



INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

Mapping of IPA Criteria and Guidance to ESG Standards Part 1

August 2026

ESG Standards and guidelines	Mapping to the numbered IPA criteria and guidelines (using a number for the criterion and a letter for the guideline)
1.1 Policy for quality assurance Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.	For all IPA reviews, the institution's policy for quality assurance is required as part of supporting documentation and its application at programme level is assessed as part of the following: Criterion 6: Robust internal quality assurance systems are used to monitor, review, and enhance the quality of the programme. This includes the use of accessible data systems that enable the tracking of student success. Planned enhancements are tracked, communicated to stakeholders and their effectiveness is evaluated.
Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines (All providers) Institutions have a quality assurance policy that: - A is public - B is part of strategic management, so: - i is formal - ii underpins the institutional quality assurance system - iii supports an institutional culture in which all internal stakeholders are responsible for quality assurance - iv supports academic integrity and freedom - v guards against intolerance or discrimination - C is implemented through appropriate structures and processes - D involves external stakeholders.	For institutions with current IQA/IQR, ESG 1.1 has been assessed at an institutional level as part of the institutional review. For institutions without IQA/IQR, section 1 part A of the Self Evaluation Document for IPA requires the institution's policy for quality assurance, or equivalent as well as other related structures, policies and processes. The visit (including a meeting with senior management) will confirm its application and the quality culture at programme level.
1.2 Design and approval of programmes Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes.	Criterion 2: The curriculum has been developed and approved using effective and approved institutional processes and structures. It is logically structured, up-to-date with current scholarship and professional practice, and effectively integrates theory and practice. It ensures all graduates meet the required international and professional standards.

The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	Criterion 1: The programme has clearly defined, published, and relevant objectives and learning outcomes that align with the mission of the institution and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) or equivalent national qualifications framework.
Institutions have: A processes for the design and approval of programmes B programmes that meet the objectives set for them C qualifications that are clearly specified and communicated D qualifications that refer to the correct academic level. Their programmes: i are designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes ii are designed by involving students and other stakeholders in the work iii benefit from external expertise and reference points iv reflect the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (cf. Scope and Concepts)	Criterion 2: The curriculum has been developed and approved using effective and approved institutional processes and structures. It is logically structured, up-to-date with current scholarship and professional practice, and effectively integrates theory and practice. It ensures all graduates meet the required international and professional standards. See criterion 1 above. Criterion 7: Information about the programme(s) including their accreditation status, admission and entry requirements and learning outcomes is accurate, objective, and publicly available. Programme certification clearly states the qualification achieved and its recognition by relevant authorities. 7f Graduates receive certification that clearly states the qualification achieved which is mapped to published standards. See criterion 1 above. 2c Programmes are kept up to date by gaining regular feedback from internal and external stakeholders and making appropriate enhancements.

v are designed so that they enable smooth student progression vi define the expected student workload, e.g. in ECTS vii include well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate viii are subject to a formal institutional approval process.	Criterion 8: Employers, alumni, professional bodies, community partners, government agencies and other relevant stakeholders are involved, where appropriate, in the development, monitoring, enrichment and enhancement of the programmes of study. See criterion 1. 1a Learning outcomes reflect sector expectations, national qualifications frameworks and relevant subject benchmark statements. 1c The learning outcomes of modules/courses are mapped to the programme learning outcomes to ensure that there are appropriate opportunities for all outcomes to be met. 2a Logical curriculum structure ensures that students' knowledge and skills develop incrementally over the course of their studies and makes more complex demands at each level of study and prepares them for future careers. 2b Student workload is clearly defined (using credits, hours or other appropriate quantifiers). Teaching and assessment are planned so as to ensure balance in workload for students across the academic year. 8d Students have opportunities to gain understanding of the workplace and the expectations of employers. See criterion 2 above.
1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.	Criterion 3: The teaching and learning methods are designed to help students to achieve the intended learning outcomes and encourage their active participation. Assessment procedures are fair, consistent, and transparent.

A Institutions implement modes of delivery that encourage students to take an active role in creating learning processes. B Their processes for the assessment of students reflect the institution's student-centred approach to learning and teaching. Student-centred learning and teaching: - i respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths - ii considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate - iii flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods - iv regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods - v encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher - vi promotes mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship - vii has appropriate procedures for dealing with student complaints. Assessment processes allow for the following: - viii assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field	3a Teaching and learning methods encourage student participation and support the development of independent learning. The approach (whether face to face, on line or hybrid) includes sufficient variety and flexibility to cater for the needs of a diverse student population. 2d Programme delivery teams create opportunities for students to participate as partners in their learning. See criterion 3 above. 6d Institutional quality processes and procedures for monitoring and review of programmes are fully implemented at programme level. (See criterion 3). Criterion 3 and 3a. 3h Students understand the processes for mitigation, complaints and appeals.
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ix the criteria for and method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance x the assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process xi where possible, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner xii the regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances xiii assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures. A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.	3c Assessment criteria are clear and understood by students and assessors, they reflect professional and national standards and practices. 3d Students receive support in preparing for different types of assessment; and feedback on assessment promotes improvement. 3b Assessment is carefully planned to provide opportunities to demonstrate the extent to which learning outcomes have been met. They reflect the standards expected for each level of study (as defined in qualifications frameworks, subject benchmarks, professional standards). 3f Regulations for passing, progressing and calculation of final outcomes are clear, consistently applied and available to staff and students. 3g There are coherent and easily understandable policies and procedures related to academic integrity and the use of artificial intelligence. 3h Students understand the processes for mitigation, complaints and appeals.
1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.	3f Regulations for passing, progressing and calculation of final outcomes are clear, consistently applied and available to staff and students. 7d The application process and associated criteria are clearly stated in regulations and consistently applied. 7f Graduates receive certification that clearly states the qualification achieved which is mapped to published standards.

A Institutions publish regulations covering all phases of the student 'life cycle' and B consistently apply those pre-defined and published regulations. xiv Admission, recognition and completion policies, procedures and criteria are appropriate, consistent and transparent xv induction to the institution and the programme is provided xvi recognition procedures are fair and appropriate and in line with the Lisbon Convention¹ xvii there are tools and processes to collect, monitor and act on information on progression xviii graduating students receive documentation explaining the qualification gained.	3f Regulations for passing, progressing and calculation of final outcomes are clear, consistently applied and available to staff and students. 3f Regulations for passing, progressing and calculation of final outcomes are clear, consistently applied and available to staff and students. Criterion 7: Information about the programme(s) including their accreditation status, entry requirements and learning outcomes is accurate, objective, and publicly available. 7d The application and admissions processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner. 7e New entrants receive an induction to their programme that enables them to understand expectations and sources of information and support. Criterion 6: Robust internal quality assurance systems are used to monitor, review, and enhance the quality of the programme. This includes the use of accessible data systems that enable the tracking of student success. Planned enhancements are tracked, communicated to stakeholders and their effectiveness is evaluated. 7f Graduates receive certification that clearly states the qualification achieved which is mapped to published standards.
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¹ [Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region \(ETS No. 165\)](#)

1.5 Teaching staff Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.	Criterion 4: Teaching staff are appropriately qualified, have relevant expertise and experience, and engage in continuous professional development to ensure they remain up to date. The institution should provide a supportive environment for its staff.
A Institutions assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. B Institutions apply fair and transparent staff recruitment and development processes. i There are opportunities for professional development of teaching staff ii scholarly activity is encouraged iii the use of new technologies is encouraged.	4a Programme-related staff are recruited using a transparent process and supported during their induction period. 4b Staff numbers, qualifications and areas of expertise are appropriate to deliver the programme. 4c There is a process for the regular review of staff which identifies strengths and areas for development. 4e Staff research and/or scholarly activity clearly underpins programme delivery. 4d Staff can access training and development to support their teaching, use of technology and wider roles.
1.6 Learning resources and student support Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.	Criterion 5: Students have access to sufficient learning resources, including library facilities, IT infrastructure, and appropriate teaching and learning spaces. Adequate student support services and career counselling are also provided.
A Institutions have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities. B Institutions provide adequate and readily accessible learning resources.	See criterion 5 above. 5a Students can access adequate teaching and learning resources to support their studies. This includes on line and/or physical resources. 5b Reading lists, or their equivalent, are kept up to date and include a range of relevant sources.

C Institutions provide adequate and readily accessible student support. i Resources include physical resources such as libraries, study facilities and IT infrastructure and human support ii the needs of a diverse student population are taken into account.	5c Students are able to access and use the IT hardware and software that they need to carry out their assessments and other programme-related tasks. See criterion 5 above. 5d Students are aware of the professional support services that are available to them and are provided with information and advice on how to access them. 5e Professional services staff understand the needs of a diverse range of students and ensure that they have the necessary provision to meet their needs.
1.7 Information management Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.	Criterion 6: Robust internal quality assurance systems are used to monitor, review, and enhance the quality of the programme. This includes the use of accessible data systems that enable the tracking of student success. Planned enhancements are tracked, communicated to stakeholders and their effectiveness is evaluated.
Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines (All providers)	
A Institutions collect and analyse information. B Institutions use relevant information to manage programmes and other activities. C The information gathered may include: i key performance indicators ii profile of the student population iii student progression, success and drop-out rates iv students' satisfaction with their programmes v learning resources and student support available vi career paths of graduates.	6a Effective processes are in place to collect and monitor programme related data. The data allows for comparisons to be made of student outcomes and performance. There is evidence of the analysis and use of data to inform decision-making and planning. 6b Feedback from students and staff involved in the programme is analysed, reviewed and used to assure and enhance the quality of the programme. 6c Data is accessible to programme level staff to monitor student success and identify aspects where students may need further support.

	5f Resources and support services gather feedback from users and use it to make further improvements.
1.8 Public information Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.	Criterion 7: Information about the programme(s) including their accreditation status, admission and entry requirements and learning outcomes is accurate, objective, and publicly available. Programme certification clearly states the qualification achieved and its recognition by relevant authorities.
Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines (All providers)	
A Institutions publish information about their activities that is: - clear - accurate - objective - up-to-date - readily accessible i for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public ii including information about their programmes, qualifications, teaching, learning and assessment procedures, pass rates, available learning opportunities and graduate employment information.	See criterion 7 above. 7c There is a process and designated responsibility for the checking and updating of information about the programmes in all its forms including website and social media. 7a Programme information is sufficiently detailed to enable prospective students and their families to understand its requirements and key features. 7b Information about cost of study, bursaries and other financial aspects of the programme is clear and regularly updated.
1.9 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.	Criterion 6: Robust internal quality assurance systems are used to monitor, review, and enhance the quality of the programme. This includes the use of accessible data systems that enable the tracking of student success. Planned enhancements are tracked, communicated to stakeholders and their effectiveness is evaluated.
Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines (All providers)	

A Institutions monitor and periodically review their programmes. B The reviews operate to ensure that programmes achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. C The reviews lead to continuous improvement of the programmes. D Any action planned or taken as a result is communicated to all those concerned. i Reviews include: - the content of the programme to ensure it is up-to-date - the changing needs of society - the students' workload, progression and completion - the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students - the student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme - the learning environment and support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme. ii Reviews involve students and other stakeholders iii as a result of the information gathered, the programme adapted and revised programme specifications published.	See criterion 6 above. 8a Programme teams involve stakeholders and external members in reviewing and developing the curriculum. 2c Programmes are kept up to date by gaining regular feedback from internal and external stakeholders and making appropriate enhancements. 6d Institutional quality processes and procedures for monitoring and review of programmes are fully implemented at programme level. 6f Programme and course/module improvements and enhancements are planned, tracked, evaluated and shared. 2c Programmes are kept up to date by gaining regular feedback from internal and external stakeholders and making appropriate enhancements, and students have the opportunity to engage at the frontiers of their subject through research and/or other appropriate activities. 8b Feedback is sought from students and relevant external experts or bodies at appropriate stages of the programme's implementation. 6a Effective processes are in place to collect and monitor programme related data. The data allows for comparisons to be made of student outcomes and performance. There is evidence of the analysis and use of data to inform decision-making and planning.
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	7c There is a process and designated responsibility for the checking and updating of information about the programmes in all its forms including website and social media. 5f Resources and support services gather feedback from users and use it to make further improvements.
1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.	In submitting programmes for accreditation, the process of external cyclical review is being put in place.
Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines (All providers)	
A Institutions participate in cyclical external quality assurance which takes account of the requirements of the legislative framework. B Institutions ensure that progress made since the last external quality assurance is taken into account in preparation for the next.	

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