

MEMORANDUM

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT VISITS (AINST22)

1. Preparing for the visit. Members of the External Assessment Teams (EATs) and Project Coordinators (GPs) will receive adequate preparation in the technical and practical aspects of the visits. A video (in English) is available to all members of the EATs and illustrates the objectives, importance, procedures, and results expected from the Institutional Assessment. The logistical aspects of each visit will be coordinated by A3ES (with the support of the Studies and Analysis Office) and communicated by the GPs to the members of the respective EATs.
2. Organizing the meetings:
 - The visits calendar is defined by A3ES, in articulation with the availability of the members of the External Assessment Teams (EATs) and the Higher Education Institution (HEI).
 - The EAT, in articulation with the GP, will define the actual plan of the visit to the HEI, bearing in mind the size and organizational structure of the latter, the typology of the meetings (referred to below) and the issues raised by the preliminary analysis of the Self-Assessment Report.
 - Visits should take place between 9.00 am and 5.30 pm and should be framed to clarify aspects identified in the preliminary analysis of the Self-Assessment Report and better explain activities and strategies included therein.
 - Some of the meetings defined below may be arranged differently, as in the case of small institutions, but also when the specific organizational model of the institution requires a different approach.
 - Visits should follow the standard plan:
 - First meeting, with the highest authorities of the HEI. In the case of public institutions, the president, dean, or director of the governing bodies of the institution. In the case of private institutions, the president of the founding body, the dean, or the director.
 - Second meeting, teams responsible for the Self-Assessment Report and the Internal Quality Assurance System. Discussion of the self-assessment process within the strategy of the institution, including the procedure followed to engage the academic community and the preliminary assessment of its results. Presentation of the

internal quality assurance system; findings and discussion of possible improvement proposals.

- Third meeting, with heads of the Scientific and Pedagogical Councils. The institution's strategy in the scientific and pedagogical domains and its main activities in these areas. Depending on the size of the institutions or their organisational model, it may be appropriate to hold two meetings.
- Fourth meeting, with leaders of Organic Units. The institution's strategy, namely in terms of scientific and pedagogical priorities and future options. Degree-awarding programmes and others.
- Fifth meeting, with leaders of Research Units. Institution's strategy, national and international partnerships. Situation of the Research Units with the FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia.
- Sixth meeting, with teaching staff. Organization of the study programmes (leading to a degree) and the remaining training offer, teaching models and pedagogical work, assessment methods, and inclusion of students in research activities. Performance assessment and career progression model.
- Seventh meeting, with students. Students' perspectives on academic training paths, the teaching/learning process, teaching models and participation in research activities; the overall functioning of the institution and the involvement of students in the pedagogical structures; discussion of the assessment objectives and role played in gathering opinions regarding the Self-Assessment Report.
- Eighth meeting, with technical, administrative and management staff. The contribution to the functioning of the institution; the articulation with the teaching staff's activities; and the existing and necessary resources for academic work. Performance assessment and career progression model.
- Ninth meeting, with graduates with no contractual relationship with the Institution. Graduates' perspectives regarding their insertion in the job market, namely for the creation of new activities; the agreement between the skills acquired throughout the academic path and the demands of an active life; the needs of society (and of the various non-academic entities) and the job market in the scientific area of their training.
- Tenth meeting, with stakeholders (partner entities and employers) with no contractual relationship with the Institution. Representatives of the surrounding community, partners, etc. Perspectives on the suitability of graduates' competences given the needs of the activities/tasks to be performed; the contribution of the institution's training areas to the development and problem-solving in the surrounding environment; the dovetailing of the educational offer with potential employers.
- Final Meeting with the highest authorities of the HEI, to present the preliminary findings regarding the performance of the institution, deferring the EAT's final position to the Preliminary Report.

- Internal Quality Assurance Systems. All EATs have a member with experience in assessing internal quality assurance systems. The role of this expert focuses on the assessment of:
 - The definition and clarity of the quality policy and its integration into the institution's educational project;
 - The organizational support structures for quality management in the institution;
 - Community participation in quality management and effectiveness of the information.
- Duration. The duration of the meetings should be limited (not exceeding, in principle, 50 minutes each), with breaks between sessions (10 minutes). The lunch break may be used for one of the planned meetings, such as the one with the *stakeholders*. The duration of the meetings may, however, be reduced depending on the size of the HEI and the number of participants per meeting. Private EAT meetings, for pause and discussion among its members, must be defined by the EAT itself. These meetings can take place at the end of each day, the following day or, even, after different visits under the responsibility of the same EAT. The EAT must also assign tasks to be distributed among its members.
- Number of participants. The number of elements in each meeting should be limited (in principle, an average of 10 participants, but never more than 15). This number does not include EAT members and the GP. Exceptionally, an element of the HEI may participate online.
- Discussion procedure. The approach to the discussion should be clear and defined in advance, in particular:
 - The questions should be carefully prepared by the EAT, who will define the topics on which the meeting should preferably focus on and which members of the EAT should address the selected issues. It bears reminding that some topics of the meeting can be clarified through prior requests for additional information.
 - The EAT member acting as moderator in each session (if not the president) must be identified in advance.
 - The initial part of the sessions, the greetings, presentation of the EAT members and framing of the meeting, should be kept brief.
- Additional information. The EAT may request the institution to provide additional information. The institution may respond to these requests in the A3ES platform, using the tools available or others (e.g. e-mails, videos, ...), in which case evidence must

always be incorporated/attached on to the platform. Requests for additional information will always be managed by the Project Manager.

STANDARD PLAN FOR THE VISITS TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

MEETINGS (*)	CONTENT TOPICS FOR MEETINGS (*)
Highest authorities of the Institution	Greetings. Presentation. Importance of the Institutional Assessment. Explanation of the institution's educational project and strategy.
Teams responsible for the Self-Assessment Report and the Internal Quality Assurance System	Procedure followed for the preparation of the Report. Description of the policy, structures, and participation mechanisms of the Quality Management System
Heads of the Scientific and Pedagogical Councils	Institutional strategy in the scientific and pedagogical domains. Findings.
Heads of Organic Units	Institutional strategy in terms of training offer, partnerships, and future options. Internationalization.
Heads of Research Units	Institutional strategy, priority areas, partnerships, and future options. Activities in knowledge transfer and entrepreneurship. Internationalization.
Teaching staff	Training offer, teaching models, and dynamization of activities. Performance assessment and career progression. Well-being.
Students	Integration of students of the various grades in pedagogical, scientific, and extracurricular/outreach activities. Social action.
Technical, administrative, and management staff	Human resources policy. Performance assessment and career progression. Well-being.
Institution graduates (with no link/contract to the institution)	Insertion in society and support of its graduates.
<i>Stakeholders</i> (with no link/contract to the institution)	Role and importance of the institution in the context in which partnerships and collaborations are established.
Highest authorities of the Institution	Thanks. First very brief assessment to be made by the EAT.

(*) Some of these contents can be addressed differently in meetings, namely in smaller institutions; discussions with certain participants/leaders may take place in meetings with specific formats, adjusted to the organization of the institution.

3. The definition of the actual visit plan is the responsibility of the EAT President, who will benefit from the support of the GP and requires an adaptation of the standard program bearing in mind not only the characteristics of the HEI but also the issues that may have been raised after a first analysis of the Self-Assessment Report.

4. After the definition of the specific visit plan (to be established by the EAT with the support of the GP), the GP communicates this proposal to the HEI. The HEI, within a maximum period of 10 working days, issues its opinion and defines the participants who will take part in each meeting. Participants appointed by the institution may only be associated with one of the meetings, except for members of the highest authorities of the institution.

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