
Regulation of the FH Council on the Evaluation in the Austrian FH Sector

(Evaluation Regulation 8/2009; EvalVO)

Pursuant to section 13 sub-section 2a of the Fachhochschule Studies Act (*Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz*, FHStG; Federal Legal Gazette 340/1993 as amended)

Resolution passed by the FH Council on August 21, 2009

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Pursuant to section 13 sub-section 2a of the Fachhochschule Studies Act (*Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz; FHStG*), Federal Legal Gazette 340/1993 as amended, the following shall be determined by regulation:

§ 1 Objective and purpose of the evaluation

- (1) The objective of the evaluation is to promote quality improvement and to demonstrate to the public how the institution meets the responsibility for assuring and enhancing quality.
- (2) The evaluation focuses on the strategies and procedures for quality assurance and quality enhancement of the core functions of *Fachhochschulen*. The requirements specified in the evaluation topics (cf. section 5) shall be used as the basis for assessing the procedures, strategies and performance.
- (3) The evaluation is based on the quality concept "fitness for purpose". The way in which the requirements stipulated in section 5, taking into account the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG, Part 1), are met shall be critically reviewed.
- (4) On the basis of both the self-evaluation report and the on-site visit, the external evaluation by the review team aims at assessing whether the requirements of section 5 have been met in a coherent, appropriate and transparent way. In this context, improvement potential shall be pointed out. The review team is bound to maintaining a culture of dialogue with the institution.
- (5) With regard to the application for re-accreditation of an FH degree programme, the review team's evaluation report (on the institutional evaluation) will be considered evidence for meeting the statutory prerequisites pursuant to section 13 sub-section 2 FHStG as amended.
- (6) As a rule, the evaluations take place in 6-year intervals.

§ 2 Evaluation methods and principles

- (1) The evaluation consists of the following elements:
 - a) self-evaluation;
 - b) external evaluation by a review team;
 - c) comment on the review team's evaluation report;
 - d) acceptance of the evaluation report by the FH Council;
 - e) follow-up procedure;
 - f) publication of the evaluation results.
- (2) Students' representatives are to be involved in the process of self-evaluation.

- (3) The introduction of the self-evaluation report shall contain a description of the self-evaluation procedure as well as the names of the persons involved. The self-evaluation report shall be structured in accordance with the evaluation topics defined in this Regulation (cf. section 5). Within the given topics, the following aspects shall be highlighted:
 - a) description and assessment of the current situation including a strengths/weaknesses analysis;
 - b) proposals for improvements and planned measures.
- (4) The course-providing body shall submit the self-evaluation report to the FH Council by 28 February of the same year in which the external evaluation takes place.
- (5) The evaluation report of the review team shall be structured in the same manner as the self-evaluation report. It shall consist of a summary and, for each field of evaluation (cf. section 5), statements and assessments as well as recommendations that are clearly listed separately. The evaluation's time schedule as well as a list of the persons interviewed shall be attached. The quality of the self-evaluation report shall be assessed by the members of the review team.
- (6) The evaluation report shall not exceed 20 pages and shall be drawn up in agreement with all involved members of the review team. Dissenting opinions may also be given.
- (7) The summary of the review team's evaluation report is the basis for the publication and shall not exceed three pages. The summary shall include statements on the following topics:
 - a) development status of the evaluated institution;
 - b) the most significant results for each field of evaluation (cf. section 5);
 - c) the overall impression taking into account the characteristic features, strengths and weaknesses;
 - d) development prospects.
- (8) The review team shall present the evaluation report to the course-providing body for a statement. The course-providing body shall submit the review team's evaluation report including its own statement electronically by 15 August of the same year in which the evaluation takes place. The statement shall be signed by the course-providing body and – if the course-providing body operates a *Fachhochschule* pursuant to section 15 FHStg as amended – by the head of the FH teaching board.
- (9) In order to ensure an appropriate feedback process between the review team and the institution reviewed, the on-site visit shall be completed with a final meeting of the entire review team and representatives of the institution, in which the impressions gained and conclusions drawn by the members of the review team are presented and discussed.
- (10) The organisation of the evaluation procedure shall be carried out in co-operation with an independent and internationally recognised quality assurance agency.

§ 3 External review teams

- (1) With regard to the composition of the review teams, it has to be ensured that their members are knowledgeable enough to assess the evaluation topics (cf. section 5). The gender ratio within the review team shall be balanced. The members of the review teams shall be independent and unbiased.
- (2) The review team shall consist of at least four members and one assistant. The review team shall comprise
 - a) one member holding an academic management position at a comparable higher-education institution;
 - b) one member with verifiable expertise in quality assurance at higher-education institutions;
 - c) one member holding a management position in a company or non-profit organisation and
 - d) one student member.
- (3) Among the members specified in section 3 sub-section 2 a - c, at least one member of the review team shall come from abroad; at least one member shall be familiar with the Austrian FH sector and at least one member shall be experienced in carrying out external quality assurance procedures.
- (4) The course-providing body shall inform the FH Council of the constitution of the review team by 15 January of the same year in which the evaluation takes place.
- (5) The FH Council can reject the constitution of the review team if it does not comply with the provisions set out in section 3 sub-sections 1, 2 or 3. In such a case, the course-providing body shall immediately suggest to the FH Council one (or more) new member(s) for the review team. In this case, sentences 1 and 2 shall be applied accordingly.
- (6) The members of the review team shall be prepared for their activity concerning the content, methods and organisation of the performance of the external evaluation prior to their on-site visit in a timely and suitable fashion.

§ 4 Implementation and publication of the evaluation results

- (1) The FH Council shall accept the evaluation reports of the review teams if they comply with the provisions set out in this Regulation and determine whether, consequently, the requirements pursuant to section 13 sub-section 2 FHStG as amended have been met or not. In this context, it shall:
 - a) publish a summary of the evaluation results based on the evaluation reports;
 - b) determine the point of time for the performance of the next evaluation; and
 - c) define obligatory improvement measures, if necessary.
- (2) The course-providing body shall be immediately informed of the resolutions of the FH Council.
- (3) The course-providing body shall inform the FH Council pursuant to sub-section 2 by the end of the third month following receipt of the resolution in which way and by when the improvement measures will be implemented.

The FH Council shall decide whether or not it considers the way the evaluation results are implemented as sufficient.

- (4) The applications for re-accreditation or requests for amendment shall clearly outline how the FH institution has responded to results of previous evaluations that are relevant to the application.
- (5) The evaluation results shall be published on the website of the FH Council in the form of a summary. The consent of the course-providing body shall be obtained prior to the publication within four weeks after submission of the evaluation results to be published; if the course-providing body does not give its consent in time, the results shall not be published. However, the information shall be published that the evaluation results cannot be published for lack of the course-providing body's consent. The overall report or extracts from it shall not be published.

§ 5 Topics of the evaluation

(1) Strategy and organisation

1. The institution pursues clearly defined goals and an appropriate strategy to achieve them. The goals and strategy have been communicated internally and are logically linked to the publicly available mission statement.
2. All degree programmes including the programmes for further education are clearly in line with the strategic orientation of the institution.
3. The tasks, competences and responsibilities as well as the communication and decision-making processes have been defined, communicated and implemented. This also applies to the interfaces between the course-providing body and the academic sector.
4. The organisational structure and procedure ensures that the teaching and research staff is integrated in the decision-making processes related to study and research and that the students are integrated in decision-making processes related to education. The autonomy of the teaching and research staff is ensured in a way that is appropriate for a higher-education institution.

(2) Quality assurance

1. The quality assurance strategies and procedures are adequate to safeguard the quality of the core functions of *Fachhochschulen*. The institution is committed to continuous quality enhancement.
2. The quality assurance system has been defined, documented and communicated internally; the responsibilities have been assigned in a transparent manner. The students' contribution to quality assurance has been defined. It also takes place in the form of course evaluation by students the results of which are consequently incorporated to improve the quality of study programmes and teaching.
3. The institution shall make sure that the information relevant for operating high-quality degree programmes be collected, analysed and incorporated into quality enhancement measures. It publishes objective information on the degree programmes and their qualifications on a regular basis.

(3) Study programmes and teaching

1. A procedure for developing and/or advancing the degree programmes has been implemented. This procedure includes periodic reviews of the degree programmes with regard to their relevance and up-to-dateness and involves the integration of external expertise. Thereby, the connection between the vocational activities, the qualification profile, the curriculum and the teaching concept is taken into consideration.
2. The educational objectives of the degree programmes have been clearly defined and everybody involved is familiar with them. The knowledge, skills and competences to be acquired in the degree programmes in line with the professional and higher-education requirements have been documented and published.
3. The admission and acknowledgement procedures have been clearly defined, are transparent and have been communicated to everybody involved.
4. The examination requirements and modalities have been clearly regulated and communicated. The assessment methods have been designed in way that allows verifying whether the defined educational goals are reached. The students are assessed using transparent and comprehensible criteria and procedures.
5. The institution shall ensure that the resources made available to the students in the degree programmes as well as the academic, administrative and other support and assistance are adequate and appropriate.

(4) Applied research & development

1. The R&D concept is clearly in line with the strategic orientation of the institution. The resources and structures are sufficient and suitable to achieve the goals of the R&D concept.
2. Applied R&D activities ensure know-how and technology transfer in the fields of industry, business and society.
3. It is ensured that the methods and results of applied R&D are integrated into the teaching programme.
4. The R&D results become manifest in publications, patents, conference contributions, etc.

(5) Teaching and research staff

1. The recruiting procedures for members of the teaching and research staff are adequate for higher-education institutions and regulated and documented in a transparent manner.
2. Job profiles for teaching and research positions in the individual fields of activity have been specified. The proportions of teaching and research activities have been defined and ensure that the core functions of *Fachhochschulen* are fulfilled.
3. The institution ensures that the teaching and research staff is qualified and competent to perform the tasks specified in the job profile. A human resources development plan and further education options are in place.

(6) Internationalisation

1. The institution has laid down its strategic goals with regard to internationalisation and participates in international partnerships.
2. The organisational and operational measures are suitable for the implementation of the strategic goals.

(7) Infrastructure and funds

1. The institution has an approved multiannual plan detailing how its tasks will be financed. The expenses budgeted and actually spent by the degree programmes and the institution are periodically edited and documented.
2. The budgeting process and the implementation of the budget are clearly defined and documented.
3. The infrastructure and technical facilities help achieve the institution's goals in an appropriate manner.

§ 6 Entry into force

- (1) This Regulation was approved by the FH Council on August 21, 2009 and shall enter into force on September 1, 2009.
- (2) The Evaluation Regulation of the FH Council, EvalVO, 5/2004 last amended by a resolution passed by the FH Council on November 10, 2006 shall thus be repealed.

Vienna, August 2009

Leopold März
President of the FH Council