

Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 3 operational guidance: Submission of the Reflective Analysis case study/studies 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, case studies and AIS should be submitted to QAA Scotland 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 QAA Scotland with eight sets of the RA and case study/ies in hard copy.

References/evidence cited in the RA to the AIS and/or other sources (for example, websites) should be hyperlinked from within the text in the electronic version submitted. This helps illustrate links between the RA and the wider information set being provided and ensures ease of use of the material for the ELIR team.

AIS materials should be submitted electronically. Please discuss your preferred means for electronic submission of the RA, case studies and AIS with your QAA Scotland officer. Depending on the format chosen (for example, USB stick), 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 *Enhancement-led Institutional Review 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 QAA Scotland 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 direct and easily accessible 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 QAA Scotland officer in advance of submission.**

The purpose of providing this information is to illustrate to the ELIR team examples of the institution's approach to quality and to demonstrate their processes in action at an early stage in the review.

It is useful for ELIR teams if the information can be presented in an easy to use format with a contents list and page numbers.

The *ELIR Handbook* (paragraphs 32-33) indicates that the AIS will comprise of the following:

- mapping of the institution's policies and processes to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- set of most recent full reports from institution-led quality reviews
- 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.

Mapping of the institution's policies and processes to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Institutions do not need to map against each Indicator, but should provide an overview and evaluation of how their activity meets the Expectations of the code. Text should be provided that outlines where the institution considers it displays positive practice and where any Indicators have presented a challenge, and/or where their institution has policy or practice that differs from the sector norms, with a brief explanation.

Set of most recent full reports from institution-led quality reviews

This information should be illustrative of internal review processes across the institution. Therefore, a timescale should be chosen to ensure you provide a sample that reflects the

types of review undertaken and their operation across different functional areas. This may differ across institutions depending on their size and processes.

Scottish Funding Council annual returns (on institution-led quality reviews) for the period since the previous ELIR

These should be included in the form they were sent to the Scottish Funding Council.

A sample of annual monitoring reports

The sample should represent a cross section of activity across the institution. It should allow the ELIR team to see how the process works, including the range of information considered and typical level of analysis undertaken.

Analysis of the external examiner comments for the preceding 12 months

Analysis of the data should identify key themes arising, including where external examiners have highlighted areas of positive practice and areas for development. Institutions should demonstrate how they use external examiner reports. Information should be included that details where reports are considered within the institution and by whom and how this affects provision in practice. Evidence may include committee minutes, papers or reports, working group minutes, action plans, and so on.

Analysis of feedback for the preceding 12 months

This means analysis of student feedback during the last academic year plus any surveys or feedback activity completed in the academic year during which the ELIR is taking place. Institutions should evidence how they have used and acted upon the feedback. Evidence may include committee minutes, papers or reports, working group minutes, action plans, and so on.

Additional information

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 QAA Scotland 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.

Structure and organisation

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. 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. Providing too great a volume of material at this early stage can make it difficult for the ELIR team to gain an overview of the key matters affecting the institution.

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 the Part 2 visit.

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2014
183 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5QD

Tel: 0141 572 3420
Email: enquiries@qaa.ac.uk
Website: www.qaa.ac.uk

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786