

eQuATIC for peer assessment

Imagine going to a conference like the EAIE equipped with the eQuATIC institutional reports on your phone, tablet or laptop (or why not: on paper). When meeting a partner, you can easily share the report and discuss the strengths and potential challenges in the partnership. Most bilateral conversations about the existing partnership currently end after a bit of small talk, some general information about both universities and their educational offer and maybe the mobility flows of the last couple of years. With the institution reports at hand, the conversation could go way beyond mere numbers and end up with discussions about several issues denoted by the eQuATIC indicators.

When the indicator “*exchange of mobility documents*” is marked with intervention required, you should discuss with your partner the handling of learning agreements and transcript of records. In principle the partner should comply with ECTS and the ECHE-charter, but some additional pressure might be needed. Another example is a weak score for “*performance of incoming students*”: incoming students might not take enough credits during their exchange. This should be discussed with the partner. Incoming students might not be prepared sufficiently, courses might be too difficult for incoming students (Bachelor students having to take Master-level courses e.g.) or the educational offer might require a better knowledge of the language of instruction. Getting insight on those elements, can urge both institutions to take action or to identify that the partnership is efficient. If the indicator on “*mobility rate*” reveals a huge imbalance in the cooperation, this should be addressed as well. Maybe both partners do not mind such imbalances, but it is better to be clear about it than to assume it is okay, or to hope the partner will never notice. A weak score on “*support and facilities*” can lead to a critical self-evaluation when it comes to support. And maybe facilities are open for incoming exchange students, but they do not know where to find the information or how to access them.

When a score for “*academic quality*” is not satisfying you might want to dig a bit deeper in the data and try to find out what is wrong. There might not be enough interesting courses for exchange students because the most popular courses are taken by local students. Or exchange students are in a separate track or just receive some course material and are expected to find out themselves.

Having the data available and sharing it with your partner is only the first step in the direction of an improved quality of cooperation. Such conversation will provoke further scrutiny on certain elements and urge institutional representatives into action once they are back at their institution. Especially those elements that came up from the analysis of several partner institutions should be high on their agenda.

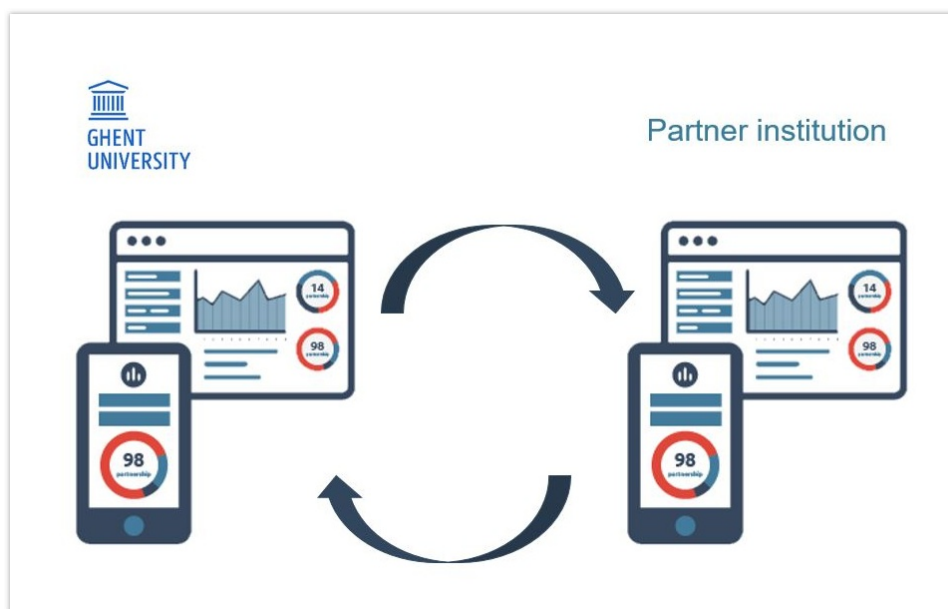
Using eQuATIC as a peer assessment mechanism

The peer assessment methodology is based on the assumption that two institutions upload their data in eQuATIC and can generate reports about each other. Once the data upload is complete, they can share their reports about each other and easily address the strengths and weakness in bilateral cooperation.

While using eQuATIC for assessment of your own partnerships provides useful feedback on the operations at your partner institution, having your partner's report available about your own strengths and weaknesses helps to improve your own performance inside the partnership. In doing so, both partners are able to improve on weak indicator scores. This can lead to seriously addressing issues and improving the quality at both sides of the cooperation. In doing so, the overall quality of the partnership will improve.

We recommend to structurally plan these peer reviews at different moments during the course of a partnership. E.g. during the EAIE conference, during staff visits, via email exchange, at specially organised online meetings etc. In doing so, both partners will be more aware of the improvements or stagnation on several of the indicators which can lead to better follow up of each other's activities and performance in the course of the agreement duration. The evaluation process will also be much easier, as both sides closely monitored the partnership.

The frequency of contacts and peer reviews could be agreed upon in the beginning of the partnership and, depending on how the figures look like, could be adjusted in the course of the agreement duration. There is no need for yearly monitoring of all partnerships but an exchange of data every two or three years seems appropriate. Surely, this is one of the most interesting ways of using the tool since it also provides feedback on your own HEI.



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