



ECA Principles for the Selection of Experts

Dublin, June 2, 2005

Introduction

- Convinced of the importance of agreed procedures and principles for the selection of experts and the composition of expert panels;
- As a necessary step towards reaching the aim of mutual recognition of accreditation decisions;
- In line with the Conclusions of the fourth meeting of the Consortium, 2-3 December 2004 in Zürich;
- Based on standard 15 of the ECA Code of Good Practice;

The members of ECA agree on the following principles for the selection of experts:

Procedures

- Any decision regarding the expert panel should be based on the policies, procedures and criteria of the accreditation organisation or on relevant legislation.
- Panel members must be independent and in a position to make unbiased judgments. Any possible conflict of interest must be disclosed.
- The selection criteria for expert panels must be established and published by the accreditation organisation.
- Applicants undergoing accreditation are given the opportunity to comment on the selection of panel members.
- The accreditation decisions should be made by the relevant authority and not by the group of experts themselves.
- Panel members must be committed to treat all material and findings as strictly confidential.

- Panel members are briefed adequately by the accreditation organisation on the context within they are operating (national legislative environment, criteria, procedures and guidelines).

Composition

The number of panel members may vary depending on the range of competence of individual members. Gender balance should be taken into consideration when appointing a panel of experts. The expert panel should have the following mix of expertise appropriate to the objectives of the accreditation procedure.

Institutional Accreditation Panels

- experience in quality assurance in higher education
- appropriate academic qualifications and recognised expertise in the relevant area(s)
- expertise in institutional governance and management
- leadership experience in science/academic management
- relevant international experience that provides a basis for making international comparisons
- knowledge on teaching and learning methods
- expertise in development, design, provision and evaluation of higher education programmes
- knowledge of the country-specific system of higher education, institutions and applicable legislation

Depending on the national context it is commendable to include in the institutional accreditation panel:

- student representatives
- representatives from the labour market
- a significant proportion of panel members from outside the country

Programme Accreditation Panels

- experience in quality assurance in higher education
- appropriate academic qualifications and scientific or professional reputation in the relevant area(s)
- relevant international experience that provides a basis for making international comparisons
- knowledge on teaching and learning methods
- expertise in development, design, provision and evaluation of higher education programmes
- knowledge of the country-specific system of higher education, institutions and applicable legislation

Depending on the national context it is commendable to include in the programme accreditation panel:

- student representatives in the respective area(s)
- representatives from the labour market
- a significant proportion of panel members from outside the country