

Utilise eQuATIC to analyse quality current partnerships

Once eQuATIC is stored with data, users from your institution can consult the institution reports about your partnerships. In these reports each indicator score gets a colour code referring to "intervention required", "fair" or "good". These score indications facilitate score interpretation by the individual user. They facilitate problem detection during monitoring exercises.

Having the indicator scores available in eQuATIC is a first important step, but in order to achieve successful usage of the tool you should embed it in the processes and policies at your university. A formal evaluation supported by eQuATIC when an agreement comes to an end seems to be a minimal effort. A round of evaluations and monitoring in the middle of the agreement duration seems more appropriate.

Monitoring of indicator scores can be done at several levels. The most important level is where the responsibility for partner management lies. At some institutions this is at the department level, at other institutions agreement management is dealt with at the central IRO level. A combination of both levels also occurs (for more information you can consult the eQuATIC research paper: [the use of data for internationalisation in higher education](#)).

1.1 Monitoring by actor responsible for agreements

Staff members who bear responsibility over a specific partnership or a set of partnerships should be the main eQuATIC users at the level of the institution. When a partnership needs to be evaluated, they can take the analysis objectified by data into account for identifying actions points and issues to be discussed with the partner. People responsible might also have additional sources of information for the partnerships assessment such as focus groups with students, personal contacts & follow up... It is the mix of all this info that can be taken into account in order to make data-informed decisions about the partnership.

The responsible actor might challenge certain data or indicator scores e.g. because more students were exchanged in the context of a specific partnership. This should engage a dialogue on the quality of the data itself underpinning the eQuATIC analysis leading to e.g. better registration of mobilities.

1.2 Monitoring by central authorities

Depending on the internal structure and processes at your institution, eQuATIC can also be used as a monitoring tool by central authorities such as the office of the vice-rector for international affairs, the internal Quality Assurance office or the central IRO. A periodic evaluation by a central level can urge the actors responsible for agreements into taking action. At this level the less successful partnerships designated by low indicator scores should be addressed. The institution's scores page offers functionality to easily identify weak indicator scores.

Moreover, eQuATIC can be added to other quality assurance instruments at the Quality Assurance department. Involving QA-professionals alongside International Officers can increase the impact of the tool by embedding its usage in the general QA-practices.

1.3 Using eQuATIC for making data-informed decisions

When an exchange agreement comes to an end, both partners need to decide whether the agreement will be renewed or not. Having the eQuATIC analysis available helps in making data-informed decisions in this regard.

For the person(s) responsible for agreements eQuATIC can help to identify three groups of partnerships:

- Partnerships with most indicator scores marked as good. Here everything goes well and these partnerships don't need specific attention as long as the scores remain good over time;
- Partnerships where some problems are identified based on the eQuATIC analysis and need further inspection;
- and finally, those partnerships where all alarm bells go off and one can ask why to continue this partnership.

The last group will typically consist of partnerships where nothing happened resulting in blank indicator scores or where all indicators are marked with an "intervention required". Always keep in mind that eQuATIC is there to support in managing partnerships and supports in achieving better quality partnerships. It is up to the users to act upon the signals issued by eQuATIC.

During the negotiations in the renewal process weak indicator scores can be discussed alongside conditions on how to improve them. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

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