

Subject	Operating an External Quality Agency
Segment	Site Visits
Topic	4.1 Overview

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Please note that this is a text-only version. All links and animations are not activated in this version. It is recommended that you view the topic online for an interactive learning experience.

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1. Introduction



A site visit is an integral part of the external review process. The primary purpose of a site visit is to collect evidence and to explore the information in the self-evaluation document provided by the institution under review. The site visit is conducted by a review team and may last for several days, depending on the complexity of the exercise and it is usually the last event before the review team starts to formulate the outcomes of the review. Therefore, it must be planned and conducted with great care.

This module gives an overview of site visits, including construction of schedules, conduct of interviews and drawing conclusions.

2. Module Overview

Let us review the topics we will cover in this module.

Site Visits – Overview

Let us review the topics we will cover in this module.

Planning Visits

The early stages of a review typically involve a series of meeting between team members to prepare for the site visit and a planning, or pre-visit, meeting between team or its representatives and the institution. Methods for ensuring effective planning are outlined.

Main Site Visit

Designing the main site visit including the construction of a schedule is key to the success of the visit. This topic discusses site visits, including design of schedules, conducting interviews and drawing conclusions.

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3. Objectives

Objectives: Site Visits

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to

- design and support planning meetings with teams and institutions under review
- create a schedule for a site visit that takes into account the purpose of the review
- explain how to phrase questions asked during site visits to elicit evidence on which review conclusions may be based
- advise team members on protocols to be observed during site visits
- provide advice on strategies for reaching consensus decisions

4. Reading

Reading: Suggested Reading and References

- Campbell, C. & Rozsnyai, C., 2002, *Quality Assurance and the Development of Course Programs*. Papers on Higher Education Regional University Network on Governance and Management of Higher Education in South East Europe. Bucharest: UNESCO-CEPES Publications.
- EUA, Institution Evaluation Program (IEP), [Guidelines for participating Institutions](#), Brussels, 2008.
- Higher Education Quality Committee, [HEQC Institutional Audits Manual 2007](#), Pretoria 2007.
- Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions [Preparing Teams for Effective Deliberation](#)

Websites

There are websites mentioned at different points in this module so you will need to refer to them from time to time. You may also need to use other websites for some of the Discussion tasks in different topics included in the module. You can link to quality assurance websites through the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (INQAAHE) at the following URL: <http://www.inqaahe.org/members/list-full.php>

Note that there several categories of membership of INQAAHE and hence other lists to consult if you do not find an agency you are trying to locate.

5. Terminology

Reminder:

These QA materials were written by an international team and so, inevitably, there is a variety of terms used throughout the text. The Syllabus section of this subject includes an overview of these terms to help you comprehend individual terms and their meanings in the QA context. You will need to consult this list from time to time!