed?

## C Programme design

- Describe the design process for open programmes.

- Describe the design process for customised programmes.
  - Does the school have faculty and staff skilled in designing customised programmes?
  - How are customer requirements and the respective individual and organisational context diagnosed as part of the design phase?
  - How is the school co-creating customised solutions with their client organisations?
  - Is the school teaming up with other departments or outside partners to broaden its design and delivery capacity?
- Describe the delivery methods used in the school's EE programmes.
  - What is the overall portfolio of learning methodologies and how are these selected and combined to form an impactful programme?
  - How is the learning experience digitalised?
  - How is the school innovating and exploring especially the online learning space?

## D Marketing, sales and corporate relations

- Describe the school's key areas of expertise in EE.
- Evaluate the school's positioning in the national and international market for EE.
  - Who are its main competitors?
  - How strong is its brand image in EE?
- Describe the composition of the school's customer base for EE:
  - Nature of customer organisations: market sector, size, etc.
  - Level of managers: senior executives/middle managers/specialists, technical staff and lower-level managers
  - Local/national/international
- Describe the school's approach to customer relationship management.
  - Does the school have a strong customer service orientation in all aspects of its work?
  - How qualified are the business development and sales staff?
- Describe the school's marketing, sales and corporate relations policy for its EE activities.
  - To what extent are faculty members involved in the marketing and sales of the school's programmes?
  - Does the EE unit have a pricing policy that is consistent with its market positioning and strategic intent?

- Explain how the school distinguishes between customers as organisations and customers as individual participants in its programmes.
  - Is the school able to articulate the role of organisational development in its programmes?

## E Digital integration

- Describe the digital integration in the portfolio of programmes and services.
  - To what extent is digitalisation a pillar of programme content?
  - Are digital delivery methods and the use of digital tools represented in programme design?
  - To what extent are online learning modules offered on a stand-alone basis, to feature in corporate learning management systems?
  - Is digitalisation stimulating research and consulting activities?
  - Is digitalisation leveraged for learning analytics?

## F Participant management

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

## G Programme quality and impact

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

## H Faculty

- Describe the faculty resources available for deployment in EE programmes: core faculty, adjunct faculty, part-time faculty, visiting faculty, etc.
  - What proportion of the core faculty is significantly involved in EE?
  - Does the school use EE as a lever for faculty development, such as refinement of the research agenda, improved connections with practice, informal knowledge dissemination?
  - Does the faculty have a clear understanding of the strategic role of EE within the school's range of activities?
- Evaluate the sufficiency of the current faculty and staff resources, both in number and profile to meet the requirements of EE provision.
  - What proportion of the faculty has relevant professional and commercial experience? What limits to growth are set by the current composition of the faculty and its range of expertise?
  - Does the school extend its reach by teaming up with other departments or external partners?
- Describe the school's process for managing faculty deployment in EE.
  - Is EE integrated into faculty workloads? Is this activity considered on-load or off-load?
  - How is faculty getting prepared for its engagement in EE?
  - Explain the processes for evaluating the contribution of individual faculty involved in EE.
  - Is extra remuneration offered as an incentive to engage in EE?

- Where the school relies on the support of a high proportion of external partners, how is teamwork and a shared culture promoted in this adjunct faculty?

- Is EE regarded as an opportunity to develop faculty in terms of their research agendas and teaching practice and in addition to ground degree programmes in the reality of business practice?

## I Research

- Describe the school's approach towards research and innovation relating to EE.

  - How is the school's research capability transferred into its EE offerings?
  - How do the school's EE activities support its research agenda and improve the relevance of its research production?
  - How rapidly is the school able to transform basic knowledge into applied knowledge for the benefit of its customers?
  - How open are faculty to the application of innovative ideas and frameworks to their work? How is this reflected in its programmes?
  - What are the key areas of innovation?

## J Internationalisation

- Describe the international outreach of the school's EE activity.

  - Does the school market its programmes beyond its borders?
  - How many international clients does it have?
  - Do language skills and international experience figure among the criteria for acceptance onto international programmes?
  - What percentage of the core faculty is competent to collaborate with an international audience?
  - How does the school impart an international experience to participants?
  - Does the school use languages and digital tools strategically to foster cross-border collaboration, attract diverse learners, and support learning opportunities?

## K Ethics, responsibility and sustainability

- Describe how the school integrates ERS into its EE activities.

- Are there activities that specifically address questions of ERS? Describe their orientation and content.
- How does the school measure the impact of its activities in ERS?

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

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

## Documents to be Provided in the Online Document Repository

- Documents on EE strategy, policy and processes, in English
- Materials describing the various programmes on offer
- The catalogue of public, open courses offered
- Examples of customised programme syllabi
- Examples of course material delivered to participants

## Note

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

Chapter

# 7

# Resources and Administration

# Chapter 7: Resources and Administration

## The EQUIS Standard

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

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the adequacy of the school's resources together with the associated management systems and staff. The campus facilities should provide an adequate learning environment for the students and participants in the school's various programmes. The EQUIS assessment of adequacy will consider the fact that the requirements for undergraduate students are quite different from those for an MBA cohort or for executive education participants. The basic principle is that both the campus and digital facilities in terms of auditoriums, classrooms, breakout rooms, social space, etc. should be sufficient to support the pedagogical approach in each programme. It is usually the case that MBA programmes and executive education activities will require dedicated facilities.

The school should be equipped with documentation services providing access to books, periodicals and electronic databases backed up by the appropriate information systems. It is expected that the school will have installed a computer-based intranet platform for digital learning and internal and external communication and will set up a support service for students and faculty. Appropriate office space and research facilities should be provided for the faculty in support of their various roles within the school.

EQUIS also reviews the sufficiency of the school's financial performance and the supporting budgetary and financial management systems. An essential criterion here is the financial viability of the school and the adequacy of its resources in line with its strategic ambitions. The school should also demonstrate that its management accounting and reporting processes contribute to operational effectiveness by providing transparent information about revenues, costs and contribution of each programme or activity. Viable business school operations require that financial as well as non-financial risks be appropriately managed. The school should explain how it organises its risk management function and should further describe how it identifies, assesses and mitigates risks.

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

## The Assessment Criteria

### THE KEY AREAS ARE:

- A On-campus facilities & the learning environment
- B Financial performance
- C Financial management
- D Risk management
- E Information & documentation facilities
- F Computing facilities
- G Marketing & public relations
- H Administrative services and staff
- I Internationalisation
- J Ethics, responsibility & sustainability
- K Connections with practice

## A On-campus facilities and the learning environment

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

## B Financial performance

- Describe the school's financial performance for the past five years as well as the financial plan for the next three years, including the current budgeting year. The information should be sufficiently disaggregated so that the impact of the school's key activities on financial outcomes and projections can be understood.
  - Present a summary of the consolidated income statement and consolidated cash flow statement for the school, if available, for the past five years as well as projections for the next three years.
  - Present a summary of the school's financial assets and liabilities for the past five years as well as projections for the next three years, if applicable.
  - Are there any agreements (such as endowments, debts) which could affect the availability of financial resources?
  - Present corresponding data for the parent institution if its financial performance may significantly impact the school's financial viability during the next three years.

- Describe the school's investment plan for the next three years, including the current budgeting year.
  - What are the school's main investment activities and how are they aligned with its strategic plan?
  - Summarise the projected funding needs as well as the targeted funding resources.
- Describe the other key assumptions underpinning the school's financial plan for the next three years.
- Describe the extent to which the school can cope with financial performance shortfalls like liquidity reserves or funding commitment by the parent institution.

## C Financial management

- Describe the school's financial autonomy.
  - What types of autonomy does the school have with respect to the use of funds?
  - What autonomy does the school have for generating additional sources of funding? How are they currently utilised?
  - What proportion of the surpluses generated by the school's are available for investment within the school?
  - If the school generates losses, how is this handled?
  - What are the rules and regulations limiting the school's financial autonomy?
- Describe the financial budgeting process applied by the school.
  - Explain the process of compiling the annual budget as well as its approval.
  - How does the school monitor its budget and how does it manage budget over-runs?
  - How does the school ensure that the budget is internally consistent between revenue and cost projections?
  - How is the budgeting system linked to the school's strategic plan?
  - How is the school's budget integrated into the budgeting system of the wider university or parent institution, if applicable?
- Describe the school's internal financial control and reporting systems.
  - What key performance indicators does the school use to track financial performance? Present appropriate evidence for the past five years as well as projections for the next three years, including the current year.
  - How is financial performance reported to the school's stakeholders?
  - How much budgetary responsibility is devolved to the school's sub-units, such as programme management teams or departments?

## D Risk management

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

## E Information and documentation facilities

- Describe the documentation services provided on site: documentation centre, library, databases, research facilities, etc.
- Identify any special relationships with external libraries, including that of the parent institution/university, and research institutions.
  - What are the opening hours and access to library and research facilities?
  - How extensive are the learning and research resources provided by the school to students and faculty?
  - What special provision demanded by the international dimension of the school's activities is provided by the library and research facilities?
  - How does the school evaluate the support provided to individuals by these facilities? What evidence is there that student feedback has been used to develop facilities?
- Describe the contribution of the documentation services to the internationalisation of the school, such as books and periodicals in other languages, international databases).

## F Computing facilities

- Describe the facilities available: hardware, software, intranet, learning management systems, open-access computer rooms, support services, user induction, training.

- Are the computing facilities, whether on campus, outsourced or virtual, adequate and are participants provided with adequate access outside normal working hours?
- What is the contribution of computing facilities and associated software to individual programme objectives? What specific knowledge, skills and qualities are developed using information technology and how do these match programme objectives?
- What learning management systems are available and how are they used by faculty members in programme delivery?

## G Marketing strategy

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

## H Administrative services and staff

- Describe the organisation of the support services, such as finance and accounting, faculty and staff management, buildings and grounds, documentation centre, computer and information services.
  - Does the school have a strategy for management and development, as well as accompanying policies for all staff?
  - Does the school have sufficient staff to provide adequate service to participants and customers?
  - How is the effectiveness of general support and administration facilities evaluated? What improvements to the quality of support have been achieved or are planned for the near future?

## I Internationalisation

- Describe how the school's resources and administrative structures support internationalisation.

- How do the virtual learning environment and digital tools used for learning support the school's international activities and collaborations? As appropriate, cross-reference to Chapter 8 Internationalisation.
- How does the school identify, assess, and mitigate risks related to its international activities (for example partnerships, mobility, and cross-border delivery)?
- How does the marketing strategy support the school's international positioning and international activities?
- How do support services meet the needs of international participants and internationally based or visiting faculty? How does the school develop staff competences required to support the school's international activities (including intercultural competences where relevant)?
- Does the school have an adequately staffed international office?

## J Ethics, responsibility and sustainability

- Describe how the school integrates ERS into its infrastructure planning and management, such as waste or energy management.
- Describe how the school integrates ERS into its operations, such as purchasing or transportation.
- Describe how the school integrates ERS into its administration, such as general staff management policies or workforce diversity and well-being.
- Describe how the school integrates ERS into staff training and development.

## K Connections with practice

- Describe the nature and extent of academic and non-academic staff that support the school's strategy for engagement with practice. What has changed since the last Peer Review Visit, or, in the case of an initial accreditation, in the last three years?
- Describe the extent and nature of non-staff expenditure that support the school's strategy for engagement with practice. What has changed since the last Peer Review Visit, or, in the case of an initial accreditation, in the last three years?

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

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

  Note: If your school has filled out Table 10 in the accompanying SAR Datasheet completely, it is sufficient to insert a reference here: "Please, see Table 10 in the datasheet for this information."

## Documents to be Provided in the Online Document Repository

- Information distributed to students explaining the documentation facilities and services available
- Strategy and policies for management and development of staff, such as a faculty/staff handbook, new employees' induction pack, promotion process and criteria
- The school's risk management guidelines
- Marketing strategy/plan

## Note

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

Chapter

# 8

# Internationalisation

# Chapter 8: Internationalisation

## The EQUIS Standard

The school should have a clearly defined purpose for internationalisation embedded within its overall strategy and supported by appropriate policies, governance mechanisms and resources. Internationalisation should be evident across the school's programmes, research, faculty and student body, professional services and external partnerships, enabling learners to develop global awareness and engagement.

The school should maintain purposeful academic and business-related connections beyond its home country and endeavour to attract and support individuals with international backgrounds and experience, as well as promote meaningful interaction and intercultural development. The school should also draw on new technologies and innovative approaches, where relevant, to enhance its international reach and its intercultural competences.

## INTRODUCTION

Internationalisation is one of the transversal dimensions of the EQUIS framework and a defining characteristic of schools holding EQUIS accreditation. Internationalisation is understood as a multidimensional endeavour that enhances the quality and relevance of education, strengthens the scope and impact of research and supports meaningful engagement with organisations and networks beyond the school's home country. Schools are encouraged to adopt approaches - whether through new forms of collaboration, mobility, programme design, new technologies or other innovative practices - that advance their international purpose and enrich the experience of students, faculty and staff.

While schools operate in very different national and political environments, internationalisation should serve to foster international connectedness, enrich learning through diverse perspectives and prepare graduates to work and manage responsibly in international settings. Schools are encouraged to reflect on how their international context has evolved in recent years and to explain how these developments have shaped the purpose, ambition and implementation of their international activities. The standard requires schools to demonstrate that internationalisation is integrated into their strategic priorities, and that schools provide meaningful opportunities for international engagement.

Internationalisation within EQUIS is structured around four overarching areas, **Purpose**, **Context**, **Content** and **Network**, which together provide a comprehensive view of a school's international profile. The chapter examines how these areas are reflected in the school's strategy, governance, programmes, research, partnerships and community.

## 1. Purpose

The standard requires that schools describe the purpose of internationalisation within the school's overall strategy, together with an indication of how the school assesses whether the purpose is fulfilled.

The EQUIS standard acknowledges that the purpose of schools' internationalisation may vary, and may include the developing an international mindset, fostering intercultural learning, recognising and valuing diversity, as well as preparing future professionals to work responsibly in multicultural and internationally-connected environments. Whatever the purpose, or purposes, they will be manifested in the articulation of a formalised international strategy, encompassing the integration of learning, research, associated operations and relevant KPIs. The strategy will be sustained by appropriate governance structures and supported by dedicated resources to encourage the realisation of purpose. These are described more in the next sections.

### 1.1. Articulated formalised strategy

It is important to describe the school's internationalisation strategy put in place to pursue the purpose of its internationalisation. EQUIS acknowledges that schools may pursue different strategic objectives in internationalisation. Such objectives should be contextualised, recognising that institutional and national circumstances influence the form internationalisation takes in schools, but should always be guided by strategic intent and academic purpose.

EQUIS considers that an internationalisation strategy should articulate a clear and coherent purpose that aligns with its ambition. As noted above, the purposes that drive schools' internationalisation vary, however, in their articulation of international strategy, schools should demonstrate how they equip graduates to lead and manage across borders with an awareness of the economic, ethical, and societal implications of their actions.

Internationalisation strategies may outline how international activity supports the school's economic sustainability and contributes to broader societal impact. This can include strengthening the revenues and growth of the school, or advancing initiatives that enhance the economic development, health, and well-being of the regional and broader communities. Together, these should reflect a purposeful approach to the school's international activities and EQUIS encourages the school to report on them, paying attention also to the relative benefits achieved in relation to the environmental impact thereof.

Alongside the formalised strategy, EQUIS requires schools to describe their distinctive and specific KPIs for their internationalisation strategy.

### 1.2. Governance structures

EQUIS considers that a school with commitment to internationalisation in its strategies will have appropriate mechanisms and processes to guide and oversee its efforts. These will include international members in the governance and advisory systems, which EQUIS requires a school to report.

### 1.3. Resources and professional staff

That the school should have sufficient resources to support the implementation of strategic initiatives is recognised by EQUIS. This includes professional staff with intercultural knowledge and competences required to meet all student and faculty needs. Equally salient are the financial resources made available to support student, staff and faculty mobility. EQUIS expects the school to describe its academic leadership capacity for internationalisation and associated management structures.

## 2. Context

### 2.1. Location

The possibilities and scope of a school's internationalisation are inevitably shaped by its geographic location and the conditions of its operating environment. Constraints on mobility for students and faculty, geopolitical tensions that limit collaboration or presence in certain regions, institutional contexts, and local policies or expectations can all influence the design and implementation of international initiatives. The size of a country, its level of connectivity, and its degree of remoteness and legal restrictions may further affect the range of feasible partnerships, mobility opportunities, and global engagement activities, including graduate placement. EQUIS expects, therefore, that the school demonstrates how its location-specific realities inform its choices, priorities, and factors affecting the practical realisation of its international ambitions.

Some schools may set up operations abroad. These may be in the form of wholly owned satellite campuses where a school offers its degree programmes, or joint ventures with an international partner to offer its degrees. The objective may in some cases be primarily growth, but these operations should also play a strategic role in internationalising a school by opening new markets in strategic regions and by giving faculty and students the opportunity to learn to manage projects in places abroad. EQUIS asks schools to evidence how the activities abroad maintain the quality standards of the home campus and enhance intercultural learning.

### 2.2. Faculty

The international profile of the faculty is an important dimension of a school's international orientation. EQUIS expects that a school's faculty profile will qualify it to operate in the international arena. This is not measured only by the nationality mix of the faculty, but also by the international qualifications of the faculty members, by their intercultural and linguistic skills, and by their demonstrated ability to teach international audiences.

These aspects can be illustrated effectively through the extent of faculty study and research experience outside the school's home country, and any international industrial, commercial, or visiting academic engagements that contribute to their international outlook. The school is required to describe these, together with the mechanisms through which it recruits international faculty. EQUIS further notes that permanent appointments and visiting positions often involve distinct processes, criteria, and objectives. In addition, the use of international visiting professors and adjuncts, whether on campus or engaged virtually, can further strengthen the intercultural character of the classroom and should be reported.

To ensure coherence and quality, schools should demonstrate how visiting and adjunct faculty are integrated into the institution's norms, academic expectations, and pedagogical standards, as well as how their performance and contribution to the learning experience are monitored. Together, these elements reflect a culturally diverse and internationally experienced faculty body that broadens perspectives, enriches learning, and fosters a more interculturally attuned academic environment.

### 2.3. Students

The profile of the student body is a key feature of a school's international direction and should be conveyed through the diversity of nationalities and cultures represented, the international experiences students bring, and the mobility opportunities available to them. Further, important cultural diversities may be reported here as they also add to the rich varieties of perspectives on business and management education. In addition, EQUIS encourages schools to outline the different channels through which they attract international students, recognising that degree-seeking, exchange, and short-term participants often follow distinct recruitment paths. A culturally diverse cohort, whether present on campus or engaging virtually, enriches learning by introducing a wide range of perspectives on business practice and global issues.

A focal purpose of an international mix of students is to prepare all learners to work and manage in a global environment or with the global context in mind. EQUIS requires schools to demonstrate how the international mix of learners contributes meaningfully to their intercultural development and global awareness. Schools are expected to show how they encourage academic and social interaction between international and home students. Schools should also report if and how they support students to experience other national contexts through study or work abroad.

With regard to incoming students, be they exchange or enrolled, it is important that schools demonstrate how they are integrated into the school's norms and expectations, and how their progress and engagement are monitored.

## 3. Content

A deeper understanding of internationalisation can result from an assessment of how a school has adapted the content of its education and research to an increasingly globalised and digitalised managerial world.

### 3.1. Educational framework (programme portfolio and other educational offerings)

Educational frameworks that embed international perspectives across curricula demonstrate a school's commitment to fostering genuine intercultural understanding. EQUIS recognises that international content should be evident across all programme types: bachelor, pre- and post-experience master's, MBA, executive education and new forms of learning such as micro-credentials and stackable modules; schools are encouraged to report systematically across all exemplars. The central aim is to ensure that learners develop the knowledge and skills required for management in an interdependent international environment, supported by initiatives such as collaborative online learning, joint virtual projects, hybrid exchanges, study abroad

opportunities, and the presence of international and exchange students in the classroom. The educational framework may also reflect evolving international activity through joint programmes, cross-border collaboration and the use of technology to deliver internationally oriented online provision.

Schools should articulate the rationale for their approaches, the quality of the learning experience created and the impact on students and the wider academic community. Digitalisation further enables the development of "born-global" programmes designed for international recruitment, which should demonstrate clear international orientation and outreach through physical or virtual mobility. When describing internationalisation within programmes, EQUIS expects schools to comment on the learning value and educational impact rather than relying solely on numerical indicators.

### 3.2. Use of language

While English is the predominant language of internationalisation in higher education, and is used throughout the EQUIS accreditation process, it should not be regarded as the sole means through which a school can demonstrate international reach. Internationalisation can also be effectively pursued through other shared languages that connect multiple countries and regions. Schools may choose to offer programmes in the languages of their target markets to support recruitment and engagement, but this need not always be required for meaningful international activity. EQUIS supports the view that the key issue is the school's ability to use language strategically to foster cross-border collaboration, attract diverse learners, and support opportunities consistent with its international purpose and strategy.

### 3.3. Research

The EQUIS standard acknowledges the significant and multifaceted role research plays in demonstrating a school's internationalisation. EQUIS requires schools to highlight the international scope of their research outputs, including publications in globally recognised journals, contributions to international conferences, and participation in cross-border research networks, consortia, or thematic groups. The relevance and reach of the school's research can illustrate the school's contribution to knowledge creation beyond its national context. EQUIS recognises that this can be achieved through various means including, addressing global challenges, informing international policy debates, or influencing practice across different countries. The faculty's ability to engage in research in international research groups, be supported by international research grants, and achieve an international impact will also be significant evidence of research internationalisation. International recognition of the school's scholars, such as citations, awards, editorial responsibilities, or leadership roles in global academic bodies, also reinforces the school's standing in the worldwide research community.

In addition, the mobility of scholars provides visible evidence of international engagement. The hosting of visiting international researchers enhances intellectual exchange and brings global perspectives into the school's academic environment, whilst the demand for the school's own faculty to contribute abroad demonstrates the value placed on their expertise internationally. Schools may also engage in joint doctoral programmes, cross-border supervision arrangements, or internationally funded research projects, further strengthening their global academic presence.

## 4. Network

In addition to internal resources, EQUIS expects schools to evidence the extent to which they have developed international networks to support their internationalisation strategy and positioning.

### 4.1. International alliances and business partnerships

EQUIS encourages schools to demonstrate clear and purposeful connections beyond their home country that advance their internationalisation strategy and academic mission. This includes international academic partnerships and alliances, as well as connections to the international world of practice, maintaining connections beyond the frontiers of its home environment. These can take many forms, including student recruitment channels, research partnerships, internship destinations, executive education provision, alumni relations, sources of funding.

Schools should describe their international academic partnerships and alliances and the related strategy and criteria used to establish, prioritise and review them (e.g., academic fit, complementarity, quality assurance expectations and mutual benefit), including the nature of relationships such as student exchange, joint programmes, collaborative delivery and research collaboration.

Schools should explicitly articulate how they engage with organisations and professional communities based outside their primary geographic location. Schools are expected to show evidence of executive education activities (where they exist) delivered to clients abroad, as well as to internationally-oriented organisations headquartered domestically. They should also indicate the extent to which their graduates are recruited by international employers to work outside the school's home country. In addition, schools should explain how digitalisation strengthens their ability to connect with practice globally, facilitating collaboration, outreach, and professional engagement beyond national borders.

Schools are also encouraged to demonstrate active participation in international networks and communities that support quality improvement and collegiate development, including within the EFMD community.

EQUIS recognises that internationalisation can be significantly strengthened through the engagement of a wide range of external partners operating in the global arena. International academic recruitment agencies can extend the school's reach into new markets and support the attraction of diverse student cohorts. Corporate recruitment officers and multinational employers contribute by offering internships, projects, and career pathways that enhance the school's global relevance and employability outcomes. Executive education clients based abroad or with international operations can provide valuable platforms for delivering programmes with global impact and for building long-term institutional relationships.

### 4.2. Alumni

International alumni networks play an important role in underpinning and sustaining a school's internationalisation efforts and EQUIS encourages schools to report on their activities in this

regard. Alumni based around the world can support student and faculty mobility, contribute to international career development, and strengthen the school's visibility in key markets. Their involvement may include mentoring students, facilitating internships or project opportunities, supporting executive education outreach, or contributing to international advisory boards. Active engagement with alumni abroad also helps maintain long-term relationships that can lead to partnerships, recruitment pipelines, and wider institutional influence and recognition. By leveraging the experience, networks, and goodwill of its international graduates, a school can extend its reach, reinforce its global identity, and enhance the resources available to pursue its international objectives.

The following table should be used to detail the international alumni collaborations. List up to 25 prominent alumni and describe their involvement in school activities. An alumnus may be involved in several Interaction Groups (faculty, undergraduate, postgraduate or doctoral students), the school's management (school management or recruitment team, etc.) or in various Types of Interaction (teaching, advising, mentoring, providing learning materials etc).

| Alumnus Name | Location Organisational | Organisational Affiliation | Interaction Group | Type of Interaction |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

### 4.3. International networks for societal impact

EQUIS recognises that beyond its core academic programmes, a school may engage in international foundations, project networks or international thematic initiatives that address global societal challenges as a way of reinforcing its international presence. Such activities may include supporting multi-country efforts in global responsible leadership, equality in the workplace, women's leadership and entrepreneurship, or youth entrepreneurship, areas where schools can help build capacity, stimulate innovation and strengthen community resilience across borders. These initiatives often mobilise partnerships and resources from multiple countries, enabling the school to contribute meaningfully to issues of international public good.

By demonstrating involvement in projects beyond academic delivery and applying expertise to global challenges, the school can further its role as an active global actor and deepens the international dimension of its overall strategy.

## The Assessment Criteria

- Describe the school's international purpose, strategy, and resources allocated to internationalisation.
  - Does the school have a clear purpose for internationalisation?

- Does the school have a formalised international strategy, clarifying its ambition and goals? Are there defined KPIs to monitor the international strategy implementation?
- How is the international dimension/perspective integrated in the school's governance?
- Does the school have an international advisory board?
- What resources are specifically allocated to the management of the school's international activities? Does the school have an adequately resourced international office?

- Summarise the school context, including location of its activities, in addition to faculty and student diversity profiles.

  - How do location-specific realities inform choices, priorities, and factors affecting the practical realisation of the school international ambition
  - Can the school summarise its international activities outside its home country: exchange students abroad, faculty mobility, joint programmes, off-campus operations, etc.?
  - What evidence is there to show the faculty's international qualifications, inter-cultural and linguistic skills and demonstrated ability to teach international audiences?
  - How are processes of recruitment and deployment of international visiting or adjunct faculty designed?
  - How does the school foster meaningful engagement among participants from many cultures in the classroom (virtual or physical)?
  - How does the school leverage the opportunities of virtual mobility for its students and faculty?

- Describe the international content of the school's academic activities.

  - How does the school ensure that the international mix of learners, learning materials and experiences contribute meaningfully to intercultural development and an international mindset?
  - Does the school offer programmes, on site or online, that are specifically oriented to the international market?
  - How does the school impart an international experience to participants, including virtual student exchanges through online collaborative projects, online classes, joint online seminars, and so on?
  - What initiatives promote meaningful interaction and intercultural development?
  - How does the school use languages strategically to foster cross-border collaboration, attract diverse learners, and support opportunities consistent with its international purpose and strategy
  - Describe the international dimensions of the school's research activity (scope of research outputs; publications in globally-recognised journals; participation in cross-border research networks, consortia, and thematic groups; addressing global challenges informing policy debates; or influencing practice across different countries). As appropriate, cross-reference Chapter 5 on Research.

- Describe the school's international networks.

  - Describe the school's network of international academic relations. How are international alliances and partnerships established? What are the criteria for the selection of organisations targeted for special relationships?

- Does the school explicitly address connections and engagement with the world of practice that are based outside the primary geographic location of the school?
- Does the school engage in executive education with clients outside its home country and with international clients headquartered domestically?
- To what extent are its graduates recruited by international organisations to work outside the school's home country?
- List key relationships with international organisations. How does the school use membership of international organisations to support its own quality improvement processes?
- How does the school support, manage and make use of its alumni internationally?
- Number of international foundations, project networks or international thematic initiatives that address global societal challenges.

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

- Short narrative explaining how the school's international context has changed in the past five years, and how this affects its international strategy.
- List of international academic partners showing the nature of the relationship, such as student exchanges, research collaboration, joint programmes, course or programme delivery.
- The chapter on Internationalisation should include cross-references to statistical tables included in other chapters, notably as regards students, faculty and research.

## Documents to be Provided in the Online Document Repository

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

## Key Indicators

- Purpose of Internationalisation:
  - An articulated, formalised internationalisation strategy aligned with the overall strategy of the school, describing the purpose of internationalisation, its plans and the KPIs to monitor the execution.

- Amount of financial and human resources allocated to the internationalisation of the school.
- Number of members of the governance and advisory structure of the school non-nationals or with evident international experience.

- The international context of the school:

  - Distribution of the academic activity (core faculty and students) across the different international campuses of the school, if applicable.
  - The recruitment of non-nationals to the faculty and those with international qualifications and professional experience.
  - The ability of faculty to teach in languages that support the internationalisation of the school.
  - The involvement of international visiting professors or adjuncts, on-campus or virtually.
  - The opportunities for faculty to serve as visiting professors abroad, on-campus or virtually.
  - The recruitment of students from and with experience of other countries.

- International content in the school's academic activities:

  - Teaching focused on global business environments.
  - International case studies and learning materials.
  - Courses taught in languages that support the internationalisation of the school.
  - The existence of face-to-face or virtual exchange programmes to provide a two-way flow of students.
  - A portfolio of face-to-face and virtual experiences in the classroom that bring together students from different countries.
  - The provision of internships or project work across borders, including online collaborative projects.
  - Courses jointly designed and taught with partner schools abroad, including online courses.
  - Internships and study abroad as an integral part of programmes, encompassing both face-to-face and virtual options.
  - Participation in international conferences.
  - Number of international publications.
  - Number of international research projects and international grants.
  - List of research topics addressing international challenges.

- Participation of the school in international networks:

  - International recruitment of students.
  - International placement of graduates.
  - Involvement of faculty in international networks.
  - Number of alumni network initiatives with international chapters or groups.
  - Alumni abroad mentoring programmes.
  - Participation in international foundations, project networks or international thematic initiatives addressing global societal challenges.

Chapter

# 9

# Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability

# Chapter 9: Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability

## The EQUIS Standard

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

### INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

## The Assessment Criteria

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

- What role do connections and engagement with the world of practice play in the ERS agenda of the school?
- To what extent does the school engage with ERS-related policy and practitioner bodies to support and progress its ERS agenda?
- To what extent does the school embrace an open eco-system and participate in co-creation of knowledge, taking advantage of possibilities offered by digitalised work environments in academia and business?

- Evaluate the key changes in the school's activities regarding ERS that have occurred in the past five years.

- Describe the role of the school in community outreach and public service.

  - What is the school's strategy on the development and management of community relations and public engagement?
  - How does the school manage and coordinate community relations and public engagement activities?
  - What is the school's policy towards faculty and staff involvement in these activities?
  - How does the school monitor, evaluate and communicate its community outreach and public engagement activities?

- Summarise the school's overall contribution to the local, national and international environment, its role in developing the community and in acting as a catalyst for debate and dissemination of knowledge of business practices that support sustainability and protection of the environment.

- Describe how the school monitors the ERS implications and impacts of its internationalisation activities and collaborations, including environmental impacts (for example travel, mobility, international events and cross-border delivery).

- Summarise the school's commitment to the global environmental protection agenda and any steps the school takes to monitor its carbon footprint and to de-carbonise, including the use of digital technologies.

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

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

## Documents to be Provided in the Online Document Repository

All documents should be available in English

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

## Further Guidance on Assessing ERS

An EQUIS-accredited school can demonstrate its ERS commitment by showing an ERS record in four different areas: governance and institutional management, education, research and community engagement, which includes connections with the world of practice.

### 1. Governance and institutional management

An EQUIS school can show that, as an institution, it operates internally and externally as an active agent and promoter of ERS related behaviours. Exemplary institutional behaviours are acknowledged as part of the distinctive trait of the institution.

- The school makes explicit its commitment to the advancement of ERS as part of the vision and mission of an academic institution and links its academic positioning to it.
- The school provides evidence that the commitment to ERS is embedded in the institutional culture expressed by the school's leadership, staff, faculty, students and other stakeholders actively promoting ERS within their respective areas of activity.
- The school provides evidence that it has management structures, reporting and control systems which allow deployment of an ERS strategy across all activities.
- The school is active in supporting national and international networks or formal declarations in support of ERS:
  - The school may be a signatory of the PRME guidelines
  - The school may commit to promoting contextually relevant SDGs
  - The school may collaborate with networks such as GBSN, ABIS or the Aspen Institute whose primary objective is that of advancing sustainability in education.

- The school provides evidence that its internal operations are developed with a clear respect for sustainability and inclusion, examples of which are:
  - The school has a green and carbon footprint policy which is monitored and reported
  - New infrastructures are designed, and other operations are conducted with a clear concern for sustainability
  - Management policies related to staff recruitment and promotions demonstrate advancing inclusion, respect for diversity, prohibition of any discrimination and the well-being of all.
    - The school operates under policies supporting diversity
    - The school provides adequate infrastructure to support specific needs (childcare, disability access, exercise space, etc.)
    - The school has a staff wellness plan.

## 2. Education

Adequate and systematic exposure to themes and experiences regarding ERS can be recognisable in the student and educational related policies and activities of an EQUIS school.

- The school provides evidence that ERS considerations are integrated into the admission criteria.
  - The school has policies to ensure and support a growing diverse and inclusive student body.
- The school demonstrates how ERS is integrated into the design process of the school's educational offerings, curricular content, and assessment of the school's degree programmes.
  - The school ensures that appropriately qualified faculty and external stakeholders participate in programme design
  - The school provides information on full programmes, modules or executive education programmes related to ERS
  - The school provides evidence that educational goals are addressed by showing intended learning outcomes and ERS related proxies which indicate the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- The school shows evidence of extra-curricular and non-curricular educational activities relevant to its educational approach to ERS.
  - The school provides opportunities for service learning as part of the educational experience
  - The school encourages involvement of students or participants in community support activities
  - The school promotes forms of associative behaviour which are relevant to ERS as for example student associations or students participating in international activities.

## 3. Research

An EQUIS school can demonstrate that ERS has a significant place in its research activities.

- The school provides evidence of how ERS is included in its research strategy.
  - The school develops distinct research themes related to ERS
  - The school provides adequate funding for research themes related to ERS
  - The school promotes and rewards multi-disciplinary ERS research work.
- The school provides evidence of research ethics policies and that it formally attends to rules which frame research behaviour according to ethical standards including funding and research methods.
- The school provides evidence that ERS is a relevant topic within its knowledge production subsystem, examples of which are:
  - Specific research groups whose goal is knowledge production in ERS
  - Research groups include ERS as a related topic of interest
  - Policy development with a view to promote ERS considerations.
- The school reports on publications in journals, books, conference proceedings, and professional association publications which specifically promote the advancement of ERS.
- The school provides evidence that individual faculty are active in promoting ERS related research by way of serving in editorial, academic or non-academic boards which are specifically promoting ERS.

## 4. Community engagement

An EQUIS-accredited school may make a difference to the world outside the school, and ERS-related engagement at local, national and international level is a mark of its wider commitment to ERS.

- The school has a "stakeholder map" of communities and entities with which it builds reciprocally beneficial relations to promote ERS.
  - The school relates to NGOs and other community-based organisations as part of its social outreach agenda
  - The school engages its faculty, staff, students and alumni in outreach activities
  - The school proactively collaborates with business organisations that support and promote ERS
  - The school has ERS principles guiding connections with practice.

- The school plays an active role in making ERS matters public.
  - The school hosts debates/discussions and encourages faculty and staff to participate in all media formats (newspapers, TV, social media) on matters related to ERS, such as climate change, corruption, artificial intelligence, responsible investment
  - Individual staff members are encouraged to accept public service positions, such as members of national committees, non-executive directorships, education governing bodies.

Chapter

# 10

## Connections with Practice

# Chapter 10: Connections with Practice

## The EQUIS Standard

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

### THE STRATEGY SHOULD ARTICULATE THE FOLLOWING:

- How the school's work and activities develop student understanding of the practice and impact of business and management through interaction with a range of organisational and societal stakeholders

How the school's work and activities impact organisational and societal stakeholders

- The ways in which the world of practice impacts on the school's academic activities, in both education and research

- The developments in work and activities that deliver engagement, connectivity and impact and future strategy to enhance these further

- The role of connections with practice in the school's efforts to internationalise and take forward its ERS agenda.

## INTRODUCTION

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

As a 'transversal' element of the EQUIS system, along with internationalisation, and ERS, connections with practice are not only to be described in one separate chapter. It is important that throughout previous chapters, there is some integrated discussion of the way in which connectivity and engagement impacts on the school and its work, in addition to how the school's work impacts on its chosen connections. In each of the chapters in this document, items relating to these connections are included in the assessment criteria. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to place these different perspectives, programmes, students, research, etc. into an organised, systematic consideration of how the school is connected to and engaged in the world of practice and to what effect.

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

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

## The Assessment Criteria

- Describe the school's strategy and policies regarding the connections and engagement with and impact on the world of practice.
- Define the major emphasis of this strategy in terms of sectors appropriate for the school, for example, corporates, SMEs, entrepreneurs, the third sector, professional, public and policy or government bodies.
- Do the overall strategic objectives make explicit reference to outcomes in these sectors?
- Describe how the school's connections with practice support its internationalisation purpose and strategy.
- Describe the key processes used to manage the school's relationships with its primary strategic connections.
- How are the processes supported; for example, does the school have an 'external relations' office or department?
- How does the school ensure that its connections and engagement deliver into its programmes? Does the school ensure input from its connections into programme content, structure or delivery?
    - Are future job requirements identified in a timely manner, to underpin programme design, delivery and evaluation?
    - Are digital tools and future skills integrated into programme design?
    - Are practitioners invited as visiting faculty to ground students in the reality of practice?
    - Are teaching materials kept fresh at any time through ongoing relations with practice?
- How do students interact with the school's connections? Describe how this is organised and managed.
- How do faculty interact with the school's connections? Describe how this is organised and managed.
- What is the relationship between research, development and the school's connections and engagement activity? Summarise how research output has an impact on the world of practice and how research agendas are influenced by the school's connections and engagement. Is there any output, such as articles, joint programmes, or start-ups, that have resulted from this type of joint work?
    - Is the world of practice inspiring the research agendas and funding joint research projects within the school?
    - Are research findings communicated to practice beyond scientific journals, where relevant?
    - Does the school monitor the impact of its research on various stakeholders?

- Summarise the flow of funding from the world of practice in the investment and operational budgets.
- Describe the extent and nature of engagement with the major connections in the school.
- Identify the extent to which graduates are recruited by international organisations to work outside the school's home country.
- To what extent does the school enter into partnership with targeted companies and organisations? Are any of these based outside the primary geographic location of the school?
- Summarise the international features of the school's engagement with the world of practice, and explain how these support the school's internationalisation purpose and strategy.
- Describe how the school supports, manages and makes use of its alumni internationally.
- Evaluate the key changes in the engagement activities of the school that have occurred in the past five years.

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

- A list of the school's principal partners indicating the nature of their relationships. The information must be presented in a sufficiently detailed form so that the strength and quality of engagement and interactions can be evaluated.

  Note: If you have listed the school's most important partners from the world of practice – together with their type of organisation, their interaction groups and their types of interaction in the accompanying SAR Datasheet, it is sufficient to insert a reference here: "Please, see section 'Partners from the World of Practice' in the datasheet for this information."

- Details of funding when applicable.

## Documents to be Provided in the Online Document Repository

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

## Further Information and Contacts

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

LINK https://efmdglobal.org/accreditations/business-schools/equis/

Alternatively, you can contact the EQUIS Office:

LINK equis@efmdglobal.org

## EFMD Global

88 Rue Gachard box 3
1050 Brussels, BELGIUM

P +32 2 629 08 10
F +32 2 629 08 11
VAT BE 411 610 491

efmdglobal.org
equis@efmdglobal.org

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