

# **Report Writing**

**Stefan Bienefeld, German Academic  
Exchange Service**

# Getting started

Each Self-Assessment report should contain:

- An introduction which describes the reason for the assessment, the institution and faculty/department, as well as the composition of the internal QA committee carrying out the review
- A short description of the programme under review including the curriculum
- A description of the content of the assessment (cells) and the methods used to gather and analyze data (i.e. document analysis)
- A description of the results

These things should each be dealt with in 2-3 pages maximum. If methods have been developed (questionnaires, interview questions, document analysis) these should be annexed to the report

# The main part

1. The main part of the report should contain a strength weakness analysis for each of the issues reviewed seperately
2. At the end of this the main strengths and the main weaknesses should be summarized.
3. At the end there should be a proposal for steps to be taken to enhance the strengths and improve on weak points. This will need to be discussed with senior management

# Some hints and caveats

- In the descriptive part try to be descriptive! Avoid adjectives or adverbs that could be understood as passing judgement
- Try to explain the methods used as clearly as possible so as to avoid misunderstandings for peers (in case a peer review is carried out)
- Clarify technical terms used in the report in a glossary if possible
- In the strength weakness analysis, stay focused on the subject. Avoid too many adjectives/adverbs passing judgement
- If you use a scale in the S/W analysis explain what each numerical indicator means (1= very good, 2= good etc.)

# Some hints and caveats

- In the summary of strengths and weaknesses indicate possible reasons for those strengths and weaknesses
- In case a development plan/action plan is included please assign responsibilities and include a timeline as this will make the follow up easier

Don't approach the exercise strictly mathematically. In case you use statistics, describe them, but don't get hung up on numbers. Do not forget to include qualitative information derived from interviews or document analysis.

# An example

## Introduction

The programme XX in University YY was reviewed for the purpose of an overall curriculum review and a successive application for a renewed curriculum with the respective regulatory agency.

The University is situated in XX, was established in YY and has ZZZZZ students.

The department is headed by Prof. AA. Members of the internal quality committee were AA (professor), B (professor), C (student), D (exams officer), E (representative of employee organisation/trade union).

# Examples (continued)

## Methodology

Questionnaires were developed for indicators 1-4 and 7-12. The questionnaires employed a 5 digit scale and no open answers. For analysis of the questionnaires SPSS was used. For each indicator summary scores were calculated and then included in correlation analysis as well as frequency distributions....

For indicators 5 and 6 as well as 13, interviews were used. Interviews resulted in qualitative data which were clustered using broader categories....

For indicators 14-22 document analysis and statistics of the university were used.....

# Examples (continued)

## Strength Weakness analysis

### 3. Student recruitment, selection and admission

Student recruitment, selection and admission are satisfactory. The faculty employs questionnaires and interviews for selection and admission. These prove to be useful since retention rates are high and dropout are low over time.

A weak aspect is the high cost of the methods employed (both in terms of financial and human resource costs). Additionally, the faculty so far lacks an overall marketing strategy.



# Examples continued

## Development plan/ Proposed Actions

### 4. Curriculum review and development

The committee proposes an overall review of the curriculum with regards to student workload in years 2 and 3 as well as redundancies in the modules psychopathology and clinical psychology 2. Furthermore, aspired learning outcomes should be more clearly defined and the profile of the programme should be sharpened.

This task shall be carried out by the Vice Dean AA and the curriculum commission. A draft proposal for a new/changed curriculum shall be submitted to the Dean by November 1st 2004.