



EQUIS STANDARDS AND CRITERIA:

2024 UPDATES – AS AT 12 JUNE 2024

FOREWORD

EFMD revises the documentation supporting EQUIS periodically and updates take effect from the start of January of the year of update (or as otherwise communicated). The following is an overview of the updates made as part of the 2024 publication, together with an assessment of the significance of the change.

As always, QED recommends that all schools within the EQUIS accreditation process (whether initial or renewal) should review and ensure they have understood the changes and clarifications.

N.B.: This document represents QED's interpretation of the EQUIS Updates. We recommend that Schools view the updated documents directly. These are available from EFMD's website in the following formats:

- [EQUIS Standards and Criteria \(2024\)](#)
- [EQUIS Process Manual \(2024\)](#)
- [EQUIS Process Manual Annexes \(2024\)](#)

QED's overview of the changes is provided below, plus a more detailed summary of the changes on a document by document basis (Appendices 1, 2 and 3).

OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

The 2024 documents have been redesigned (fonts, headings), in addition to the normal annual updates.

As usual, clarification and guidance points have been updated within the EQUIS Standards and Criteria. Two areas of the standards should be particularly noted:

- Standard 5 (Research) has been completely re-written.
 - It now focuses very specifically on two research categories (academic publications and practice-oriented publications). Pedagogical scholarship is no longer a category within Standard 5, but is included as one of the (practice-oriented) fields of research and is also linked directly into Standard 2 (see below).
 - The Assessment Criteria have been rewritten (though many of the principles behind the criteria remain as before)
 - There is a greater focus on more '*holistic means of research evaluation*' and this also translates into changes in the Data Sheet.
- Standard 2 Assessment Criteria now includes a section on '*pedagogic development and innovation*'. In addition, there are additional questions linked to the impact of degree programmes on their relevant constituencies.



The Process Manual and related Annexes have also been reviewed. Duplication has been minimised and detailed guidance has been moved to the Annexes where relevant. A cross map of this is provided in [Appendix 2](#) and [Appendix 3](#) below. Key areas of significance to note include:

- The Datasheet has been updated.
 - Tables have been renumbered – which may impact schools preparing their SAR (e.g. cross references to tables within the Datasheet).
 - The guidance that faculty with dual passports have to be considered ‘national’ if one of the passports is domestic has been removed for the faculty table (now Table 2).
 - Some additional information is required to support evidence of practice-oriented research activities (Table 12a to 12d)
- Additional guidance has been provided in several of the annexes (e.g. Annex 7 EQUIS Advisory Guide; Annex 10: Peer Review Visit Guide).

An overview of the significance of the changes is provided in Figure 1, with a detailed summary of the changes in Appendices 1 -3

Figure 1: Summary of Significance of Changes to EQUIS Documents (June 2024)

Level of Change	Standards and Criteria (Appendix 1)	EQUIS Process Manual (Appendix 2)	EQUIS Process Manual Annexes (Appendix 3)
<i>No material changes made (or no changes made)</i>	All other areas not noted below	All other areas not noted below	All other areas not noted below
<i>Some changes, but unlikely to be substantial (may include clarifications or advice)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 2 • Section 3 • Section 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex 5 • Annex 6 • Annex 7 • Annex 13 • Annex 14
<i>Some changes: possible administrative impact</i>	---	---	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex 3 • Annex 8 •
<i>Some Changes: possible substantial impact (depending on school)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex 2 (Datasheet)
<i>Significant Change</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 5 	---	---

APPENDIX 1: DETAILED SUMMARY OF CHANGES IN EQUIS STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

A list of Acronyms has been added before the Table of Contents

IMPORTANT NOTES

There are two updates in this section of the Standards:

- The privacy and confidentiality note has been re-worded, but the overall advice and policy around privacy and confidentiality remains as previous years.
- A list of the EQUIS Core Documents (The Standards; the Process Manual; and the Process Manual Annexes) is now provided and linked to the EFMD website. Schools are reminded that it is their responsibility to use the most recent documents.

No material changes. The notes confirm and clarify previous guidelines.

INTRODUCTION

- Some rewording around the context of EQUIS accreditation as "*an international quality assessment framework embracing strategic review, quality improvement and accreditation for schools*". The applicability of the framework to schools in any context, and its focus on internationalisation, is emphasised.
- Reference to the Student Report within the Introduction has been removed, but this remains a requirement (within Chapter 3: Students).

No material change

CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT, GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY

- No significant changes

(No Significant Changes)

CHAPTER 2: PROGRAMMES

- There are minor rewordings throughout, in addition to the more significant changes listed below.
- The formal standard has been reworded. Key changes include:
 - Explicitly requiring programmes to have a learner-centred focus.
 - Clarification that the programme evaluation processes must also demonstrate the longer term impacts for students – including ongoing career success.
- The Introduction has been reworked. Whilst much of the content aligns with the previous year, additional advice is provided for pedagogic development and innovation – including the use of cases; the development of open educational resources; and the importance of pedagogical strategy (with both short and long-term impact indicators). *This change aligns with the re-focusing of Standard 5 (Research)*
- Within '*Programme portfolio*', schools are now asked to consider the impact of each degree programme on its constituencies (in alignment with the updated wording of the formal standard).
- A new Assessment Criterion has been introduced for *Pedagogic development & innovation* (Now key area #3, with all subsequent criteria being renumbered). This section requires schools to detail how they support



pedagogic development and innovation (including details of publications that support pedagogy; and how teaching effectiveness is assessed). This has also meant some rewording within other criteria (to avoid duplication and/or reflect additional focus in this area).

- Within *Skills Acquisition* (Area E), Schools are now asked to:
 - outline how the acquisition of skills is supported by pedagogical innovation; and
 - describe how *"new impact measures are being used in collaboration with students' employers"*
- The *Programme Evaluation* section has been updated to include reference to measuring the impact of programmes on the relevant constituencies (in line with the change in wording to the formal standard).
- Within *Relevance of connections with practice*, consideration must now be given to the measurement of impact of programmes within the world of practice (both student performance and employer satisfaction)
- Additional requirements for the ODR include:
 - Description of the pedagogical initiatives, projects or innovations over the previous five years (in English)

(Possible significant change in terms of additional focus on pedagogic innovation and programme impact)

CHAPTER 3: STUDENTS

- For the SAR, the table describing the outward and inward flows of international exchange students must now be provided in English (not previously specified).
- Detail around the student report has been removed (but is well-covered in Annex 15 of the EQUIS Process Manual Annexes).

(No significant changes)

CHAPTER 4: FACULTY

- The final note, confirming that double passport holders should be considered as 'national' if one of the passports is domestic, has been removed. (This note has also been removed from Table 2 in the Datasheet)

(No significant changes)

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

*****This chapter has been completely reworked and should be reviewed carefully*****

- There formal standard has been slightly reworded to include explicit reference to "other societal stakeholders" as a specific group.
- The introduction has been significantly reworked. Key changes include:
 - EFMD's definition of research within the EQUIS framework – putting a core focus on the spectrum of "academic publications" through to "professionally relevant publications". Pedagogical scholarship is no longer defined as a distinct research type, but is included as one of the "fields" of research (alongside disciplinary fields, contemporary topics, advances in AI, digitalisation etc).
 - Explicit reference to the importance of the infrastructure around research (teamwork, work allocation, supports for research, EDI matters etc)



- Emphasis on a more "holistic means of research evaluation... that look beyond traditional, quantitative bibliometrics for assessing research"

The focus on research strategy, aligned with mission and resources, remains

- The detailed definitions of each of academic research and practice-oriented research have been revised and include helpful context and suggestions. In particular:
 - It is confirmed that there are no EQUIS accredited schools relying solely on academic research.
 - Schools are encouraged to use alternative indicators of research impact (beyond citations etc) that are aligned with mission and research strategy
 - Practice-oriented research comprises three domains:
 - Partnerships and collaborative projects,
 - Actionable insights (key for relevance of research and important for research dissemination)
 - Dissemination
- The layout of the Assessment Criteria has been revised and now includes:
 - A: Research Strategy
 - B: Research Activity (with a subsection for each of academic and practice-oriented research)
 - C: Research Management
 - D: International features of research
 - E: Ethics, responsibility and sustainability

Whilst the principles behind several of the criteria remain as before, the new layout focuses on a logical narrative that helps to support the more holistic focus on research throughout the standard – particularly as it relates to each of academic and practice-oriented research.

- Table 1 (Research Outputs) has been amended to reflect the focus on academic and practice-oriented outputs.
- The previous "Table 2 (the suggested format to help schools report research data required by EQUIS) is not included within Chapter 5. A modified version remains in the Datasheet (Table 4). It should also be noted that additional information is now required within the Datasheet (new Table 12 series: See Changes to [Process Manual Annexes](#) below)

(Significant Change, though clearly building on the direction of previous guidance)

CHAPTER 6: EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

- Minor wording changes
- With Assessment Criteria, the key area previously labelled 'research and development' is now labelled 'Research'. References to 'development' have been removed within this section. (This appears to align with the refocused material in Chapter 5: Research).

(No significant changes)

CHAPTER 7: RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION

- Minor wording changes
- In the introduction, the previous final paragraph relating to the integration of ERS within resources and administration, has not been included. However, the assessment criteria are unchanged in this regards, and so this appears to be either an oversight or not significant.

(No significant changes)



CHAPTER 8: INTERNATIONALISATION

- Minor wording changes
- Within Further Guidance on Assessing Internationalisation, a cross reference is provided to Annex 16 within the EQUIS Process Manual Annexes.

(No significant changes)

CHAPTER 9: ETHICS, RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

(No significant changes)

CHAPTER 10: CONNECTIONS WITH PRACTICE

(No significant changes)

APPENDIX 2: DETAILED SUMMARY OF CHANGES IN EQUIS PROCESS MANUAL

- There are minor clarifications and word changes throughout. These are not significant.
- A List of Acronyms has been included at the start of the document
- Several sections have been reduced in content – to reduce duplication (adding cross references where needed). In several areas, additional content/explanation has been moved to the Process Manual Annexes and/or to more relevant sections of the Process Manual. These have not necessarily been included in the points below, as it reflects changes in presentation, rather than in content.

IMPORTANT NOTES (NEW SECTION)

- The important notes are as set out at the start of the EQUIS Standards and Criteria document ([outlined above](#))

(No significant changes)

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO EQUIS

- This has been shortened, but there are no other key changes. It reflects a summary of the previous content.

(No significant changes)

SECTION 2: MANAGEMENT OF EQUIS

- Part 1: The EFMD Board. Reference to an annual call for nominations to the Accreditation Board has been removed.
- Part 4: The membership of the EQUIS Accreditation Board (AB) has been updated from "representatives of high-profile organisations that are stakeholders in the quality improvement of management education" to "academics and representatives from the world of practice".
- Part 5: EQUIS Advisors (previously Part 6) has been summarised, with additional detail in Section 3 and in a new Annex 7 in the Process Manual Annexes.
- Part 7 is now a summary of the Appeals Committee. (The information on confidentiality etc is provided in the "Important Notes" section.).

(Not significant: Represents additional clarification and guidance)

SECTION 3: THE EQUIS ACCREDITATION PROCESS

- Each of the formal Stages now includes a helpful guidance table, summarising the key School Actions at each stage of the process.

STAGE 0: ENQUIRY

- Clarifies that Schools must be full members of EFMD to proceed beyond ENQUIRY to the Formal Application for Entry



STAGE 2: PRE-ELIGIBILITY: ONLINE BRIEFING & PRE-ELIGIBILITY ADVISORY

- This stage now includes the Pre-Eligibility Advisory phase (previously Stage 3) and all subsequent stages have been re-numbered accordingly.
- Some of the explanations and guidance for the Online Briefing and related report are moved to Annexes 4 and 5 of the EQUIS Process Manual Annexes
- The minimum duration of the OPTIONAL pre-Advisory Service is now nine months (previously one year).

STAGE 4: ELIGIBILITY EVALUATION AND DECISION

- The Eligibility Criteria have been reworded and renumbered, but there are no material changes.
- The formal eligibility decision will now be communicated by phone or brief email within 48 hours of the EQUIS Committee meeting. (As previously, formal letters should be issued within one week of the meeting).
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STAGE 5: SELF ASSESSMENT AND PRE-REVIEW ADVISORY

- Additional information on factors to be considered when estimating the date for a Peer Review Visit has been provided.
- Duplicated guidance for the SAR has been removed (as provided later in the document).
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STAGE 6: PEER REVIEW VISIT AND PEER REVIEW REPORT

- The timing of the draft Peer Review report back to the School (for factual accuracy checks) is reduced from 8 weeks to 5 weeks. The final PRR (including recommendation) is sent to the School within 8 week of the visit.

STAGE 8: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & PROGRESS REPORTS

- 3 year Accreditations: The narrative supporting schools that "*satisfy all the Standards except for one that cannot be expected to be fully satisfied due to environmental circumstances*" has been removed. It appears that any School receiving a three year accreditation will be expected to demonstrate tri-annual progress based on the Areas of Required Improvement provided.
- The wording that allows schools obtaining five year accreditations to choose their own Areas of Development has been reduced – but still appears to exist in principle (implicitly, rather than explicitly).

STAGE 9: REACCREDITATION

- Confirmed that Schools holding EFMD Programme Accreditation that is valid at the time of the EQUIS reaccreditation visit will not need to include a Selected Programme for the Reaccreditation visit (or within the related documents).
- Additional tips for the re-accreditation SAR are provided – essentially reminding schools of the importance of reflecting on changes since the previous accreditation; the challenges now faced by the School and commenting on observations and recommendations made in the previous report.

(Not significant: Represents additional clarification and guidance)

SECTION 4: GUIDANCE FOR SELF ASSESSMENT

This was previously Section 5.

- The section has been rewritten, and includes some updated (and helpful) guidance.
- The opening note stating that the section is primarily addressed to schools has been removed.
- EFMD also advises that the ODR is organised by the ten chapters of the EQUIS standards and criteria (in alignment with the SAR). In QED's experience, most schools take this approach anyway – but it is worth noting for schools that might not.
- Advice on distribution of SAR has been moved to Section 5 (Guidance for Peer Review).

(Some Changes: Clarification and additional Guidance)

SECTION 5: GUIDANCE FOR PEER REVIEW

This was previously Section 6.

- The section has been significantly condensed and now cross references to Annex 10 in the EQUIS Process Manual Annexes for more detailed guidance.
- The opening note stating that the section is primarily addressed to EQUIS Peer Reviewers has been removed.

(No significant impact: Change in presentation only)

APPENDIX 3: DETAILED SUMMARY OF CHANGES IN EQUIS PROCESS MANUAL ANNEXES

The Annexes have been extended to include material previously found within the Process Manual directly. For convenience, QED includes a list of the Annexes below (with map back to the 2023 documents)

List of 2024 Annexes		2023 Placement	Changes
Annex 1	EQUIS Application Form	Annex 1	---
Annex 2	EQUIS Datasheet	Annex 2	Yes – See below
Annex 3	EQUIS Fee Schedule	Annex 3	Yes – See below
Annex 4	Online Briefing Guide	Previously in Process Manual	Minor rewording only
Annex 5	Online Briefing Report Form	Annex 4	Yes – See below
Annex 6	EQUIS Eligibility Progress Report Form	Not provided	Yes – See below
Annex 7	EQUIS Advisory Guide	Limited information in Process Manual	New
Annex 8	Pre-Eligibility Advisory Evaluation Form	Annex 5 (& renamed)	---
Annex 9	Pre-Review Advisory Evaluation Form	Annex 6 (& renamed)	---
Annex 10	Peer Review Visit Guide	Extended information in Process Manual	Yes – See below
Annex 11	Initial Peer Review Visit Schedule Template		---
Annex 12	Reaccreditation Peer Review Visit Schedule Template	Annex 7	---
Annex 13	Supporting Information & Documents To Be Provided In The Self- Assessment Report Or Sar Annexes	Annex 8	Yes – See below
Annex 14	Documents To Be Provided In The Online Document Repository	Annex 9	Yes – See below
Annex 15	Student Report Template	Annex 10	Yes – See below
Annex 16	EQUIS Quality Profile Sheet	Annex 11	As needed to align with changes to standards
Annex 17	EQUIS Criteria Evaluation Form	Annex 12	
Annex 18	EQUIS Mid-Term Progress Report Form	Annex 13	---
Annex 19	EQUIS Annual Progress Report Form	Annex 14	---
Annex 20	Policy On Accreditation Of Multi-Campus Operations	Annex 15	---
Annex 21	Policy On Accreditation Of Collaborative Provision	Annex 16	---
Annex 22	EFMD Confidentiality Agreement Form	Annex 17	---
Annex 23	Conflict Of Interest Policy	Annex 18	---
Annex 24	Policy And Publicity Guidelines For The Use Of The "EQUIS" Brand	Annex 19	---
Annex 25	Appeals Procedure	Annex 20	---
Annex 26	Policy On Institutional Change And Restructuring	Annex 21	---
Annex 27	Special Reaccreditation	Annex 22	---

Annex 28	EQUIS Policy On Reaccreditation Of Schools With EFMD Programme Accreditation	Annex 23	---
Annex 29	Policy On Non-Renewal Of Accreditation Of Schools	Previously in Process Manual	---

ANNEX 2: EQUIS DATASHEET

Schools are required to submit (and update) their datasheet using the EQUIS online platform (OX). Annex 2 includes a sample datasheet, to illustrate the type and format of data required. It is not expected to be used for formal submission. Key changes to the datasheet, as based on the sample template, are as follows:

- A headline note has been added to the template, to remind Schools to contact EFMD for OX log-in information.
- EFMD confirms that links to additional documents are not permitted.
- Tables 8, 9 and 10 (in addition to the previous Appendices 1-3) do not count against the page limit (16 pages).
- Tables have been renumbered throughout the document. A list of datasheet tables is provided below (with 2023 numbering also for convenience).

		2023 Version	Changes
Table 1	MBA Programmes' Participant Experience	'MBA Programmes'	---
Table 2	Faculty	Table 1	Yes
Table 3	Departments/Areas and Faculty Allocation	Table 2	---
Table 4	Research Output	Table 3	Yes
Table 5	Core Faculty Workload Distribution	'Faculty Workload'	---
Table 6	ExecEd Activity	Not labelled	---
Table 7	Partner Organisations' Interactions	'Partners from the World of Practice'	---
Table 8	Degree Programme Portfolio	Table 4	---
Table 9	Distribution of non-national students enrolled this year (new entrants) – not including exchange students	Table 4a	---
Table 10	Summary information on the School's Financial Situation	Table 5	---
Table 11	Academic Research Output Ranking	Table 6	---
Table 12a	Practice-Oriented Research: Partnerships, Projects and Collaboration	n/a	New
Table 12b	Actional Insights	Table 7	Yes
Table 12c	Dissemination	n/a	New
Table 12d	Recognition of research from Practice	n/a	New

Table 13a	Campus Information (labelled by location and founding year)	Table 8a	---
Table 14a	Collaborative Provision table (labelled by name of programme and partner organisation)	Table 9a	---

- Table 2 Faculty
 - The instruction that dual passport holders must be considered 'national' if one of the passports is national/local has been removed. *N.B. QED recommends inclusion of a short note to clarify the approach taken by the School when describing international diversity within the SAR. We also recommend that any comparative analysis uses the same basis of classification.*
 - Rows have been added to accommodate percentage figures where relevant
- Table 4: Research Output
 - List of Research Types has been edited and a total column has been added.
 - Research books/monographs has been added
 - Articles on Pedagogic Development and Innovation has been removed (*captured in new Table 12 series*)
 - Published Case Studies has been removed (*captured in new Table 12 series*)
 - R&D publications has been updated to research publications (*aligned with the updated terminology in Chapter 5*).
 - There is no reference to Tabel 2 within the Standards and Criteria document (as this table no longer exists within the Standard).
- Executive Education
 - The requirement to add a few keywords in brackets, explaining the international dimension of the relationship with international clients, has been removed.
- Appendix 1: Research Output (two last completed years). Additional data tables are now included, reflecting the refocus of research into Academic and Practice-Oriented. The new tables relate to practice-oriented research.
 - Table 12a – new table requiring data on practice-oriented research: partnerships, projects and collaboration (project name; source of funding; type of project; revenue; Duration).
 - Table 12b – Modified version of the previous Table 7, looking for specified actional insights (number, target audience/client, comments). Categories include white papers, trade publications, patents, consultancy, start-ups etc.
 - Table 12c – Data on dissemination of research (conferences , key notes, print, media etc) by target audience/client; evidence of reach and any comments.
 - Table 12d -Data on measures of recognition of practice-oriented research – such as endowed chairs, joint research centres, prizes/awards etc (Source of funding/award, revenue, comments)

(Material Change: significant new requirements in some areas)

ANNEX 3: EQUIS FEE SCHEDULE

- Key EQUIS fees (application, Eligibility, Review etc) have increased by circa 2.5%. The full fee schedule is [available here](#).

(Some Changes: possible administrative impact)

ANNEX 5: ONLINE BRIEFING REPORT FORM

- The EQUIS advisor is also asked to comment on:



- the School's membership of EFMD (full membership, in good standing).
- Principal Risks (within the recommendations section)
- The Briefing Report form suggests that the minimum advisory period remains at 12 months. However, please note that the Process Manual has updated the minimum period to 9 months, so this appears to be a minor oversight on the form.

ANNEX 6: EQUIS ELIGIBILITY PROGRESS REPORT FORM

This is not a new requirement, but the formal form to be used (based on the annual progress report form, post accreditation) has been included within the annexes. It is the form used when a school applies for eligibility more than two years post the Online Briefing (as set out in Stage 2 of the EQUIS Process within the EQUIS Process Manual).

ANNEX 7: EQUIS ADVISORY GUIDE

An extended explanation of the role and purpose of the EQUIS Advisory service has been included. This sets out the objectives and nature of the service, as well as a summary of the process; the key stages and other helpful advice.

ANNEX 10: PEER REVIEW VISIT GUIDE

An extended guide to the Peer Review Visit has been included. Much of the content was previously included in the Process Manual (2023) -but the content has been reviewed and expanded where relevant. Some key points include:

- Proposal of PRV Schedule to EQUIS office 6 weeks pre visit (previously 8 weeks)
- Once fully approved, the School is responsible for sending the final schedule to the PRT at minimum 2 weeks prior to visit.
- Provision of a more detailed participant directory (including photo/head shot) – to be sent to PRT in advance of the visit.
- Additional advice and guidance as relevant throughout.

(Some Changes: possible administrative impact)

ANNEX 13: DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED IN THE SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT OR SAR ANNEXES

- This Annex has been updated in line with changes within the EQUIS Standards and Criteria.

(Limited Changes in this cycle)

ANNEX 14: DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED IN THE ONLINE DOCUMENT REPOSITORY

- This Annex includes basic guidance for the ODR and has been updated in line with changes within the EQUIS Standards and Criteria.

(Limited Changes in this cycle)



ANNEX 15: TEMPLATE FOR THE STUDENT REPORT

- A set of General Questions has been added to the report template.
- The tabular format of the report has been removed, but the questions posed are broadly aligned to previous versions, other than:
 - Students are now asked to comment specifically on how they signal "*inadequate teaching or poor instructors*" (Section 3 – Programmes)

(Some Changes: possible administrative impact)

For advice and further details on any of the above, please contact the QED Accreditation Team at info@QEDaccreditation.com