

Guidance Note: Handbook paragraphs 73 & 74

Initial consideration of the Reflective Analysis

Approved by the Quality Board on 4 March 2019

Preamble

Notes of Guidance are issued by the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education following consultation with the higher education institutions, LÍS (the National Union for Icelandic Students) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (MESC). They are offered for guidance to amplify statements contained in the *Quality Assurance Handbook for Icelandic Higher Education* (the *Handbook*). They are designed to clarify expectations, and promote transparency, as well as equity and consistency of practice across the sector. Please note, however, that the *Handbook* in all circumstances remains the definitive statement on the QEF. Any enquiries related to this Note of Guidance should be referred to the Manager of the Quality Board (secretariat@qef.is).

This Note relates to paragraphs 73 and 74 of the *Handbook* on the source of optional advice available to institutions on a draft Reflective Analysis as part of their Institution-wide Review.

Guidance

Paragraph 74 states: “the Reflective Analysis (...) is entirely the responsibility of the institution. However, if the institution wishes, the Board Manager may be consulted in the process of compiling the Reflective Analysis and will offer limited advice on an early draft if so requested. Such advice, however, would be limited to the general structure, approach and style of the document. The Board Manager is not in a position to offer any detailed comments on content.”

It is important to be aware of a few specific points in this context:

- a. The Reflective Analysis is the responsibility solely of the institution. The decision to seek advice or not is entirely at the discretion of the institution. Further, the reaction (if any) to any advice offered is entirely at the discretion of the institution. The visiting IWR Team, including the chair, will not be aware of any of these informal exchanges. The sole author of the final Reflective Analysis is the institution.
- b. The optional advice available is from the Manager of the Quality Board and will not address the matter of specific content. Rather, advice will be on matters related to overall structure, style and approach. However, the institution is free to consult any other colleague or external expert who is not a current member of the Quality Board or of the team assigned to review it.
- c. For the avoidance of doubt, advice will not be available from the chair of the IWR Review Team. In the first round of the QEF, advice was offered by the member of the Board who was going to chair the Review Team. However, in the second round (as indicated in the 2nd

Edition of the *Handbook*), an explicit development has been to underpin the objectivity of the Review Team by removing the IWR Team Chair from any involvement in the preparation of the institution's IWR Reflective Analysis.

- d. The chair of the IWR Review Team will visit the institution in the months leading up to the visit of the IWR Review Team and after the institution's submission of the Reflective Analysis. The purpose of that visit is not to provide feedback on the content of the Reflective Analysis, as should be evident from the points made above. Rather, it is to discuss details of the Review Team visit, including the visit schedule. At this meeting, the Chair of the IWR Review Team may request further information to be added in clearly demarcated supplementary annexes to the Reflective Analysis. However, the main text of the Reflective Analysis would not be altered.

Further Information

Any further information on this Note of Guidance is available from the Board Manager (secretariat@qef.is).