



Agence pour l'Évaluation de  
la Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur

# **AEQES Reference Framework**

## **Compilation and assessment guide**

**22 May 2012**



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# Introduction

## Foreword

The aim of this document is to explain the AEQES assessment reference framework\* as approved by the AGCF (Decree of the French Community) of the .... (Repealing the AGCF of 11 April 2008)

This guide targets both the higher education institutions\* (hereinafter referred to as HEIs) involved in compiling the self-assessment report and the experts mandated by AEQES for conducting the external assessment missions.

To this end, after a contextual introduction and a few general editorial remarks, the text seeks to explain and document the criteria\* established by the Agency and approved by the Government to assess the quality of a study programme\*.

In the foreword, the Agency briefly summarises its missions at the service of quality in higher education: as an independent agency of the public service, AEQES conducts formative assessments based on a permanent dialogue with all stakeholders. The Agency's two main objectives are to support the development of a true quality culture within the HEIs, and give accountability of the quality of higher education.

As far as the concept of quality in higher education is concerned, numerous definitions and typologies exist.

Rather than try to define one notion of quality, Harvey and Green (1993) argued that they could be 'grouped into five discrete but interrelated ways of thinking about quality'. Harvey (2008)<sup>1</sup> provides the following brief overview of the five categories:

- The exceptional view [of quality] sees quality as something special. Traditionally, quality refers to something distinctive and élitist, and, in educational terms is linked to notions of excellence, of 'high quality' unattainable by most.
- Quality as perfection sees quality as a consistent or flawless outcome. In a sense it 'democratises' the notion of quality and if consistency can be achieved then quality can be attained by all.
- Quality as fitness for purpose sees quality in terms of fulfilling a customer's requirements, needs or desires. Theoretically, the customer specifies requirements. In education, fitness for purpose is usually based on the ability of an institution to fulfil its mission or a programme of study to fulfil its aims.
- Quality as value for money sees quality in terms of return on investment. If the same outcome can be achieved at a lower cost, or a better outcome can be achieved at the same cost, then the 'customer' has a quality product or service. The growing tendency for governments to require accountability from higher education reflects a value-for-money approach. Increasingly students require value-for-money for the increasing cost to them of higher education.
- Quality as transformation is a classic notion of quality that sees it in terms of change from one state to another. In educational terms, transformation refers to the enhancement and empowerment of students or the development of new knowledge.

Martin and Stella (2007)<sup>2</sup> distinguish between two conceptualizations of quality in education, one related to 'golden standards' and the other to 'fitness for purpose'.

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey, L., 1995, 'Editorial: The quality agenda', *Quality in Higher Education*, 1(1), pp. 5–12.

<sup>2</sup> Martin, M., & Stella, A. (2007). External quality assurance in higher education: making choices (85). Paris: UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning.

- The first approach assumes that it is possible to define and quantify certain key aspects of higher education quality. In addition, it is often assumed that there are some 'gold standards' towards which institutions should aspire
- The second approach, fitness for purpose, assumes that the many different missions and objectives of different types of higher education imply that it is not possible to define a series of quantifiable criteria or standards. Rather, any criteria must be understood within a specific context

Among all these definitions, AEQES tends towards a conceptualisation of quality promoting the "*fitness for purpose*" approach.

Such conceptualisation implies that the Agency conceives its own external assessment procedures in such a way as to best guarantee the successful achievement of its own missions and objectives.

This approach also guides the implementation of the assessments carried out within the institutions. These have an important contextual dimension, in that the institutions, in the context of the missions assigned to them by law, set themselves the overall and specific objectives of their programmes. The Agency, through its methodology, thus takes into account the diversity and richness of higher education within the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

### **Why this new reference framework, how, by whom?**

The reference list of performance indicators\* established when AEQES was first set up in 2002 provides a broadly-based framework of the fields to be analysed when assessing a study programme: contextual data regarding the institution and its governance, the characteristics of the programme being assessed (its development, management, implementation, etc.), the characteristics of the student cohorts registered for the programme, the human and material resources made available to monitor the quality of the study programme, the local anchorage, research findings, diverse partnerships, mobility; and finally, the conclusions of the self-assessment in the form of a progress report and action plan.

However, this list contains no real assessment criteria or indicators. This gap needs to be filled, both for the institutions and for the experts hired by the Agency. The latter therefore set up a working group, made up of members of the Steering Committee representing various higher education sectors and of experts invited on the basis of their specific skills, especially in the field of quality assurance. The working group also conducted a benchmark of several reference frameworks used for the assessment of higher education in other countries with a view to gleaning best practices.

Finally, the working group suggested to the Steering Committee to ask institutions to participate, on a voluntary basis, in an experimental phase of the new reference framework. A number of experts having already participated in AEQES missions will also be asked to come up with constructive criticism - in the course of a workshop - on the relevance of this new assessment tool.

## Contextual elements

The diagram below shows the three reference frames upon which the AEQES reference framework is built.



On the one hand, **the European Higher Education Area**, the brainchild of a dynamic and voluntary construction of states involved in the Bologna process, constitutes a reference standard of *inspiration*, based on political orientations adopted by the European Ministers in charge of higher education in peculiar reflected in the adoption of the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)"<sup>3</sup> and the European Qualifications Framework. This inspiration basically involves a series of lines of action (the three-cycle degree structure\*, the development of quality assurance systems, the social dimension of higher education, life-long learning in higher education, student mobility, funding, governance processes, etc.) and instruments developed at European level, such as the European Credit Transfer System\* (ECTS), the diploma supplement and the national certification frameworks.

On the other hand, the **legal framework existing in the Belgium's French Community** sets the national legal milestones, providing a set of decrees marking out the overall organisation of higher education in the French Community and its step-by-step integration into the European Higher Education Area (in particular the Bologna Decree of 31 March 2004 and its Appendix V relating to the European

<sup>3</sup> Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) are to be found in Appendix 2

Qualifications Framework)<sup>4</sup>. The legislator has also set up<sup>5</sup> an external quality assessment system for higher education programmes in the French Community, implemented by an independent agency (i.e. AEQES).

Finally the third frame is that derived from the **committees' fields of expertise**. The experts, belonging to one of three profiles (the peer expert, the expert representative of the professional field or the educationalist) cover competences in the following fields: the disciplines being looked at, department and/or institution management, programme management, quality management, higher education teaching methods, evolutions of the professional fields in relation to the assessed curricula\*, the implementation of the Bologna process, etc. This means that the experts hired by the Agency provide added input - through their mutual interaction and in dialogue with the study programmes being assessed - to the quality assessment reference area.

The AEQES reference framework is positioned at the intersection of these three frames.

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<sup>4</sup> Extract from the European Qualifications Framework - Appendix 5

<sup>5</sup> The Decree of 14 November 2002 setting up the Agency for the Assessment of Higher Education (AEQES) organised or subsidised by the French Community

The Decree of 22 February 2008 setting forth a number of measures related to the Agency's organisation and work

## General information on compiling the self-evaluation report

The self-evaluation report (SER) is to be compiled in accordance with the following scheme:

- 1 Succinct presentation of the programme
- 2 Self-assessment of the study programme(s) with regard to the five criteria specified in the AEQES reference framework
- 3 SER appendices, together with a summary list thereof.

The current compilation and assessment guide lists 5 criteria, each containing 2 to 4 dimensions\*. Details of each dimension are to be found in an accompanying frame. Each dimension contains a non-limiting and non-exhaustive list of questions advisable to ask oneself when examining the quality of a study programme.

For the HEIs, these questions are intended to serve as a guide when compiling the self-evaluation report. For the experts, they serve as a framework when reading the self-assessment reports (SAR) and provide input for the meetings with the HEIs.

Not all dimensions and (sub) questions are necessarily relevant for each and every programme in all education sectors. Similarly, the order in which the questions appear is not necessarily meaningful.

For the HEIs, these questions are meant to help them compile the report. The responses they come up with may pertain to the programme description, to the evaluation or to any follow-up action. It is recommended to explicitly make use of these three focuses wherever suitable, though without forgetting that the aim of the exercise is to compile an analytical rather than a descriptive report.

Similarly and in order to facilitate the reading of the self-evaluation reports for the experts, any purely descriptive elements should be included in an appendix (with a detailed list of appendices made available to the reader).

Should the study programmes be offered in conjunction with another HEI (joint programmes\*), additional criteria or dimensions may need to be taken into account<sup>6</sup>.

In order to avoid any differing interpretation of specific terms, a glossary is provided in Appendix 1 of this document in which terms marked with an asterisk (\*) are defined. HEIs are nevertheless requested to add any additional terms and acronyms used in their self-assessment reports to this glossary.

To make sure the report is easily readable, the following rules apply:

- the document should have a total of 19,000 - 20,000 words;
- the size of the summary presentation of the study programme should not be longer than 10% of the document;
- the SER appendices should be submitted in digital format (as a CD-ROM or on a USB stick).

The Agency requests each HEI to submit its SER in pdf format to the AEQES Executive Office (for example using the same medium used for submitting the appendices).

Once finished, the SER is to be validated by the members of the commission responsible for its compilation (ending for example with it being stamped "**read and approved**" by the entity's\* managing body):

- for the universities: the rector and the dean;
- for the Hautes Ecoles: the president-director and the category director;
- for higher art colleges: the director;
- for the adult vocational education institutions: the head of the institution.

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<sup>6</sup>The section on study programmes offered in conjunction with another HEI (joint programmes) is due to be compiled shortly and will be included in this document.



# AEQES Reference Framework

## Draft decree of the Government of the French Community

### First section of the self-evaluation report (SER): summary description of the programme

Data presenting the institution

Data presenting the entity responsible for the assessed programme (faculty, category)

Data on the programme itself

### Second section of the self-evaluation report (SER)

#### Criteria 1: the institution/the entity has defined, implements and keeps up-to-date a policy for maintaining its programme's quality.

*This criterion is explicitly mentioned in the French Community's legislation:*

*Article 9 of the Decree of 31 March 2004: "The higher education institutions are bound to watch over and assure quality in all their missions." The decree of 14 November 2008 reaffirms the inclusion of adult vocational education, stating that "[...] higher adult vocational education shall be included in the quality assurance system. Adult vocational education institutions providing higher education shall ensure quality monitoring and management in all missions at this level of education [...]" (Article 73).*

*The aim of this criterion is to check the existence and effectiveness of a quality assurance policy and associated processes. These need to foresee a role for students and other stakeholders.*

#### Dimension 1.1.: The HEI's governance policy

The HEI has defined a governance policy in line with its missions and values. In this context, it develops and implements an organisation and processes designed to ensure effective governance. Such governance makes it easier to carry out quality assurance between the institutional level and that of the study programme; thereby contributing to the quality of the assessed programme.

#### Dimension 1.2.: Quality management at HEI, entity and programme levels

The HEI / entity develops and implements a quality assurance policy and associated processes at HEI, entity and programme levels. These foresee a role for students and other stakeholders. In doing so, the HEI explicitly undertakes to establish a culture recognising the importance of quality and its management via appropriate processes.

#### Dimension 1.3.: Study programme development, monitoring and periodical review

The HEI / entity develops and implements processes and mechanisms for designing, monitoring and periodically reviewing its study programme. These processes and mechanisms are effective, participatory and contribute to improving the quality of the programme. Programme monitoring takes into account the results of all the quality assessments of the programme.

#### **Dimension 1.4.: Internal information and communication**

The HEI / entity has defined and implements a communication policy and has effective procedures for making information on the assessed programmes available to internal stakeholders.

#### **Criteria 2: the HEI / entity has developed and implements a policy ensuring the relevance of its study programme.**

*The aim of this criterion is to be able to examine to what extent the learning outcomes\* targeted by the programme meet societal requirements (current or foreseeable) with regard to training and personal development. A second aim is to assess how the programme, via its objectives and content, sustains the socio-occupational integration of graduates and/or their integration into a flexible learning path.*

#### **Dimension 2.1.: Assessment of the study programme's relevance**

The HEI / entity develops and implements processes and mechanisms for ensuring that the study programme complies with legal requirements and takes stakeholders' needs and expectations into account. The study programme is thus regularly updated (taking into account business practices, research results, scientific knowledge and techniques, etc.), sustaining the socio-occupational integration of graduates and/or their integration into a flexible learning path.

#### **Dimension 2.2.: External information and communication**

The HEI / entity regularly communicates updated and objective information on the programmes and diplomas offered, taking both quantitative and qualitative aspects into account.

#### **Criteria 3: The HEI / entity has developed and implements a policy for ensuring the internal coherence of its study programme**

*The aim of this criterion is to assess the coherence between the following aspects: the learning outcomes stated in the study programme; the actual programme content; the programme's overall design, the choice and logical sequencing of learning activities or arrangements; the criteria and modalities used in assessing learning outcomes and the time foreseen for achieving the targeted learning outcomes.*

#### **Dimension 3.1. Learning outcomes of the programme**

The HEI / entity selects, formulates and publishes the programme's targeted learning outcomes. These are realistic, suitable and appropriately communicated.

#### **Dimension 3.2.: Programme content, learning activities and arrangements (including internships, projects, end-of-course dissertations, examinations)**

The HEI / entity develops and implements learning arrangements and activities designed to allow students to achieve the specified learning outcomes.

### **Dimension 3.3.: Programme's overall design and time foreseen for achieving the specified learning outcomes**

The study programme is designed and implemented in such a way as to allow students to achieve the specified learning outcomes within a reasonable period of time.

### **Dimension 3.4.: Assessment of the achievement level of the targeted learning outcomes**

The assessment criteria and modalities match with the targeted learning outcomes and are applied systematically and consistently. Moreover, the requirements are clearly formulated and communicated to students in due time.

## **Criteria 4: The HEI / entity has developed and implements a policy for ensuring the efficiency and equity of its study programme**

*The efficiency criterion relates to the extent the objectives of the programme are achieved, given the resources being used. The intention is to check whether the programme produces the expected results, i.e. whether students achieve the targeted learning outcomes at the end of their studies.*

*Via this criterion, the HEI / entity is invited to track a student's progress from the moment he registers for a programme, looking at learning outcomes achievement levels and pass rates. Assessment of a programme's effectiveness relates not only to the graduates characteristics but also to an HEI's ability to promote the success of students admitted to the programme. The criterion also involves checking such effectiveness factors as resource allocation, teaching practices and organisational arrangements implemented in support of the quality of the programme.*

*The equity criterion relates to the arrangements made within the study programme to provide students - whatever their previous academic background, their personal, social or financial situation – with the opportunity to acquire, update and develop throughout their life both the targeted learning outcomes and the professional skills necessary to ensure their employability as well as to promote the pursue of their education, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue.*

### **Dimension 4.1.: Human resources**

The HEI / entity ensures that appropriately trained human resources are available to the programme and adequate to the number of students. The HEI / entity makes available the necessary means to ensure staff quality and skills, with a particular focus on teaching staff.

### **Dimension 4.2.: Material resources**

The HEI / entity ensures that the resources allocated to teaching infrastructures and tools are adequate and suited to achieving the learning outcomes targeted by the programme.

### **Dimension 4.3.: Equity in terms of student reception, progress monitoring and support**

The HEI / entity ensures that the arrangements set up for providing students with guidance, orientation and support in their learning paths are fair, adequate and adapted to the programme's objectives.

#### **Dimension 4.4.: Analysis of the data necessary for monitoring the programme**

The HEI / entity ensures that it gathers, analyses and makes use of the data necessary for monitoring the study programmes and other activities.

**Criteria 5: The HEI / entity has completed the analysis of its programme and has come up with an action plan for continuous improvement.**

#### **Dimension 5.1.: Self-evaluation methodology**

The HEI / entity has carried out a validated self-evaluation of the study programme, in a participatory and in-depth manner.

#### **Dimension 5.2.: SWOT analysis**

The self-evaluation carried out by the HEI / entity involves an analysis identifying both the programme's strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats in its environment.

#### **Dimension 5.3.: Action plan and follow-up**

On the basis of the self-evaluation, the HEI / entity has taken appropriate and carefully thought out decisions. It has drawn up an action plan defining priorities and performance indicators with the aim of continuously improving the quality of its programme. It regularly and systematically checks the quality of its programme.

## Detailed presentation

### I. First section of the self-evaluation report (SER): summary description of the assessed study programme(s)

#### Data presenting the institution

Name of the institution  
Missions (or main mission) of the institution  
Legal status of the institution  
Organisation of the institution (organisation chart)  
Programmes offered by the institution (including vocational training)  
Institution headcount (by staff category - administrative, scientific, lecturers, academic, etc.)

#### Data presenting the entity\* responsible for the assessed study programmes (if different from the HEI: e.g. faculty, category)

Mission  
Organisation of the entity (organisation chart)  
Qualification programmes  
Headcount (by staff category - administrative, scientific, academic, etc.)  
Material and financial resources\*  
Openness and partnerships

#### Data presenting the study programme

Specialisations\* available within the study programme(s)  
Evolution of the student population over at least the last three years correlated to the overall student population within the Wallonia-Brussels Federation)  
Socio-demographic characteristics\* of the student population, their profiles when starting the programme correlated with the overall data within the Wallonia-Brussels Federation  
Presentation of the study programme  
    Information provided to students  
    Presentation in diagram form  
    Modalities of the programme implementation  
Teaching methods\* and specific and/or innovative assessment methods\* of learning outcomes  
Success rate\* by study year over the last three academic years or by training unit\* (EPS) for the last three organisations (where relevant, please provide additional information on the evolution of this rate)  
Number of graduates  
Rate of socio-occupational integration\* of graduates  
Rate of graduates pursuing their studies

## II. Second part of the self-evaluation report (SER): examination of the assessed study programme(s) with regard to their compliance with the AEQES reference framework

According to how the HEI is organized, the SER is to be compiled by the appropriate level (i.e. at the level of the institution or the responsible entity).

The study programme(s) are examined on the basis of the following five criteria: the existence of a quality management policy, the programme's relevance\*, its internal coherence\*, its efficiency\* and equity as well as the establishment of an action plan for continuous improvement.

**Criteria 1: the institution/the entity has defined, implements and keeps up-to-date a policy for maintaining its programme's quality.**

This criterion is explicitly mentioned in the French Community's legislation:

Article 9 of the Decree of 31 March 2004<sup>7</sup>: "The higher education institutions are bound to watch over and assure quality in all their missions." The decree of 14 November 2008 reaffirms the inclusion of adult vocational education, stating that "[...] higher adult vocational education shall be included in the quality assurance system. Adult vocational education institutions providing higher education shall ensure quality monitoring and management in all missions at this level of education [...]" (Article 73).

The aim of this criterion is to check the existence and efficiency of a quality assurance policy and associated processes. These need to foresee a role for students and other stakeholders.

### Dimension 1.1.: The HEI's governance policy

The HEI has defined a governance policy in line with its missions and values. In this context, it develops and implements an organisation and processes designed to ensure effective governance. Such governance makes it easier to carry out quality assurance between the institutional level and that of the study programme; thereby contributing to the quality of the assessed programme.

Description	What are the HEI's / entity's teaching objectives and values?
	What are the HEI's / entity's research objectives and values (where applicable)?
	What are the HEI's / entity's objectives and values regarding community service?
	How are these objectives and values interlinked? What are the priority objectives?
	On which external partnerships does the HEI / entity rely on in order to achieve its objectives? Please provide details.

<sup>7</sup> 31 MARCH 2004 - Decree on higher education, facilitating its integration into the European Higher Education Area and refinancing the universities

	<p><i>What are the roles of the coordination and decision-making bodies? How do they function?</i></p> <p><i>What role do students play in the HEI's governance?</i></p> <p><i>What role do students play in the entity's governance?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>To what extent and in which manner do the various governance modes contribute to the programme's quality?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent are the HEI's objectives and values reflected and articulated in a strategic plan?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>What improvements could be made to governance methods?</i></p>

## Dimension 1.2.: Quality management at HEI, entity and programme levels

The HEI / entity develops and implements a quality assurance policy and associated processes at HEI, entity and programme levels. These foresee a role for students and other stakeholders. In doing so, the HEI explicitly undertakes to establish a culture recognising the importance of quality and its management via appropriate processes.

### 1.2.1. At HEI level

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>How does the HEI define the notion of quality in its study programmes?</i></p> <p><i>What role is played by the HEI's management and other bodies with regard to quality?</i></p> <p><i>Who are the stakeholders and how are they involved in this policy?</i></p> <p><i>What policies does the HEI have with regard to quality management? How are these organised in concrete terms and how are they implemented?</i></p> <p><i>How are these policies communicated to the relevant stakeholders?</i></p> <p><i>How are the quality management systems interlinked?</i></p> <p><i>Which central departments are involved in the process of managing the programme and its quality? How do they intervene / how are they consulted?</i></p> <p><i>How is the effectiveness of key administrative processes and tasks (room management, secretary's office, registration for courses and exams, timetables, etc.) ensured?</i></p> <p><i>Where applicable - to what extent does the HEI take into account other assessments (internal or external)?</i></p> <p><i>How is long-term quality assurance ensured?</i></p> <p><i>How does one ensure that policies and measures are known to stakeholders?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>To what extent does the quality assurance management implemented at HEI level contribute to the quality of the assessed programme?</i></p>

<i>Action</i>	<i>Which improvements could be made to quality management policies and procedures?</i>
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### 1.2.2. At entity / programme level

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>What policy does the entity have with regard to quality management?</i></p> <p><i>How does the internal quality management process function? Which bodies are involved and what are their respective responsibilities and powers?</i></p> <p><i>Which objectives are pursued via the programme's internal quality management process? Are there any priority objectives? What are they and what are the reasons for defining them so?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent are the results of the internal quality management process published? How is the follow-up ensured? By whom?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<i>How do the implemented processes help achieve the stated quality objectives?</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>What should be done by the entity in order to improve the programme's quality management ?</i>

## Dimension 1.3.: Study programme development, monitoring and periodical review

The HEI / entity develops and implements processes and mechanisms for designing, monitoring and periodically reviewing its study programme. These processes and mechanisms are effective, participatory and contribute to improving the quality of the programme. Programme management takes into account the results of all the quality assessments of the programme.

### 1.3.1. Processes for designing, monitoring and reviewing programmes

<p><i>Which bodies / persons are involved and what are their respective responsibilities and powers?</i></p> <p><i>Which factors / actors can trigger an opening / revision of the study programme?</i></p>
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	<p><i>What information / data is used in the internal quality management process? How is it gathered? How is it analysed? How are follow-up decisions taken? How is it used for managing the study programme?</i></p> <p><i>How does one ensure that the process is participatory?</i></p> <p><i>How is the HEI / entity involved in the work done on designing, monitoring and reviewing the study programme?</i></p> <p><i>In the different types of higher education systems where the governing bodies define different requirements such as minimum schedules, teaching files, skill repositories*, etc., what use does the HEI / entity have of its room for autonomy?</i></p> <p><i>How does the HEI / entity communicate its findings and expectations regarding the development, management and review of its study programme to the bodies on which it depends?</i></p> <p><i>How does the HEI make the most of its available teaching autonomy?</i></p>
Assessment	<p><i>What are the main problems encountered in these processes? What remedies are foreseen / have been implemented? Does the HEI / entity display adequate reactivity?</i></p>
Action	<p><i>What needs to be done to improve decision-making procedures and mechanisms?</i></p>

### 1.3.2. Assessment of teaching and the study programme

Description	<p><i>Does a mechanism exist for assessing teaching and programme quality (by peers, students, other stakeholders)? What does it consist of? Who triggers it? Under what conditions?</i></p> <p><i>Is the mechanism for assessing teaching quality based on collective discussion and implementation?</i></p> <p><i>How is follow-up ensured? By whom?</i></p> <p><i>How are problems occurring during the course of the year concerning learning activities tackled?</i></p>
Assessment	<p><i>How does one make sure that the measures adopted in the context of assessing teaching and the programme have the intended effect on the quality of the teaching and the programme?</i></p>
Action	<p><i>What should be done to improve the collective mechanism for teaching and programme quality assessment?</i></p>

### Dimension 1.4.: Internal information and communication

The HEI / entity has defined and implements a communication policy and has effective procedures for making information on the assessed programmes available to internal stakeholders.

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>Which internal stakeholders are targeted by the communication and publishing of information?</i></p> <p><i>What objectives are pursued in communicating and publishing information targeting the programme's stakeholders and how are they defined?</i></p> <p><i>How is communication organised? What channels are used? Who can use them and under which conditions? Are these mechanisms part of the institutional policy?</i></p> <p><i>How do communication means and contents match with the objectives pursued?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>How is the effectiveness of internal communication mechanisms ensured (achievement of objectives)?</i></p> <p><i>What is done to ensure that the communication between different staff categories and students takes place rapidly and to an adequate and suitable manner? When difficulties are encountered, does the entity have available arrangements for resolving them (including organisational measures)?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>What is to be done to improve internal communication mechanisms?</i></p>

**Criteria 2: the HEI / entity has developed and implements a policy ensuring the relevance of its study programme.**

*The aim of this criterion is to be able to examine to what extent the learning outcomes\* targeted by the programme meet societal requirements (current or foreseeable) with regard to training and personal development. A second aim is to assess how the programme, via its objectives and content, sustains the socio-occupational integration of graduates and/or their integration into a flexible learning path.*

**Dimension 2.1.: Assessment of the study programme's relevance**

The HEI / entity develops and implements processes and mechanisms for ensuring that the study programme complies with legal requirements and takes stakeholders' needs and expectations into account. The study programme is thus regularly updated (taking into account business practices, research results, scientific knowledge and techniques, etc.), sustaining the socio-occupational integration of graduates and/or their integration into a flexible learning path.

**2.1.1. Overview of any specific legal framework governing the programme**

<i>Description</i>	<i>Where applicable: does the programme have any specific legal framework? For example: a student selection process.</i>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>To what extent do the stakeholders in the HEI appropriate the legal context of the French Community and the European legal context?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent does the programme meet up to the requirements set forth in the French Community's qualifications framework (especially the descriptors for each cycle)<sup>8</sup>?</i></p> <p><i>In case the programme targets a regulated profession*, to what extent does it meet the legal provisions in force in the French Community, in Belgium or within the European Union (particularly in the context of Directive 2005/36/EC)?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent does the programme lie within the scope of any other reference frameworks?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent do the learning outcomes targeted by the programme meet the general higher education objectives?</i></p>

**2.1.2. Taking into account stakeholders' needs and expectations**

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>Who are - in the view of the HEI / entity - the programme's stakeholders?</i></p> <p><i>Among these, which ones were/are involved in the design, implementation/revision/opening of the programme? How did they participate?</i></p> <p><i>How are former students / business representatives / the arts (for art colleges) involved?</i></p>
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<sup>8</sup> Appendix 3 of the Decree of 31 March 2004.

	<p><i>How are the needs / expectations of the various stakeholders collected?</i></p> <p><i>How are their needs / expectations taken into account (or not)?</i></p> <p><i>How are their opinions on the programme gathered?</i></p> <p><i>How are their opinions taken into account (or not)?</i></p> <p><i>How are the specificities of the various target groups taken into account? How are the developments of their needs / expectations taken into account?</i></p> <p><i>How are these needs and expectations translated into learning objectives?</i></p>
Assessment	<p><i>How does one ensure that the mechanisms for taking stakeholders' needs and expectations into account are relevant?</i></p>
Action	<p><i>What needs to be done to improve the way stakeholders' needs and expectations are taken into account?</i></p>

### 2.1.3. Links between the programme, research and business (where applicable)

#### Links to research

Description	<p><i>What is the entity's research policy? What are the main research topics?</i></p>
Assessment	<p><i>How do learning activities benefit from research results (both research carried out within the HEI and elsewhere)? What measures are taken to ensure that research advances are regularly included in teaching activities, with regard both to methods and results?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent do programme updates take scientific progress into account?</i></p>
Action	<p><i>What needs to be done to ensure - where applicable – that the programme is regularly updated with regard to research results?</i></p>

#### Links to the business world

Description	<p><i>What career prospects does the programme offer? How are they identified? By whom?</i></p>
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<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>How do the programme's specified learning outcomes actually reflect what a graduate should be able to demonstrate at the end of his studies?</i></p> <p><i>How do the learning outcomes fully define the end-of-study profile(s)?</i></p> <p><i>What is done to make sure that the learning outcomes match career opportunities and are regularly updated in line with business developments?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>Where applicable, what needs to be improved to ensure that the programme's learning outcomes match socio-occupational needs?</i></p>

### **Local/regional foothold**

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>Are there any local/regional partnerships developed by the HEI /entity responsible for the programme? What are the objectives of the partnership in relation to the study programme?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>In what sense does the programme respond to local/regional needs?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>What needs to be done to improve the programme's local/regional foothold?</i></p>

#### **2.1.4. Student learning path\* flexibility**

##### **Flexibility within the programme**

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>What mechanisms are available to students allowing them to choose individualised paths within the study programme? What limits are imposed on flexibility?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent are these mechanisms used by students?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>To what extent do the student learning path flexibility mechanisms respond to stakeholders' expectations? Is the degree to which these mechanisms are used satisfactory?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>What needs to be done to allow these student learning path flexibility mechanisms to better respond to stakeholders' expectations?</i></p>

## Recognition of prior learning - RPL

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>What arrangements are available for the recognition of prior learning?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent are these arrangements used by students?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>To what extent do the arrangements for recognising prior learning respond to stakeholders' expectations? Is the degree to which the various arrangements are used satisfactory?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>What needs to be done to allow these arrangements for recognising prior learning to better respond to stakeholders' expectations?</i></p>

## Continuation / resumption of studies

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>What measures are taken to make it easier to continue / resume studies?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>In terms of continuing / resuming studies, what is done to ensure that learning outcomes are appropriate to the type of teaching, programme level (bachelor / master) and to its specific features? Is the degree to which the various measures are used satisfactory?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>What needs to be done to make it easier for a student to continue or resume his studies (IN/OUT)?</i></p>

## International dimension

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>To what extent does the programme have an international dimension?</i></p> <p><i>Which objectives are pursued via the programme's international dimension? How are these defined? By whom?</i></p> <p><i>What measures are taken to include an international dimension to the programme?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent does the programme encourage the international mobility of its students and staff?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>To what extent does the international dimension represent an added value for the programme's quality?</i></p> <p><i>If this added value exists, does the programme encourage students' international mobility?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>What needs to be done to improve international mobility?</i></p>

## Dimension 2.2.: External information and communication

The HEI / entity regularly communicates updated and objective information on the programmes and diplomas offered, taking both quantitative and qualitative aspects into account.

<i>Description</i>	<i>What objectives are pursued with the external communication and diffusion of information on the study programme? How are these defined? By whom?</i> <i>What audiences are targeted? How is the communication organised? What channels are used? Who can use them and under what conditions?</i> <i>How do communication means and content match with the objectives pursued?</i>
<i>Assessment</i>	<i>What is done to ensure the effectiveness of the external communication mechanisms (achieving objectives)?</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>What needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of the external communication mechanisms?</i>

**Criteria 3: The HEI / entity has developed and implements a policy for ensuring the internal coherence of its study programme**

*The aim of this criterion is to assess the coherence between the following aspects: the learning outcomes stated in the study programme; the actual programme content; the programme’s overall design, the choice and logical sequencing of learning activities or arrangements; the criteria and modalities used in assessing learning outcomes and the time foreseen for achieving the targeted learning outcomes.*

**Dimension 3.1. Learning outcomes of the programme**

The HEI / entity selects, formulates and publishes the programme’s targeted learning outcomes. These are realistic, suitable and appropriately communicated.

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>How are learning outcomes formulated? By whom? What processes are available to ensure their quality?</i></p> <p><i>How are they communicated?</i></p> <p><i>How are these divided into sub-objectives to achieve?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>To what extent do the described learning outcomes reflect what a student knows, understands and is capable of doing at the end of his studies?</i></p> <p><i>What is done to ensure that the intended learning outcomes are actually known, understood and effectively exploited by all stakeholders (in particular by teaching staff, students, and - where applicable - by potential employers)?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>What needs to be done to improve learning outcome descriptions and their communication?</i></p>

**Dimension 3.2.: Programme content, learning activities and arrangements (including internships, projects, end-of-course dissertations, examinations)**

The HEI / entity develops and implements learning arrangements and activities designed to allow students to achieve the specified learning outcomes.

<p><i>What is done to ensure that the objectives of each learning programme / activity are clearly and explicitly formulated? How are these objectives communicated to students?</i></p> <p><i>How do learning methods emphasise mobilizing knowledge from different disciplines?</i></p> <p><i>Which teaching practices are representative of the teaching method announced? How are they promoted? How are they assessed?</i></p>
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	<p><i>Which innovatory practices have been developed?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent are theory and practice articulated?</i></p> <p><i>What measures and initiatives are taken to stimulate and maintain student motivation?</i></p> <p><i>What measures and initiatives are taken to stimulate and maintain student autonomy?</i></p>
Assessment	<p><i>What are the visible indications showing that the measures and initiatives taken to stimulate and maintain student motivation are effective? In particular: What is done to ensure that there is sufficient variety of activities offered to students? To ensure that such activities are meaningful for students? To ensure that students have sufficient time to realise them? To ensure that they have an appropriate level of difficulty? etc.<sup>9</sup></i></p> <p><i>What place is left for student self-evaluation and self-reflection?</i></p> <p><i>What indications are there that the measures and initiatives taken to stimulate and maintain student autonomy are effective? In particular: What is done to ensure that the activities offered to students leave enough room for individual or collective initiative?</i></p> <p><i>Generally speaking, to what extent are the teaching/ learning methods adapted to the targeted learning outcomes and how do they promote their achievement?</i></p> <p><i>How does each learning activity* adequately contribute to achieving the specified objectives?</i></p>
Action	<p><i>What needs to be done to improve learning arrangements and activities as well as educational practices?</i></p>

### Dimension 3.3.: Programme's overall design and time foreseen for achieving the intended learning outcomes

The study programme is designed and implemented in such a way as to allow students to achieve the intended learning outcomes within a reasonable period of time.

Description	<p><i>Which aspects attest the programme's overall coherence? How is the logic behind the programme's construction communicated to both teaching staff and students?</i></p> <p><i>What is done to ensure that the prerequisites for each programme component are actually mastered by all students, whatever their individual background? What arrangements are available when certain prerequisites are not fulfilled by certain student categories?</i></p> <p><i>How is the progression in the programme organised in order to achieve the intended learning outcomes? What is done to ensure that the different programme components constitute a coherent whole, with each component having its own learning objectives?</i></p> <p><i>Where applicable, what different paths are offered/recommended (range of specialisations, optional subjects)? How successful are they? To what extent does the way the programme is implemented promote such paths?</i></p>
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<sup>9</sup> Criteria taken from R. VIAU's list of 10 conditions for ensuring student motivation: <http://www.ccdmd.qc.ca/correspo/Corr5-3/Viau.html> (viewed on 21 May 2012)

	<p><i>In what way are the choices, options and other opportunities for individual paths presented and communicated? What is done to make sure that these are well understood by students?</i></p> <p><i>What is done to ensure that the time foreseen for each learning module and activity matches the available time? What is done to ensure that the total programme workload is reasonable (in terms of daily, weekly, term and annual workload) and that there is sufficient time available for personal work?</i></p> <p><i>How are ECTS credits managed? How is a student's workload taken into account when allocating ECTS credits to a programme's different components and learning outcomes? How are ECTS credits taken into account for gauging student workloads?</i></p>
Assessment	<p><i>How are the courses / modules offered aligned with each other, both in terms of content and at organisational level?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent is the time required for each learning module and activity adapted to the available time? To what extent is the total required workload reasonable (in terms of daily, weekly, term and annual workload)? To what degree is sufficient time available for personal work? In case problems have appeared regarding the match between the time necessary for each learning module and activity and the available time, what measures have been taken to remedy them?</i></p> <p><i>Are the ECTS allocated to the different programme components consistent with the specified learning outcomes?</i></p>
Action	<p><i>What needs to be done to improve all these aspects?</i></p> <p><i>What needs to be done to improve the programme's overall design?</i></p>

### Dimension 3.4.: Assessment of the achievement level of the intended learning outcomes

The assessment criteria and modalities match with the intended learning outcomes and are applied systematically and consistently. Moreover, the requirements are clearly formulated and communicated to students in due time.

Description	<p><i>What arrangements are set out in order to ensure that assessments are consistent with the intended learning outcomes?</i></p> <p><i>What is done to ensure that students know what is expected from them in any assessment of their work? How and when are assessment criteria communicated to students?</i></p> <p><i>How are the pass/fail conditions for the individual programme components and for the programme as a whole described? How have these been determined? How are they communicated to students?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent do these assessments help students to be aware of their current level, of any deficits and progress? Which feedback mechanisms are available after each assessment? What role do formative assessments play in the programme?</i></p> <p><i>What role do end-of-course dissertations / final oral examinations, work placement(s), project(s) play in this respect?</i></p> <p><i>How does the supervision of work placement(s) as well as supervision of end-of-course dissertation and final oral exam serve this goal? What is done to ensure that students are given sufficient opportunity to receive feedback in the course of their work?</i></p> <p><i>What measures are set out for ensuring the quality and relevance of assessment mechanisms?</i></p>
Assessment	<p><i>How do the assessment mechanisms allow an effective assessment of learning outcome achievement levels?</i></p>

*What is done to ensure the coherence between the different mechanisms used for assessing student's learning outcomes with the programme's educational activities? In what way(s) do the educational activities involve appropriate preparation for assessments?*

*Action*

*What needs to be done to improve the way learning outcomes are assessed?*

**Criteria 4: The HEI / entity has developed and implements a policy for ensuring the efficiency and equity of its study programme**

*The efficiency criterion relates to the extent the objectives of the programme are achieved, given the resources being used. The intention is to check whether the programme produces the expected results, i.e. whether students achieve the targeted learning outcomes at the end of their studies.*

*Via this criterion, the HEI / entity is invited to track a student's progress from the moment he registers for a programme, looking at learning outcomes achievement levels and pass rates. Assessment of a programme's effectiveness relates not only to the graduates characteristics but also to an HEI's ability to promote the success of students admitted to the programme. The criterion also involves checking such efficiency factors as resource allocation, teaching practices and organisational arrangements implemented in support of the quality of the programme.*

*The equity criterion relates to the arrangements made within the study programme to provide students - whatever their previous academic background, their personal, social or financial situation – with the opportunity to acquire, update and develop throughout their life both the targeted learning outcomes and the professional skills necessary to ensure their employability as well as to promote the pursue of their education, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue.*

**Dimension 4.1.: Human resources**

The HEI / entity ensures that appropriately trained human resources are available to the programme and adequate to the number of students. The HEI / entity makes available the necessary means to ensure staff quality and skills, with a particular focus on teaching staff.

*Please note: the people referred to in this section include all categories of staff whose work has or could have an impact on the students' education in the context of the programme. It is not restricted solely to teaching staff.*

**4.1.1.: Allocation of human resources<sup>10</sup>**

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>How are decisions about human resources allocation made? On what basis / according to which criteria?</i></p> <p><i>How is the workload (teaching, assessment work, supervising of internships / dissertations / theses, programme management, other work) divided up between those involved in teaching?</i></p> <p><i>How are the workload and well-being of the various people involved in the programme assessed?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>To what extent do resource requirements match available resources with regard to the different staff categories involved in the programme teaching? How is such an assessment conducted? By whom?</i></p>

<sup>10</sup> 4.1.1. and 4.1.2: where applicable, to be regarded separately for each staff category

	<i>Where applicable, what measures are taken to remedy out-of-line situations? Which entity is responsible for taking them?</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>What needs to be done to improve human resources allocation?</i>

#### **4.1.2.: Staff recruitment, selection, management and skills development (continuing education and career development)**

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>What is the HEI's / entity's recruitment policy?</i></p> <p><i>What are the recruiting / selecting modes of a new staff member?</i></p> <p><i>What steps are taken to welcome and integrate a new staff member?</i></p> <p><i>What are the main lines of the general professional development policy (continuing education and career development) for the different categories of teaching staff? Who is responsible for formulating them? For approving them? For implementing them? For monitoring them?</i></p> <p><i>What concrete provisions exist to ensure the professional development of the different staff categories involved in the study programme? To what extent are these provisions profitable for the programme? How is monitored?</i></p> <p><i>What mechanisms are available for assessing staff skills?</i></p> <p><i>What mechanisms are set out for remedying any occurring problem associated with the professional practice of teaching staff?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>What is done to ensure the effectiveness of mechanisms for the recruitment, selection, management, assessment and skill development of teaching staff?</i></p> <p><i>What is done to ensure the fairness of mechanisms for the recruitment, selection, management, assessment and skill development of teaching staff?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<i>What should be improved with regard to the recruitment, selection, management, assessment and skill development of teaching staff?</i>

#### **Dimension 4.2.: Material resources**

The HEI / entity ensures that the resources allocated to teaching infrastructures and tools are adequate and suited to achieve the learning outcomes targeted by the programme.

#### 4.2.1. Teaching material (reference books, syllabi, slide shows, software, case studies, examples, etc.)

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>What is done to ensure that the available teaching material matches with the current status of knowledge?</i></p> <p><i>What is done to ensure that the teaching material available takes (future) business expectations and scientific progress into account (where applicable)?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>How and to what extent does the teaching material help in achieving the programme's objectives?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>What should be improved regarding teaching material?</i></p>

#### 4.2.2.: Rooms, laboratories, workshops, ICT<sup>11</sup> rooms

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>Is there a code of conduct with regard to ICT usage? What is done to ensure that everyone knows about it? How is it applied? Are there specific regulations for specific locations / for the use of laboratories or other specific facilities?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>Do the available rooms form a good work environment? To what extent are they suited to the teaching methods used? Are there suitable facilities available for students' personal work?</i></p> <p><i>Do ICT infrastructures match student / teaching staff needs (hardware, software, availability, accessibility)?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>What should be improved regarding facilities (e.g. labs, ICT rooms)?</i></p>

#### 4.2.3.: Libraries, documentary resources, databases

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>Which documentary resources and databases are available to students?</i></p> <p><i>What is done to provide students with easy access to the libraries and their contents?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>What is done to make sure that the libraries contain material (reference works, journals, etc.) for student use and that this material is necessary and appropriate for their learning requirements?</i></p> <p><i>What is done to ensure that a sufficient number of the same reference works is available? To ensure that there is adequate room in the library? To ensure that the opening hours match the needs? Do inter-library loans arrangements exist?</i></p>

<sup>11</sup> Information and communication technologies

<i>Action</i>	<i>What should be done to improve the use of libraries, documentary resources and databases?</i>
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#### **4.2.4.: ICT-based teaching support platforms**

<i>Description</i>	<i>What use is made of ICT-based platforms within the programme? To what extent is such use generalised? Are there any training courses available to staff members for helping them to make the most out of the ICT-based platforms?</i>
<i>Assessment</i>	<i>If ICT-based platforms are used as teaching support, what is their added teaching value? (how do they improve teaching quality?)  If ICT-based platforms are used for distant / asynchronous learning, what measures are taken to ensure the effectiveness of the implemented approaches?  How is the use of such platforms periodically analysed and assessed? How is such an analysis followed up?</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>What should be done to improve the use of ICT-based teaching supports, and in particular to stimulate added value through their usage?</i>

### **Dimension 4.3.: Equity in terms of student reception, progress monitoring and support**

The HEI / entity ensures that the arrangements set up for providing students with guidance, orientation and support in their learning paths are fair, adequate and adapted to the programme's objectives.

#### **4.3.1.: Student admission and orientation**

<i>Description</i>	<i>How does the admission process work? Are there different categories of entrants? How are they processed?  How is the admission process assessed? By whom? How is this assessment followed up?  What system is set out to provide orientation and guidance to future students?</i>
<i>Assessment</i>	<i>In case the number of entrants is unsatisfactory, what are the reasons therefore and what is being done to remedy the situation?</i>

<i>Action</i>	<i>What should be improved regarding student admission, orientation, guidance, and re-orientation?</i>
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#### **4.3.2.: Transitions to higher education, transition paths\* (*passerelles*)**

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>What difficulties are encountered when making the transition from secondary school to higher education? How are such difficulties identified? If the entrants' flux is heterogeneous, are there certain groups experiencing particular difficulties?</i></p> <p><i>What difficulties are encountered when using the transition paths provided for in statutory texts? How have such difficulties been identified? If the transition path entrant's flux is heterogeneous, are there certain groups experiencing particular difficulties?</i></p> <p><i>How are the prerequisites for a given programme identified? How are they communicated to students? How are they assessed?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>What measures have been taken to overcome the difficulties experienced during the transition to higher education ("support in gaining success")?</i></p> <p><i>What measures have been taken to overcome the difficulties encountered in the various transition paths?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>What needs to be done to facilitate the transition to higher education?</i></p> <p><i>What needs to be done to improve the transition paths mechanisms of the programme?</i></p>

#### **4.3.3: Equity in teaching processes**

<i>Description</i>	<i>What arrangements have been set out in the programme for enabling the HEI / entity to make sure that all students are in a equitable position to achieve the specified learning outcomes and a similar level of competency, whatever their previous academic background or their personal, social or financial situation?</i>
<i>Assessment</i>	<i>What does the HEI / entity do to assess if the treatment of the different student categories is fair?</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>What should be done to improve equity of treatment for different student categories?</i>

#### **4.3.4.: Support in gaining success**

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>How are students experiencing difficulties identified?</i></p> <p><i>What measures are taken to help students experiencing difficulties?</i></p> <p><i>How are students repeating the programme treated? Is their success rate satisfactory?</i></p> <p><i>What ways are students re-oriented in case of need?</i></p>
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<i>Assessment</i>	<i>What is done to ensure the efficiency of the measures taken to support students experiencing difficulties?</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>What needs to be done with regard to providing support to students experiencing difficulties?</i>

#### **4.3.5.: Students with particular needs**

<i>Description</i>	<i>Are there any particular arrangements set out for supporting handicapped students? Are the necessary resources available? What measures are foreseen for supporting students with social difficulties? Are the necessary resources available?</i>
<i>Assessment</i>	<i>What is done to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements made to support handicapped students? What is done to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements made to support students with social difficulties?</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>What should be done with regard to providing support for students with particular needs?</i>

### **Dimension 4.4.: Analysis of the data necessary for monitoring the programme**

The HEI / entity ensures that it gathers, analyses and makes use of the data necessary for monitoring the study programmes and other activities.

#### **4.4.1.: Characteristic of the learning paths of students registered for the programme (study duration, retaking of programme parts, dropping out, etc.)**

<i>Description</i>	<i>What is the average study duration? What are the targets in this respect? What is the average drop-out rate per year or per module? Are there any specific points in the curriculum where students drop out?</i>
<i>Assessment</i>	<i>If the average study duration is unsatisfactory, what are the reasons therefore and what is being done to remedy the situation? What are the main causes for students drop out?</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>What is done to stop students having to retake a year / a module or to stop them dropping out?</i>

#### **4.4.2.: Graduates characteristics**

##### **Graduates numbers**

<i>Description</i>	<i>What percentage of students obtains their degree (by year)? What are the targets in this respect?</i>
<i>Assessment</i>	<i>If the percentage is unsatisfactory, what are the possible causes?</i>  <i>What conclusions does the HEI / entity draw from the data collected?</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>What should be done to improve the situation?</i>

### **Assessment of student achievement levels and grade distribution**

<i>Description</i>	<i>Does the HEI assess the quality level of graduates in terms of learning outcome achievement levels? If it is the case, how?</i>  <i>Is this cross-linked with the grades obtained and their distribution? With employers' feedback? With surveys carried-out among graduates?</i>
<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Where applicable, what are the results of this assessment? Are there any targets in this respect?</i>  <i>If the level is unsatisfactory, what are the reasons for this and what is being done to remedy the situation?</i>  <i>What conclusions does the HEI / entity draw from the data collected? What is the impact on programme design?</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>What needs to be done to improve the situation?</i>

### **Socio-occupational integration**

<i>Description</i>	<i>If there is no data on on the socio-occupational integration, what needs to be done to obtain this rate? If figures exist, how high is the rate and which conclusions can be drawn? What measures are taken to promote graduates' socio-occupational integration?</i>  <i>What mechanisms are set out for tracking HEI's / entity's graduates (cf. the EUA TRACKIT project<sup>12</sup>)?</i>
<i>Assessment</i>	<i>What indications attest that the measures taken to promote socio-occupational integration are efficient?</i>  <i>What conclusions does the HEI / entity draw from the data collected?</i>
<i>Action</i>	<i>What should be done to facilitate socio-occupational integration?</i>

<sup>12</sup> EUA, *Tracking learners' and graduates' progression paths (Trackit)*, online: <http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area/projects/tracking-learners-and-graduates-progression-paths.aspx> (viewed on 21 May 2012)

**Criteria 5: The HEI / entity has completed the analysis of its programme and has come up with an action plan for continuous improvement.**

### **Dimension 5.1.: Self-evaluation methodology**

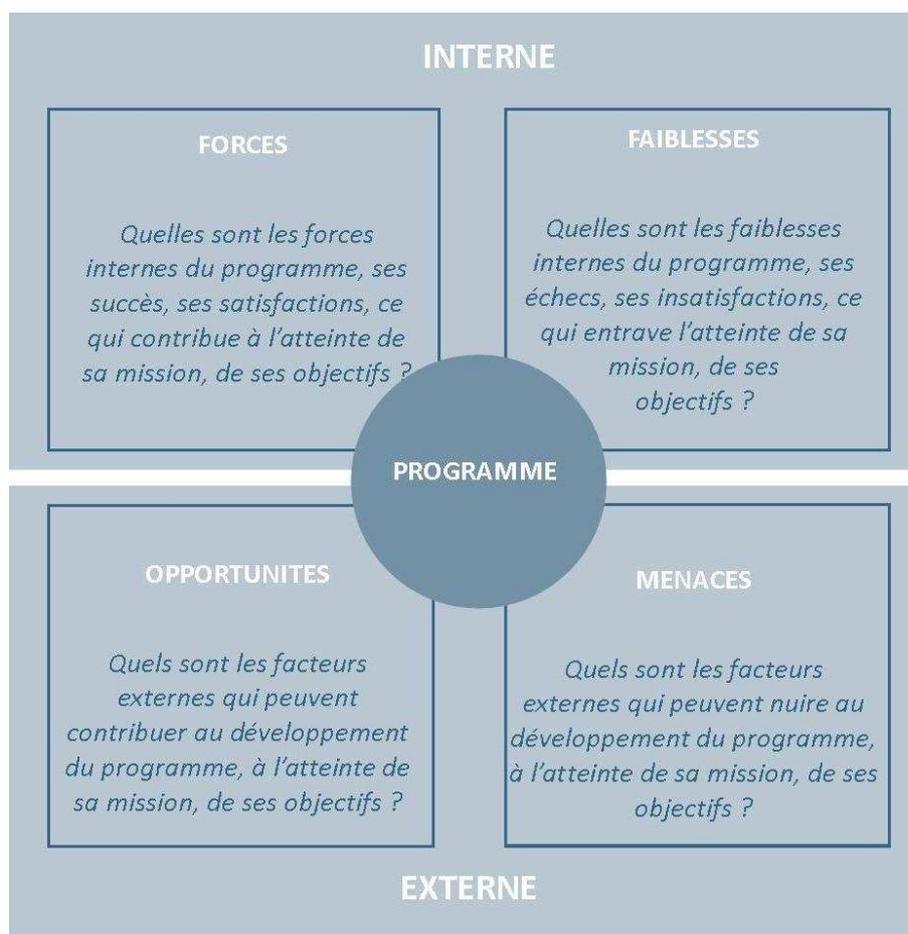
The HEI / entity has carried out a validated self-evaluation of the study programme, in a participatory and in-depth manner.

<i>Description</i>	<p><i>What steps did the self-evaluation phase involve?</i></p> <p><i>How was the internal self-evaluation commission organised?</i></p> <p><i>How were the various stakeholders involved? To what extent did each stakeholder contribute?</i></p> <p><i>Who carried out the analysis?</i></p> <p><i>How was the analysis validated? By whom?</i></p> <p><i>How was the action plan compiled and validated?</i></p>
<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>What are/were the main problems encountered in this process? What remedies are/were envisaged or applied? Was/is the level of reactivity adequate?</i></p>
<i>Action</i>	<p><i>What should be improved in this respect?</i></p>

### **Dimension 5.2.: SWOT analysis\***

The self-evaluation carried out by the HEI / entity involves an analysis identifying both the programme's strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats in its environment.

<i>Assessment</i>	<p><i>What are the results of the SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats)?</i></p>
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### Dimension 5.3.: Action plan and follow-up

On the basis of the self-evaluation, the HEI / entity has taken appropriate and carefully thought out decisions. It has drawn up an action plan defining priorities and performance indicators with the aim of continuously improving the quality of its programme. It regularly and systematically checks its programme's quality.

<b>Description / Assessment / Action<sup>13</sup></b>	<p><i>What could be done to maximise strengths?</i></p> <p><i>What could be done to minimise weaknesses?</i></p> <p><i>What could be done to maximise opportunities?</i></p> <p><i>What could be done to minimise threats?</i></p> <p><i>How do the opportunities help minimise the threats?</i></p> <p><i>How do the strengths help keep the weaknesses under control?</i></p> <p><i>Which internal strengths need to be leveraged to activate / make the most out of the opportunities?</i></p> <p><i>Which internal weaknesses need to be overcome to be able to make the most out of the opportunities?</i></p>
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<sup>13</sup> Sources for certain questions: ROUSSEL, INSA Strasbourg and University of Lausanne's (UNIL) Quality Assessment Department, *Evaluation des facultés (Faculty assessment)*, Lausanne: UNIL, 2011, p. 14. Online: [http://www.unil.ch/webdav/site/cover/shared/Eval\\_facultes/EvalFaculte2011.pdf](http://www.unil.ch/webdav/site/cover/shared/Eval_facultes/EvalFaculte2011.pdf) (viewed on 15 May 2012).

*Which internal strengths need to be leveraged to provide protection against / mitigate the threats?*

*Which weaknesses need to be dealt with as soon as possible to minimise the external threats / to become less vulnerable to external threats?*

*Which internal strengths need to be strengthened / consolidated with regard to the background of the opportunities offered?*

*Taking the threats into account, which weaknesses need to be particularly monitored to prevent the situation getting worse?*

*What short, medium and long-term plans have been made to enhance the curriculum quality?*

*What conclusions have been drawn from the assessment work?*

*How have these conclusions been translated into a concrete action plan for improving the quality of the study programme? What is the action plan?*

An action plan: freely worded, listing priority areas, including an implementation timetable and in line with the HEI's governance policy.

### **III. Study programmes organised together with other HEIs (joint programmes)**

If the study programmes are organised together with other HEIs (joint programmes), the following additional criteria and dimensions need to be taken into account:

*This section is currently being compiled.*

## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Glossary

<b>Academic degree</b>		
Title corresponding to the level achieved within a curriculum recognised by this Decree and attested by a diploma. In "long-type" courses, first-cycle degrees are referred to as "transitional".	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bachelor in Philosophy</li> <li>▪ Bachelor in Primary Education</li> <li>▪ Bachelor in Nursing Care for holders of a hospital nursing certificate</li> <li>▪ Master of Ancient Music</li> </ul>	Decree of 31 March 2004, Article 6.
<b>Assessment method</b>		
A consistent set of practices (situations, tools) aimed at examining, using specified criteria, the level at which a student has achieved the specified learning outcomes.		Taken from: <i>Dictionnaire encyclopédique de l'éducation et de la formation, op. cit.</i>
<b>Assessment reference framework</b>		
A structured set of statements/provisions describing what needs to be done (taking into account applicable norms, requirements and/or values), and acting as a yardstick for comparing the existing situation.	The AEQES Reference Framework for assessing the quality of higher education study programmes	AUBERT-LOTARSKI, A. (et al.), <i>Conduire un audit à visée participative</i> , Lyon: Chroniques sociales, 2006 and taken from: LECOINTE M. ET REBINGUET M., <i>Ethique et pratique de l'audit</i> , Lyon: Chroniques sociales, 1994.
<b>Joint programmes</b>		
A programme is termed as "joint programme" when it is jointly organised, monitored and provided by partner HEIs and when successful completion is jointly recognised and acknowledged through the joint award either of a degree signed by all partner HEIs or of degrees issued by each		The "joint programme" working group made up of representatives of the Marcourt Cabinet, DGENORS and the Councils: (November 2010 - June 2011)

HEIs by virtue of their own award rules.		
<b>Coherence (of a programme)</b>		
The ability of an HEI / entity to match together, coordinate and regulate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the specified learning outcomes,</li> <li>teaching resources, activities and methods,</li> <li>achievement assessment.</li> </ul>		<p>Taken from: BOUCHARD, C. et PLANTE, J., <i>La qualité: mieux la définir pour mieux la mesurer</i>, in Les Cahiers du Service Pédagogie Expérimentale, n° 11-12, Service de pédagogie expérimentale de l'université de Liège, 2003, pp.219-236.</p> <p>Biggs, J.B., <i>Teaching for quality learning at university</i>, Buckingham: Open University Press/Society for Research into Higher Education, 2003 (2<sup>e</sup> éd.)</p>
<b>Competence (or skill)</b>		
The ability to mobilise, combine, transpose and implement individual or collective resources in a particular context and at a given point in time. By resources, we mean knowledge, know-how and attitudes.		The "learning outcomes/higher education qualifications framework" working group made up of representatives of the Marcourt Cabinet, DGENORS and the Councils (March 2011 - November 2011)
<b>Competence framework (1)</b>		
A structured set of competences (or skills) specific to a title or qualification and gained by the end of a curriculum.		The "learning outcomes/higher education qualifications framework" working group made up of representatives of the Marcourt Cabinet, DGENORS and the Councils (March 2011 - November 2011)
<b>Competence framework (2)</b>		
A structured set of competences (or skills) specific to the exercise of a profession		
<b>Criterion</b>		
A statement describing what needs to be done or what is expected in terms of how something works or its result. A criterion can be made up of several dimensions.	The HEI / entity has developed and implements a policy for ensuring the internal consistency of its study programme (Criterion 3 listed in	Aubert-Lotarski, A.

	this assessment reference framework)	
<b>Curriculum</b>		
<p>All study programmes belonging to a certain discipline. A curriculum can cover one or more study cycles.</p> <p>The quality assessment carried out by AEQES relates to all programmes of a curriculum in all HEIs offering such programmes.</p>	<p>The university curriculum in philosophy for example covers the following programmes: "Bachelor of Philosophy", „Bachelor of Religious and Secular Science", and several Master programmes: "Master of Ethics", "Master of Philosophy", "Master of Religious Science" and "Master of Religious and Secular Science".</p>	<p>Taken from the Decree of 31 March 2004, Article 6.</p>
<b>Cycle</b>		
<p>A series of study years leading to an academic degree. Higher education is divided up into three cycles.</p> <p>The quality assessment carried out by AEQES relates to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> cycles.</p>	<p>Bachelor = 1st cycle  Master = 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle  Doctorate/PhD = 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle</p>	<p>Decree of 31 March 2004, Article 6.</p>
<b>Dimension</b>		
<p>A significant aspect of how what is being assessed functions, or a significant context for assessing the results.</p>	<p>The HEI / entity selects, formulates and publishes the programme's targeted learning outcomes. These are realistic, suitable and appropriately communicated (Dimension 3.1 of this reference framework)</p>	<p>Aubert-Lotarski, A.</p>
<b>ECTS credit</b>		
<p>An ECTS credit is a unit of measurement related to the student workload for one or more learning</p>		<p>Taken from the Decree of 31 March 2004, Articles 6 &amp; 26.</p>

<p>activities within a certain programme. One credit corresponds to 30 hours of learning activities. This workload is only partly devoted to teaching offered by the institution. It also includes other related work, such as personal work, preparation, studies, projects, desk research, exams, etc... A study year consists of 60 credits.</p> <p>A unit of measure corresponding to the time spent by a student within his study programme on a learning activity within a specific discipline. Credits are awarded to a student after a positive assessment of the learning outcomes associated with a teaching unit</p>		
<p><b>Efficiency</b></p>		
<p>The ability of an HEI / entity, reflected in its results, to achieve the specified targets.</p>		<p>Taken from: LEGENDRE R. (dir.), <i>Dictionnaire actuel de l'éducation</i>, 3<sup>e</sup> éd., Guérin : Montréal, 2005 and BOUCHARD, C. and PLANTE, J., <i>op. cit.</i></p>
<p><b>Entity</b></p>		
<p>Part of the organisational structure of an HEI which bears responsibility for the management of a programme being assessed or a curriculum containing this programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ EPS, ESA (adult vocational education, art colleges): the management (bodies) responsible for the curriculum being assessed and its component programmes.</li> <li>▪ Hautes Écoles: the management (bodies) of the category responsible for the curriculum being assessed and its component programmes.</li> <li>▪ University: faculty,</li> </ul>	

	department, programme commission, etc.	
<b>Financial resources</b>		
The main sources of funding (state funds, own funds, private funds).		
<b>Higher education institution (HEI)</b>		
An institution offering higher education as set forth in the Decree of 31 March 2004. According to the study sector for which they are accredited, the institutions are either universities, an Haute Ecole, a higher art college, a school of architecture or a university academy. They may also be an adult vocational education institution offering degrees equivalent to those awarded by full-time institutions.		Decree of 31 March 2004, Articles 1 and 6.
<b>Learning activity</b>		
Any activity carried out by a student in a learning context and contributing to achieving one or more learning outcomes specified in the study programme. The Decree of 31 March 2004 lists these as: 1. courses organised by the HEI, including lectures, supervised exercises, assignments, laboratory work, seminars, creative and research workshop exercises, excursions, visits and work placements; 2. activities conducted individually or in a group,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ attending a lecture</li> <li>▪ presenting a report</li> <li>▪ studying a text</li> <li>▪ conducting a lab experiment</li> <li>▪ taking part in a group discussion on a theme related to what one is studying</li> </ul>	Decree of 31 March 2004, Article 22.

<p>in particular preparatory work, looking up information, dissertations and project work; 3. study activities, self-learning and personal knowledge acquisition; 4. on-the-job skill acquisition in the context of combined theory/practice education.</p>		
<p><b>Learning outcomes</b></p>		
<p><u>Definitions</u> Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate at the end of a period of learning. Learning outcomes are verifiable statements of what learners who have obtained a particular qualification, or completed a programme or its components, are expected to know, understand and be able to do. As such they emphasise the link between teaching, learning and assessment.</p>	<p><u>Examples</u> At the end of the programme's 2<sup>nd</sup> year, students will be in a position to write, in French, a summary of the main ideas contained in a random text on a subject dealt with during the programme.</p>	<p><u>Sources and tools:</u> <i>The ECTS Users' Guide</i>. 2009, p. 13, online: <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/ects_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/ects_en.htm</a> (viewed on 13 April 2012).  KENNEDU, D., HYLAND, A., RYAN, N., <i>Writing and Using Learning Outcomes: a Practical Guide</i>, in DAVIES, H., FROMENT, E., KOHLER, J., PURSER, L., SCHURINGS, G., WILSON, L. (eds.), <i>EUA Bologna Handbook: Making Bologna Work</i>, Berlin: Raabe Verlag, 2006. Online: <a href="http://www.bologna.msmt.cz/files/learning-outcomes.pdf">http://www.bologna.msmt.cz/files/learning-outcomes.pdf</a> (viewed on 21 May 2012).  ADAM, S., <i>An introduction to learning outcomes</i>, in DAVIES, H., FROMENT, E., KOHLER, J., PURSER, L. SCHURINGS, G. WILSON, L. (eds.) <i>op. cit.</i>  Experts Bologne de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, <i>Les acquis d'apprentissage dans l'enseignement supérieur de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles : quelques exemples de bonnes pratiques</i>, Brussels: AEF-Europe, 2012. Online: <a href="http://www.aef-europe.be/documents/EXBOLOVade-mecum_LOs_draft_2011_12_06_2.pdf">http://www.aef-europe.be/documents/EXBOLOVade-mecum_LOs_draft_2011_12_06_2.pdf</a> (viewed on 21 May 2012).</p>

<b>Learning path (or individual path)</b>		
The sequence of programme components taken by a student to achieve his study programme.		
<b>Performance indicator</b>		
Observable indicator allowing a criterion or dimension to be measured. A performance indicator can be either qualitative (a property needing to be possessed) or quantitative (a threshold value to be achieved).	<p>Dimension 3.2: <i>The HEI / entity develops and implements learning arrangements and activities designed to allow students to achieve the specified learning outcomes.</i></p> <p>Possible performance indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ proof that assessments reliably measure learning outcome achievement</li> <li>▪ success rates</li> <li>▪ results of student surveys</li> </ul>	Taken from: ROEGIERS, X., <i>Des curricula pour la formation professionnelle initiale</i> , Brussels: De Boeck, 2010, p. 201.
<b>Recognition of work experience</b>		
<p>Process of assessing and recognising the knowledge, know-how and attitudes of a candidate in the context of an admission procedure.</p> <p>In the field of adult vocational education (EPS), this process is referred to as the "recognition of acquired abilities".</p>		<p>Decree of 31 March 2004, Article 6. Working group on learning outcomes.</p> <p>Decree of 16 April 1991, Article 8.</p>
<b>Regulated profession</b>		
a professional activity or group of professional activities, access to which, the pursuit of which, or one of the modes of pursuit of which is subject, directly or indirectly, by virtue of legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions to the		Taken from Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, Article 3.

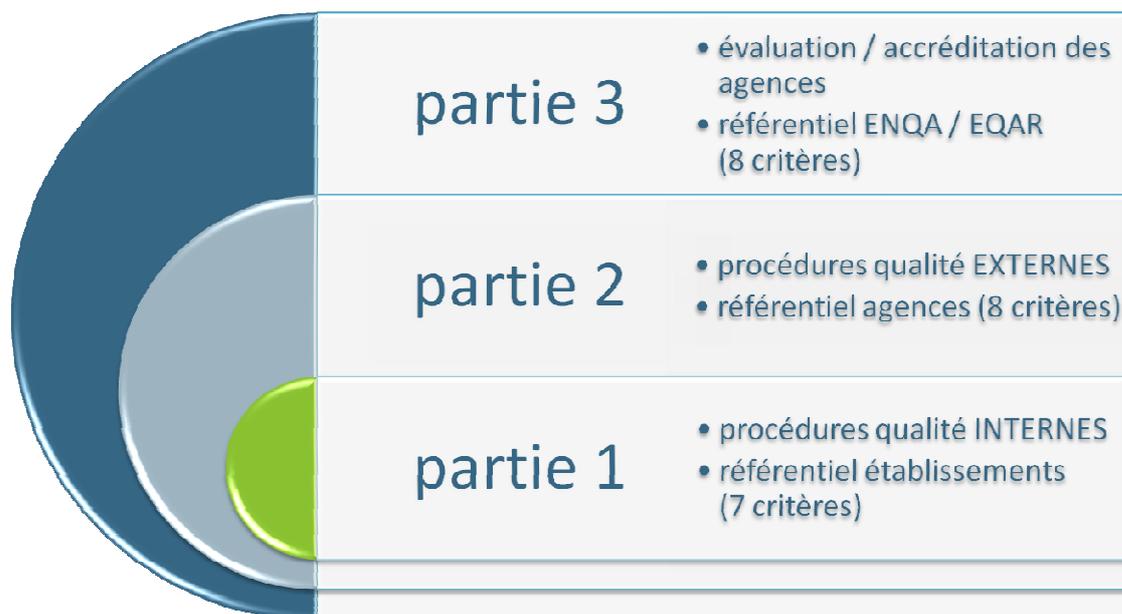
possession of specific professional qualifications; in particular, the use of a professional title limited by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions to holders of a given professional qualification shall constitute a mode of pursuit.		
<b>Relevance</b>		
The ability of an HEI / entity to take into account requirements needing to be satisfied through appropriate objectives and actions.		Taken from: LEGENDRE R. (dir.), <i>op. cit.</i> et BOUCHARD, C. ET PLANTE, J., <i>op. cit.</i>
<b>Socio-demographic characteristics</b>		
Data describing the student population: date of birth, gender, nationality, official address, previous academic career, grant status, low-income student status		AEQES tool box
<b>Socio-occupational integration</b>		
The integration of graduates in the business world, in social and/or cultural structures, reflected by quantitative data (where available) or otherwise by an indicative assessment.  Rate of socio-occupational integration: ratio of graduates having found a job 6 - 24 months after having graduated.		Taken from: <i>Le nouveau Petit Robert de la langue française</i> , Paris: Dictionnaire le Robert, 2009.
<b>Specialisation (1)</b>		
According to the <i>Decree of 31 March 2004, Article 16 §4</i> :  Second-cycle Master programmes (120 ECTS or more) include one of the following 30-credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Master of History, teaching specialisation</li> <li>▪ Master of Occupational Science, business</li> </ul>	Decree of 31 March 2004, Article 16, §4

<p>specialisations:</p> <p>1. The <b>teaching</b> specialisation: this provides specific teacher training in application of the Decree of 8 February 2001 defining initial upper secondary teaching qualifications or the Decree of 17 May 1999 on higher art education.</p> <p>It is only provided for the academic degrees corresponding to the qualifications required for this profession, whereby the Government is responsible for establishing this correspondence.</p> <p>2. The <b>research</b> specialisation: this prepares a student for scientific research and includes both in-depth programme modules in a certain discipline and general training on working in research. This option is only available for the university disciplines specified in Article 31.</p> <p>3. The <b>professional</b> specialisation: this provides specialised business or artistic skills in a particular discipline.</p>	<p>specialisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Master of Educational Science; research specialisation</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Specialisation (2)</b></p>		
<p>A statement of principle through which a social group identifies and transmits its values; it provides guidelines to an educational system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training true mathematicians rather than just advanced users of mathematics.</li> <li>▪ Training versatile legal experts.</li> <li>▪ Training IT specialists responding as much as possible to the needs of the</li> </ul>	<p>HAMELINE, D., <i>Les objectifs pédagogiques en formation initiale et en formation continue</i> (IVET and CVET teaching objectives), Paris : Editions ESF, 1979</p>

	region's employers.	
<b>Study programme or programme</b>		
<p>The set of teaching modules comprising the studies; the programme specifies the time sequence in study years and associated credits. A study programme leads to an academic degree.</p> <p><i>For adult vocational education (EPS):</i> a set of teaching activities constituting the training modules of a section of higher adult vocational education. The programme of the sections leading to Bachelor, Master or specialisation degrees or the certificate of higher education (<i>brevet d'enseignement supérieur</i>) specifies the credits associated with the student's learning activities.</p>	<p>A "Bachelor in Economics and Business Management" study programme includes a course in "Political Economics".</p>	<p>Decree of 31 March 2004, Article 6</p> <p>Decree of 16 April 1991, Article 41.</p>
<b>Success rate</b>		
<p>The number of students having successfully completed the academic year / the number of students registered for the academic year (as of 1<sup>st</sup> February) * 100</p> <p>Students deemed to have successfully completed the year are those authorised to move up to the next year at the end of 2 terms of the academic year or those successfully completing the final year of a cycle.</p> <p>The number includes: students acquiring the 60 credits of the study year, as well as those declared to have partially succeeded, i.e. having gained at least 48 credits and thereby authorised to register for the following year.</p>		<p>AEQES tool box</p>

<b>Teaching method</b>		
Consistent set of practices, guided by an overall philosophy and subordinate to an educational project with the aim of encouraging learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Active learning in small tutored groups</li> <li>▪ Learning via seminars prepared and presented by the students</li> </ul>	Taken from: <i>Dictionnaire encyclopédique de l'éducation et de la formation</i> , Paris: Retz, 2005 (3° ed.).
<b>Teaching module</b>		
<p>Teaching modules are the base unit of any study programme; each has its own abbreviation and name.</p> <p>A teaching module involves a learning activity or set of activities linked together due to the fact that they have a common objective and constitute a unit from a learning outcome perspective.</p> <p><i>Adult vocational education (EPS)</i>: the term used here is a "training module".</p>	A module on "Political Economics" constitutes part of the "Bachelor in Economics and Business Management"	The "learning outcomes/higher education qualifications framework" working group made up of representatives of the Marcourt Cabinet, DGENORS and the Councils (March 2011 - November 2011)
<b>Transition path (<i>passerelle</i>)</b>		
An academic process allowing a student to pursue his studies in a different curriculum or in a different type of studies.		Decree of 31 March 2004, Article 6.

## Appendix 2: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)



### Part 1: Standards and Guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions

1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance: Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards: Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

1.3 Student assessment: Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff: Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

1.5 Learning resources and student support: Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate to each programme offered.

1.6 Information: Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

1.7. Public information: Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

### Part 2: European Standards and Guidelines for external quality assurance in higher education

2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures: External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

Development of external quality assurance processes: The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

2.3. Criteria for decisions: Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

2.4 Processes fit for purpose: All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

2.5 Reporting: Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to their intended readership. . Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find

2.6 Follow-up procedures: Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.

2.7 Periodic reviews: External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

2.8 System-wide analyses: Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.

### **Part 3: European standards for external quality assurance agencies**

3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education: The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of this report.

3.2 Official status: Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

3.3 Activities: Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

3.4 Resources : Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.

3.5 Mission statement: Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

3.6 Independence: Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies: The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available.

These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-assessment/self-evaluation or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
- an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

3.8. Accountability procedures: Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

### Appendix 3: Table cross-referencing the ESG (Part 1) and the AEQES reference framework

ESG - Part 1		AEQES Reference Framework	
1.1	<p>Policy and procedures for quality assurance: Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>Criteria 1</b></p>	<p>the HEI / entity has defined, implements and keeps up-to-date a policy for maintaining its programme’s quality.</p> <p><b>Dimension 1.1.: The HEI's governance policy</b></p> <p>The HEI has defined a governance policy in line with its missions and values. In this context, it develops and implements an organisation and processes designed to ensure effective governance. Such governance makes it easier to carry out quality assurance between the institutional level and that of the study programme, thereby contributing to the quality of the assessed programme.</p> <p><b>Dimension 1.2.: Quality management at HEI, entity and programme levels</b></p> <p>The HEI / entity develops and implements a quality assurance policy and associated processes at HEI, entity and programme levels. These foresee a role for students and other stakeholders. In doing so, the HEI explicitly undertakes to establish a culture recognising the importance of quality and its management via appropriate processes.</p>
		<p><b>Criteria 5</b></p>	<p>The HEI/entity has completed the analysis of its programme and has come up with an action plan for continuous improvement</p> <p><b>Dimension 5.1 : self-evaluation methodology</b></p> <p>The HEI/entity has carried out a validated self-evaluation of the study programme in a participatory and in-depth manner</p> <p><b>Dimension 5.2: SWOT analysis</b></p> <p>The self-evaluation carried out by the HEI / entity involves an analysis identifying both the programme’s strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats in its</p>

			environment.  <b>Dimension 5.3: Action plan</b> On the basis of the self-evaluation, the HEI / entity has taken appropriate and carefully thought out decisions. It has drawn up an action plan defining priorities and performance indicators with the aim of continuously improving the quality of its programme. It regularly and systematically checks the quality of its programme.
1.2	Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards: Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.	<b>Criteria 1</b>	<b>Dimension 1.3.: Development, monitoring and periodic review of the study programme</b> The HEI develops processes and mechanisms for designing, monitoring and periodically reviewing its study programme. These processes and mechanisms are effective, participatory and contribute to improving the quality of the programme. Programme monitoring takes into account the results of all the quality assessments of the programme.
1.3	Assessment of students: Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.	<b>Criteria 3</b>	<b>Dimension 3.4.: Assessment of the achievement level of the specified learning outcomes</b> The assessment criteria and modalities match with the targeted learning outcomes and are applied systematically and consistently. Moreover, the requirements are clearly formulated and communicated to students in due time.
1.4	Quality assurance of teaching staff: Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in the assessment reports.	<b>Criteria 4</b>	<b>Dimension 4.1.: Human resources</b> The HEI / entity ensures that appropriately trained human resources are available to the programme and adequate for the number of students. The HEI / entity makes available the necessary means to ensure staff quality and skills, with a particular focus on teaching staff.
1.5	Learning resources and student support: Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate to each programme offered.	<b>Criteria 4</b>	<b>Dimension 4.2.: Material resources</b> The HEI / entity ensures that the resources allocated to teaching infrastructures and tools are adequate and suited to achieving the learning outcomes targeted by the programme.

			<p><b>Dimension 4.3.: Equity: student reception, monitoring and support</b></p> <p>The HEI / entity ensures that the arrangements set up for providing students with guidance, orientation and support are fair, adequate and suitable for achieving programme objectives.</p>
1.6	Information systems: Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.	<b>Criteria 4</b>	<p><b>Dimension 4.4.: Analysis of the data necessary for monitoring the programme</b></p> <p>The HEI / entity ensures that it gathers, analyses and makes use of the data necessary for monitoring the study programmes and other activities</p>
1.7	Public information: Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.	<b>Criteria 2</b>	<p><b>Dimension 2.2.: Information for the public</b></p> <p>The HEI / entity regularly communicates updated and objective information on the programmes and diplomas offered, taking both quantitative and qualitative aspects into account.</p>



## Appendix 4: Extract from the Higher Education Qualifications Framework<sup>14</sup>

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Degrees
Level 6	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts;</li> <li>take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups</li> </ul>	Honours Bachelor Degree, vocational university German State-certified Engineer, Business Manager and Designer (Fachhochschule) Bachelor, City and Guilds Graduateship(GCGI)
Level 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research</li> <li>Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields</li> </ul>	Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches;</li> <li>take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams</li> </ul>	Masters (60 / 120 credits), vocational university (Fachhochschule) Masters, City and Guilds (MCGI)
Level 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields</li> </ul>	The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research	Certificate of research training Doctorate

<sup>14</sup> Appendix 3 of the Decree of 9 May 2008 enhancing higher education consistency and cutting red tape in university and non-university higher education.





**Agence pour l'Evaluation de  
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