

Enhancing recognition through self-assessment



The “Spotlight on recognition” project

- **Aim:** to enhance capacities in terms of recognition procedures in compliance with the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#), where most recognition decisions in the EHEA are taken → HEIs (instead of ENIC-NARICs or governments)
- **Target group:** staff at higher education institutions who are responsible for recognition processes and decisions (e.g., admissions officers)
- Erasmus+
- July 2020-June 2022
- Project consortium: EUA (coordinator), Crue, HRK, Nuffic

Rationale

Lack of awareness of legal framework and good practice despite abundance of available tools, frameworks, documents and networks



Provision of clear information to and training of staff responsible for academic recognition is needed

“Spotlight on recognition” self-assessment tool

- **Target group:** institutional staff responsible for designing, implementing and evaluating recognition procedures
- **Aim:** to support staff in evaluating whether institutional practice is in line with the LRC and international good practice (e.g., EAR-HEI manual)

Offers a **formative way** for institutions to

- benchmark their institutional recognition procedures and processes against required and good practice;
- assure and demonstrate that institutional recognition practice is fair and transparent, and serves the best interests of applicants, institutional staff as well as the institution itself;
- identify actionable areas for improvement.

Poll question: Has your institution ever conducted a self-assessment of its recognition procedures?

Key question	Sub-questions	Relevant section in EAR-HEI manual	Further reading
1: Policies and guidelines			
1.1. What kind of institutional regulations and guidelines for recognition procedures does your institution have?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part I, Chapter 1: Introduction to recognition, Section “The Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)” 	The Lisbon Recognition Convention (1997) is a legal tool that governs recognition in the European region.
1.2. If your staff is following (institutional, regional, national or international) guidelines, statutes or regulations to ensure a			

4: Monitoring and improving

4.1. How does your institution ensure that its recognition processes are up-to-date and fit-for-purpose?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part III, Chapter 11: Transparency and information provision 	<p>Standard 1.4 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) expresses the expectation that institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, including recognition.</p> <p>In addition, the LIREQA project report Integrating Academic Recognition and Quality Assurance: Practical Recommendations contains a set of recommendations that aim to help ensure fair recognition via quality assurance mechanisms.</p>
4.2. To what extent does your institution collect and analyse data on recognition?	If applicable, which indicators does your institution use to evaluate the quality of its recognition procedures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part III, Chapter 12: Institutional recognition practices 	
4.3. How does your institution monitor that its recognition procedures are in line with institutional regulations and applied consistently?			
4.4. How regularly are these procedures reviewed and revised with a view to enhancing their quality?	Could you provide a few examples of recent enhancement measures taken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part III, Chapter 11: Transparency and information provision Part III, Chapter 12: 	

The approach

- 1) Set up self-assessment team
- 2) Agree on division of tasks/timeline and gather data
- 3) Analyse the data
- 4) Decide on follow-up action

Ad 3) Analyse the data

- a) Is the presented evidence sufficient to support the answer?
- b) Does the existing practice match the requirements of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and established good practice and how effective is the practice?
- c) Is there room for improvement?

The self-assessment tool covers...

- 1) Policies and guidelines
- 2) Implementation of processes
 - a) Organisational aspects
 - b) Information provision
 - c) Special procedures and decisions
 - d) Tools and resources
- 3) Capacity-building
- 4) Monitoring and improving

Cf. Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle

Questions for discussion

- 1) Is this question **clear** to you ?
- 2) How would you **answer** this question at your institution?
- 3) Do you think that it would be **difficult to find a clear answer** to this question at your institution, for example when trying to collect supporting documents?
- 4) Does the comparison with the EAR-HEI manual lead to **any surprising insights**?

Self-assessment questions

1.3. At your institution, do you have a commonly applied definition of what a “substantial difference” is? What is the definition?

- To which extent is your institution’s definition of “substantial differences” based on the **purpose** for which recognition is sought and the potential of the candidate to succeed in the learning path for which they are applying?
- Compare with EAR-HEI manual Part II, Chapter 6: **Purpose of recognition**.

Self-assessment questions

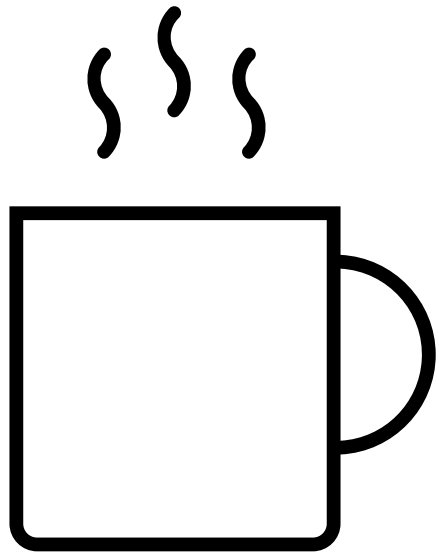
2.10. Which procedures are in place at your institution for applicants in a refugee-like situation with insufficient or missing documents?

- Compare with EAR-HEI manual Part V, Chapter 21: **Qualification holders without documentation.**

Self-assessment questions

2.11. To what extent does your institution use the full range of recognition decisions, including partial, alternative and conditional recognition?

- Compare with EAR-HEI manual Part II, Chapter 10: **Alternative recognition and the right to appeal.**



15 minutes coffee break



Self-assessment questions

3.1. How does your institution ensure that its staff has the relevant knowledge and skills to perform recognition procedures?

- No corresponding chapter in the EAR-HEI manual.

Self-assessment questions

4.2. To what extent does your institution collect and analyse data on recognition?

- If applicable, which indicators does your institution use to evaluate the quality of its recognition procedures?
- Compare with EAR-HEI manual Part III, Chapter 12: **Institutional recognition practices.**

Self-assessment questions

- 1.3. At your institution, do you have a commonly applied definition of what a “substantial difference” is? What is the definition?
 - To which extent is your institution’s definition of “substantial differences” based on the **purpose** for which recognition is sought and the potential of the candidate to succeed in the learning path for which they are applying?
- Compare with EAR-HEI manual Part II, Chapter 6: Purpose of recognition.
- Considering the purpose of recognition ensures that the assessment is accurate and relevant
- Required learning outcomes and competences depend on level and specialisation of specific study programme
- Recognition decision should state the purpose of recognition
- A change in purpose requires a completely new assessment

Self-assessment questions

- 2.10. Which procedures are in place at your institution for applicants in a refugee-like situation with insufficient or missing documents?
- Compare with EAR-HEI manual Part V, Chapter 21: Qualification holders without documentation
- LRC Article VII obliges to assess
- Absence of documents
 - Background paper
 - If needed: follow-up assessment

Self-assessment questions

- **2.11.** To what extent does your institution use the full range of recognition decisions, including partial, alternative and conditional recognition?
- **Compare with EAR-HEI manual** Part II, Chapter 10: Alternative recognition and the right to appeal
- No substantial difference -> Full recognition
- Substantial difference:
 - -> Alternative recognition (e.g., admission to another programme)
 - -> Conditional recognition (e.g., certain learning outcomes have to be achieved first)
 - -> Partial recognition (e.g., some credits are recognised)
 - -> No recognition (e.g., in the case of diploma mills)

Self-assessment questions

- 3.1. How does your institution ensure that its staff has the relevant knowledge and skills to perform recognition procedures?
- No corresponding chapter in the EAR-HEI manual.
- How does your institution ensure that **new staff members** receive relevant training?
- How does your institution ensure that all staff members enhance their capacities, or have an opportunity to **refresh** their knowledge and skills?
- How does your institution ensure that its staff members regularly **exchange** about cases and good practice?

Self-assessment questions

- 4.2. To what extent does your institution collect and analyse data on recognition?
 - If applicable, which indicators does your institution use to evaluate the quality of its recognition procedures?
- **Compare with EAR-HEI manual** Part III, Chapter 12: Institutional recognition practices
- ESG Standard 1.4: expectation that institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, including recognition
 - Recognition to be covered by QA
- Role of information management/databases

Poll question: Do you think the self-assessment tool could be a suitable addition to your institution's quality assurance measures?

Poll question: Does the tool, in your opinion, strike the right balance between being comprehensive enough to cover all major aspects of good recognition and not overburdening the staff conducting the self-assessment with too many aspects to cover?

You might also be interested in...

- **Academic Recognition Hub:** Online space gathering all available resources on academic recognition:
www.academicrecognition.eu
- **[STREAM online training platform](#):** Several modules equipping recognition practitioners with substantial, practical knowledge about good practice in recognition; hosted by Nuffic
- **Webinar:** [“Ensuring fair and transparent recognition procedures through Bologna Process tools”](#) on 28 January
- **Webinar** [“Smooth recognition of academic qualifications: The role of quality assurance”](#) on 29 April
- **LinkedIn group:** [“Academic Recognition in the European Higher Education Area”](#)
- **EUA** [mailing list](#) on academic recognition

Thank you for your participation!

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