

2016



ACEEU

ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL &
ENGAGED UNIVERSITIES



Standards & Guidelines

Engaged University
Accreditation

Purpose of this document

This document sets out the standards against which an institution aiming at engaged university accreditation will be evaluated and provides guidelines for the self-evaluation step of the accreditation procedure.

RELATION TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

Please refer to ACEEU's Accreditation Process Manual for more information on the self-evaluation procedure and to the Self Evaluation Form for further information on how to prepare the self-evaluation report.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the ACEEU Office via email or phone.

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Introduction

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document presents the standards against which institutions will be evaluated in their procedure to get awarded ACEEU's engaged university accreditation. In addition, the document features guidelines that support applicant institutions in the preparation of the self-evaluation report.

ACCREDITATION APPROACH

ACEEU has developed a variety of standards that enable to describe and evaluate engaged and entrepreneurial universities. The standards are structured according to the following 5 dimensions which build ACEEU's guiding accreditation framework.

1. orientation and strategy
2. people and organisational capacity
3. drivers and enablers
4. education, research and third stream activities
5. innovation and impact

Within each of the 5 dimensions, there are 3 standards which differentiate the activities and attainments expected of either the engaged or entrepreneurial university. Although the dimensions are common to each accreditation type, universities will need to submit evidence which is appropriate to the specific standards of either the engaged or entrepreneurial university.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENGAGED UNIVERSITY

Based on the above presented set of dimensions, ACEEU understands the engaged university as follows:

“An engaged university is oriented towards and strategically positioned to deliver a range of societal contributions, benefits and impacts. The institution undertakes education and research aligned with society and business needs. Education integrates external stakeholders and promotes a wide range of career opportunities, including the private, public and not-for-profit sector. Research and projects are collaborative and mutually beneficial. The priority in third mission activities is engagement and the institution accordingly develops its people, organisational capacity, support structures and external collaborations. An engaged university is an influential organisation within the wider ecosystem and is dedicated to continuous improvement and the generation of greater social and cultural impacts for the city and region.”

IMPORTANT REMARKS

It is important to note that ACEEU provides institutional accreditation, as opposed to accreditations on faculty or department level. This means that institutions are required to show that entrepreneurship and/or engagement is not only promoted and implemented in one faculty or department, but is truly a whole organisational approach. While ACEEU accreditation has been designed for universities, other organisations (such as Science Parks, Incubators, external TTOs) may be eligible to enter ACEEU accreditation procedure if they can clearly highlight a strong link to and impact on the higher education ecosystem (please contact the ACEEU Office for more information).

It is also important to bear in mind that ACEEU's accreditation procedures are designed for the global higher education environment and thus need to take into account a great diversity of education systems and approaches towards entrepreneurship and engagement. Acknowledging this wide diversity, however, does not mean that expectations regarding the fulfilment of the standards are lowered for certain regions. The basis for the evaluation of the standards is the generic quality that can be expected on an international level (for more information please refer to the section "Assessment of Standards" in ACEEU Process Manual). Rather, acknowledging diversity requires an accreditation to provide applicant institutions with the opportunity to present its approach towards entrepreneurship and/or engagement in the best possible way. As a consequence, ACEEU's guidelines for self-evaluation are kept rather broad, as opposed to a detailed, step-by-step questionnaire.

While the guidance for self-evaluation is kept broad, institutions need to avoid a promotional description of the university and its approach. Rather, it is expected that descriptions are objective and based on a critical analysis of the subject matter. It has also to be noted that institutions are not limited to the example evidence put forward in this document. Each institution should develop its own approach to present its case and provide the respective evidence supporting this presentation.

STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

Chapter two will provide an overview of the 15 standards while chapter three presents the standards as well as guidance for self-evaluation. Each of the 5 dimensions is introduced with a short opening statement, outlining its focus on the link of the 3 standards to the dimension.

Standards overview

Dimension 1: **Orientation and strategy**

- Institutional Commitment
- Shared Goals
- Financial Planning

Dimension 2: **People and organisational capacity**

- Leadership
- Staff profile
- Incentives and rewards

Dimension 3: **Drivers and enablers**

- Culture
- Internal Support Structures
- Service Alignment

Dimension 4: **Education, research and third stream activities**

- Education
- Research
- Third Mission Activities

Dimension 5: **Innovation and impact**

- Continuous improvement
- Influence within the Ecosystem
- Impact

Standards and guidelines

ORIENTATION & STRATEGY

An engaged university is oriented towards and strategically positioned to deliver a range of societal contributions, benefits and impacts. This is reflected in the institution's commitment, shared goals and financial planning.

Standard 1.1: Institutional Commitment

STANDARD

The university has made a public and strategic commitment to engagement.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate, making reference to any relevant evidence, your university's strategic commitment to engagement and how this priority is related to the overall organisational strategy.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes written documents (e.g. vision, mission, strategic plan) available to university staff, students and external stakeholders.

Standard 1.2: Shared Goals

STANDARD

The university has established engagements goals, with measurable targets and deadlines, which are understood and owned by a range of people in the organisation.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate how the institutional commitment to engagement is being enacted by people at different levels of the organisation and across the organisation as a whole.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes organisational charts, action plans for units and job descriptions.

Standard 1.3: Financial Planning

STANDARD

The university has a sustainable commitment to engagement which is reflected in its financial expenditure plans.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate how the university can be confident that it has sufficient financial resources to achieve its engagement goals, now and in the foreseeable future.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes expenditure reports and investment plans in facilities and people dedicated to engagement.

PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

An engaged university actively develops its people and organisational capacity to the benefit of its stakeholders. This is reflected in the institution's leadership, staff profile and incentives and rewards.

Standard 2.1: Leadership

STANDARD

The university's values and its approaches to leadership combine to foster engagement.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate how the actions of leaders enable individuals (academics and professional services staff) to engage with external stakeholders. Highlight any values and approaches that are common across the university.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes leadership values and guiding principles, job descriptions/person specifications, and, where appropriate, involvement of external stakeholders in governance.

Standard 2.2: Staff Profile

STANDARD

The university manages its profile of academic and non-academic staff to meet the current and future demands of the engagement strategy.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate how the profile of university staff is continuously aligned to the engagement strategy. Highlight how the university staffing is kept up-to-date in terms of expertise and experience with respect to engagement.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes overview of engagement staff (e.g. functions, expertise, experience, gender), recruitment policies and examples of recent job ads, staff development policies and opportunities.

Standard 2.3: Incentives and Rewards

STANDARD

The university has a coherent system of incentives and rewards to stimulate staff to undertake and support external engagement activities.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate any incentives and rewards which are designed to stimulate staff to participate in engagement activities, either as part of their employment or on a voluntary basis. Highlight the role of engagement in the staffs' performance evaluation.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes staff evaluation policy, promotion policies, listing of incentives and rewards.

DRIVERS AND ENABLERS

An engaged university develops internal and external collaborations built on trust and commitment. This is reflected in the institution's culture, internal support structures and alignment with external services.

Standard 3.1: Culture

STANDARD

The university promotes a culture conducive to engagement.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate the different mechanisms and activities through which the university aims to enhance its engagement culture.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes set of shared values and beliefs, coverage of stakeholder engagement in the university's communication, listing of engagement events (e.g. guest speakers and alumni meetings), and engagement-oriented communities (e.g. refugee support).

Standard 3.2: Internal Support Structures

STANDARD

The university's internal support services and facilities enable individuals to progress through the stages of engagement with external stakeholders.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate how the university's support structures help staff and students to progress through the stages of engagement (e.g. identification, creation and development) with external stakeholders, such as the local community.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes listing of internal services and facilities (e.g. liaison offices, legal advice, CRM) supporting engagement.

Standard 3.3: Service Alignment

STANDARD

The university enhances its internal support structures by brokering access to external services, thus providing a comprehensive support system for engagement.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate how the university's internal structures and external services are aligned to assist staff and students to engage with external stakeholders.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes descriptions of links to external services and facilities (e.g. community education & health centres, arts & cultural promotion services, not for profit social services).

EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND THIRD-MISSION ACTIVITIES

An engaged university undertakes education and research aligned with society and business needs. Education integrates external stakeholders and promotes a wide range of career opportunities, including the private, public and not-for-profit sector. Research and projects are collaborative and mutually beneficial. Third mission activities are focused on engagement. This is reflected in the university's education, research and external-facing activities.

Standard 4.1: Education

STANDARD

Engagement with external stakeholders enriches the student learning experience and promotes a wide range of career opportunities, including in the private, public and not-for-profit sector.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate how external stakeholders and their input is integrated in the design, delivery and evaluation of study courses and extra-curricular education activities. Highlight how the needs of external stakeholders are taken into account to prepare students for the "real world".

Evidence that you could make reference to includes examples of practice-based learning and stakeholder engagement approaches in study courses and non-curricular education activities, examples of teaching and learning

approaches that foster engagement, listing of external stakeholders that contributed to education offers, and any initiatives that enable students to combine their study with the engagement with external stakeholders (e.g. thesis with companies, internships).

Standard 4.2: Research

STANDARD

The university engages with partners in collaborative research and projects that are mutually beneficial.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate how the university promotes long-term, mutually beneficial collaborations in research and projects with a variety of external stakeholders.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes research strategy plans and goals, statistics on and examples of collaborations, including joint publications.

Standard 4.3: Third Mission Activities

STANDARD

The university serves external stakeholders, including on a not-for-profit basis, through the provision of services and a variety of formal and informal engagement activities.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate how the university (including leaders, academics and professional services staff) drives engagement with external stakeholders, with a focus on, but not limited to, not-for-profit activities. Highlight how partnerships are strategically managed to increase mutual benefits.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes services and projects that are aligned to the needs of the community in terms of education, health, social cohesion and cultural life.

INNOVATION AND IMPACT

An engaged university is an influential organisation within the wider ecosystem and is focused on generating social and cultural impacts for the city and region. This is reflected in the university's approach to continuous improvement, its level of influence with stakeholders and the impact it generates.

Standard 5.1: Continuous Improvement

STANDARD

The institution is achieving continuous improvement in engagement by regularly evaluating its performance against targets.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate how the university monitors its performance and uses this evaluation to drive up performance in education, research and engagement. Highlight how the university integrates external input.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes list of performance indicators and data sources, processes and policies on performance evaluation and continuous improvement, and examples of external input.

Standard 5.2: Influence within the Ecosystem

STANDARD

The university is an influential stakeholder in the regional ecosystem with regards to policy and practice.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate how the university is influential in the advancement of regional policy and practice and highlight collaborations with national and international partners.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes policy development activities, holding of responsibilities on committees and working groups with external stakeholders, and external awards given to the university in recognition of its achievements and influence.

Standard 5.3: Impact

STANDARD

The university generates a wide range of benefits through engagement and is working towards greater social and cultural impacts for the city and region.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate the indirect and direct, short-term and long-term impacts the university delivers.

Evidence that you could make reference to includes quantitative and qualitative data on people and organisations engaged, and contributions to social cohesion, education, well-being and health, sustainability, society and social behaviour and access to cultural artefacts and events.

Assessment of standards

The Accreditation Committee and the Peer Review Team will evaluate the institution against the standards using the following scales. The basis for the evaluation is the generic quality that can be expected on an international level.

Unsatisfactory	The institution does not meet the standard. At least one aspect of the standard that is meaningful in the institution's case is not satisfied.
Satisfactory	The institution meets the standard on an acceptable level. If any aspect of the standard is not fulfilled on an acceptable level, this aspect is not meaningful in the institution's case.
Excellent	The institution systematically and substantially exceeds the standard. The institution provides an exceptional performance with regards to all aspects of the standard that are meaningful in the institution's case. Evidence (data, examples etc.) proving this exceptional performance exist and the institution can be regarded as an international good practice example with respect to this standard.

In extraordinary cases, a standard might be evaluated as "N/A - Not considered applicable or relevant." Such a case, however, requires a review and written consent of the Accreditation Council chair and vice-chair. The requirements for premium accreditation presented below are not affected by the exclusion of a standard.



Standard accreditation

To receive ACEEU accreditation, institutions need to reach at least the "satisfactory level" for all standards.



Premium accreditation

In order to get awarded ACEEU's premium accreditation, the university is required to provide an excellent performance in at least 12 standards of which at least 2 must be each of the 5 dimensions.



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