

# Programme Self-Evaluation Resource

This short resource is provided to participants of the Eminent Project to support activities in the development of programme self-evaluation. The purpose of the resource is to:

1. Explain programme self-evaluation
2. Outline the process of self-evaluation
3. Provide a template for self-evaluation of a programme

## Section 1: Programme Self-Evaluation

**What is Programme Self-Evaluation?**

Programme Self-Evaluation is a systematic and evidence-based review of how well a programme of study is working in terms of achieving its intended educational purpose and outcomes. The outcomes of programme self-evaluation lead to action planning for improvement to maintain and enhance the quality of programmes offered.

A more formal description can be found in the European Standards & Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) 2015, section 1.9, which states:

*Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned*.

Les institutions suivent et évaluent périodiquement leurs programmes afin de s’assurer qu’ils atteignent les objectifs qui leur sont assignés et qu’ils répondent aux besoins des étudiants et de la société. Ces évaluations conduisent à une amélioration continue des programmes. Toute action planifiée ou entreprise en conséquence est communiquée à l’ensemble des parties concernées.

The French translation of ESG 2015 may be accessed at: <https://enqa.eu/indirme/esg/ESG%20in%20French_by%20Re%CC%81seau%20FrAQ.pdf>

**What is the need for Programme Self-Evaluation?**

Programme Self-Evaluation provides an opportunity for staff engaged in the delivery of a programme to work together as a professional disciplinary group to examine the quality of a programme, that is how well a programme is running. It is a structured exercise which is comprehensive of all aspects of the programme operation across the full educational lifecycle from admission, through assessment to graduation and beyond to the work of work and wider society. Within a programme context, Programme Self-Evaluation is an exercise in professional academic dialogue and review of the academic practices in place with a commitment to planned developments to ensure a high quality programme.

**What is the difference between internal Self-Evaluation and External Self-Evaluation**

Internal programme self-evaluation is the systematic evaluation of how well a programme is operating, carried out by the team responsible for the design, delivery and ongoing development of the programme. The process and outcomes of the review are documented in a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and Action Plan.

External programme evaluation, is a peer review process, which looking in from the outside examines how effectively, based on the SER and Action Plan, the programme team has:

* Conducted a comprehensive Programme Self-Evaluation on the effective working of the programme;
* How comprehensively and effectively the evidence base was used for the evaluation;
* How appropriate are the planned actions, in light of the evidence presented;
* Identified instances of good practice in the operation of the programme

The external evaluation provides recommendations about:

* What level of confidence may be applied to the Self-Evaluation conducted by the programme team;
* The overall quality of the programme;
* The planned actions to develop the programme, including additional activities which may be required to improve the quality of the programme;
* Good practice in operation for the programme or further good practices which could be adopted.

## Section 2: Process of Self-Evaluation

The process of Self-Evaluation focuses on how well a programme of study is working in terms of achieving its intended educational purpose and outcomes. It normally takes a review period of 5 years operation of the programme, 2015-2020.

**Educational Purpose of Programme**

Therefore the departure point for self-evaluation is the raison d’etre of the programme: *what is the overall purpose of the programme?*

**For example:** The overall the purpose of the programme is the formation of nurses equipped with the necessary, clinical, theoretical, professional skills and competence to work effectively in the provision of healthcare.

Thus the purpose of the programme is a meta statement of educational purpose, appropriate to the disciplinary area.

**Programme Outcomes**

Then following from the purpose of the programme, more specific outcomes unique to the type of institution and programme are detailed, these are specific programme outcomes. Programme outcomes provide an extended description of the particular knowledge, skills and competence required of graduates from the programme and they express these clearly through active verbs with a focus on what the graduate will be able to do.

**For example in Nursing**:

to develop knowledge and skills relevant to professional General Nursing practice, including independent and critical thinking, and problem solving.

to enable the delivery of nursing care that is up-to-date and based on the best current evidence.

**Key Questions in the Process**

The Programme Self-evaluation is a structured critical review and reflection by a Programme Team which addresses, with reference to the educational purpose and outcomes, the questions of:

* What are we doing, why, how and how well on the programme?
* What is the quality of the programme?
* How do we know?
* How can the programme be enhanced and sustained?

**Data Required for Self-Evaluation Process**

The evidence required to answer these questions includes qualitative and quantitative data including:

* student admission and graduation rates;
* student performance (pass/fail/ honours);
* student employment rates or destinations;
* feedback from current students on their learning and teaching experience;
* feedback from graduates of the programme;
* feedback from employers/ other public stakeholders;

**Self-Evaluation Documentation**

The process if self-evaluation is documented as a Self-Evaluation Report, it provides information on the purpose of the programme, the programme operation to date, it outlines the self-evaluation methodology and the key findings from the process with reference to the evidence base considered. It details the Action Plan with information on the planned activities identified from self-evaluation for the assurance and on-going enhancement of the programme.

## Section 3: Programme Self-Evaluation Template

**Programme Review: Self-Evaluation Template Contents**

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) Template has 5 main sections and in each section a series of indicative (not exhaustive) questions are outlined which should help to stimulate the self-evaluation discussion and analysis by the programme team. Each section should describe, analyse and identify current good practice and areas for development based on the evidence used to enable the self-evaluation. The SER includes a Conclusion and Action Plan, and overall the document is supported by Appendices of the data included in the self-evaluation process.

### Programme Description and Programme Outcomes

#### Overall how *effectively* is the Programme operating in terms of the educational purpose and stated programme outcomes? How well do the programme outcomes reflect current and emerging disciplinary knowledge? How well do they meet the needs of learners and wider society? How well do they fit with the institution’s overall educational strategy or educational orientation? How well does the range of course units support achievement of the overall programme outcomes? What considerations arise in terms of good practice or identified enhancements?

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* Context and Background of the Programme (raison d’etre)
* Programme Learning Outcomes
* Programme structure and content (A table with the all the courses/units for the programme) (Full descriptions of course units in Appendix)
* Graduate outcomes and destinations, and any graduate/ alumni feedback

### Learners and Learning Experience

Overall how *effectively* are learners supported and enabled to understand and achieve the outcomes of the Programme? What is the typical student learning experience? What types of students enter the programme? Based on student performance data, what does this indicate about students achievement of the programme outcomes? What does student performance indicate about the quality of teaching, or learning? What highlights and issues emerge from student feedback, on modules? Feedback on the programme? What considerations in terms of the enhancement of the learning experience?

Student Data, by cohort, tabulated including:

#### Student numbers

#### Student profile including gender, admission standard and admissions pathways (if applicable such as transfer from another institution)

#### Student progress admission to graduation

#### Student performance pass/ fail/ honours and attainment

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#### Student Learning experience:

#### Available student supports

#### External links, work placement, community engagement

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#### Student feedback on learning experience

### Teaching and learning, including the impact of research on teaching

#### What *processes* are in place to ensure that the teaching, learning and assessment approaches are appropriate for the intended programme outcomes, programme content, intended learning experience and diversity of learners? What is the overall *effectiveness* of the learning, teaching and assessment approaches? How well does assessment support learning and students’ engagement with the programme material? How well does assessment verify that learning has taken place? How does assessment approach encourage the development of skills and competence as well as knowledge?

#### Approach to teaching, learning and assessment

#### Assessment matrix (provide a table which shows year by year, all types of assessement for all course units)

* + Details of the different assessment instruments/methods used

#### Links between research & scholarship and teaching & learning (this could be disciplinary or pedagogic research or scholarship)

#### Learning resources, what is typically available to support students’ learning, teacher provided material, library, electronic resources

### Programme Staff

What *processes* are in place to develop and enhance staff skills, expertise and scholarly activities in the delivery of the programme? How are staff feedback and communication mechanisms used *effectively* for ongoing programme delivery and development.

* Staff Profile
  + Communication
  + Staff research and development

1. **Programme Governance & Quality Enhancement**

What *processes* are in place for planning, monitoring, and developing the programme? Is there an established programme team and an approach to programme management?

How *effective* are these processes, and what do their outcomes indicate about current quality and future plans for the programme? How does the programme compare itself to similar programmes elsewhere (benchmarking), or what useful benchmarking activity might help to enhance aspects of the programme further?

* Programme Team
* Programme Management
* External feedback and engagement: graduates, employers, stakeholders
* Benchmarking against similar provision

**Conclusion and Action Plan**

This section should outline the key findings of the Self-Evaluation by the Programme Team and highlight successes and achievements (good practice) as well as identify areas for further enhancement (specific improvements). The plan should provide the basis for the development of the programme in the short and medium term with the overall goal of continuing to maintain and improve the quality of the programme.

**Appendices (Evidence)**

The Appendices should provide the evidence used in the Self-Evaluation by the Programme Team as follows:

Full unit descriptors

A sample of assessments selected from Y1 – Final Year

All student data from entry to graduation including performance

Student feedback data including method of collection

Staff profiles (CV’s)

Stakeholder feedback including method of collection – alumni/ graduates and employers