

## SUMMARY OF THE CONCEPT OF EVALUATION OF DEGREE PROGRAMS

### CONTEXT

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The constant determination to improve in all fields, the increasing need for accountability, and involvement in the Bologna process have for several years placed the question of quality at the heart of the priorities of the University of Lausanne (UNIL).

New ideas concerning the evaluation of teaching and research, both nationally and within UNIL, invite us to pay particular attention to the development of study programmes. It appears necessary, within UNIL, to set in motion systematic procedures for the evaluation of degree programs. These will be associated with self-evaluation procedures in faculties at intervals reset to six years in order not to overburden faculties.

During this period, each faculty will evaluate several<sup>1</sup> of its study programmes according to a concept and recommendations developed by the COVER for all faculties.

The evaluation process for study programmes that UNIL wishes to put in place and the reflection this involves will moreover be an excellent opportunity for faculties to become familiar with the "National Qualification Framework for Swiss Higher Education" (nqf.ch-HS)<sup>2</sup> and to use it to describe each of the proposed courses.

### VALUES

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The quality system developed at UNIL takes account of the Institution's working rationale and its specific institutional culture, particularly as regards quality. This culture is composed of a number of values, considered to be essential, which underlie all quality assurance measures put in place internally. The concept of evaluation of degree programs is based on the same values.

### OBJECTIVES

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The process of evaluation of degree programs provides an opportunity to take stock of learning objectives, to identify the strengths of the course and any aspects requiring improvement, to draw a conclusion and then to determine new priorities.

### SCOPE AND PLANNING

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#### **Scope**

The intended focus of the evaluation is degree programs (Bachelor's, Master's). According to its special features and internal organization, each faculty is free however to focus the evaluation on individual disciplines or specific programmes.

#### **Frequency**

Half of UNIL degree programs will be evaluated initially between 2010 and 2015. The other half of degree programs will be evaluated in the five following years (2015-2020). The procedure will therefore be carried out exhaustively every ten years. Faculties will

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<sup>1</sup> See "Frequency" below for more information.

<sup>2</sup> The countries engaged in implementing the Bologna reform have undertaken to develop and apply by 2010 their own national qualification frameworks for higher education. A "qualification framework" is a systematic description of the educational system based in particular on the qualifications acquired by graduates at each level of study. It will then be the responsibility of each university to use this framework to describe, for each degree program and study programme offered, the level of competence that must be reached by its students.

also be asked to take stock every three years with respect to evaluations that have been carried out.

### ***Planning***

Planning of the evaluation of degree programs is undertaken by the deans. This proposal is then validated by the Rectorate.

The COVER, as guarantor of this process, is informed of the choice made by faculties and any subsequent adjustments.

## **DETAILED PROCEDURE**

### ***Responsibilities***

The entire process is the responsibility of the dean, who may appoint a person in charge of self-evaluation (vice-dean for teaching, course leader, director of unit responsible for the course, etc).

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

To encourage the involvement of groups of people concerned with the degree program, the dean / person in charge of self-evaluation decides whether to make use of a consultative committee existing in the faculty (teaching committee, study plan committee, subject area committee, etc) or to set up an ad hoc committee (hereafter "degree program self-evaluation committee"). As is customary at UNIL, these committees include representatives from all four university bodies (teaching staff, intermediate staff / assistants, students and administrative staff).

### ***Actions***

The evaluation process consists of five steps.

#### ***1. Self-evaluation***

This first step allows internal reflection on the degree program based on the opinions of interested parties (teaching and intermediate staff, students, study advisors, graduates, employers, etc). It ends with the drafting of a self-evaluation report (of around ten pages) and the preparation of a development plan containing concrete proposals for development of the degree program.

The dean ensures that the self-evaluation report and the development plan are presented to the Faculty Council. These documents are then forwarded to experts.

#### ***2. External Evaluation***

Two groups of experts are involved in this process to strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of the evaluation:

- two experts from outside UNIL, specialists in the discipline and proposed by the faculty, express their opinion of the degree program (content, interconnection of subjects taught, relevance of the degree program in relation to what is done elsewhere, etc); they express their opinions on developments envisaged by the faculty for the degree program and make proposals to foster its development.
- two members of UNIL university community, from outside the faculty, express their opinion on how the self-evaluation process was conducted; they are drawn from a pool of experts composed of representatives of all UNIL faculties; each internal expert is made aware beforehand of the specific nature of the evaluation process by means of a workshop which will reflect upon the evaluation of degree programs.

The experts base their judgement on an analysis of documents and a meeting with members of the degree program self-evaluation committee during an on-site visit.

### *3. Finalisation of the development plan by the faculty*

The dean / person in charge of self-evaluation examines the experts' report.

He or she then writes a short letter to the Rectorate stating the faculty's position in relation to comments made by the experts and whether they entail any adjustments to the development plan.

The Rectorate adopts a position in writing on documents generated by the process. The final version of the development plan incorporates comments made by the Rectorate.

### *4. Communication of results*

The dean / person in charge of self-evaluation prepares a summary of the results, which is published on the website of the faculty concerned and the COVER website after validation by the latter.

### *5. Follow-up of the process*

In order for this process to have a real effect on the quality of the degree program and in order to capitalise on the investment in time and energy involved, it is important to ensure its follow-up.

The dean, supported by the units and different consultative authorities concerned with the degree program, is responsible for implementing the development plan.

Every three years, the dean is responsible for submitting to the Rectorate an assessment of all degree programs that have been evaluated. Members of the faculty and UNIL Rectorate can thus monitor the progress of the various development plans relating to evaluation of the degree program.

## **SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

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A self-evaluation framework has been prepared to facilitate the process of evaluating degree programs.

Questions concerning the quality of degree programs have been identified to underpin the reflection that will need to be carried out within the faculty. These questions have been grouped into five topics: 1. Contextual relevance of the degree program; 2. Content and organization of the degree program; 3. Working of the degree program and pedagogical approaches; 4. Human, material and financial resources; 5. Results and effects of the training.

**It is important to underline that the self-evaluation report does not consist of answers to all questions posed, but of a summary of the framework's five topics.**

## **SELF-EVALUATION REPORT**

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The self-evaluation report is the result of an analytical approach. It describes the degree program, its structure, its development since the last evaluation or in recent years, as well as the context in which it is placed. It contains a summary of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities to be taken and difficulties to be overcome, to ensure the future of the degree program. This summary serves as the basis for preparing a development plan.

### ***Development Plan***

The development plan contains concrete proposals for development of the degree program. The aim firstly is to consolidate what has been achieved so far, and secondly to improve the quality and relevance of the degree program.

## **RESOURCES SUPPORTING THE PROCESS**

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The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CSE) and the QA cell support the dean / person in charge of self-evaluation in this process.

The CSE may provide support in identifying and developing methods of data collection and also processing.

The QA cell provides support as and when required to the person in charge of self-evaluation and the degree program self-evaluation committee, particularly at the start and end of the process.

Once the evaluation process is over, the CSE is available to help in the development and/or implementation of follow-up activities.