**Part II: Evaluation & Accreditation Criteria**
**European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU)**
**ECIQ Quality Review Council (EQRC)**
**ECIU/EQRC Quality Review Criteria 2001** **[ver. June 2001]**

**II-A. Institutional Eligibility:** The institution must be authorized by the appropriate government agencies to offer the program(s) under review and the academic degrees awarded to graduates. The eligible degree programs are outlined in Section I, Organization and Policies.

The program must be administered within a clearly identifiable faculty unit that is responsible for program management, curriculum development, faculty and support staff, and the allocation of necessary resources. *For joint programs,* there must be a *formal and active* joint steering committee and an identifiable faculty unit that is responsible for that part of the curriculum taught on each campus.

**II-B. Graduates:** To be reviewed for accreditation, the program should have graduates by the time of the review. Copies of final theses, project reports and papers, portfolios, internship evaluations, and examinations *must* be available for review. Students who have just graduated, or those who will shortly graduate, *must* be available to meet with the reviewers.

A new program may be reviewed for initial accreditation if the first graduating class has substantially completed the program requirements. The faculty must be able to present cogent examples of student work to demonstrate the knowledge and skills that graduates are expected to possess. The faculty also must meet standards for quality management, as described in Section II-F4.

## II-C. Criteria for Bachelor and Master-level Programs

### 1. Program Coherence, Level, and Objectives

**a. Coherence and Structure:** The program must include a coherent group of courses and educational activities that provide an appropriate coverage of fundamental and advanced subject matter in the primary discipline, or in the disciplines that form an interdisciplinary program. There must be a well-conceived progression of work, from fundamental to advanced topics, including activities that serve to integrate theory and practice.

**b. Entry and Graduation Level:** The program must have clear and verifiable entry and graduation levels. It must be shown that the designation as a bachelor- or master-level program is appropriate. Entry and exit levels may be defined in terms of national standards, selection requirements, knowledge prerequisites, curricular content, and graduate competencies.

**c. Program Objectives**: All educational programs, whatever their level or description, must have a set of credible educational objectives. These objectives may reflect traditional disciplinary and professional interests or they may be innovative in nature. These objectives should reflect an understanding of the needs of the institution, the students who are to be served, the occupations contemplated for the graduates, and relevant employers.

The faculty must show that the program objectives can be operationalised and fulfilled through the courses and activities that form the program.

**d. Academic Feasibility**: It must be shown that the faculty can provide the courses, projects, teaching and support staff, facilities and equipment needed to produce the intended results, and in turn, to achieve the program objectives.

## 2. Disciplinary and Professional Context

EQR provides a framework for the review of programs in various disciplines and professional areas. The educational and competency standards for a given disciplinary or professional area provide the context for review.

**a. Disciplinary and Professional Demands**: The demands or needs of the discipline, profession, or higher studies must be considered in setting the program objectives and in planning its courses, projects, and other educational activities. The faculty must identify those requirements, show how they were determined, and show how they are addressed in the curriculum.

**b. Employment or Advanced Studies Outcomes**: The program must be designed to prepare graduates for at least entry-level professional employment in an identifiable field or admission to advanced studies. The program should have an identifiable disciplinary or professional core of the topics deemed essential to the occupations or advanced studies contemplated for graduates

Not all programs are designed to prepare students for professional licensing or to meet requirements for professional titles. This may be the case with certain bachelors programs or innovative programs at the masters level. However, if the graduates are expected to interact with licensed or titled professionals, the program should prepare the students to function in those situations.

## 3. Program Outcomes & Assessment

**a. Outcomes:** All programs, whatever their level or description, must have a set of outcomes (intended results or performance indicators), credible in disciplinary and/or professional terms, that will verify attainment of the program objectives. These outcomes may vary according to the program design, level, and degree of specialization. However conceived, they should refer to intellectual and practical skills that can be demonstrated and assessed.

**b. Connection to Objectives**: There must be clear connections between the program outcomes set forth by the faculty, the courses and educational activities that form the program, and the ultimate program objectives.
(A sample chart appears in the self-evaluation document)

A program is the sum of its parts; therefore, each course description should state the results that the instructor expects students to achieve and the program objectives fulfilled through those results.

**c. Assessment:** Each program outcome defined by the faculty must have a corresponding means of assessment. There should be a systematic sampling and analysis of student work to determine whether the intended results are being achieved. [See Section IIF-6, Quality Management}

Course-level and student assessments may be based upon written and oral examinations, term papers, projects and presentations (individual or team-based), practical work, student and employer internship reports, properly constructed self- or peer evaluations, and final theses. Regardless of the methods used, the results

must validate the program objectives and be used to manage and improve the program. [See Section II-F6, assessment provisions]

## II-D. Curricular Content

**1. Overall Continuity:** For all higher education degree programs: The overall distribution of theoretical and practical studies, including any prior post-secondary education, must support the stated program objectives.

For advanced-level programs, the combination of the students' previous education and advanced-level studies should provide and coherent and effective educational experience. Prior education normally includes: 1. Basic and general education courses; 2. Support courses appropriate to the students' field of study; 3. Courses specific to the major program; 4. Appropriate laboratory and computing experience; 5. Some form of synthesis and application or practice.

**2. Breadth:** All study programs should be designed to give graduates the breadth needed to function effectively and to continue learning in a multi-disciplinary work environment. All programs should provide an exposure to relevant topics in other disciplines, doing so in a manner appropriate to their level and disciplinary specialization.

In some national systems, advanced studies in the final year of secondary school, or studies in a university preparatory phase, are regarded as part of the students' general education. Similarly, the breadth desired for Masters-level students may be achieved through a combination of studies and experiences at the Bachelors and Masters level.

**3. Communication:** Oral and written communication skills must be developed in and practiced in all study programs. The self-study must explain where these skills are taught and practiced within the program.

**4. Application & Integration:** Any study program, regardless of level and length, must deliver an integrated educational experience that prepares graduates to function effectively in professional employment or further studies. This may be achieved through a combination of theoretical and practical education, culminating in an appropriate integrative project or activity.

Each program should include projects *or structured activities* in which students, working individually or in teams, *apply previous learning to solve problems*. This may take various forms; e.g., classroom exercises, term projects, a thesis, a structured work project, design experiences, the construction and testing of models, or suitably designed examinations.

*Assessments of project-based education will consider:*

- To what extent it helps to integrate the students' education up to that point
- To what extent the project work or research experience anticipates the demands of the occupations or advanced studies contemplated for graduates.
- To what extent the project work requires an exercise of skills in communication and teamwork

**5.** *In disciplines and programs where computing and/or laboratory instruction and experience is essential:* the faculty must show that such instruction and experience is included in the program, and that it is appropriate and sufficient in terms of the discipline, study level, and occupations or higher studies contemplated in the program objectives.

**6.** *In study programs where language skills are essential*: The faculty must show where and how the curriculum develops the language and communication skills needed to fulfill the program objectives. This may be done by identifying specific courses, projects, and activities that serve to develop writing, speaking, and presentation skills.

**7.** Higher education degree programs should address the ethical, social, economic, and environmental concerns applicable to the professions that the graduates are likely to enter. This may be done through course work, related assignments, seminars and special lectures, or through the content of projects.

**8.** *In programs that have a required internship or work project:*
The faculty must state the results or competencies to be achieved through the work experience, establish a connection to the program objectives, and have a credible plan for evaluation. Employer participation in work project evaluations is highly desirable.

## II-E. Faculty Issues

### 1. Overall Faculty Background: Points for Evaluation

- Level and type of academic training; mix of teaching and outside experience
- Communication skills in pertinent languages
- Interest in program and quality improvement
- Scholarship as shown by scientific and professional publications
- Participation in professional, scientific or learned societies
- Participation in professional development activities
- Interaction with students.

### 2. Faculty Number, Qualifications, Adequacy

**a. Number**: A higher education degree program should have at least four (4) *full-time-equivalent* faculty members, but in any case, the number must be sufficient in terms of student numbers and the program objectives. The program FTE total may include or be enlarged by part-time staff drawn from other faculties, or instructors employed to fill specific roles.

**b. Qualifications:** The faculty must have the educational background, professional experience, and teaching competency to meet the stated objectives of the program, both at the moment of review, and for the foreseeable future**.**

**c. Adequacy**: The FTE total and balance of full- and part-time members, their capabilities, and the manner in which they are assigned, must provide adequate curricular coverage, student-faculty interaction, advising support, management of the curriculum, and a workable distribution of responsibility.

Other faculty teaching and research obligations should not detract from the program under review. Teaching loads should be such that the faculty can meet the program objectives, meet any research obligations, and pursue professional development. There should be a workable plan, with time and resources for faculty development.

## II-F. Quality Management: Program, Students, Graduates

**1.** The faculty must have written *recruitment and selection* policies for the program. The selection standards must correspond to the demands that students are expected to meet. It must be shown that students who meet these standards can succeed in the program.

**2.** The recruitment and selection practices must ensure that all first-time students have appropriate secondary-school credentials with satisfactory results on all required examinations. The preparation required for admission to a bachelor or master program must be appropriate in terms of the type, level, and demands of the study program.

**3.** Selection policies and practices for Masters or *advanced-level* programs must ensure that entering students have sufficient academic preparation at the Bachelor level, including language skills. There should be procedures for identifying and correcting weaknesses in student preparation.

**4.** There must be a faculty committee or individuals responsible for selection policy. The faculty must track the performance of each class admitted under a given set of standards to determine the validity of selection standards and procedures. There must be a procedure for modifying those standards when necessary to maintain quality.

**5.** There must be faculty committees or individuals responsible for *academic standards, assessment and grading practices, graduation rules, and advising procedures*. There must be written policies in these areas, including a policy for corrective action if student performance falls below faculty standards. There must be an effective system for curricular and career advising at a central and/or faculty level.

**6. Assessments: Internal and External**

**a. Internal, current students:** The faculty must be able to demonstrate the quality of student work through representative samples of examinations, homework, lab exercises, design projects, reports, portfolios, constructions, or other means. Whatever means of student assessment or evaluation are used, they must verify the knowledge and skills reflected in the stated program outcomes, and in that way, prove that the objectives have been fulfilled.

The faculty should systematically sample student work to determine its overall quality, student progress, and if necessary to plan corrective action. The faculty should have provisions for student evaluations of courses and teaching. When individual correctives or program-level improvements are undertaken, a written account of these actions should be kept.

**b. External: graduates, employers, others:** The institution and/or faculty should have at least a working scheme for obtaining feedback from the program graduates and their employers (or academic advisors of graduates who enter higher studies). This is a basic form of program-level assessment.

*For new programs, the plan for external assessments should be operational by the time of the review, so that it can be discussed with the visiting committee*. For programs which have been in operation for a full cycle, the follow-up survey procedure should be operational and the results included in the self-evaluation.

These inquiries should be designed to first, establish the credibility of the objectives and intended results of the program, second, to ascertain the progress of graduates in employment or higher studies, and third, to determine satisfaction with the study program. Surveys of alumni, representative employers, and graduate school advisors may be done locally or as part of a national inquiry.

**c. Action**: The follow-up plan must show how graduate and employer feedback has been, or will be, used to maintain, and improve the quality of the program.

## II-G. Institutional Support

1. **Leadership:** There should be evidence of constructive leadership by the principal administrators of the institution, division, and faculty, as well as effective communications between the various levels of administration. The issue is whether the leadership is conducive to the success of the program.

2. **Financial Policy & Support:** The fiscal policies and practices of the institution and faculty must ensure the ability of the program to meet its objectives over time. Such policies should embrace faculty, facilities, equipment, and information resources, including computer facilities.

3. **Institutional Facilities:** Study programs must have physical facilities that, given their size and scope, allow the stated objectives to be met. The mix of facilities may vary according to the field of study and type of program, but will generally include office and classroom space, study and project space, laboratories, computer centers, studios, or shop facilities.

4. **Information & Computing Resources:** Study programs must be supported by information systems, resources, and services that allow the program objectives to be met. These 'information' resources may take the form of computing hardware and software, central and faculty-level libraries, and electronic information assets. It must be shown that these resources meet program, faculty, and student needs.

5. **Laboratory Resources:** Where laboratory work is required, the facilities and equipment must support the program objectives. The instrumentation and equipment should be of the type, quality, and quantity needed to provide an effective teaching and learning experience. Programs with a laboratory component must have a working plan for the ongoing maintenance, replacement, supervision, and upgrading of facilities and equipment.

**II-H. Advisory Note: Advanced-Level Programs:** Universities throughout Europe are currently developing bachelors- and masters-level programs, such that program level becomes an important point in any review. The broad characteristics of a European Masters-level Program are as follows:

- It provides additional depth in a primary discipline, and may provide depth in the cultural, social, management or technical subjects related to the primary discipline or to the occupations contemplated for graduates. Advanced-level interdisciplinary programs should achieve a level above that of "undergraduate" degree programs.
- The entering students will normally hold an appropriate "undergraduate" (bachelors) degree or the equivalent, completed at another institution or done as an integral part of the study program under review. This may be an actual or virtual degree, the key point being the completion of first-cycle education.

*A Masters or "advanced-level" program should reach or exceed the equivalent of:*

- one year of study beyond the 4-year bachelor's degree in non-European university systems, not including review content;
- or one year beyond a European four-year university degree, not including review content;
- or two years beyond the "undergraduate" or "university bachelors" degree in the new European university model;
- two or more years beyond the level of a higher professional school diploma, subject to national or institutional policies on mobility between higher education sectors;
- or the level of final-year courses in a European five-year MSc (or its equivalent).