EFMD

EPAS

ACCREDITED

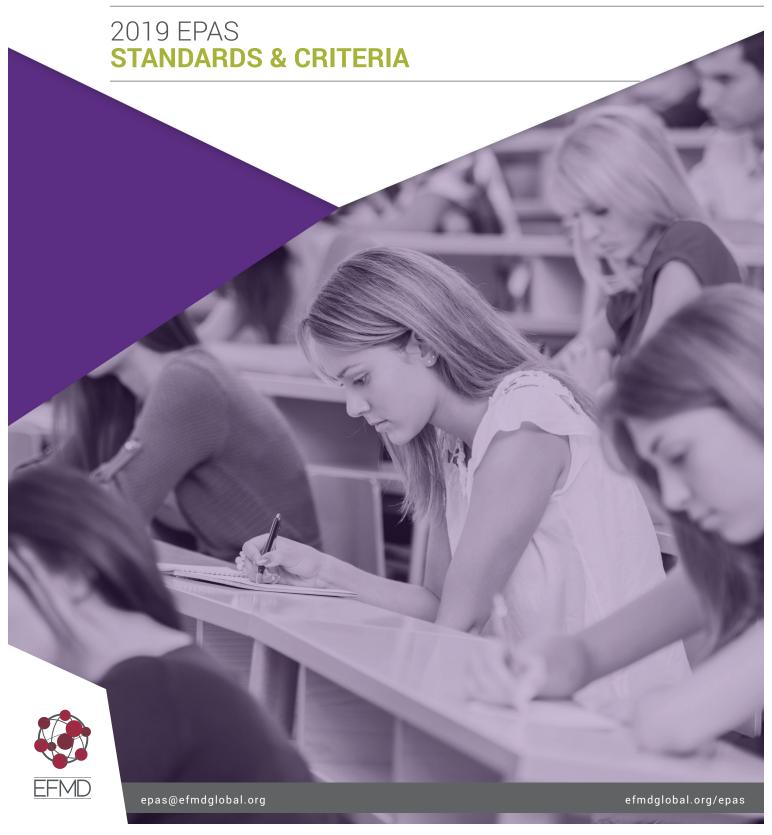# EFMD Programme Accreditation System
The EFMD Accreditation for International Degree Programmes in Business and Management

2019 EPAS
STANDARDS & CRITERIA

EFMD

EFMD PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION SYSTEM

EPAS STANDARDS & CRITERIA

Document Version 2019[1]

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[1] The EPAS documents are revised periodically and it is the responsibility of the Institution to always use the latest version of the documents. Older versions of the EPAS documents are only an acceptable reference with the prior approval from the EPAS Office. The EPAS documents are updated annually at the beginning of each calendar year.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AB	EPAS Accreditation Board
BL	Blended Learning
BSc	Bachelor of Science
DBA	Doctor of Business Administration
DL	Distance Learning
DS	Datasheet
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EPAS	EFMD Programme Accreditation System
EQUAL	European Quality Link
ERS	Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability
FT	Full-time
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
HE	Higher Education
ILOs	Intended Learning Outcomes
LA	Learning Analytics
MA	Master of Arts
MBA	Master of Business Administration
ML	Mobile learning
MSc	Master of Science
OL	Online Learning
OCL	Out-of-class Learning
PhD/DPhil	Doctor of Philosophy
PRT	Peer Review Team
PRV	Peer Review Visit
PT	Part-time
QA	Quality Assurance
QP	Quality Profile
QS	Quality Services
SAR	Self-Assessment Report
SR	Student Report
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

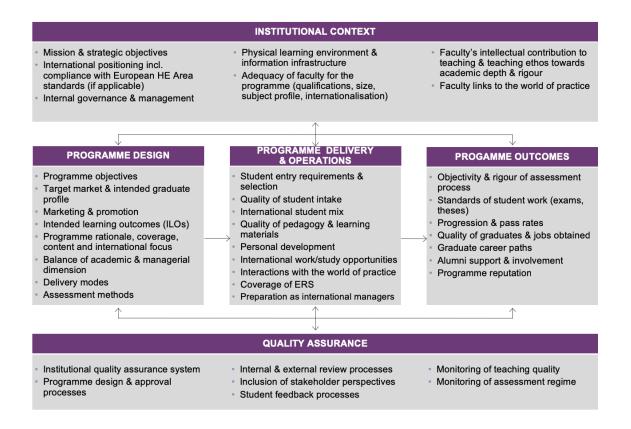**CONTENTS**   Page

Introduction

The EFMD Programme Accreditation System (EPAS) is concerned with assessing whether a programme (or suite of programmes) meets a level of quality at international levels in order to justify the granting of EFMD Programme Accreditation. The standards and criteria for accreditation are based on a model for design, delivery and outcomes achieved within an environmental context and supported by appropriate quality assurance processes, as summarised in the diagram below.

Fig.1: EPAS Programme Accreditation Framework

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

- Mission & strategic objectives
- International positioning incl. compliance with European HE Area standards (if applicable)
- Internal governance & management

- Physical learning environment & information infrastructure
- Adequacy of faculty for the programme (qualifications, size, subject profile, internationalisation)

- Faculty's intellectual contribution to teaching & teaching ethos towards academic depth & rigour
- Faculty links to the world of practice

PROGRAMME DESIGN

- Programme objectives
- Target market & intended graduate profile
- Marketing & promotion
- Intended learning outcomes (ILOs)
- Programme rationale, coverage, content and international focus
- Balance of academic & managerial dimension
- Delivery modes
- Assessment methods

PROGRAMME DELIVERY & OPERATIONS

- Student entry requirements & selection
- Quality of student intake
- International student mix
- Quality of pedagogy & learning materials
- Personal development
- International work/study opportunities
- Interactions with the world of practice
- Coverage of ERS
- Preparation as international managers

PROGAMME OUTCOMES

- Objectivity & rigour of assessment process
- Standards of student work (exams, theses)
- Progression & pass rates
- Quality of graduates & jobs obtained
- Graduate career paths
- Alumni support & involvement
- Programme reputation

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- Institutional quality assurance system
- Programme design & approval processes

- Internal & external review processes
- Inclusion of stakeholder perspectives
- Student feedback processes

- Monitoring of teaching quality
- Monitoring of assessment regime

Programme Accreditation Standards and Criteria

Standards are stated for each broad area and these are further explained by the criteria. The criteria are generally given in the form of questions without setting quantitative norms since they are generalizable to all levels and types of programmes. However, the degree of emphasis on the questions and the types of answers will vary for different types of programmes. It is expected that the appropriate EQUAL[2] Guidelines (see p. 26) will be respected for the designation of degree titles. Interpretation of these Standards and Criteria and the Guidelines for different programmes lies with the Peer Review Teams and ultimately with the EPAS Accreditation Board which aims to ensure consistency.

This document should be used by Institutions as the basis for their Self-Assessment Report (SAR) **which should follow the sequence of this document and the Quality Profile** (see EPAS Process Manual **Annex 10**). It is also the basis for discussions with the Peer Review Team (PRT) and their subsequent report and for their recommendations.

In writing the SAR, Institutions should use the bullet points in each of the criteria sections as a guide to what to describe, explain, summarise, analyse, assess and so on. However, it should be noted that **Institutions are not expected/required to answer every single question but only those that are relevant for the specific programme(s) being put forward for accreditation**. Specific data requirements are listed either to be included in the SAR (as appendices) or in the Base Room as exhibits and both should be referenced in the SAR text. Lists of what should be included in the SAR and what should be available in the Base Room as exhibits are given in **Annexes 5 and 6** of the EPAS Process Manual. At the end of some chapters there is a section entitled "Notes" in which definitions or explanations are provided.

Programmes to be accredited

Institutions should specify on the front cover of the Self-Assessment Report which programmes are to be assessed by EPAS. The programmes must aim to produce graduates in the field of business and management. These may cover a diversity of programme types or levels such as:

A.   Bachelors or Licence (3 or 4 years)
B.   Masters (1 or 2 years, often Bologna style)
     a.   Generalist - e.g. MSc in Management
     b.   Specialist - e.g. MSc in Marketing or Finance
C.   Masters pre-Bologna (5 or more years) - e.g. French Grande Ecole ESC programme
D.   MBA (post-experience)
E.   Doctorate - e.g. PhD or DBA (see EPAS Process Manual **Annex 12**)

Eligibility for EPAS requires that a programme has had at least 2 graduating classes (normally over at least 2 years) and has produced at least 30 graduates over the last 2 years (see the Eligibility Guidelines in EPAS Process Manual, Section 4). However, a programme that has developed from one format to another will also be eligible

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[2] EQUAL (European Quality Link) is the international association of quality assessment and accreditation agencies in the field of business and management education as well as national or regional associations of universities, business schools or graduates in management. See https://efmdglobal.org/about-us/strategic-partners/equal/.

provided that in total the 2-year graduations rule applies. This would typically be the case of a change from a Type C pre-Bologna Masters to a post-Bologna Type A Bachelors plus Type B Masters. Additionally, the Institution offering the programme should be of higher education status or level, rather than vocational. It must have been in existence for at least 5 years.

Chapter 1: The Institution in its National and International Context

1.1 The institutional context

Standard: The Institution should be able to demonstrate that it understands how both the national context and the international contexts (including the European Higher Education Area and the Bologna reforms where appropriate) may impact on its portfolio of programme offerings and its market positioning.

The Institution should be legitimate in its national context, have a clear strategy, be financially viable and be well resourced and managed such that it is able to offer the programmes on a sustainable basis. It should demonstrate that it is able to project itself credibly in its national and international contexts. It should also be able to demonstrate that it has a clear commitment to offering students an international learning experience, developing strong links with corporates and external organisations generally and that it both practises and teaches socially responsible management.

a) The environmental context

- Explain the national Higher Education system and its associated legal and regulatory framework.
- How does the national and international context impact on the positioning and strategy of the Institution?
- How does this context affect its ability to offer and deliver particular programmes?
- If appropriate, how does the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and its associated Bologna Agreement on the harmonisation of qualification structures impact on the Institution's mission and programmes?
- If appropriate, how have the Bologna proposals impacted on the design of the programmes being accredited? Are these programmes compatible with other European systems? Are there credit transfer arrangements with other institutions?
- How does the Institution ensure compatibility of its programmes with other international systems?

b) The Institution

- What body holds the authority for degree awarding powers (e.g. the State, the parent University, an accreditation agency or other stakeholder body or the Institution itself) and how are particular degree programmes authorised?
- What are the Institution's mission, vision and strategic objectives? Does it have a coherent strategic plan? For online/blended programmes, is there a link present between the institutional mission and the provision of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)?
- Is the Institution resourced, organised and managed in such a way as to facilitate the achievement of its objectives?
- What is the evidence for the established reputation and positioning of the Institution nationally and internationally?

- Describe the School's internal governance and management and the decision-making processes. Evaluate these in terms of effectiveness in contributing to the overall strategy and to the development of the programme portfolio. How do these processes support the development of the applicant programme(s)?
- How does competition with other institutions impact on the Institution's programmes?
- To what extent is providing an international learning experience[3] an integral part of the Institution's ethos and activities?
- To what extent are external organisations (e.g., corporations, public entities, third sector) involved in the Institution's ethos and activities?
- To what extent are the concepts of Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability (ERS) part of the Institution's ethos and activities?

Data requirements:

Base Room   *a) Strategic plan*
b) Financial statements – previous 3 years' accounts and next year's budget
c) Policy documents on the international learning experience, connections with the world of practice and ERS
d) Relevant Institution brochures
e) Minutes of the Management Committee meetings for the past year
f) External audit reports, evidence of rankings

1.2   Resources and facilities

Standard: *The Institution's infrastructure should be of such quality as to support the programmes.*

- Are the pedagogic facilities appropriate to the level of the programme?
- Are the social and welfare facilities appropriate to the student mix?
- Are the facilities and learning infrastructure appropriate for students with disabilities?
- Are the IT systems, library and other resources appropriate and modern?
- Is a learning platform (e.g. Blackboard, Moodle) available and is it widely used by faculty for interactive learning (in addition to using it for the logistics of course management, e.g. electronic submission of assignments)?

Data requirements:

SAR   *Brief description of IT resources and of other facilities (appendix)*

Base Room   *In case of an online programme, access for PRT members to the relevant VLE platform should be granted at least 4 weeks prior to the PRT visit.*

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[3] See note on Internationalisation at the end of Chapter 1.

1.3   Faculty

Standard: The faculty* should be of sufficient quality and size to meet the needs of delivering the programme(s) under review. The Institution should demonstrate that the faculty have sufficient expertise and are sufficiently intellectually active for the level of the programme and that they are also engaged in pedagogic innovation and development. They should have appropriate experience and links to practice nationally and internationally. There should be appropriate faculty management processes.

[*Faculty may be interpreted as core (i.e. mainly employed by this Institution), adjunct, professional, or visiting faculty. Whatever the mix for a particular programme, the faculty body must be integrated into the programme team.]

The expectations on faculty quality should match the level of the programme(s) under review. As a minimum, all faculty teaching on any programme should be expected to have a Master's degree or equivalent and to be sufficiently scholarly in their subject area as well as able to blend theory and practice. In programmes where there may be increasing levels of specialisation, e.g. 3rd year electives, MBA electives, the levels of qualifications and scholarly activity[4] should match the programme level. For a taught specialist Masters programme, e.g. a Masters in Finance or in Marketing, most faculty should hold a relevant doctorate, or have an equivalent publication record and/or professional qualifications. At MBA level, the qualifications and research activity requirements should demonstrate that faculty can show the relevance to post-experience participants of their teaching input both of theory and practice. Finally at doctoral level, it is essential that the faculty involved are recognised as experts in their area.

Some programmes may be delivered primarily by visiting or virtual faculty which is acceptable in the EPAS system. However, the PRT should be convinced that the programme design and delivery are coherent, that the visiting faculty have input both to programme design and review and to operational issues of teaching methods and assessment, and that the students are able to receive appropriate support throughout the programme and not just on visit days.

- Do the faculty profiles match the demands of the programme?
- Do the faculty undertake sufficient scholarly activity (e.g. case writing, applied practice orientated research, and pedagogical development) to underpin the academic development of the programme and its students as well as having an impact on the practice of management?
- Do the faculty have a teaching ethos that requires students to read further academic literature around the topics being taught (in addition to the faculty's own teaching notes)? Do they expect students to make reference to academic literature in the assessment process? Does this lead to appropriate academic depth and rigour in the programme?
- Do the entire faculty understand and make use of the ILO (Intended Learning Outcomes) concept in course design and delivery?
- Are the faculty engaged in pedagogic developments and especially do they make use of technologies as appropriate within the learning and teaching process? How innovative is the pedagogy in general?
- Do they have the background and ability to bring an international dimension to the programme?

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[4] See note on Research at the end of Chapter 1.

- Are the faculty sufficiently well connected to the world of business and management generally speaking to facilitate the development of students as potential business people and managers?
- Do the faculty actively pursue the practice of socially responsible management and are these ideas incorporated into their teaching and other intellectual activity? Please set out the faculty's engagement with ERS.
- What are the faculty management processes including recruitment, workload allocation, performance appraisal and professional development?

Data requirements:

SAR   *Aggregate data on all faculty members (whether core, adjunct, professional or visiting faculty) teaching in the applicant programme(s) by grade/category, age, gender, qualifications / doctorates, extent of research activity, international background, interactions with the world of practice.*

Base Room *Faculty list of the applicant programme by subject area with a table of all the modules/courses taught by each member, and their CVs/resumes. Where TEL is present, and especially for online programmes per se, those elements that have been designed or facilitated by others should also be included.*

Notes

❖ EPAS defines '**mission**' as the role for which the Institution was created or is currently mandated to fulfil. It answers the questions: 'Why does the Institution exist? What is it for? What does it do?'.

❖ EPAS defines '**vision**' as the way the Institution would like to position itself in the future, usually expressed as one or two simple but powerful ideas.

❖ It is the role of the '**strategy**' to plan the route towards realising the vision of the Institution within the scope of its mission. EPAS expects that there will be a formal strategy which will include clear and measurable (medium term) objectives, an action plan for achieving them and an estimate of the resources required (with sources) to implement the plan.

❖ **Internationalisation** is one of the transversal pillars of the EFMD accreditation systems. One of the distinguishing aspects of EFMD is also our capacity to apply standards and criteria in a given context without sacrificing quality or lowering standards. Within the EPAS framework, the teaching materials, delivery methods, including virtual interactions along with the programme content, the qualifications, background and diversity of faculty and students alike, and partnerships, all contribute to the students' international learning experience. The learning experience in itself cultivates other values such as tolerance, cultural sensitivies, between and among faculty and students alike that are equally important in an increasingly changing business and management environment.

Thus, internationalisation is multi-faceted; it implies far more than simply the number of different nationalities that make up the faculty or the student body. This can be seen visually in Section H (page 37) of the *Guidelines & Position Papers: Supporting Material for the EQUIS and EPAS Accreditation Systems* (see also Section G of that document). Section H is pertinent for EPAS accreditation particularly with respect to Chapter 1, especially with regard to 1.1 The Institutional

context, 1.2 Resources and facilities and 1.3 Faculty. Bear the international dimension in mind with respect to Chapters 2 and 3 in addition: what international considerations are particularly pertinent for the programme (set) under consideration for EPAS accreditation?

❖ With regard to **Research**, the EPAS Standards and Criteria are suitably general and lend themselves to a wide range of differing interpretations. Research is often characterised as relating to the production of highly rated academic journal articles primarily directed at other academic readers and has, therefore, limited impact on the practice of management. Practice-Orientated Production is aimed at practitioners and students (who may also be practitioners) and may have a much wider impact in management practice. Pedagogical Development is a fundamental element in learning and teaching. In the light of this, the EPAS Committee and EPAS Accreditation Board agreed in 2015 that EPAS should focus on Practice-Orientated and Pedagogical Development and research-informed teaching when considering the research aspect of the programme(s) under review. This will allow broader dimensions of the research-practice continuum to be considered.

❖ **Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)** in the EPAS Standards and Criteria is covering an area of increasing importance to business schools and to programme development. It is an area of strategic importance. Is the business school able to invest in TEL and is it a part of the school's learning strategy? TEL is about how to use appropriate learning technologies to improve the students' learning process. In the EPAS context it is about faculty engagement in pedagogical development and the use of technology for this purpose. Consideration of TEL is also about curriculum design both pedagogically and the personal development of students, like digital skills as a part of ILOs and the content of the programme. TEL is also concerned with the delivery modes like online or blended or at a distance. Digitalisation might also be a part of the counselling and the follow up of students' progression, such as the use of robots and big data as well as links to the assessment scheme. Last but not at least, it is a question of new, innovative, flexible and effective ways of interactive learning. TEL is present in most dimensions of the EPAS Standards and Criteria. For more information on TEL, please refer to EPAS Process Manual **Annex 13**.

Chapter 2:   Programme Design

2.1   Programme objectives and target markets

Standard: The programme objectives should be aligned with the overall strategy of the Institution and the needs of its stakeholders. The target market should be appropriate to the strategy and the programme team should be explicit about the student profile to be recruited and the graduate profile to be developed. Marketing and promotion of the programme should be of professionally high quality.

a)   Programme objectives

- What are the programme objectives?
- How do these link with the institutional objectives?
- How will these meet the anticipated needs of the programme's stakeholders and how do they fit the national and international context?

b)   Target market and target graduate profile

- What is the student or participant target market, e.g. entry level, geographic and international mix?
- How is the programme promoted in these markets? How integral is this promotion to the Institution's overall promotion activities?
- For what roles on graduation is the programme preparing students?
- What are the expectations of organisations recruiting graduates of the programme?
- What are the key attributes expected of the students on graduation?

Data requirements:

SAR   Website address for programme publicity

*Base Room   a) Programme brochure
b) Minutes from Committees dealing with programme strategy, design/reviews and modifications for the past year*

2.2   Curriculum design

Standard: The Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)* should be explicit and show how the programme objectives** will be achieved. The programme management team should have a clear rationale for the curriculum design and should demonstrate how the curriculum design achieves the ILOs and how it incorporates international aspects and connections with practice as well as awareness of the broader trends in society.

[* The ILOs are defined as: What should the students know and be able to do by the end of the programme?]
[** It is useful to distinguish 'programme objectives' and 'intended learning outcomes'. The programme objectives are general in nature covering, for example, the target market, the profile of students to be recruited, the jobs for which students are to be prepared. For example, an MSc Finance may aim to recruit good Bachelor graduates in economics, or a cognate subject, to prepare them for roles in the financial services

sector. The intended learning outcomes are more specific and relate to what graduates are expected to know and be able to do, and how they are expected to behave, i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes.]

a)   Intended learning outcomes (ILOs)

- What are the intended learning outcomes of the programme in terms of:
  o Knowledge
  o Skills including interpersonal, analytical, digital and intercultural skills for example
  o Behaviours
  o International perspective
  o Understanding of the business world
  o Awareness of the broader trends in society (e.g. social responsibility)

b)   Programme coverage and content

- Describe and explain the rationale for the broad curriculum structure for the programme:
  o Why does the curriculum consist of the particular list of courses and how do they link together in order to achieve the programme objectives and ILOs? Provide a diagram or matrix that shows how the course ILOs are achieved and how they then achieve the programme ILOs and objectives.
  o Explain how specialist options/majors depend on and relate to the core courses (where appropriate).

- Describe in more detail:
  o Sequence of courses and progression to more advanced courses, including specialist options/majors (where appropriate)
  o Expected teaching and learning commitments (i.e. hours in and out of class)
  o Broad teaching aims (e.g. fostering enthusiasm for the subject) and methods
  o Broad assessment aims and methods

- List the component modules or courses and make available module information such as:
  o Module description
  o Intended learning outcomes
  o Module syllabus or content
  o Pedagogic methods
  o Assessment objectives and methods

c)   Academic depth and rigour

- Does the design incorporate an appropriate level of depth and rigour relative to the qualification being awarded?
- Does the design draw on current research in the field of study?
- Does the design promote an appropriate blend of theory with business practice?
- Is there an appropriate balance between intellectual development and the development of managerial skills?

d)   Other curriculum design aspects

- Are the guidelines of external bodies (such as statutory and professional bodies and relevant subject associations) taken into account in the design, e.g. EQUAL[5] Guidelines for MBA and other programmes, or PRME[6] for ERS, or EOOCs[7] Standards & Criteria for online courses/programmes?
- To what extent is the design up-to-date and/or innovative?
- How explicit is the international focus of the programme design in terms of:
    o Curriculum design
    o Course and module content
    o Development of intercultural and managerial skills
    o Availability of study or work abroad programmes
    o Development of knowledge of language(s) other than native tongue
- To what extent are the needs of the world of practice embedded in the design?
- How are the broader trends in society, including ERS, incorporated into the design?

Data requirements:

SAR   *The overall programme rationale, definition and matrix of ILOs - the description of the structure and design should be brief but explicit*

Base Room   *Formal documentation on programme specification and module descriptions as listed in p. 31 of the EPAS Process Manual Annexes (Annex 6).*

2.3   Design of delivery modes and assessment methods

Standard: The methods of programme delivery should match the needs of the target market but also be designed to achieve the programme objectives and ILOs. The assessment regime should be designed so as to test the achievement of the ILOs by students with sufficient rigour and integrity.

a)   Delivery modes

- Define the delivery modes which may include
    o Full time study
    o Part time or modular
    o Distance, online, open or blended learning[8]
    o Work based learning, etc.
- How do these meet the needs of the defined target markets and the programme objectives?
- How do the delivery modes operate (e.g. PT schedule)?

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[5] EQUAL (European Quality Link): https://efmdglobal.org/about-us/strategic-partners/equal/ or check the *Guidelines and Position Papers: Supporting Material for the EQUIS and EPAS Accreditation Systems* available on the EFMD website:
https://efmdglobal.org/accreditations/business-schools/epas/epas-guides-documents/.
[6] Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME): see www.unprme.org.
[7] EOCCS (EFMD Online Course Certification System): for the EOCCS Standards & Criteria, see https://efmdglobal.org/assessments/online-courses/eoccs/eoccs-guides-documents/.
[8] See the notes at the end of this chapter and also EPAS Process Manual **Annex 13**.

- Explain the programme structure and balance between in-class learning hours and out-of-class learning hours (e.g. do the total hours of students' work meet the requirements of the ECTS system, if applicable?). Do students receive adequate guidance for out-of-class learning (assignments, eLearning support, etc.)? In the case of an online programme, please explain the balance between asynchronous and synchronous learning processes[9].
- How does the delivery mode stimulate the international learning process?
- How are the programmes managed (e.g. separate programme managers for each year group or a specific expert team for online programmes)?
- Are the management and administrative structures, processes and non-academic staff assigned to the programme appropriate?
- Are the student handbooks and guidance notes of appropriate standard?

b)   Assessment methods

- Are the assessment methods designed to ensure that participants meet the agreed ILOs for the programme?
- Does the assessment regime explicitly identify the criteria for assessment and the range and relative weighting of the various assessment methodologies employed? Are these methods objective?
- Is there an appropriate range of assessment methods, e.g. individual examinations, course work, group assignments, projects or dissertations?
- Is there sufficient individual assessment in each course, e.g. more than 50%?
- What proportion of the course assessment is based on multiple choice question papers? The EPAS recommendation is for not more than 20%.
- Are there guidelines on the objective assessment of class participation?
- Is out-of-class learning (or synchronous learning for online programmes) adequately reflected in the design of the assessment regime?
- What provision is made for re-taking failed assessments or examinations? Is this appropriate and does it support the programme's aims and objectives?
- Is there a code of ethics (e.g. dealing with plagiarism) or a system to ensure authenticity in the case of online programmes?
- Is there an appeals system?

Data requirements:

Base Room   *a) Programme schedule for each year of study*
              b) Table of number of students registered for each course
              c) Assessment regulations

Notes

❖ In all EPAS documents, '**programme**' refers to a structured period of study, usually for a duration of one or more years, leading to a degree qualification as in 'MBA programme', 'Undergraduate programme', 'Masters programme', etc.

❖ The term '**course**' refers to a single unit of study in a particular subject within the programme as in 'Marketing course' or 'Finance course'. Each course is usually

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[9] See notes at the end of this chapter.

assessed separately and leads to a grade and a pre-established number of credits.

❖ The term '**module**' is sometimes used synonymously with 'course' and sometimes used to refer to an organised sequence within a course. In this sense, a course may be structured as a series of modules. For example, an Executive MBA programme may be organised into a series of one to three week modules over a period of two years.

❖ Delivery modes:

> ❖ **Blended learning** - A concept which combines online learning and face-to-face learning, in order to complement the latter.
>
> ❖ **Distance learning** - An approach to learning specifically designed to be carried out remotely utilising digital communication technologies. Communications between instructors and students are conducted via a range of these technologies.
>
> ❖ **Online learning** - Learning delivered and administered via the Internet – either on campus (often combined with face-to-face interactions – blended learning) or off campus.

For further guidance on online/blended/distance learning, and on TEL more generally, please refer to EPAS Process Manual **Annex 13**.

❖ **Asynchronous (learning)** - A technology-enhanced method that enables the individual to learn outside of a fixed setting (i.e., regardless of a particular place and time).

❖ **Synchronous (learning)** - Refers to learning that takes place at a fixed place and setting for all participants involved. This may also be in an online learning environment.

Chapter 3: Programme Delivery & Operations

3.1 Student recruitment

Standard: The entry requirements for the programme should be appropriate for the target market but also be sufficiently rigorous so that the students can expect to achieve the programme objectives and to match the target graduate profile. The selection processes should be explicit and be applied consistently. The Institution should present potential students with a customer focus which should include appropriate induction processes.

The programme(s) submitted for accreditation must meet specific criteria in terms of the number of graduates and the number of students on the programme that are set out in the Datasheet and Section 4 of the EPAS Process Manual.

- What are the entry requirements for the programme in terms of academic and/or vocational qualifications and work experience (if appropriate)?
- What are the processes for handling enquiries, selection and admission to the programme? Are the stated entry requirements (e.g. a GMAT score of 600 or more) explicitly used in selection decision-making?
- What is the entry profile of the student body in terms of qualifications, age, nationality, diversity, and work experience?
- Is there a match between the entry and target profiles? How does the Institution evaluate the effectiveness of its recruitment processes?
- What induction processes are in place for the enrolment of new students or participants?

Data requirements:

SAR Tables of student profiles (updated from Datasheet)

Base Room a) Sample of selection interview template, or video, if appropriate
b) Documentation on induction processes and online materials for induction of off-campus students

3.2 Pedagogy

Standard: The Institution should provide a high quality educational experience to the students appropriate to the level of the programme. There should be a variety of pedagogic methods and appropriate use of innovation and modern technologies. The learning materials should be of high quality. Furthermore, there should be focus on student learning.

- Does the Institution employ a sufficiently diverse range of learning and teaching methods and what is the balance between them? How do these support the programme aims?
- To what extent are modern technologies employed, e.g. interactive learning platforms, mobile learning, etc.?
- Explain how faculty are encouraged to use effective learning and teaching methods.

- Does the content of the learning materials cover the content required by the curriculum design and the ILOs?
- How professional are the learning materials in style and production?
- Is additional academic literature made available and what are the expectations in this regard?
- Is the quality of teaching satisfactory?
- Explain the methods used to ensure that learning is student centred rather than teacher centred.

Data requirements:

Base Room   Samples of learning materials (see EPAS Process Manual Annexes, Annex 6) and additional academic readings

3.3   Personal development of students

Standard: The Institution and the programme should support the development of students as well-rounded and confident individuals and as potential international managers.

- Does the Institution provide adequate support to develop learning skills in course participants? How is student counselling organised? What evidence is there that problems are diagnosed at an early stage and remedied where possible?
- Does the programme have general educational aims to develop transferable intellectual skills such as the ability:
  o to communicate and collaborate in digital environments
  o to argue rationally and draw conclusions based on a rigorous, analytical and critical approach to data
  o to carry out academic research
  o to demonstrate an awareness of the wider context of the programme of study
  o to develop interpersonal and team working skills
  o to synthesise general concepts and apply them to practical situations
  o to make a contribution to the community
  o to develop intercultural and international skills
  o to operate in an international context?

- How is student progress and development managed on an individual basis? How does this contribute to their overall success?
- Does the programme include sufficient individual project work for the development and assessment of a student's ability to integrate core subjects and to apply managerial skills?
- Are students provided with adequate opportunities to make practical project work as relevant and productive as possible? Are there opportunities for work based learning and/or internships and how many students take part?
- What opportunities are provided to allow students to benefit from group work including work in virtual teams and practical experience? How do these support the programme objectives?
- If applicable, show how TEL courses or modules enhance the personal development of students and how the use of TEL supports group work.

- If applicable, show how Learning Analytics is collected and used to monitor and manage student progress and to personalise the learning experience.

Data requirements:

Base Room   Handbooks and guidance notes; analytical reports

3.4   International aspects[10]

Standard: To develop as potential international managers, students should be exposed to a diverse mix of students, faculty, teaching materials and international links.

- How is the international learning experience of the programme developed in terms of:
  o A diverse mix of students
  o International perspectives facilitated by international teaching materials and course content, plus a diverse team of core and visiting faculty
  o Language development
  o Uptake of study or work abroad programmes (where applicable)
- How is the international learning experience enhanced through the use of technology?
- Show how the mix of international partnerships enhances the international learning experience of the programme.
- What are the links to international organisations (private, public and not-for-profit) institutions in the context of the programme? How are these selected, established and managed?
- How well prepared are the graduates for careers in international management?

Data requirements:

SAR   List of international academic partners and business institutions, and the nature of the partnerships

3.5   Interactions with the world of practice

Standard: The Institution should utilise its external connections in order to enhance the practical relevance of the programme and to facilitate the employability of its graduates.

- What links exist to the world of practice? How are these links selected and managed?
- How do these external connections impact on the programme in terms of:
  o Programme governance
  o Student recruitment and selection
  o Curriculum and module design
  o Teaching, facilitating, mentoring, project supervision
  o Technologies and software used on the programme
  o Provision of an international perspective

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[10] Once again, please refer to Sections G and H of the *Guidelines & Position Papers: Supporting Material for the EQUIS and EPAS Accreditation Systems*.

o Internships, career placement

Data requirements:

SAR   *List of major relevant external connections and their nature (the information must be presented in a sufficiently detailed form so that the strength and quality of interactions with the world of practice can be evaluated at the module level)*

3.6   Ethics, Responsibility and Sustainability (ERS)

Standard: The Institution should provide students with a perspective of the role of ERS in modern management so that, as future managers, they contribute to societal well-being.

- Are institutional or programme-level ERS policies in place? How do they affect the programme?
- How is ERS incorporated into the programme in terms of:
  o Programme objectives
  o Intended Learning Outcomes
  o Curriculum and course design (dedicated courses, extent of transversal coverage of ERS)
  o Pedagogy (e.g. project work supporting social causes)
  o Assessment regime (in particular student thesis writing)
- Are there extracurricular student activities in support of social causes?

Data requirements:

Base Room   *a) Policy documents related to ERS*
                b) Syllabi and sample of course materials
                c) Sample of student project papers or theses with ERS focus

Chapter 4: Programme Outcomes

4.1 Quality of student/participant work

Standard: The quality of the assessed students' work should reflect the intended learning outcomes and the intended graduate profile. Pass rates and progression statistics should be appropriate for the level of the programme.

- Are the assessments actually set at an appropriate standard for the level of the programme and have they been properly marked or graded?
- Does the assessment regime explicitly ensure that the course ILOs have been achieved and that in turn these ensure achievement of the programme level ILOs?
- Does the standard of students' work, including projects/theses, meet the programme objectives?
- Is the assessment regime applied with sufficient rigour?
- Does the students' work show evidence of academic depth and rigour (appropriate to the degree level), i.e. understanding of theory underpinning practice evidenced by references to academic literature?
- Does project work normally require problem solving, data collection and analysis, conclusions and critical thinking (e.g. understanding of limitations)? (NB: Purely descriptive work is unlikely to be adequate.)
- What steps are taken to ensure objectivity in terms of the standards being applied?
- How does the Institution ensure that the assessments relate to the individual student's own work and ability? For TEL modules and on-line assessments, set out how the Institution utilises technology to correctly identify students.
- Set out how the Institution ensures that processes for inputting student grades to the student data system are rigorous and comprehensive with appropriate checks and balances.
- What are the module pass rates and the overall progression statistics? Do these meet contextual expectations? (e.g. 100% pass rate at Bachelor level is unlikely to be acceptable)
- Where results for the final award or qualification are based on grades, what is the grade profile and does it meet international expectations?

Data requirements:

SAR   *Module pass rates for the core courses and overall progression statistics for the last 3 years*

Base Room   *Samples of course materials (a binder for each course) including exam papers (including resits), course work assignments, etc. and student answers to those assessments plus summary marks for each sample assessment. The PRT should be able to track from the questions set to the answers given by the students to the summary marks schedule.*

4.2 Graduate quality and career placement

Standard: The quality of graduates produced should match the target graduate profile and meet international norms for the level of the programme. The Institution should provide assistance with career placement and the resulting jobs profile should match the programme expectations.

a) Graduate quality

- Do the graduates appear to have developed the qualities expected from the programme?
- Does the actual range of jobs or careers obtained by graduates match the target profile? What kind of organisations employ the graduates and in what functions?
- What views do potential employers hold on the programme and are they recruiting from it?

b) Career placement

- Are the career placement services appropriate to the programme and sufficiently resourced?
- What kind of links are made to potential recruiting organisations?

Data requirements:

SAR *a) Final graduation statistics for the last 3 years including grade profile where appropriate (e.g. % merit/distinction or honours grades)*
b) Table of proportions of graduates employed within 3 or 6 months of completing the programme and distribution of starting salaries
c) Table of sample job functions
d) Data, where available, on career progression profiles

4.3 Alumni

Standard: The Institution should offer appropriate support to alumni activities for the mutual benefit of both.

- What alumni services are available to graduates and are these appropriate? What is the take-up or usage of these services?
- Are alumni active in the Institution/programme activities and in what way, e.g. programme promotion, teaching sessions, provision of project work, graduate recruitment, etc.?
- Are the alumni active in fundraising?

Data requirements:

SAR *Data, where available, on % membership and activity levels of the alumni association and career progression profiles*

Base Room *Brochures and programmes for alumni activities*

4.4 Programme reputation

- What evidence is there that the programme has high national and/or international standing?
- What evidence is there that graduates are highly sought after by recruiting organisations?

Data requirements:

Base Room   Press rankings and clippings

Chapter 5: Quality Assurance Processes

Standard: The Institution is expected to operate a formal, effective and rigorous quality assurance system to cover the design and approval of programmes, the monitoring of programme delivery, and undertaking periodic review of all aspects of the programme.

5.1   Design and review processes

a)   Institutional systems

- What formal institutional quality systems are applied to programmes and how do they contribute to the achievement of the Institution's strategy?
- How does the Institution handle the degree-awarding function? What mechanisms are used to protect the integrity and validity of the process?
- What formal quality assurance systems are in place on the institutional level and how are they applied to the programme?
- How is quality assurance embedded in the Institution's governance (assignment of monitoring responsibilities, definition of reporting lines, external oversight, etc.)? What mechanisms are in place to ensure compliance?
- Are the Institution's quality assurance activities and systems periodically subjected to internal and external review?
- Has a Chief Quality Officer (or equivalent) been appointed within the Institution? Do dedicated staff support the Institution's quality assurance activities?
- Is an operational quality management system in place, which ensures the efficiency of administrative processes (e.g. handling of grades), their continuity and transparency? Does the quality management system meet the expectations of stakeholders, in particular students, faculty and administrative staff?
- Has the applicant programme or the Institution as a whole been subjected to audits by regulatory agencies, statutory bodies, professional associations or the parent organisation within the last three years?

b)   Programme design/review and approval process

- What organisation structure supports the design/review process?
- How are various faculty perspectives (including virtual faculty) captured in the process?
- How do the student body, alumni and practitioners generally influence the design? Is feedback from these stakeholders collected systematically?
- What mechanisms exist for the assessment of consistency with the standards required by external bodies, where appropriate, for the programme content?
- How does the Institution assess the successful integration of core subjects and the application of cross-functional approaches to programme design and delivery issues?
- What are the (formal and informal) approval processes and what is the final validation procedure?

c)   Periodic programme review

- What is the process for the review and revision of programmes?
- How is an internal review carried out and how often?
- What adjustments to the programme design have been made in the light of feedback from programme teams and key stakeholders?
- Is there a process for periodic fundamental reviews? Does this involve external input, e.g. external academics?

Data requirements:

SAR   *Chart showing the QA process sequence*

Base Room   *a) Audit reports from regulatory agencies or statutory/professional bodies (if any)*
b) Documentation on programme approval or validation and periodic review reports

5.2   Quality assurance on operations

- What quality messages arise from the student evaluations of individual faculty and if applicable, from TEL?
- How is the effectiveness of learning and teaching evaluated by management? Are peer observations utilised? Explain how TEL courses or modules, if any, are evaluated.
- What types of analytics are used to monitor retention and progression?
- How is the assessment regime itself evaluated by management, particularly when new or innovative approaches are being applied?
- How is consistency of standards across courses assured, e.g. is there a system of sample double marking?
- Do students receive appropriate feedback on their assessed work?

Data requirements:

SAR   *Tables of summary student evaluations of teaching*

Base Room   *a) Evidence of monitoring of assessments*
b) Samples of completed student evaluation forms

EQUAL Guidelines

The following Guidelines, which can be found in the document entitled *Guidelines and Position Papers: Supporting Material for the EQUIS and EPAS Accreditation Systems[11]*, may be useful:

Section	Guidelines
A	Guidelines on Undergraduate Degrees in General Business & Management
B	Position Paper on Master's Degree Titles in Management Education in Europe
C	Position Paper on Master's Degree Titles in Management Education in Europe
D	EQUAL MBA Guidelines
E	Guidelines for Doctoral Programmes in Business and Management
F	EQUAL Guidelines on Collaborative Provision
G	EFMD Quality Services: Guidelines for Defining the International Dimension of Higher Education Institutions in Management and Business Administration
H	Assessing the Degree of Internationalisation of a Business School

EQUAL (European Quality Link) is the international association of quality assessment and accreditation agencies in the field of business and management education as well as national or regional associations of universities, business schools or graduates in management. See https://efmdglobal.org/about-us/strategic-partners/equal/.

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[11] Available on the EFMD website:
https://efmdglobal.org/accreditations/business-schools/epas/epas-guides-documents/.

Further Information and Contacts

If you have any questions concerning the EPAS accreditation system, or would like to receive more information, please consult the EFMD website where all documentation is available to download:

https://efmdglobal.org/accreditations/business-schools/epas/

Alternatively, you can contact the EPAS Office at EFMD Quality Services:

epas@efmdglobal.org

Notes

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