

## **Accreditation Standards**

### *Institutional accreditation of higher education institutions*

This document outlines the accreditation standards that EQAA uses for the institutional accreditation of higher education institutions. The standards are the terms of reference for judging whether a higher education institution qualifies for accreditation by EQAA. Standard 8 is only applicable to higher education institutions that actively undertake (applied) research by themselves or in co-operation with other universities or higher education institutions.

#### Standard 1

##### *Mission and Strategy*

- (1) The higher education institution has a publicly available mission statement, which has been formally adopted.
- (2) The mission statement of the higher education institution appropriately and sufficiently reflects the characteristics of the higher education institution.
- (3) The higher education institution has a comprehensive strategy, which is derived from the mission, and that supports the higher education institution in the implementation of its mission.
- (4) The strategy of the higher education institution provides guidelines for the development of the higher education institution by indicating short, medium and long-term goals and objectives.
- (5) The higher education institution periodically reviews and adjusts its strategy.

#### Standard 2

##### *Quality Assurance*

- (1) The higher education institution assumes responsibility for assuring the quality of its operations. The higher education institution places the focus of its quality assurance activities on the enhancement of quality and the development of a quality culture.
- (2) The higher education institution has a system and strategy of quality assurance in place, which is based on its publicly available quality assurance policy. The policy has been developed with the support of

stakeholders. Stakeholders also have an active role in the quality assurance system.

- (3) The higher education institution has processes for the management and implementation of its quality assurance policy and strategy. The processes are managed with clear responsibilities and implemented through an appropriate structure. The outcomes of these processes are continuously integrated into the operations of the higher education institution, in particular into planning, decision-making and administrative processes.
- (4) The quality assurance system of the higher education institution covers all units and areas of the higher education institution's operations, including teaching and learning, research, engagement with the community, governance, administration and support services. The quality assurance activities provide relevant information and data to support the higher education institution in its management and development.
- (5) The higher education institution periodically reviews its quality assurance system for its effectiveness and impact.
- (6) The higher education institution ensures the involvement of management, academic and other staff and students in the operational processes of its quality assurance system.
- (7) The higher education institution includes external stakeholders in its quality assurance system.
- (8) The higher education institution periodically undergoes external quality assurance by an appropriate body.

### Standard 3

#### *Governance*

- (1) The higher education institution has an effective governance system in place that is in line with its mission and strategy.
- (2) Academic and other staff as well as students are adequately involved in the governance of the higher education institution.
- (3) The higher education institution's governance ensures an appropriate division and distribution of responsibilities and accountabilities.
- (4) The higher education institution ensures the transparency of its decision-making processes.
- (5) External stakeholders are involved in the governance system.

### Standard 4

#### *Learning and Teaching*

- (1) The higher education institution has an effective system in place for the design, approval, monitoring and review of study programmes. This system also ensures that study programmes conform to national regulations, meet the requirements of applicable qualifications

frameworks and are in line with the higher education institution's strategy.

- (2) The university ensures that its study programmes are based on an assessment of the needs and requirements of the labour market and that the study programmes effectively integrate theory and practice, place a focus on employability and are profession related.
- (3) The higher education institution publicly provides information about study programmes, including provisions about credits, learning outcomes, methodology and admission, progression and completion.
- (4) The higher education institution basis its admission policy on clear and consistently applied regulations.
- (5) The higher education institution guarantees the recognition of periods of studies unless substantial differences exist in a fair and timely manner.
- (6) The higher education institution actively supports and encourages student-centred learning.
- (7) The higher education institution ensures that students are provided with adequate learning resources, including adequate facilities, libraries, IT infrastructure and support, and academic guidance. The higher education institution also ensures an appropriate learning environment, in particular through counselling and other support services.
- (8) The higher education institution ensures that students are fairly assessed on the basis of consistently applied and transparent regulations. The higher education institution enforces a policy against plagiarism and other forms of malpractice.
- (9) The award of a qualification is accompanied by appropriate explanatory documents.

#### Standard 5

##### *Community Engagement*

- (1) The higher education institution has defined the community or communities it caters for, assesses their needs and requirements and takes these into consideration for its activities.
- (2) The higher education institution provides adequate public information about its activities, including its study programmes and other learning offers.
- (3) The higher education institution ensures that its activities impact and benefit the relevant community/ies.
- (4) The higher education institution ensures that an appropriate system of contact and exchange with its alumni is in operation.

## Standard 6

### *Staff*

- (1) The higher education institution uses a well-defined system for the recruitment and promotion of its staff. The system places a strong emphasis on appropriate qualifications, competences and skills.
- (2) The higher education institution ensures that an adequate proportion of its teaching staff has practical professional experience.
- (3) The higher education institution offers and encourages the professional development of its staff based on appropriate needs assessment.

## Standard 7

### *Resources*

- (1) The higher education institution has appropriate financial resources to undertake its operations. The financial resources are efficiently managed.
- (2) The higher education institution's budget is appropriate for its mission and adequate to implement the strategic objectives.
- (3) Budgetary procedures should allow for medium-term planning.
- (4) Accounting systems are in line with accepted professional accounting standards.
- (5) The higher education institution ensures risk assessment and external financial auditing.
- (6) The higher education institution has a risk management strategy.

## Standard 8

### *Research*

- (1) The higher education institution has an institutional research policy and strategy. The applicability and/or relatedness to professions is/are an intrinsic part of the research policy and strategy.
- (2) The university ensures that its research activities conform to internationally accepted methodological standards.
- (3) The higher education institution provides adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment for the research activities of staff and students in line with its strategies.
- (4) The higher education institution encourages research collaboration and cooperation across the higher education institution and externally.
- (5) The higher education institution has a policy on intellectual property in place that is consistently applied.
- (6) The higher education institution ensures that the outcomes of research are appropriately integrated into the teaching activities.
- (7) The higher education institution has mechanisms to ensure compliance with ethical standards.

(8) The higher education institution ensures that academic misconduct, including plagiarism, is prevented.