

2021



ACEEU

ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL &
ENGAGED UNIVERSITIES



Standards & Guidelines

Engagement Accreditation
for Academic Units

(Divisional Accreditation)

Purpose of this document

This document sets out the standards against which an institution aiming at engaged academic unit¹ 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.

¹ *Academic unit* in this sense refers to a generic term designating units within a higher education institution, such as school, faculty, department and similar. In a similar sense the term "divisional accreditation" is striving to capture the same constituents. In the official accreditation title of the applicant academic unit will use the terminology based on the status of the applicant (e.g. *Entrepreneurial Department Accreditation, Engaged School Accreditation*, and similar).

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Introduction

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document presents the standards against which academic units will be evaluated in their procedure to get awarded ACEEU's engagement accreditation for academic units. In addition, the document features guidelines that support applicant academic units 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 academic units. 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 academic unit. 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 academic unit.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENGAGED ACADEMIC UNIT

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

“An engaged academic unit is oriented towards and strategically positioned to deliver a range of societal contributions, benefits and impacts. The unit 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 academic unit accordingly develops its people, organisational capacity, support structures and external collaborations. An engaged academic unit 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 this is a divisional accreditation and that with respect to autonomy there may be some overlaps and/boundaries between divisional level and institutional level. Therefore, to be able to make an unbiased assessment of the scope of engagement activity that the division has decision-making power over, it is important to clearly specify what engagement activities the division decides upon and what activities are within the jurisdiction of the institution.

Furthermore, even though this is a divisional accreditation (pertaining only to one school/faculty/department), in some standards it is important to highlight the level of interdisciplinarity among other divisions within the same institution. Therefore, it is critical to emphasise the scope of interdisciplinarity within Standards pertaining to Research, Education and Third Mission.

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 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, academic units need to avoid a promotional description of the academic unit 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 academic units are not limited to the example evidence put forward in this document. Each unit 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**

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

Standard 1.1: Commitment

STANDARD

The academic unit has made a public and strategic commitment to engagement.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

Please describe and evaluate, making references to any relevant evidence, of your **academic unit's** strategic commitment to engagement and how this priority is related to the overall organisational strategy.

Evidence that you could make references to includes written documents (e.g. vision, mission, strategic plan) available to academic unit's staff, students and external stakeholders. Please ensure that the evidence you put forward clearly demonstrates the inclusion of stakeholders (inside and outside of the unit/institution) that may be otherwise excluded or marginalised.

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) is your unit's commitment aligned with commitment of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, if your unit possesses a strategy, to what extent is it aligned with the university strategy when it comes to engagement.

Standard 1.2: Shared Goals

STANDARD

The academic unit has established engagement 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 academic unit's 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 references to includes organisational charts, action plans for units and job descriptions.

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) are your shared goals aligned with shared goals of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, if your unit has an action plan, to what extent is it aligned with your university action plan when it comes to engagement.

Standard 1.3: Financial Planning

STANDARD

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

**GUIDANCE FOR
SELF-EVALUATION**

Please describe and evaluate how the **academic unit** 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.

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) is your unit's financial planning aligned with financial planning of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, if your unit has revenue-generating reports, to what extent are they aligned with your university reports when it comes to engagement.

PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

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

Standard 2.1: Leadership

STANDARD

The academic unit'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 **academic unit**.

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

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) is your unit's leadership aligned with leadership of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, to what extent are leadership values and principles aligned with your university leadership values and principles when it comes to engagement.

Standard 2.2: Staff Profile

STANDARD

The academic unit 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 **academic unit** staff is continuously aligned to the engagement strategy. Highlight how the **academic unit** staffing is kept up-to-date in terms of expertise and experience with respect to engagement.

Evidence that you could make references 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.

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) is your unit's staff profile aligned with financial planning of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, if your unit has revenue-generating reports, to what extent are they aligned with your university reports when it comes to engagement.

Standard 2.3: Incentives and Rewards

STANDARD

The academic unit 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 staff performance evaluation.

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

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within

jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) are your unit's incentives and rewards aligned with the incentives and rewards of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, if your unit has staff-evaluation policies, to what extent are they aligned with your university staff-evaluation policies when it comes to engagement.

DRIVERS AND ENABLERS

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

Standard 3.1: Culture

STANDARD

The academic unit promotes a culture conducive to engagement.

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

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

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

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) is your unit's culture aligned with the culture of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, if your unit has social media channels, to what extent are they aligned with your university social media channels when it comes to engagement.

Standard 3.2: Internal Support Structures

STANDARD

The academic unit'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 unit'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 references to includes listing of internal services and facilities (e.g. liaison offices, legal advice, CRM) supporting engagement.

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to.

Standard 3.3: Service Alignment

STANDARD

The academic unit 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 unit's internal structures and external services are aligned to assist staff and students to engage with external stakeholders.

Evidence that you could make references 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).

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to.

EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND THIRD-MISSION ACTIVITIES

An engaged **academic unit** 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 unit'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 references 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).

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) is your unit's education aligned with the education of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, if your unit has practice-based learning, to what extent is it aligned with your university practice-based learning.

Standard 4.2: Research

STANDARD

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

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

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

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

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) is your unit's research aligned with the research of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, if your unit has a research strategy, to what extent is it aligned with your university research strategy when it comes to engagement.

Standard 4.3: Third Mission Activities

STANDARD

The academic unit 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 **academic unit** (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 references to includes services and projects that are aligned to the needs of the community in terms of education, health, social cohesion and cultural life.

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) are your unit's third mission activities

aligned with the third mission activities of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, if your unit has third mission activities, to what extent are they aligned with your university third mission activities.

INNOVATION AND IMPACT

An engaged academic unit 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 unit's approach to continuous improvement, its level of influence with stakeholders and the impact it generates.

Standard 5.1: Continuous Improvement

STANDARD

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

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

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

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

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) is your unit's continuous improvement aligned with the continuous improvement of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, if your unit has performance indicators, to what extent are they aligned with your university performance indicators when it comes to engagement.

Standard 5.2: Influence within the Ecosystem

STANDARD

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

GUIDANCE FOR SELF-EVALUATION

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

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

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) is your unit's influence within the ecosystem aligned with the influence in the ecosystem of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, if your unit holds engagement-related responsibilities in a public authority body, to what extent is it aligned with your university engagement-related responsibilities in a public authority body.

Standard 5.3: Impact

STANDARD

The academic unit 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 academic unit delivers.

Evidence that you could make references 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.

NOTE: Please specify to what extent you have the capacity to execute the abovementioned and to what extent (if any) this is within jurisdiction of the institution you are attached to. Furthermore, please specify to what extent (if any) is your unit's impact aligned with the impact of the institution you are attached to. Please comment on, for instance, if your unit has quantitative/qualitative data on social entrepreneurship jobs created, to what extent is this aligned with your university's quantitative/qualitative data on social entrepreneurship jobs.

Assessment of standards

The Accreditation Committee and the Peer Review Team will evaluate the **academic unit** 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 academic unit does not meet the standard. At least one aspect of the standard that is meaningful in the unit's case is not satisfied.
Satisfactory	The academic unit 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 unit's case.
Excellent	The academic unit systematically and substantially exceeds the standard. The academic unit provides an exceptional performance with regards to all aspects of the standard that are meaningful in the unit's case. Evidence (data, examples etc.) proving this exceptional performance exist and the unit 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." This can also pertain to the fact whether the academic unit has decision-making power on the standard in question or the university within which the unit is embedded is the sole decision-making agent. 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, **academic unit** need to reach at least the "satisfactory level" for all standards.



Premium accreditation

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





**Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial
and Engaged Universities**
Mendelstraße 11
48149 Münster
Germany

P: +49 251 980 1280
E: office@aceeu.org
W: www.aceeu.org