



## **Institutional Evaluation**

### **Expert tool**

Towards the Quality Assurance Agency

May 2013

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## **I. Scope**

The Expert Tool is a document aiming to support the reviewers in their work through the pilot evaluation phase of the Tempus TLQAA Project (cf. Work-package 4) ‘Towards the Lebanese Quality assurance Agency’.

It aims to facilitate the preparation work of each reviewer before the site-visit, to be a ‘reminder’ during the visit, and to help identify the ways in which conclusions are reached at the end of the site visit.

The tool is designed to ensure that the site-visit focuses on issues that have been identified as critical to a successful site-visit and evaluation outcome. These include not only the preparation beforehand that is necessary to ensure that all appropriate lines of enquiry are followed, but also ensuring that a constructive relationship is built between the review committee and the representatives of the institution being evaluated. It is particularly important that, whilst seeking to be rigorous in their collection and analysis of relevant data, the Review Committee is respectful of the contexts within which the Institution operates.

It is also emphasized that the conclusions reached by the Review Committee – as a whole - are evidence-based and result from collegiate decisions, irrespective of the personal experiences of the individual members of the review team.

The main objective of the document is to guide reviewers, individually and as a team, through their responsibilities and to ensure that the necessary steps are followed to ensure that the proper procedures have been followed in identifying whether an Institution complies, or does not, with the TLQAA Teaching and Learning Standards.

Above all, the information provided in this Expert Tool should be regarded as ‘a guide’ – whilst authoritatively based on international norms it must not be regarded, or used, as a set of compliance requirements.

## **II. Some key principles**

It is of interest to mention some helpful information regarding the reviewers' attitude during the site-visit.

### **Chair of the Committee:**

- To welcome and thank the interviewees.
- To present the committee members at the beginning of each session if considered necessary.
- To guarantee that every committee member can say and/or ask the questions they consider.
- To ask the interviewee if there is some issue they would like to comment at the end of each session.
- To ensure there is time enough to resume the clarified issues after all the interviews and to see if there are some more issues which could be treated in the next sessions.
- To take decisions in the case of not reaching a consensus within the Committee.
- To look at the timetable and make it respected by the interviewees and committee members.

### **All Reviewers:**

- All the reviewers must be present during all the interviews and meetings and all may participate in the discussions and debates respecting the previous agreed distribution of the tasks.
- To be clear and concise during the interviews asking concrete professional questions.
- To take into account the context of the evaluated Institution and be understanding with it.
- Not to discuss issues during an interview session between committee members, it is better to wait till the end of the session to do so.

- Decisions within the review committees are collegiate.
- To take notes during the interviews.
- Not to divulgate the information obtained from other interview sessions in order to respect the confidentiality of these meetings.
- To check if the issues mentioned during the interviews are supported by evidence.
- To maintain a certain distance with the interviewees, not to be in relation with the Institution members except during the time foreseen for the interviews (no lunch, dinner or extra meetings).
- To wear appropriate clothes for the circumstance.
- To switch off mobile phones.

### **III. Working tool:**

As previously defined in the document “Rules and Procedures”, it has been agreed that, in order to plan the review visit and to determine a final list of issues to explore during the visit the following procedure is applied:

1. The review committees get the set of documents including the self-assessment report from the agency;
2. Each reviewer examines the document and prepare a list of issues per standard/criterion;
3. The review committee chairperson coordinates email exchanges in order to reach a common list of issues per standard/criterion;
4. The review committee meets and finalizes the list of issues to be explored during the visit, and sets the agenda for the visit.

For this purpose, an evaluation form has been elaborated in order to facilitate the preparation work which will be sent by each reviewer to their Committee Chair before the site-visit.

**Evaluation form:**

In this section the Review Committee analyses the requirements that the Institution should fulfill.

An evaluation form for each standard has been created, indicating in blue color the standards connected to the “Teaching and Learning” theme (Cf. “Guide for preparing a Self-Assessment Report”, p 11-14), on the basis of which the self-assessment reports have been produced. Every reviewer will fill-in these forms before the site-visit based on the self-assessment report (“Prior to the site-visit”) on the one hand and after the visit (“After the site visit”) on the other hand.

*How to fill in the evaluation form?*

Evaluation forms contain the following parts:

Fixed segment: elements staying the same, which are:

- Standard: TLQAA standards.
- Assessed aspect: description of the standard.
- Questions to consider: contain the sub standards as questions and a part for indicating the identified aspects to be clarified as per the self-assessment report study.

Variable segment: elements that complete fulfillment as evaluation progress, which are:

- Evidence (available and missing ones): standards should be based on recorded evidence to support the conclusion reached. Examples: minutes of meetings, etc.
- Who to interview: to identify which department/group of people is responsible to answer the different questions.
- Strengths: aspects of the Institution that give it an advantage regarding that standard.
- Aspects for improvement: aspects of the standard that the Institution does not fulfill, or at least not thoroughly.
- Commentary: any aspect that it is considered for observation, explanation or discussion within the assessed standard.

Standard 1		Mission/Goals and Objectives	
<b>Assessed aspect</b>		The institution publishes its educational mission, goals, and objectives reflecting its distinctive character and articulating institutional values. The institution describes its purpose and rationale in the context of Lebanese higher education.	
<b>Prior to the site-visit</b>			
<b>Questions to consider</b>	<p><u>Sub-standards:</u></p> <p>Does the Institution have a clearly articulated mission, goals, and objectives?</p> <p>Does the Institution communicate its mission, goals and objectives to all students, faculty, staff, and the broader public?</p> <p>Do goals and objectives guide the institution’s over-all direction, the establishment of academic programs and curricula, and administrative practices? Are they used to evaluate the overall institutional performance?</p> <p>Are the Institution’s goals and objectives periodically reviewed and developed with the participation of the academic community and its governing body?</p> <p><u>Aspects identified in the self-evaluation report to be clarified:</u></p>		<b>Who to interview?</b>
Available evidence:		Missing evidence :	
<b>After the site-visit</b>			
Strengths			
Aspects for improvement			
Commentary			

Standard 2 Governance		
Assessed aspect		
Prior to the site-visit		
<b>Questions to consider</b>	<p><u>Sub-standards:</u></p> <p>Does the institution’s governance system reflects the institution’s organizational structure, autonomy, and public role in accordance with its mission, goals, and objectives, and ensures its effectiveness and integrity?</p> <p>Does the institution’s system of governance publishes internally the roles of institutional constituencies in decision-making and policy development, and integrates faculty members in the decision-making process at all levels?</p> <p>Does the governance structure include an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to fulfil responsibilities of efficient planning, policy-making and resource allocation?</p> <p>Does the institution develop and publish policies and procedures for the carrying out of effective university business by its governing structure, including evaluation and promotion, needs assessment, data gate keeping and access, and to ensure that data is analysed and used for decision-making and for the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning?</p> <p>Does the institution, through its governing structure, undertake strategic planning that involves analysis of constraints and opportunities, and implements plans of action with the aim of continuous improvement of its teaching and learning goals?</p> <p>Does the institution have a research strategy, described, justified, monitored, reviewed, and developed regularly?</p>	<b>Who to interview?</b>

	<p>Does the institution allocate adequate resources to implement the research strategy?</p> <p>Does the institution manage its financial resources to ensure long-term stability by budgeting and forecasting based on the institutional strategic plans?</p> <p>Does the institution include institutional assessment or institutional research or similar forms of self-evaluation which assesses its resources, weaknesses and strengths, provides trustful information, and undertakes periodic review of its programmes, in light of its goals and objectives, and the quality of teaching and learning?</p> <p>Does the institution has consolidated a quality culture based on a known and publicly available quality policy, and ensure a continuous improvement of the quality?</p> <p>Does the institution have a policy and procedures for quality assurance?</p> <p>Does the institution use the results from quality assurance processes to revise and improve structures, processes, curricula?</p> <p>Does the institution take deliberate steps to engage faculty and students as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience?</p> <p>Does the institution have fair, effective and timely procedures for handling faculty and students' complaints and academic appeals?</p> <p>Does the institution demonstrate that it ensures the governance of all of its campuses and branches according to the same rules and academic standards?</p> <p>Does the institution make its decision making "impersonal" supported by written rules and regulation?</p> <p>Does the institution encourage the community service activities within all its faculties and units?</p> <p><u>Aspects identified in the self-evaluation report to be clarified:</u></p>	
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Available evidence:	Missing evidence :
<b>After the site-visit</b>	
Strengths	
Aspects for improvement	
Commentary	

Standard 3 Teaching and Learning		
Assessed aspect		
Prior to the site-visit		
<b>Questions to consider</b>	<p><u>Sub-standards:</u></p> <p>Does the institution provide evidence for effective teaching in line with academic requests and learning outcomes?</p> <p>Does the institution ensure a climate conducive to teaching and learning effectiveness through qualified faculty, facilities, support units, and administration of institutional affairs?</p> <p>Does the institution develop procedures regulating academic decision-making affecting learning, including service learning, internships, and employment, so as to safeguard the centrality of learning to the institution?</p> <p>Does the institution systematically evaluate student learning and provide evidence of success rates and weaknesses?</p> <p>Is the assessment of student learning continuous and embedded?</p> <p>Does assessment provide evidence that students have met the knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional goals and program outcomes at the time of graduation?</p> <p>Does the institution provide evidence on the impact of faculty staff research and their teaching content and methodology?</p> <p>Does the institution provide evidence of student learning opportunities and demonstrate it is achieving its objectives and reaching a good quality of learning?</p>	<b>Who to interview?</b>

	<p>Does the institution have procedures whereby it can check that the purpose of any action that it undertakes, including outside work experience, community service, and mobility, is to encourage learning by the student?</p> <p>Does the institution use the most appropriate assessment approach for each course and learning outcomes?</p> <p><i>Aspects identified in the self-evaluation report to be clarified:</i></p>	
Available evidence:		Missing evidence :
<b>After the site-visit</b>		
Strengths		
Aspects for improvement		
Commentary		

Standard 4 Academic Programs		
Assessed aspect		
Prior to the site-visit		
<b>Questions to consider</b>	<p><u>Sub-standards:</u></p> <p>Do the institution’s various programs display knowledge content, rigor methods, and coherence appropriate to good quality of effective teaching and learning?</p> <p>Does the institution have in place effective processes for program administration, program design and approval of new programs?</p> <p>Does the institution work systematically and effectively to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs and the credits and degrees awarded?</p> <p>Does the institution have in place mechanisms to sustain, review and update its programs?</p> <p>Does the institution have in place mechanisms to approve, manage, evaluate and periodically enhance the quality of programs?</p> <p>Do all these mechanisms include the participation of all concerned stakeholders?</p> <p>Do academic programs articulate student learning goals and objectives, including foundational knowledge, skills, and competencies?</p> <p>Does the institution evaluate the degree to which programs meet goals and objectives?</p> <p>Does the institution identify expected outcomes (of learning and employment), assess the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provide evidence of improvement based on</p>	<b>Who to interview?</b>

	<p>analysis of the results?</p> <p>Are program goals and objectives and learning outcomes reviewed periodically for continuing validity and relevance?</p> <p>Does the institution ensure overall compatibility of the programme in terms of core knowledge, specialized knowledge and transferable personal skills?</p> <p>Does the institution diversify learning opportunities through non-traditional forms of learning such as certificate programs, blended programs, non-credit offerings, distance learning, and remedial courses, etc.?</p> <p>Are graduate degrees awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols?</p> <p>Does the institution practice similar procedures and equality of access to effective learning across different campuses and branches?</p> <p><u>Aspects identified in the self-evaluation report to be clarified:</u></p>	
Available evidence:	Missing evidence :	
<b>After the site-visit</b>		
Strengths		
Aspects for improvement		
Commentary		

Standard 5		General Resources	
Assessed aspect		The institution sustains its operations and supports the achievement of its educational objectives through sufficient capacity in academic, fiscal, physical, technological and library and information resources.	
Prior to the site-visit			
<b>Questions to consider</b>	<p><u>Sub-standards:</u></p> <p>Are the academic, financial, technological, and physical infrastructure necessary, sufficient and accessible to meet institutional goals?</p> <p>Does the institution manage its financial resources effectively and with full disclosure?</p> <p>Are general institutional resources dedicated to the academic mission and objectives and promote a quality environment for teaching and learning?</p> <p>Does the institution’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities?</p> <p>Are the effective and efficient uses of institutional resources analyzed as part of ongoing institutional and academic program evaluation?</p> <p>Does the institution make available open library and information resources to support teaching and learning and demonstrate their effectiveness in fulfilling its goals?</p> <p><u>Aspects identified in the self-evaluation report to be clarified:</u></p>	<b>Who to interview?</b>	
Available evidence:		Missing evidence :	

After the site-visit	
Strengths	
Aspects for improvement	
Commentary	

Standard 6 Human Resources	
Assessed aspect	Faculty and staff qualifications, numbers, and performance are sufficient to accomplish the institutional and program goals and objectives and ensure quality teaching and learning.
Prior to the site-visit	
<p><b>Questions to consider</b></p> <p><i>Sub-standards:</i></p> <p>Does the institution have policies and procedures for staff recruitment that are equitable, transparent, and explicit in their implementation?</p> <p>Does the institution have mechanisms to ensure that the hiring, administration and training of its teaching staff is carried out with the necessary guarantees to ensure they can fulfill their corresponding functions, and clearly specify the working condition of faculty staff (such as working hours, teaching load, etc.)?</p> <p>Are the institution’s instructional, research, and service support units developed, implemented and monitored by qualified professionals?</p> <p>Does the institution provide appropriate institutional support for the advancement and development of faculty, including support for teaching, research, creative scholarship, and</p>	<p><b>Who to interview?</b></p>

	<p><a href="#">professional service, as well as through faculty exchange programs?</a></p> <p>Are faculty mobility and exchange governed by clear agreements and policies so as to guarantee equity and boost institutional human capacity?</p> <p>Does the institution provide an adequate framework and resources to promote research and innovation, and to involve faculty in research projects at the local, regional and international levels?</p> <p><a href="#">Does the institution demonstrate provision of basic rights for faculty, including academic freedom and work conditions, within the context of sound teaching and learning?</a></p> <p>Does the institution develop staff rules and regulations in collaboration with concerned staff (faculty members, assistants, administrators)? Are these rules and regulation made public and reviewed regularly?</p> <p>Are the faculty members encouraged to get involved in community services?</p> <p><u>Aspects identified in the self-evaluation report to be clarified:</u></p>	
Available evidence:	Missing evidence :	
<b>After the site-visit</b>		
Strengths		
Aspects for improvement		
Commentary		

Standard 7      Students		
Assessed aspect		
Prior to the site-visit		
<b>Questions to consider</b>	<p><u>Sub-standards:</u></p> <p>Is the institution’s interaction with enrolled and prospective students characterized by integrity?</p> <p>Does the institution have in place policies and procedures for the recruitment and admission of students to tertiary education that are equitable, clear, and explicit and are implemented consistently?</p> <p>Does the institution provide sufficient student support services to enable students to achieve competitive results?</p> <p>Does the institution have effective arrangements in place to support students in their learning?</p> <p>Does the institution support student life on campus, grants freedom of expression and association and participation in decision-making? Does the institution provide channels of information to students to help them better making their educational and professional strategies?</p> <p>Does the institution have in place measures that strengthen student diversity in terms of religion, gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity, and regional origin, in order to contribute in social integration?</p> <p>Does the institution publish accurate and up-to-date information addressed to enrolled and prospective students to allow for informed decision-making about the institution and</p>	<b>Who to interview?</b>

	<p>learning pathways?</p> <p>Are there public criteria, regulations and procedures applied consistently regarding student assessment?</p> <p>Does the institution demonstrate an acceptable level of internal effectiveness regarding students’ progress (recruitment, retention, promotion and graduation)?</p> <p>Does the institution provide career education, information, advice and guidance to students and ensure that information regarding grants, scholarships, proposals and mobility are available to all students?</p> <p>Does the institution provide structures of interaction between institutional offer and labor market demand, involving students?</p> <p>Does the institution maintain active contact with alumni and involve them in decision-making?</p> <p>Does the institution ensure that in all its policies, procedures and activities consideration is given to enable students with special needs and disadvantaged students to participate in all aspects of the academic and student life of the institution?</p> <p>Do students provide input and participate to most of the institution committees including those in charge of the quality of education?</p> <p><i>Aspects identified in the self-evaluation report to be clarified:</i></p>	
Available evidence:	Missing evidence :	
<b>After the site-visit</b>		
Strengths		
Aspects for		

improvement	
Commentary	

Standard 8 Public Disclosure	
Assessed aspect	The institution documents and publishes data and information to ensure transparency.
Prior to the site-visit	
<b>Questions to consider</b>	<p><u>Sub-standards:</u></p> <p>Are public disclosure and transparency driving institutional principles and acknowledged clearly in institutional bylaws?</p> <p>Does the institution produce and regularly provide information to stakeholders that is complete, accurate, timely, accessible, clear and sufficient for informed decision-making about institutional performance?</p> <p>Does the institution document all activities, programs, rules and regulations related to different institutional and program procedures, and preserve them systematically to ensure institutional memory?</p> <p>Does the institution maintain an official website that is updated continually?</p> <p>Is the institution responsible for the quality of its provisions, and has in place policies and procedures to ensure that its responsibilities, and those of its partners, are clearly identified and met?</p> <p><u>Aspects identified in the self-evaluation report to be clarified:</u></p>
	<b>Who to interview?</b>

Available evidence:	Missing evidence :
<b>After the site-visit</b>	
Strengths	
Aspects for improvement	
Commentary	

<b>Standard 9 Integrity</b>		
<b>Assessed aspect</b>		
The institution commits to high ethical standards in dealing with its governing board, students, prospective students, faculty, staff, external agencies and organizations, and the general public. The institution promotes democratic values, sense of dialogue, communication, respect of diversity, sense of belonging and social integration.		
<b>Prior to the site-visit</b>		
<b>Questions to consider</b>	<p><u>Sub-standards:</u></p> <p>Does the institution develop and publish, through the consensus of its multiple constituencies a code of ethics that is official and adhered to?</p> <p>Does the institution recognize the participatory nature of learning process and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas?</p> <p>Does the institution uphold accountability at all levels?</p> <p>Does the institution have active academic integrity assessment procedures?</p> <p>Does the institution foster to develop in all its educational programmes courses, modules or part of courses dedicated to democratic values, sense of dialogue, communication, respect</p>	<b>Who to interview?</b>

	<p>of diversity, sense of belonging and social integration?</p> <p>Does the institution demonstrate support for academic and intellectual freedom?</p> <p><u>Aspects identified in the self-evaluation report to be clarified:</u></p>	
Available evidence:		Missing evidence :
<b>After the site-visit</b>		
Strengths		
Aspects for improvement		
Commentary		