

## **EVALUATION OF FACULTIES CONCEPT SUMMARY**

### **CONTEXT**

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Between 2005 and 2009, the seven faculties of UNIL each carried out an initial evaluation according to the UNIL Quality Concept in force at that time. Since then this concept has been revised, on the one hand taking account of the observations from different people involved in the evaluations, and, on the other hand, the start of the programme evaluations in January 2010.

The frequency of the faculties' evaluation, originally scheduled for four years, has been extended to six years to maintain the strength of the exercise while relaxing the frequency.

### **OBJECTIVES**

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The evaluation is used as the basis for the faculty to develop a faculty-based strategy in which it outlines its objectives and suggests coordinated actions to achieve them. This strategy defines the overall directions for the faculty's development and constitutes the frame of reference for cooperation between the faculty and management.

The analysis focuses on the faculty's mission, operation, activities and positioning by involving stakeholders.

### **VALUES**

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UNIL's ambition is not simply to establish a methodology and a quality assurance approach, but to develop a quality culture within the Institution.

It is about convincing members of the university community to subscribe to the idea that it is important to develop and improve the Institution's structures and activities in respect of the following values:

- search for fitness of purpose (and not conforming to standards);
- central place for reflexivity;
- taking account of distinguishing features;
- participation of the people concerned;
- involvement of external experts;
- search for a balance between transparency and confidentiality.

Each evaluation process established by UNIL is based on these values which are also incorporated in the framework of the faculties' evaluation.

### **METHODS BEHIND THE APPROACH**

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#### **Responsibilities**

The Dean is responsible for the entire process. He or she may appoint a person who oversees the evaluation (e.g. a Deputy Dean).

#### **People and structures involved**

So that different points of view can be taken into account during the evaluation process, a commission representing all the members of the faculty assumes the role of an advisory body. It can be an existing or *ad hoc* faculty commission. As it is implemented at UNIL, this

committee includes members of the four university corpora (teaching staff, intermediaries, students and administrative staff).

### **SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS**

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Self-evaluation is at the core of the approach for the faculty's evaluation. The emphasis is on an in-depth (qualitative) and self-criticising analysis which is aimed at developing the faculty, based on the opinion of the groups of people concerned.

In order to guide the faculty in its self-evaluation work, a reflection framework has been created for a variety of topics related to governance, teaching, research and resources. For each theme, the faculty is invited to report on what exists, highlighting topics which provide satisfaction and identifying any necessary developments or improvements.

The faculty also assesses the implementation of the development plan formulated at the end of its last evaluation and any programme evaluations which have run since.

At the end of this reflection the faculty will draw up a medium-term strategy, i.e. it will define the objectives which aim, on the one hand, to take advantage of the main strengths and opportunities, and, on the other hand, to minimise any weaknesses and threats identified.

The faculty produces a self-evaluation report which enables it to summarise the information gathered during the self-evaluation phase. It contains a development plan describing the strategic objectives highlighted.

The Dean ensures that the Faculty Board has the opportunity to read this report. The report is then sent to the experts.

### **EXTERNAL EVALUATION PHASE**

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In order to ensure greater legitimacy, objectivity and credibility for the evaluation process, the results of the faculty's self-evaluation are subject to the advice of a committee of external experts comprising four people. This committee is appointed both by the faculty and the Commission for Teaching and Research Enhancement (COVER).

The faculty chooses the people to whom it gives credit. They are essentially people recognised for their academic skills and work in a field close to that of the faculty.

COVER chooses both individuals who have experience in the field of evaluation procedures, and in managing an academic unit or a higher education institution.

The role entrusted to the experts is not that of assessing the faculty, but the self-evaluation process and its results. As a basis for their evaluation they analyse the self-evaluation report, and then conduct a two and a half day visit on site during which they engage in discussions with faculty members.

At the end of the visit the committee of experts orally presents its first impressions to faculty members, especially to the people encountered and to the members of the self-evaluation commission.

After the visit, the committee of experts drafts the first version of the report.

The faculty assumes a position in respect of the document, indicating whether the expert's remarks require the development plan to be adjusted.

The committee of experts finalises its report based on the faculty's response.

Lastly the management considers all the documents from the evaluation and discloses its analysis during a meeting with the Deanship. It particularly issues an opinion on the manner in which the process has been conducted, as well as the adequacy of the faculty's development and UNIL's strategic plan.

The final version of the faculty's development plan incorporates the management's comments.

### **NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS**

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A summary document produced by the faculty at the end of the process is made public. As guarantor of the process, COVER ensures beforehand that this summary reports on the main elements of the self-evaluation and that it has incorporated the experts' point of view.

### **MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

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The follow-up measures are an integral part of the evaluation process, the process is only worth doing if the proposed developments are implemented.

This is why the Dean sends the management a brief follow-up report of the faculty's evaluation every year. This report describes how the development plan is being implemented and if any adjustments are required.

This report is then discussed at the annual meeting between management and the Deanship. The management can thus check that the measures planned by the faculty are still in line with its strategic objectives.

### **RESOURCES TO SUPERVISE THE APPROACH**

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The quality cell and the Centre for teaching and learning support (CSE) support the person who is responsible for this approach within the faculty.

The management also grants funding so that one or several support staff can be hired within the faculty.

### **IMPROVING THE PROCESS**

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At the end of each faculty evaluation the impressions of the people involved in the various stages of the process are gathered. Thus, proposals may be made to remedy any difficulties identified in the implementation of the process.