

FINEEC's self-assessment report for the ENQA targeted review 2026

Glossary of terms

Accreditation

Accreditation refers to an assessment based on criteria to determine if a higher education institution, a degree programme or some other programme meets the requirements for being granted a certain quality label or operating licence. An accepted accreditation is a public acknowledgement and proof of the higher education institution, degree programme or other programme meeting the criteria specified for the accreditation.

Audit

An audit refers to a process in which the higher education institution's activity and/or quality management is assessed systematically. FINEEC's audits focus on the procedures the HEI uses to ensure and develop its activities and their quality. Pre-determined criteria are applied in audits.

Criterion

A criterion refers to a framework for evaluation. It explains what kind of activity, result or quality level the aim is. A criterion may be quantitative or qualitative, and it is usually defined prior the evaluation. The activity to be evaluated or quality management is assessed against the criteria. Based on this, conclusions can be drawn regarding how well the activities or quality management meet the set criteria. The criteria can be defined as a scale or levels, for example insufficient–good–excellent.

Enhancement-led evaluation

Enhancement-led evaluation emphasises a participatory approach, trust between the implementer and participants of the evaluation, and the HEIs' responsibility for developing its activities. The methods can be tailored to the objectives and themes of the evaluation. Enhancement-led evaluation focuses on the process and outcomes with the purpose of supporting the development of activities. The HEIs receive feedback on areas requiring development and strengths in their activities.

A central aspect of the approach is the participation of different parties, such as HEIs, teaching staff and other personnel, students, labour market and stakeholder representatives, in planning the evaluation, producing evaluation data and interpreting the results.

Evaluation

Evaluation means assigning a value to something. It comprises an interpretative analysis of information about the evaluation object, and a valuation based on it. It includes systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of information on the object and an assessment of how an activity or issue is realised in relation to the set targets, norms, criteria or outcomes.

Peer review

Peer review is based on collegial assessment in which independent external experts provide feedback on the higher education institution's activities. The peer reviewers often represent an organisation or community like the one being evaluated.

Quality culture

Quality culture determines how the quality of activities is defined in the organisation, how quality and its significance are understood, and how the quality of activities is maintained and developed. It describes the atmosphere and individual's and community's commitment to the quality of activities and their development. Quality culture is created and developed in its context. It is the outcome of an open and participatory process.

Quality label

A quality label indicates that a higher education institution has passed an external evaluation based on specified criteria, for example an audit.

Quality management

Quality management refers to the practices, processes or systems the organisation uses to plan, implement, maintain, evaluate and develop the quality of its activities. Quality management can be understood as a general concept that includes the steering, control, assurance and development of quality.

Quality system

A quality system refers to a system consisting of the quality management organisation, division of responsibilities, procedures and resources. Each organisation decides on the objectives, structure, operating principles, methods used and development of its quality management in its quality system.

Quality work

Quality work refers to the concrete actions an organisation takes to maintain and improve the quality of its activities. Quality work is quality management in practise.

Self-assessment

Self-assessment is the organisation's assessment of its activities and how it improves them. Through this process, the organisation identifies its strengths as well as areas in need of development. The insights gained enable the organisation to set meaningful objectives and to guide the further development of its operations accordingly.