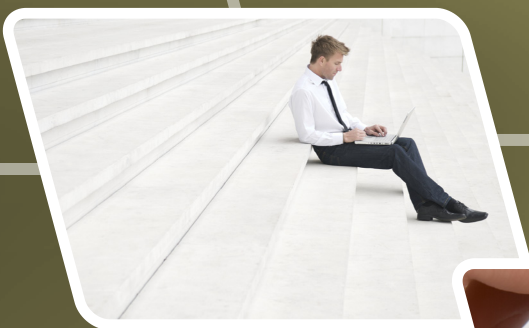
UNIQUe

European Universities Quality in e-Learning



Information Package

For further information about the UNIQUe Certification, or to apply.please contact:

EFQUEL

Rue des deux Eglises, 35
1000, Brussels
Belgium
+32 2 6393032
unique@efquel.org

Forms are also available from our website:
http://unique.efquel.org

Design by Knowledge Innovation Centre.
Carbon Offsetting by natureOffice – this publication is carbon-neutral.

Contents

Introduction to **UNIQUe**

The field of technology-enhanced learning is extremely diverse, and in an environment with thousands of providers and offerings, it is often hard for the observer to distinguish high quality programmes from the rest. The UNIQUe quality label is a unique concept of quality improvement which is theoretically sound and at the same time is meeting the expectations of practice.

Many of the existing quality initiatives in this field focus heavily, if not solely, on online instructional design. The UNIQUe approach goes above and beyond this, focusing on the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to enhance educational provision and learning support, throughout the entire breadth of activity of the Higher Education Institution. This sophisticated approach demands an applicant to meet high quality standards for programme objectives, programme structure, content, resources and learning processes.

UNIQUe accelerates **quality improvement** and Innovation

The UNIQUe criteria demand proof of continuous iterative innovation in all aspects of pedagogical design and course provision. In addition, they have been designed to be complimentary to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, thus allowing for quality improvement in Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), in alignment with on-going adaptation of systems in line with the Bologna reforms

The label focuses strongly on innovation in all its criteria. Since systemic processes of innovation are bound to enhance the use of information-technologies, the label will take note of, and evaluate, the institution's entire innovation ecosystem.

The end result of a UNIQUe review is not just a quality certification, but also a set of recommendations to improve TEL quality at the institution in question. Since the UNIQUe certification is valid for three years, each subsequent evaluation, takes into account the recommendations from the previous meaning that an institution must continuously improve its processes and procedures to keep the certification. In addition, researchers at the European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning continuously go over the observations from audit reports, and update guidelines for peer-review teams accordingly, ensuring that reviews take the very latest state-of-the-art into account when conducting a review.

UNIQUe is the result of extensive **testing and research**

The UNIQUe system and criteria have been based on nearly a decade of research into quality certification of technology enhanced learning. The Certification was designed by the European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning, the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), the MENON Network, and EUROPACE – all of whom have decades of expertise in technology enhanced learning. The UNIQUe criteria themselves are based on ten years of research and development activities which included:

- Three European Commission-funded development projects, bringing together 15 partner institutions from around Europe, looking into various aspects of quality certification of e-learning,
- A wide process of consultations with researchers, quality experts and European stakeholders
- A series of UNIQUe pilots tested the criteria and the process with ten Higher Education Institutions over two years
- The current set of criteria were further reviewed based on the feedback received by the first UNIQUe applicants, and from quality assurance agencies in Europe, as well as in Eastern Europe and the Middle-East.

UNIQUe offers a transparent **and reliable certification**

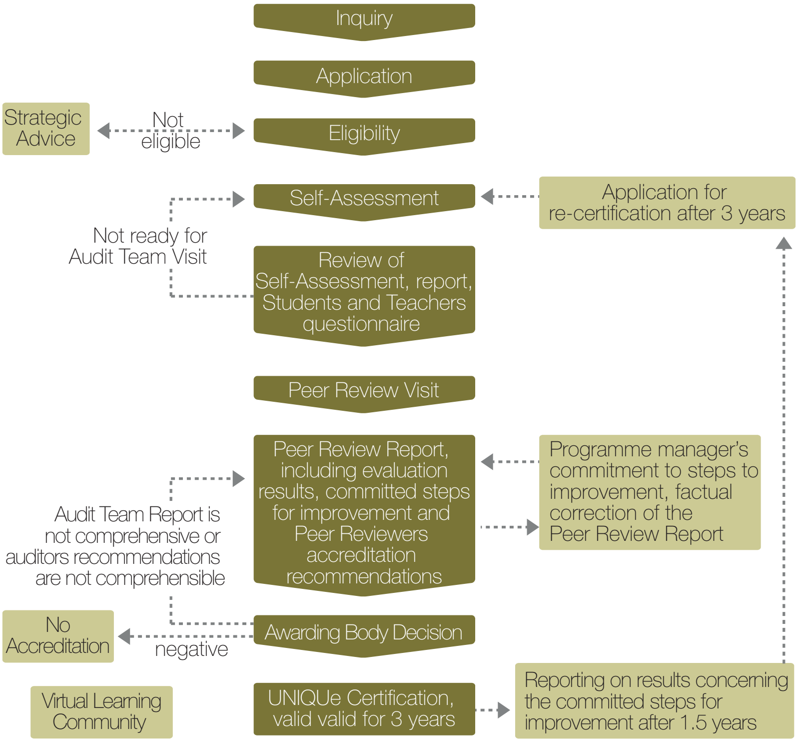
All the UNIQUe criteria, together with supporting descriptions and documentations are publicly available on the web for all to see. The system is divided into six distinct stages, which offer a formalised approach in each step. In addition, the final decision on certification is made by an independent awarding body, based on the recommendations of an expert peer-review team.

Institutions are publicly awarded at an annual awarding ceremony held during the EFQUEL Innovation Forum, and are given a label to publicise their achievement on their websites and promotional materials. In addition, EFQUEL regularly creates compilations of best-practice in collaboration with certified institutions, and from time-to-time invites them to share their practices in various academic fora.

Certification
Process

The UNIQUe process is structured in six very distinct stages and offers a formalised approach in each of the steps:

0 - Inquiry
1 - Application
2 - Eligibility
3 - Self-Assessment
4 - Peer Review
5 - Awarding Body
6 - Continuous Quality Improvement



Applying for UNIQUe

Pre-Application

The European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning (EFQUEL)- operates the UNIQUe certification. An interested institution may contact the UNIQUe desk - for additional information, and to enquire about any aspect of the process prior to application.

EFQUEL can also arrange a briefing meeting (organized via video-conferencing), with those responsible for the process within the institution, so as to explain the criteria and the process in detail.

At the moment, all communication can only be carried out in English, with the institution providing translation and interpretation as necessary, where it wishes to operate in a different language. All documentation, process manuals etc. are shared with the institution at this stage, since during the application phase the institution explicitly acknowledges that it has received, read and understood the documentation making up the UNIQUe package.

Application

Application for a UNIQUe review, requires the submission of a questionnaire that collects basic information as to the nature and scope of the institution's activities, and which must be signed by the head of the applicant institution. At this stage, the institution also nominates a review manager, who will be the main point-of-contact for the review team, and will be responsible for organizing the self-assessment and peer-review within the applicant institution.

Two types of institutions may apply for UNIQUe:

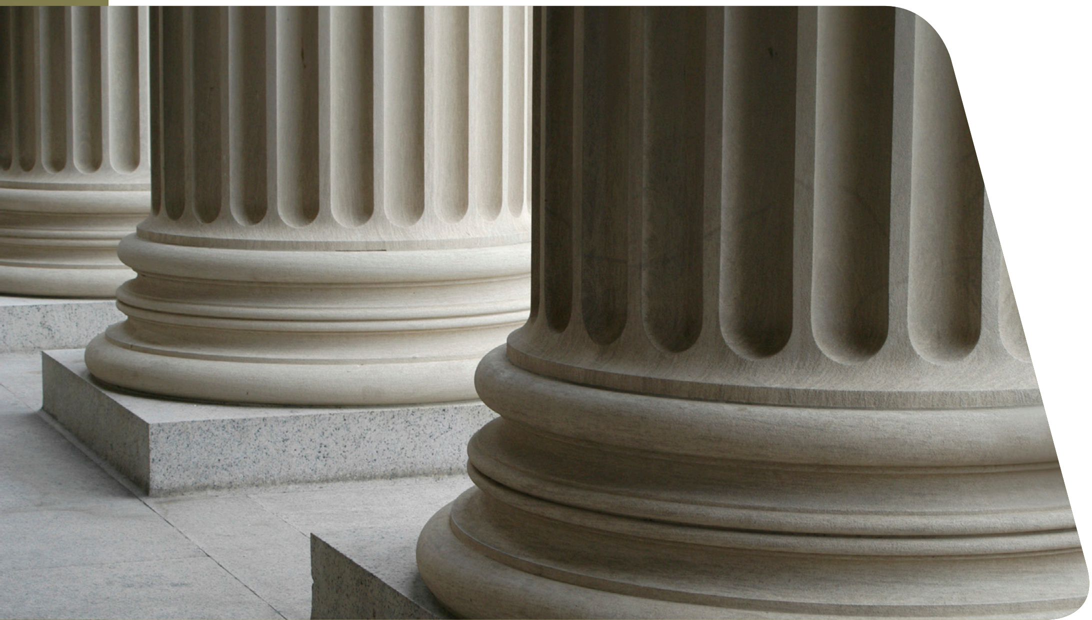
- Institutions of Higher Education, such as universities, institutes for professional higher education, advanced vocational institution etc.
- Independent Institutes, operating within Institutions of Higher Education, such as schools, faculties etc.

Eligibility

On receipt of the application, the UNIQUe secretariat organizes an eligibility check of the application. Four criteria are applied in performing the check:

Nature of the Institution	UNIQUe for Institutions - the institution is accredited by its relevant national authority - the institution is active in the provision of qualifications at ISCED Level 5 and above	UNIQUe for Institutes - the institute must be located within an institution meeting the UNIQUe criteria - the institute must have academic autonomy from the institution (autonomy in curricular design and provision) - the institute must be characterized thematically, not by mode of provision (e.g. a school of law is eligible, a distance learning institute is not) - the institute's application must be formally supported by the institution
Evidence of TEL Activities	The institution must show that it is active in the field of Technology Enhanced Learning.	
Ability to conduct evaluation	From the initial application, the secretariat determines that the applicant has a sufficiently developed quality system to allow it to conduct a system-wide self-evaluation, and organize a peer-review.	
Administrative Check	The application form is appropriately filled in, appropriately signed, and includes appropriate guarantee of payment.	

Once the secretariat has performed the eligibility check, the applicant is informed of the decision. At the same time, the secretariat will also appoint a review secretary, who will guide the institution through the process of the review, and be the institution's sole point of contact from here forward.



Being declared eligible signifies that:

- the application has been formally accepted;
- the review period has started from the date of notification
- UNIQUe will work with the institution towards the twin objectives of quality improvement and future certification.

Following the notification, the review secretary will hold an introduction meeting with the institution, so as to explain the self-assessment process, and begin planning for the peer-review team's visit. The meeting will be held via video-conferencing, although it can be held at the institution's request, at the latter's cost.

It is important to note that the declaration of eligibility to enter the process does not constitute any guarantee or any formal prediction of the university's ultimate success in achieving certification.

Self-Assessment

During the eligibility briefing, the institution will be advised on how to initiate the Self-Assessment (SA) process. The aim of this advice is to ensure that the university's management understands what is expected and how best to proceed.

This self-evaluation process is designed to help the university management gain a clearer understanding of its strategic position by assessing its strengths and weaknesses, by measuring the principal constraints and opportunities determined by its environment, and by looking realistically at the coherence between its ambition and its resources. The process is also designed to lead the institution to judge the overall effectiveness of its own processes. The self-assessment report is intended to be self-critical rather than promotional, and analytical as well as descriptive.

The Report is structured around the UNIQUe Criteria, with the institution asking to explain its position with regards to each of the criteria, describe any on-going (but not completed) initiatives in the area, and critically analyse the strengths and weaknesses of its current setup with regard to the criterion. As part of the process, the institution is also expected to administer a questionnaire provided by the UNIQUe team to a number of teachers and students. Documented evidence of all claims is expected to be provided as part of the self-assessment process. Where possible, this should always be provided in English, however it can be provided in other languages where necessary. The chair of the peer-review committee may ask the institution to translate certain documents or part thereof as needed.

Where the institution has queries as to the proper interpretation of specific criteria, to the appropriate format of responses, or to the necessary evidence to be provided, they are encouraged to contact their review secretary, who will provide clarification.

The self-assessment process should he completed within 120 days of notification of eligibility, although extensions may be permitted for valid reasons.

Peer **Review**

Before the Visit

The Peer Review Visit, consists of a 2 day visit, during which the UNIQUe peer reviewers meet and interview a variety of people representing the university's different activities and interests (e.g. institutional leadership, students, tutors, authors, administrative personnel, instructors/trainers).

The Peer-Review team is nominated by the UNIQUe office, from amongst the members of its peer reviewers' pool, all of whom have received training as to conducting UNIQUe reviews. A team of 3 persons, (a chairperson and two experts), will be nominated to conduct the review 60 days after the declaration of eligibility.

Following the notification, the review secretary will coordinate and approve a visit date with the institution and with the peer-review team, which must take place within 60-90 days following the deadline for receipt of the self-assessment report. Once the dates are agreed, the institution is responsible for arranging for the travel and accommodation of the review team.

On receipt of the self-assessment report, the peer-review will analyse the self-assessment report, the eligibility check, and the surveys received from students and teachers. After 30 days the team may ask subsidiary questions to complement the self-assessment report, ask for additional supporting documentation, and for any translations of documents they require.

At this point, the review team will also provide a list of persons (or categories of persons) they wish to interview during the peer review visit, and an estimate of the amount of time they intend to spend on each interview. The institution is

expected to answer all questions and provide a draft agenda for peer-review visit within 15 days of receiving the requests through the review secretary. The agenda of the visit should be finalized 10 days before it takes place.

During the Visit

The Peer Review Team arrives at the institution on the evening prior to the Peer Review Visit, when they organize an internal team meeting. The aim of the meeting is to discuss the way in which they will organise their work during the Peer Review Visit and determine the issues on which emphasis should be placed. The team will be under instructions not to make informal contact with any members of the institution following the start of the peer review. Therefore, any informal meeting the institution may wish to organize may only be carried out on the evening prior.

During the peer-review visit the team will organize interviews with members of the institution as according to the agenda. The team will provide for its own recording of proceedings, and requires that each interview is held in confidence with the person outlined on the agenda (excluding even the institution's review manager). However, the institution will be expected to provide interpreters where interviews are unable to be conducted in English. The team will also hold several private meetings during the two days, so as to share impressions following the interviews, and continuously prepare their first observations and recommendations for the institution. To this end, the team must be provided with a private meeting space in the institution, which is made available during the entirety of the review, and where the team can have meals.

At the end of the peer review visit, the institution's management, the Peer Review Team's preliminary conclusions and recommendations for quality improvement during an oral feedback session. Based on these conclusions and recommendations, the management and the peer reviewers will jointly discuss ways for improvement, including future steps that will be taken and measurable goals if applicable. The jointly agreed upon major steps for improvement will become part of the Peer Review Report and hence will be a part of the Awarding Body decision.

After the Visit

Within 30 days of the peer-review visit, the chairperson will prepare a detailed peer review report, setting out the Peer Review Team's assessment of the university against the UNIQUe criteria and standards and including the steps agreed upon for the institution's future development. These recommendations and descriptions will be of three types:

- Agreed upon developments: These are steps for improvement that have been jointly agreed upon between the management and the peer reviewers at the end of the Peer Review Visit. The management is expected to follow these steps for improvement and report on progress within 1.5 years after successful certification.
- Recommendations by the Peer Review Team: These are suggestions which the Peer Review Team, based on the professional experience of its members, believes to be helpful for the management to achieve its strategic objectives. The programme management is not obliged to follow these recommendations.

The report is at this point sent to the institution, which will have the opportunity to correct factual errors in the report, and comment upon the recommendations for improvement. The institution will not get the opportunity to see the numerical ratings or the recommendations to the Awarding Body at this point. The institution must respond to the report within 14 days of receipt.

Based on this, the review team will finalise the report, which will include rating the institution's compliance with each criterion, and based on this, will make a recommendation as to certification, to the UNIQUe awarding body.

Awarding **Certification**

The UNIQUe Awarding Body, composed of a chairperson and 4 expert members, makes the final decision on certification, within 60 days of certification.

The awarding body meets virtually, and evaluates the peer-review report, as submitted by the review secretary (who will have checked it for completeness), and will be presented to the awarding body by the chairperson of the review. The awarding body's role is to consider whether the recommendation of the peer-review team is in line with the evidence collected, and to verify that the process of review was appropriately carried out. Based on these considerations, the awarding body, which takes its decisions by unanimity, can choose to:

- accept the recommendation outlined in the report
- reject the recommendation outlined in the report

Where the recommendation outlined in the report is rejected, the report is sent back to the peer-review committee, with a request to revise the report, after which it is reconsidered at the next meeting. Reasons for rejection might be a lack of enough information to make a decision, a disconnection between the recommendation and the level of quality observed at the university, or a recommendation which lacks comparability with other peer review reports.

The peer-review team may make three types of recommendation:

- to recommend the Institution for a full certification, which is valid for three years
- to recommend the Institution for non-certification
- to recommend the Institution for a candidate certification, valid for one year, at which time a full certification or a non-certification will be decided upon, based on progress during the last year

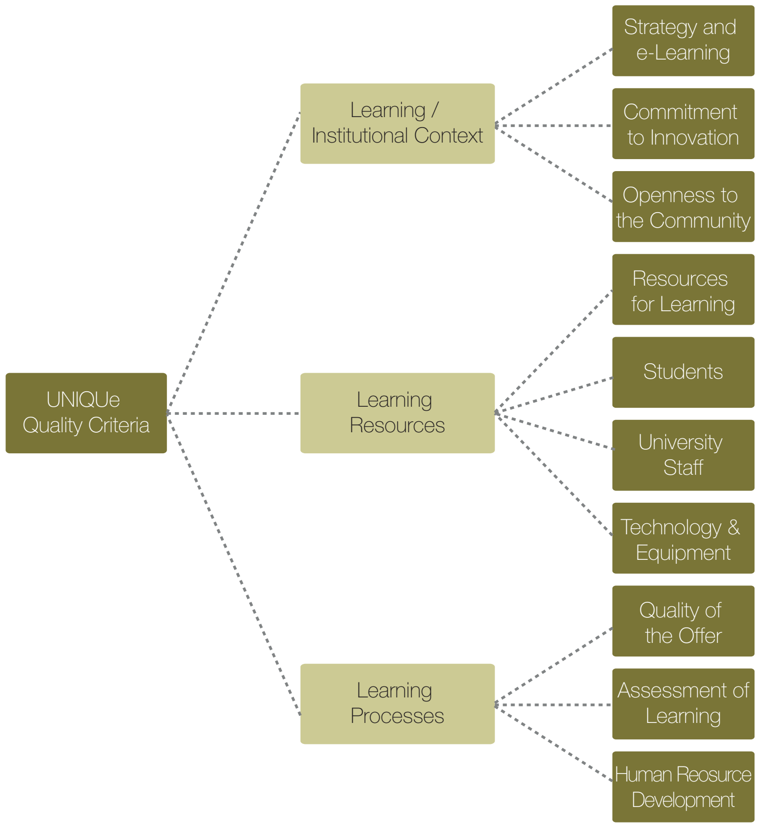
The awarding body, by accepting one of these recommendations, makes a decision as to certification. Within 3 days of the meeting, the UNIQUE secretariat will dispatch an official notification to the institution, with the decision taking effect from the date of notification.

Continuous Improvement

Along with the decision from the awarding body, the UNIQUe secretariat will dispatch a set of recommendations for improvement, as well as the full and final report of the team. The awarded institution is expected to act on these recommendations during the three year validity of the certification. The EFQUEL secretariat will send a questionnaire to the institution at the mid-term of the certification, asking for documentation of the progress made in implementing the same recommendations. Once a re-certification visit takes place at the end of the three years, the review team and the self-assessment module both taken into account the progress made in the decision on re-certification.

The UNIQUe **Criteria**

UNIQUe is aimed at the institutional certification of universities for outstanding work in the use of ICT-based learning. Its quality label can be articulated in three areas: resources, processes and context. The UNIQUe quality criteria break down as follows:



Grading the
Criteria

UNIQUe is structured as follows:

- Areas
  - Criteria
    - Sub-Criteria

In the self-assessment report, the institution is asked to assess itself against every sub-criterion. The peer-review team, will check this assessment, and grade each sub-criterion, which is used to calculate a mark for the criterion.

So as to be recommended for a full UNIQUe Certification, the institution must be judged in substantial compliance with **every one** of the criteria. Substantial Compliance is determined as follows:

Grading a Sub-Criterion	The peer-review team judges the institution's performance, and assigns a value based on such performance. The options are as following: - Not compliant with sub-criterion (Value = 0) - Partially compliant with sub-criterion (Value = 5) - Compliant with sub-criterion (Value = 10) - Full and best practice compliance with sub-criterion (Value = 15)
Total Theoretical Grade for a Criterion	The total theoretical grade for a criterion is calculated as: Number of constitutent sub-criteria × 15
Judging Substantial Compliance on a single criterion	To be considered as being in substantial compliance with the criterion, an institution must score at least 80% of the score which would be achieved, if the institution were to be marked as compliant on every sub-criterion. Thus, the grade for determining substantial compliance is set at: 80% × (number of constituent sub-criteria × 10)

Examples of usage

If one takes a criterion which is made up of 6 constituent sub-criteria, then:

Maximum score:	6 × 15 = 90
Substantial compliance score:	80% x 6 x 10 = 48

Based on this, if the institution is judged as:

Judgements on sub-criteria	Total Score	Result
Compliant on 3, partially on 2, not on 1	40	not compliant
Compliant on 3, partially on 3	45	not compliant
Compliant on 4, not compliant on 2	40	not compliant
Best practice on 2, compliant on 2, partially on 2	60	compliant
Best practice on 1, compliant on 3, not complaint on 2	45	not compliant
Best practice on 1, compliant on 1, partially on 4	45	Not compliant
Best practice on 1, compliant on 3, partially on 2	55	compliant

Compulsory sub-criteria

Several of the sub-criteria are considered as to be critical to any quality learning experience. For this reason, in addition to meeting the grading scoring on a criterion level as outlined above, to be recommended for certification, the institution must be found to be compliant with each of these sub-criteria:

- Evidence is available that e-learning/TEL is an integral part of the institutional strategy
- The institution chooses the course delivery methods based on criteria of pedagogical appropriateness, social sensitivity and cost-effectiveness.
- Systemic collaborative working procedures and tools are employed in order to share knowledge developed with the community
- All technology-based procedures are appropriately tested according to industry best-practice.
- Course Design and Delivery Guidelines are available for relevant staff
- Flexible pedagogic and learning delivery models are adopted in order to meet different users' needs
- Tools and procedures for evaluation of the outcomes of the learning process- including using data collected from stakeholders and graduates- are taken into consideration for improving the quality of the offer
- Continuous efforts are made to promote an optimal learning environment
- Both formative and summative assessment are used
- Training services and materials (e.g. Guidelines) for the staff in charge of learner's services are available in order to support them (if required) in the process of moving from conventional teaching to (fully or partially) on-line teaching

The
Guidelines

Area 1: Learning / Insitutional Context
Criteria 1: Strategy and e-Learning

1.1.1 **Evidence is available that e-learning/TEL is an integral part of the institutional strategy**

- Do high-level strategic documents make mention of e-learning TEL?
- Is pedagogical and technological innovation a key priority for the university?
- Does the institution identify itself with these values in its communications?

1.1.2 **The use or potential application of e-learning, or innovation of pedagogies/content thanks to technology, is specifically referred to within a strategic document applicable to the entire institution.**

- Within the university's organisational structure, and within the university's student body, who is affected by the policies referred to in 1.1.1?

1.1.3 **Quality procedures relating to e-learning and TEL, are in place, and are at least as stringent as those applied to 'traditional' learning**

- Does the institution apply any quality controls or standards which are specific to e-learning and TEL?
- What quality procedures are applied to e-learning / TEL offerings?
- Do these differ from those applied for other offerings?

1.1.4 **Institution has procedures in place to ensure the visibility and transparency of the provision, methods, tools and results of e-learning and TEL, both to students, as well as to the wider academic community.**

- Kindly provide a detailed outline of: the information about courses and about individual models provided to (a) prospective students, (b) current students, (c) graduates for the purpose of recognition by other institutions.

1.1.5 **Results from new research into pedagogy and provision are incorporated into teaching/learning/management practice**

- What incentives are in place to encourage innovation (in pedagogy and provision)?
- How is it monitored?
- How does the administration and staff keep abreast of developments?

1.1.6 **Adequate mechanisms and procedures that support effective coordination between the different e-learning Units/Departments, and between these and other university departments are in place.**

- Please explain the structure of your e-learning/TEL responsible units/staff, and how they interrelate.
- Please explain how they are managed, and how they coordinate their activities, both formally and informally.

1.1.7 **Internal stakeholders are represented within decision-making structures of the institution, and particularly those related to ICT policy.**

- Please provide an organogram, explaining your decision-making structure, and indicate which internal stakeholders are representing on the various boards, and to what extent (membership and rights).

1.1.8 **The institution involves external stakeholders in the process of defining the strategy for ICT use, either through regular consultation, or through involvement in decision-making bodies.**

- Please explain the type of consultation which takes place with external stakeholders.
- Include involvement on decision structures, research into stakeholder perceptions/needs, seminars/workshops etc. Please outline specifically how these consultations affect ICT policy.

1.1.9 **The institution's accessibility (disability) policy also encompasses all of the institution's ICT offerings.**

- Explain how the institution's disability policy deals with ICT-issues, including access to resources, equity of learning provision and other relevant issues.

Criteria 2: Commitment to Innovation

1.2.1 **The institution chooses the course delivery methods based on criteria of pedagogical appropriateness, social sensitivity and cost-effectiveness.**

- What factors are taken into consideration when deciding upon the mode of delivery of a course?
- What sort of decision-making and consultation process is applied to it internally?
- What is the raison d'etre of for the e-learning / TEL offering?

1.2.2 **The institution has a policy in place to ensure constant iterative curricular innovation.**

- What procedures exist governing the updating of curricula for (a) courses and (b) course modules?

1.2.3 **The institution has a policy in place whereby institution staff are kept up to date with technological developments and their impact on pedagogical approaches and course content.**

- What communication, support, training and/or communication tools does the institution employ to keep staff updated on latest developments in their field, both in terms of content and provision?

1.2.4 **Established procedures and practices for the creation and distribution of content online are promoted and supported**

- Explain what procedures and/or incentives are in place to promote the distribution of content online.
- What content is put online?
- What proportion of total research / course content does it make up?
- Who has access to it once published?

1.2.5 **The institution has made a link between IP and innovation policy (e.g. Through patenting, knowledge transfer guidelines)**

- Does the institution's intellectual property policy promote innovation?
- How?

Criteria 3: Openness to the Community

1.3.1 **Systemic collaborative working procedures and tools are employed in order to share knowledge developed with the community**

- How do staff involving with TEL and e-learning collaborate and share knowledge with their peers, both within and outside of the institution?
- What incentives, programmes and/orprocedures exist to promote this?

1.3.2 **Analysis and review of the potential needs within the community and labour market for technology supported learning are regularly carried out**

- Does the needs analysis performed amongst the community take into account factors which may affect the mode of provision?
- What sort of indicators are used to check this?
- How regularly does such analysis take place?

1.3.3 **Coherence between the Institutional objectives/mission and needs/ demand of the community/market in which the institution operates is periodically checked by governing body**

- Does the institution's overall mission, and more specifically, its e-learning and distance learning policies, reflect the needs of its environment?

1.3.4 **e-Learning offerings are covered by an equivalent credit/module system to the university's other offerings.**

- Please describe what qualifications may be achieved through ICT / TEL courses.
- Where these are different from standard offerings, please specify how.

1.3.5 **The institution's CSR policy takes notice of the role of technology in supporting its objectives.**

- Does the CSR policy of the institution make specific references to technology?
- Is technology used to support the objectives of the institution's CSR Policy?

1.3.6 **ICT is used for cross-border collaboration with students and teachers from different backgrounds and cultures having, as its main purpose, the enhancement of intercultural understanding and the exchange of knowledge**

- Please describe any initiatives, policies or projects you have in this area, particularly where related to virtual mobility.

1.3.7 **Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure transparency and recognition of all the institution's credits and qualifications.**

- Please describe how your institution's qualifications (including ALL ICT/e-learning offerings) are mapped to the national qualifications framework, and/or equivalent national legislation where no QF is in place.

Area 2: Learning Resources

Criteria 1: Resources for Learning

2.1.1 **All technology-based procedures are appropriately tested according to industry best-practice.**

- How is the learning management software you use tested by the provider?
- How have you tested/piloted different elements of course-provision both from pedagogical (suitability for teaching / support to teaching/ learning) and technological (usability, reliability etc.) aspects?

2.1.2 **The institution has an archiving policy for learning materials.**

- How are learning materials created for/in your courses archived throughout the institution?
- Are different procedures in place for e-learning / TEL courses?

2.1.3 **Electronic databases are used to significantly expand the scope of a universities' collection, either through the inclusion of full-text electronic resources, or through the operation of an efficient library-loan system**

- Please describe how technology is used to enhance your library offering.
- What is the scale of your digital library-offering in comparison to the rest of the collection?

2.1.4 **Learning resources are made available are labelled according to a prevailing meta-data standard, and made available in a searchable and harvestable database.**

- What technical standards are used for meta-data labelling, searching and harvesting?
- How is the procedure managed and implemented?
- Does it apply to all resources archived by the institution?

2.1.5 **Metrics on students' usage of learning resources are collected, and made available to quality and course review procedures.**

- Which metrics are collected? How are they analysed?
- How is the data reported to quality / course review responsibles?
- How often does this happen?

2.1.6 **There is a specific budgetary allocation to further development of TEL and research into the same.**

- Please explain how your development budget is allocated generally, and highlight the allocations for TEL and TEL Research.
- Please consider short/medium term budgets, and the long-term development strategy.

Criteria 2: Students

2.2.1 **All administrative procedures can be conducted through the university intranet.**

- Does the university intranet support: processing of admissions, subscription for course modules and exams, paying of financial obligations to university, grade monitoring, e-portfolios (or transcripts)?
- Are any other administrative procedures digitised? Are digital forms signed digitally?

2.2.2 **All relevant current information and notifications are delivered to students through a web-portal.**

- Are course and lesson updates, timetables, student services, student news (including social) delivered through the web-portal?
- Who is responsible for providing such information, who updates it?

2.2.3 **Students are provided with detailed and written information on each course available.**

- Does the information include (a) technical requirements, (b) organisational specifications, (c) pedagogical specifications?
- Is it based on learning outcomes described in terms of knowledge, skills and competences?
- Which European and/or national standards were applied in formulating the descriptions?

2.2.4 **Students' progress in e-Learning is monitored (through continuous assessment) and made available to students**

- Please describe how student progress is monitored in TEL / e-learning courses.
- How are students made aware of their progress?
- How are students given the opportunity to discuss their progress in person?
- Are there formal procedures/standards in this respect?

2.2.5 **Students evaluation on the learning experience is collected and used for improving the e-Learning experience**

- How are student evaluations collected?
- Who is responsible for analysing them, and how are they analysed?
- Who is given the results of the analysis?
- How is the analysis systematically used to create recommendations, and how are they in turn turned intro recommendations?

2.2.6 **Individual learner support (methodological , technical and organisational) is available**

- What support services are in place for students?
- How and when can they be contacted?
- How long is their response time?
- Do they have performance targets?

2.2.7 **The institution provide the appropriate services required to ensure that students can acquire the ICT skills necessary to access an e-Learning course and/or utilise technology to improve their learning.**

- Please describe any training and/or educational materials which is provided to students who need to improve their ICT skills so as to follow an e-learning offer.

2.2.8 **All students have access to convenient guidance service including psychological, career and social guidance services.**

- What guidance and counselling services are made available to students?
- Are these all also availalble to off-campus students?
- How and when may they be contacted?

2.2.9 **Students have universal access (from campus, dorms and home) to library and course resources**

- Which library and course resources do students have access to online?
- Where do they need to be to access them?

2.2.10 **Tuition fees are fair and equitable when compared with those existing local fee structures being reported for similar type courses**

- What fees are in place for e-learning/blended learning courses?
- What are the fees for equivalent courses offered on campus?
- Where there are significant differences between the sets of fees, please explain.

2.2.11 **Assuming access to a computer, students are provided with all digital/physical materials and services, including internet, necessary to fully use the e-learning/TEL offering.**

- Do the students need to buy any additional software, learning resources and/or other materials?

Criteria 3: University Staff

2.3.1 **Course Design and Delivery Guidelines are available for relevant staff**

- What applicable standards are there for design, and review and provision of courses?
- Who do these apply to?
- Guidelines might include peer-review rules, division between practical work and teaching, rules for contact hours, guidelines for writing exams, guidelines on describing course structure etc.

2.3.2 **Methodological, organizational and technical support for any staff wishing to develop e-Learning resources is implemented across the entire institution.**

- What sort of collaborative working tools are made available for staff?
- What sort of online notifications, updates, information boards are made available digitally?
- How are teaching resources archived and shared?

2.3.3 **Technical services to support staff interaction (e.g. one-to one; one to many, peer review) by different means (virtual teaching staff room, forums, blogs and on-line and off-line help) are implemented**

- What sort of collaborative working tools are made available for staff?
- What sort of online notifications, updates, information boards are made available digitally?
- How are teaching resources archived and shared?

2.3.4 **It is ensured that all faculty members are qualified in information technologies by providing continuous possibilities and incentives for further qualification and development**

- What training opportunities are offered for general faculty to upgrade their ICT skills?
- Are incentives are offered to encourage them to do so?
- Are there any compulsory competence-levels for staff?

2.3.5 **All staff involved in course design and teaching hold regular academic titles / positions within the university structure.**

- Are the e-learning / TEL teaching and research staff located within the regular faculty structure?
- Do they have the same career advancement prospects as general staff?
- Do they have the same rights with respect to accessing resources and funds for research and personal development?

2.3.6 **Published and easy to understand IPR policies exist to help staff understand utilization of 3rd party material and publication rights for their own materials.**

- Does the institution have an official IPR policy regarding these issues?
- Is support material on the IPR policy (brochures, website etc.) available or is training given?

Criteria 4: Technology & Equipment

2.4.1 **Staff and students have single sign-on access to various applications (i.e. using the same password to log into different applications)**

- What is the level of integration between the university's various learning management, communications and administrative systems?

2.4.2 **Available technical learning resources have been tested for usability, and rectified to overcome common technical problems**

- How are systems tested and assessed for usability, interface, efficiency, ease of use, etc.?
- What sort of data is collected on real use and common problems?
- How is it analysed and reported, then fed into quality review processes and bodies?

2.4.3 **A strategy to overcome technological barriers for disadvantaged groups is in place (disabled students, rural areas, socio-economic disadvantage etc.)**

- What strategies exist to ensure equity of access, participation and completion for disadvantaged groups?
- What role does technology play in enhancing equity?

2.4.4 **Course authoring and production tools are able to cover a variety of actual formats and also take fully into account the principles of reusability, accessibility, interoperability and durability, aimed at facilitating on-going applicability**

- Does the institution have a policy on formats for learning resources?
- What are the principles of such policies? What steps are taken to future-proof learning resources?
- How do these principles reflect in selection of technological platforms?

2.4.5 **Strong, end-to-end encryption, is used to protect all personal data of users in the system.**

- What technological measures are employed to protect confidential user data?
- What sort of access rules are applied to the data?
- Who is responsible for overall management of data?

2.4.6 **Common agreed production quality standards are available (consistency in graphics, compatibility audio/video..)**

- What technical quality standards are applied to production of multimedia?

2.4.7 **Best practice procedures are implemented for backups. At very least these include mirroring, and asynchronous off-site backup.**

- Please describe your backup arrangements. What sort of procedures are in place for (a) continuity of service, (b) disaster recovery?

Area 3:Learning Processes

Criteria 1: Quality of the Offer

3.1.1 **Flexible pedagogic and learning delivery models are adopted in order to meet different users' needs**

- How are users' needs, in terms of form of learning provision, monitored and assessed?
- How do the quality processes take note of these, and incorporate them into the iterative improvement of the offer?
- Please provide evidence that the mode of learning is tailored to (a) ideal acquisition of the learning outcomes and (b) optimal learning environment for students based on their socioeconomic conditions

3.1.2 **Marketing of the offer is freely available and is credible, comprehensive and current.**

- What procedures are in place to ensure that the materials online are up-to-date?
- How is accuracy maintained?
- Are any materials provided only upon request?

3.1.3 **Learning opportunities include a clear statement/description of intended learning outcomes, learning content, expectations of learner activities, opportunities for interaction, and assessment methods**

- Is a common format used for description of learning opportunities in the prospectus?
- What information abouteach course is provided?

3.1.4 **Systems and services to support communication amongst students and staff (inter-intra faculty) are implemented.**

- How is technology used to enhance student-staff communication?
- What tools are used (both personal and collaborative)?
- Are there incentives in place to encourage more communication?
- How heavily are the tools used?

3.1.5 **The e-Learning offer provides technical, organizational and pedagogical support for those using the services from registration to graduation (by means of written materials, face to face sessions and on-line help).**

- What support services are available to students at each of these stages, in terms of online help, training, one-to-one support and anyother type of assistance?

3.1.6 **Tools and procedures for evaluation of the outcomes of the learning process- including using data collected from stakeholders and graduates- are taken into consideration for improving the quality of the offer**

- Please describe the indicators (and data collection methodology) you use to determine the success of your learning processes, including e-Learning/TEL processes, as well as any targets you may have in place.
- How is this data systematically integrated into your institution's quality cycle?

3.1.7 **Continuous efforts are made to promote an optimal learning environment**

- The learning environment may be described as all aspects of the learning experience aside from the curriculum itself.
- It includes all measures taken to facilitate learning by providing a comfortable and conducive environment for learning, whether through physical or digital optimizations.

3.1.8 **Course learning outcomes include the acquisition of soft / transversal / transferable skills and competences**

- Do your e-learning / ICT-course descriptions include the acquisition of transversal competences amongst their learning outcomes?
- How are these elements integrated into curricula?
- Are any quality standards/criteria used in preparing the standards?

UNIQUe
European Universities Quality in e-Learning

Criteria 2: Assessment of Learning

3.2.1 **Both formative and summative assessment are used**

- What standards exist for assessment during and at the end of studies at module and course level?
- How is student's progress assessed (a) during studies, (b) at the end of studies?

3.2.2 **Continuous Self-assessment opportunities are made available to students to allow them to reflect on their learning experience (promoting self-development initiatives)**

- Provide a list of self-assessment methods employed by students in your courses.
- How is the presence of such tools monitored, and how is it encouraged?

3.2.3 **The institution has appropriate tools and procedures to secure the assessment process and ensure confidentiality of the results**

- What policies and technical systems are in place to ensure a secure assessment process?
- What confidentiality policies apply?

3.2.4 **Fairness and transparency in assessment are ensured by allowing auditing of every step of the assessment process.**

- Please list the different forms of assessment practiced in your institution, and describe the audit procedures available for each one.

3.2.5 **Methods to detect plagiarism and other malpractices are in place, and communicated to students**

- What systems are used to detect plagiarism, copying etc.?
- Are students provided with information/training opportunities in proper referencing and other standards of academic practice and writing?

3.2.6 **Timely, comprehensive and constructive feedback is provided to students**

- Do students have full access to their work and to the detailed assessment (based on the original work) of the work?
- How is the viewing of such assessments organized, and what procedures and standards govern students seeking or staff providing feedback?

3.2.7 **An efficient and fair system for grievances from assessment results is in place**

- How can a student appeal a grade?
- Are there any charges involved?
- How long does it take for his complaint to be decided?
- What is the procedure for considering appeals?

3.2.8 **Peer evaluation methods are supported and/or group work is encouraged for students**

- Please describe examples of how students have been encouraged to work in peer context.
- Do any examples exist of guidelines for including group work and/or peer assessment in course plans?

Criteria 3: HR Development

3.3.1 **Teaching staff needs analysis are regularly implemented through staff competence reviews or self-assessment processes.**

- How often does each member of staff review their performance and competences?
- How is this review carried out?
- How are results compiled and acted on (a) individually,(b) institution-wide

3.3.2 **Training services and materials (e.g. Guidelines) for the staff in charge of learner's services are available in order to support them (if required) in the process of moving from conventional teaching to (fully or partially) on-line teaching**

- What training courses, individual support and learning resources are available to staff in adopting ICT, from (a) a technological and (b) a pedagogical standpoint?

3.3.3 **Acquisition of ICT competences are an integral part of continuing professional development for staff.**

- What incentives are available for acquisition of ICT competences?
- Is ICT integrated into the training plan of the overall institution?

3.3.4 **All staff responsible for course design undergo processes of peer-learning and review, evidenced through academic resources for attendance to conferences and activity in academic publications.**

- What are the requirements from staff in terms of participation in the global academic community (conferences, publications, research etc.)?

UNIQUe

Associated Services

In its position as a leading authority on certification of e-learning and technology enhanced learning, EFQUEL can offer a number of advisory services which can help a university improve its preparation for certifications, as well as its overall TEL implementations. The advisory services are provided by a pool of topic experts, as well as actors in best-practice UNIQUe certified institutions:

These can include:

- Pre-application check of compatibility with UNIQUe
- Mock Assessments
- Consultancy on mainstreaming of ICT Policy
- Specific advice on implementing UNIQUe recommendations

In addition, EFQUEL organises a series of yearly events based around sharing best practice in use of ICT for education. These can be found at http://www.efquel.org.

EFMD

MENON Network

EUROPACE

EFQUEL
European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning