



What is good self-evaluation report like? Case example by FINHEEC

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Preconditions for external review

- Evidence should be produced indicating that the agency undertakes on a regular basis external quality assurance of higher education institutions or programmes. By ‘regular’ it is understood that evaluations are planned on the basis of a **systematic procedure** and that **several quality assessments have been conducted over the last two years.**



General description of good self-evaluation report

- clear information, that it is full, frank and analytical, and that its contents can be verified by documentary or oral evidence about the ways in which the Agency meets the ENQA membership criteria/ESG
- self-evaluation report, annexes and additional documents for the site visit should be in English and made easily available to the panel
- the agency will publish the completed self-evaluation report on its website



Contents of the self-evaluation report in Guidelines for external reviews of QAAs in EHEA

- a brief outline of the national higher education system, the history of the particular agency and of the evaluation of higher education in general;
- evidence of the external quality assurance undertaken by the agency;
- details of the evaluation method applied by the agency including: the elements of the methodology; an account of the role of the external expert group; documentation of the agency's processes and procedures;
- details of the system of appeal;
- details of the agency's own internal quality assurance procedures;
- information and opinions on the agency from its key stakeholders.



Contents of the self-evaluation report FINHEEC example

1 Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council in the National Context _ 7

1.1 The Higher Education System in Finland

1.1.1 Universities _____	9
1.1.2 Universities of applied sciences _____	10
1.2 Entrance to higher education _____	12
1.3 Recent developments in Finnish higher education _____	13
1.4 Steering of higher education _____	15
1.4.1 Higher education databases _____	15
1.4.2 Evaluation in the context of Finnish Higher Education system ____	16
1.5 The history of FINHEEC and evaluation in Finnish Higher Education__	17
1.6 The structure and organisation of FINHEEC _____	19



Contents of the self-evaluation report

2 Compliance with the European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education	25
2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures	25
2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes	26
2.3 Criteria for decisions	28
2.4 Processes fit for purpose	28
2.5 Reporting	31
2.6 Follow-up procedures	32
2.7 Periodic reviews	33
2.8 System-wide analyses	34



Contents of the self-evaluation report

3 Compliance with the European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies	35
3.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education	35
3.2 Official status	35
3.3 Activities	37
3.4 Resources	38
3.5 Mission statement	38
3.6 Independence	40
3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies	41
3.8 Accountability procedures	42
4 Views of external stakeholders	45



Materials for the External Review panel:

FINHEEC Self-evaluation report
Audit manual 2008-2011
Quality manual
Plan of Action 2008-2009

Decree on FINHEEC
Universities Act
Polytechnics Act
Standing order of FINHEEC

Examples of FINHEEC's reports:
Analysis of Audit Outcomes 2005-2008
Audit of Helsinki School of Economics
Audit of Seinäjoki Polytechnic
Re-audit of Seinäjoki Polytechnic
Centres of Excellence in University Education
PhD Training and the Knowledge-based Society

The material packed into a Zip-file: External review



Preparation for the external review by FINHEEC

In ideal world, agency is supposed to give a frank picture of its' valid processes and methods - not too much extra is expected.

However, FINHEEC did improve and develop certain things keeping in mind the up-coming external review:

- 3 years prior the external review IQA gained a lot of attention and a new Quality manual came out
- Some of the ESG requirements were taken care of in the new document, for example a clear mission statement
- 2 years prior the external review the process of self-evaluation begin by appointing the person responsible for the drafting of the report
- The self-evaluation report draft was discussed in the council several times during two years
- SWOT conducted by FINHEEC council and secretariat together
- Views of external stakeholders were collected
- System-wide analysis were done



SWOT conducted by FINHEEC Council and Secretariat together World cafe in a yearly development day

Strengths: no ranking, comprehensive, same criteria for both sectors, enhancement-led, process has impact as such, engaging for external stakeholders, management made visible, flexible, inclusive, developed jointly with stakeholders

Weaknesses: emphasis on the QA-system level is too strong, external stakeholders are over-emphasized, no feedback for units within HEIs, difficult to draw the line between the QA system and the actual quality of outcomes, council bases decisions solely on the report - objectivity may be hard to guarantee, how useful is the report for the HEI?



SWOT Cont.

Opportunities: gives good tools for further development work, makes comparisons and benchmarks possible, adds public interest in the quality of HE, adds understanding between the two HE sectors, strengthens the quality-related debate, makes QA systems visible, fulfils the international need for QA label

Threats: same audit model > no added value > frustration > no commitment in the 2nd cycle, the expertise of the secretariat might narrow down, can FINHEEC compete successfully with foreign agencies? EQAR?, what if the audit model does not fulfill international requirements anymore?, too many recommendations?, every institution passes the second cycle, heterogeneity of the audit processes, because internal QA systems are so different



Views of external stakeholders

- FINHEEC collects and documents systematic feedback from all audited HEIs and members of the audit panels.
- FINHEEC used the feedback collected to revise the audit method for second edition of the Audit Manual for 2008-2011.
- The Ministry of Education asked the opinions of Finnish universities, UAS and student unions on FINHEEC in the process of updating the decree concerning FINHEEC in 2009. The Ministry kindly shared the answers received and FINHEEC utilized this material for the external review.
- **Recommendation:** Survey of the opinions of external stakeholders.



Analysis of Audit Outcomes 2005-2008

ESG 2.8 System-wide analysis

- QA has generated tools for the internal management of the HEIs and steered the HEIs to develop their activities as a whole
- The most typical framework for the QA system follows the Deming Cycle for Continuous Improvement
- QA of education seems to be most advanced
- Five out of 19 institutions analysed did not pass the audit and received a re-audit decision (app. 26%)
- Common factor in all re-audit decisions is that the HEIs in question had deficiencies in their overall QA system, in its comprehensiveness, and in its impact



Analysis of Audit Outcomes 2005-2008 Cont.

Most challenges are in

- QA of scientific postgraduate degrees and UAS Master's degrees
- QA of social interaction, impact and regional development cooperation
- QA of strategy work
- Comprehensive utilisation of evaluation and feedback data
- Definition of the role of the stakeholders in QA and of the kind of information they need and receive from QA



External Review of FINHEEC Recommendations

The review panel considered that, as FINHEEC continues to develop its audit procedures, its work would benefit from consideration of the following aspects:

- to make explicit reference to the standards and guidelines of ESG Part 1 within the FINHEEC Audit Manual, the audit process and the audit reports.
- to give continuing attention to the question of international expert participation in its processes, including consideration of international membership of the Council and the establishment of the proposed international advisory committee.
- to allow for a form of representation to the Council, subsequent to the audit report, with reference back to the team, in cases where an institution disputed the Council's decision on procedural grounds.



Thank you for your attention!

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