

ORDER 15/22

SIMPLIFICATION OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES OF STUDY PROGRAMMES IN OPERATION

Academic year 2022-2023

As part of the process of simplification of assessment procedures for study programmes, the Management Board (MB) of A3ES decided to adopt, in an experimental and phased way, a set of measures that may anticipate some procedures that will be applied in the third cycle of assessment of study programmes in operation.

In a first place, taking advantage of the experience of the first cycle of assessment of study programmes, several adjustments have been introduced in the assessment and accreditation procedures. The Guidelines have suffered some adaptations, resulting from new legislation or from the introduction of simplifications. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the clarification meetings with the assessed institutions, commonly called "site visits", were changed from *in campus* site visits, to distance conference calls. Approximately two years after the adoption of this measure, it was possible to conclude that procedures can be simplified, without questioning the rigor and quality required in these moments. The fact that we are already facing the second cycle of assessment has necessarily contributed to that, in a situation in which practically all the study programmes in operation have already been assessed in a previous moment. But also, in parallel, because A3ES has reoriented its working method to a better preparation of site visits, thus guaranteeing the effective contribution of all the experts.

In a new phase, to be initiated in the current academic year, before the beginning of the institutional assessment, the MB decided that, once A3ES has identified all the processes that will be decided based on the compliance with the criteria established in the "more simplified and flexible assessment regime to be used in the 2nd cycle of assessment/accreditation of study programmes", from now on called "Green Line", it will be asked to all the Thematic Assessment Teams (TAT) / External Assessment Teams (EAT) of the different scientific areas, with assessments in progress, to identify among the remaining processes those that, by gathering sufficient information, may lead to the preparation of reports with no need for clarification meetings. If the information is not sufficient, the EAT will address the requests for additional information that considers necessary and, in limit, will ask for some meetings limited, whenever possible, to half day per process.

Another component of this new phase, also to be initiated in the current academic year, which, as mentioned, precedes the beginning of the institutional assessment, but with exclusive application to the processes identified as ACEF/2122, determines that the "Green line"

procedures will be extended to all processes from the institutions which, though not having a SIGQ certified by A3ES, have implemented another quality system and also meet the other conditions set out in the “Green Line” regime. In these situations, study programmes may be accredited through this simplified way, without the need to appoint a EAT. The appointment of the EAT will be maintained if the Self-Assessment of these ACEF/2122 includes a proposal for curricular restructuring.

The Management Board justifies the present changes, of experimental nature, to avoid the duplication of procedures, since most of them will also be present in the institutional assessment, that will be launched still in 2022. It is also justified to analyze procedures to be adopted in the future, listening, in advance, the intervening parties about possible improvements and/or new adjustments that may contribute to a greater efficiency of the next assessment cycle of study programmes in operation.

Lisbon 5th September 2022

The President of the A3ES’ Management Board

João Guerreiro