Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 3 operational guidance: Submission of the Reflective Analysis and advance information set

This operational guidance covers submission of the following:

- Reflective Analysis (RA)
- the case study/studies
- advance information set (AIS).

Timing and format of submission

The RA and accompanying material should be submitted to QAA Scotland (QAAS) eight working weeks before the beginning of the Part 1 visit.

The RA and case study/ies should be submitted both in hard copy and in electronic form. Institutions should provide QAAS with eight sets of the RA and case study/ies in hard copy. References/evidence cited in the RA should also be provided electronically and/or by web links.

AIS materials should be submitted electronically. Please discuss with your QAAS officer your preferred means for electronic submission of the RA, case studies and AIS. Depending on the format chosen, multiple sets (up to eight) may also be required.

Reflective Analysis

Guidance on the structure and content of the RA is provided in paragraphs 25-27 and Annex 2 of the *ELIR Handbook* (May 2012, third edition) which is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/ELIR-handbook-3.aspx.

The *Good practice in Reflective Analysis when preparing for Enhancement-led Institutional Review* report (November 2008), is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/Scotland/Documents/ELIR-good-practice-reflective-analysis.pdf. This report includes guidance on approaches to developing an RA, layout and length, additional material and format, and style. An updating commentary on this report (September 2013) is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Commentary-Good-practice-in-Reflective-Analysis.aspx.

Case studies

Case studies support the information base for the ELIR, and institutions should submit one or more case studies with their RA. Guidance on the selection and preparation of case studies is available in paragraphs 28-31 of the *ELIR Handbook* (see web link above) and through discussion with the QAAS officer in advance of submission.

Advance information set

The institution should submit an AIS to accompany the RA. The purpose of the AIS is to provide the ELIR team with easily accessible, direct access to information about the institution's key processes for securing academic standards and assuring quality at an early stage of the review.

The AIS should normally constitute pre-existing documentation and/or draw on existing analysis, rather than being prepared specifically for ELIR, and it should help the ELIR team to identify specific areas for exploration with the institution.

The precise detail of the AIS will vary from institution to institution. Therefore, the suite of information to be included in the set should be agreed between the institution and the QAAS officer in advance of submission.

The *ELIR Handbook* (paragraphs 32-33) indicates that the advance information set will comprise the following:

- a mapping of the institution's policies and processes to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- full reports of the institution-led quality reviews for the preceding 12-month period
- Scottish Funding Council annual returns (on institution-led quality reviews) for the period since the previous ELIR
- a sample of annual monitoring reports
- an analysis of the external examiner comments for the preceding 12 months
- an analysis of student feedback for the preceding 12 months.

In addition to the material identified in the AIS, it is useful to provide institutional strategy documents and diagrams of organisational and/or committee structures. If there are particular additional materials that your institution would like to submit in advance, please discuss this with the QAAS officer managing your ELIR. You may also wish reviewers to have access to documents referenced within the RA, such as committee minutes or particular papers. While it can be very useful for reviewers to have access to these wider materials, institutions should be conscious of providing the ELIR team with targeted information that illustrates the analysis included in the RA.

It is understood that the AIS is likely to represent a substantial amount of material but institutions are asked to bear in mind that all reviewers are expected to read the information provided as part of the AIS, therefore the total volume should not be unreasonable.
The institutions need to consider achieving a balance between providing enough material to demonstrate the key institutional processes in action, without providing such a high volume of information that it is unreasonable to expect colleagues to read and analyse it.

Institutions can help reviewers work with the material in the AIS by providing a contents list and clear signposting within the AIS, and between the RA and the AIS.

The ELIR team may request other material to support the review during the Part 1 and Part 2 visits. Usually, ELIR teams request material at the end of the Part 1 visit with the expectation of the material being made available by or during the Part 2 visit.