



Guidelines for evaluating organizational units according to UG 2002 (University Act of 2002) Resolution of the senate and rectorate from March 29, 2006

1. FRAMEWORK, OBJECTIVES AND PROCEDURE

Evaluations of organizational units (OU) pertain to the competency of the rectorate. Generally, evaluations of organizational units are commissioned by the rectorate. However, in certain cases they may also be conducted on behalf of the University Council or the bm:bwk (Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture).

Evaluations may also be requested by an OU. In such cases a corresponding request is to be submitted to the rectorate for further approval. The expenses of an evaluation are to be paid in any case by the rectorate.

General objectives of an evaluation:

- Facilitating a process of systematic self-reflection within the organizational units to be evaluated,
- Reflecting upon the evaluation assisted by external reviewers and
- Defining further measures to implement quality assurance procedures in a lasting manner.

Specific objectives of an evaluation:

- Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the respective organizational unit,
- Specific advancement of profile and organization development,
- Providing a well funded assessment of the overall performance profile to researchers, third-party funding providers, as well as the interested public,
- Highlighting developmental perspectives, problem solutions and potentials of the evaluated organizational unit.

The following **procedures** shall be adhered to for the aforementioned:

- Combination of self assessment, assessment by others and quality assurance instruments
- The emphasis is placed on assisting the OU, versus assessing its performance
- Transparency and openness, measures that facilitate trust
- Evaluation as a learning and development opportunity, as well as a reflection process for all concerned
- Process orientation: formative aspects of evaluations

- Goal orientation: The evaluation designs correspond well with the objectives of the evaluation
- Application of a simple and efficient method that aids in achieving objectives with the least amount of time and resources possible
- Principle of periodically conducted evaluations
- Participation of students in procedures for quality assurance
- Evaluation as a possible basis for organization development
- Implementation of suggestions for improvement
- Publication of results
- Promoting the objectives of the university in the context of performance objectives
- Evaluation as basis for international benchmarking activities

Evaluation standards

As a member of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Evaluation (DeGEval) (German Evaluation Society) The University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences Vienna adheres to the „Standards for Evaluation“, as published by the society. See appendix or:

http://www.degeval.de/index.php?class=Calimero_Webpage&id=9023

Furthermore, the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” shall be adhered to that were published by the ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) as a result of the Bologna procedure. They address academic procedures in more detail. See appendix or:

<http://www.enqa.net/files/ENQA%20Bergen%20Report.pdf>

Legal framework

Furthermore, the present guidelines also adhere to relevant legal regulations pertinent to UG 2002, in particular to §14 and § 22 para. 1 Z 10, as well as the guidelines for conducting, publishing and implementing evaluations as stated under V of the statutes.

Preamble

Performance of the OU in the following also includes the performance of pertinent subunits. Furthermore, all relevant subunits of the evaluated organizational unit are to comply with the evaluation procedure.

2. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

2.1. Schedule

Procedure	timeframe/reference point
I. Initiation of evaluation	6 weeks
1. Written information from the rectorate, statement by the OU	2 weeks
2. Selection of peers (p)	2 weeks
3. Comments on evaluation design and peer selection	1 week
4. Selection of evaluation design, contractual agreement	1 week
II. Internal evaluation	7 weeks
5. Generation of self assessment report by the OU	5 weeks
6. Statement regarding self assessment report	1 week
7. Submission of documents to the peers	1 weeks
III. External evaluation	9 weeks
8. Site visit and inspection of facilities	3 days
9. Generation of final report	2 weeks
10. Statement by the OU	2 weeks
11. Inclusion of statements	3 weeks
12. Presentation and discussion of final report	1 week
IV. Implementation and follow-up measures	2 weeks/1 year
13. Determining implementation measures for the evaluated OU	1 week
14. Agreement on objectives	December
15. Publication of results	1 week
16. Interim report of the OU on implemented measures	1 year
17. Head(s) of peers provides details regarding evaluation progress	2 weeks
Total	24 weeks/1 year

Procedure phases without any further comments will be performed in a sequential order, those marked as (p) in a parallel manner.

The rectorate aims at completing the entire procedure within 24 weeks, in order to include the results of the evaluation in the agreements on objectives between the rectorate and the organizational unit for the following year.

2.2. PHASES OF THE PROCEDURE

I. Initiation of the evaluation (6 weeks)

1. Written information from the rectorate and statement by the OU (2 weeks)

The evaluation procedure is initiated in formal writing by the rectorate addressed to the OU that shall be evaluated. Furthermore, the senate, the university council and the works council, as well as the Arbeitskreis für Gleichbehandlungsfragen (working group on equal opportunities) will be informed. In the event the evaluation is commissioned by the university council, the corresponding writing will be submitted by the head of the university council to the OU upon consultation with the rectorate and the senate.

This writing shall amongst others inform about reasons and objectives of the evaluation. Furthermore, an approximate schedule, as well as suggestions for a head of peers (HoP) shall be included. The objectives of the definition may extend to all core processes. Alternatively, the commissioning party may limit the evaluation to specific topics, such as research transfer, new academic programs, internationalization, human resource management, planning and resource management etc.

Evaluations are generally commissioned by the rector or the head of the university council, who commissions the vice-rector for research to perform an evaluation of certain organizational units. He/she shall be assisted by the department for quality assurance. This requires a close cooperation between the department, the research support office, the center for education, as well as the department of controlling.

Generally the commissioning unit is responsible for covering the expenses of the evaluation.

The OU shall submit a statement within two weeks.

2. Selection of peers (2 weeks)

Upon receipt of the statement submitted by the OU, the head of peers is appointed by the rectorate upon consultation with the OU; His/her appointment has to be mutually approved by the rectorate and the OU. At the same time the head of peers will be asked to select the remaining peers (reviewers). The number of reviewers is not pre-assigned and depends on the size of the OU. However, a group of 3-5 peers is recommended.

The peers shall be distinguished researchers within the discipline that the OU to be evaluated is operating in. The peers are expected to be impartial, both, professionally and on a personal level. Peers are usually appointed ad personam, and shall be employed for an evaluation procedure only in special cases.

A peer group generally consists of the following:

- Head of peers
- A minimum of three experts who shall cover the scope of all subjects to be evaluated (of the OU, discipline), two of which are to be appointed from a foreign institution
- A representative of the professional practice
- A member who does not operate in the respective discipline (possibly with management experience in an academic setting)
- Possibly an expert for organization development.

The department for QA and the research support office may assist with the selection of peers by providing recommendations of relevant research institutions or research funding institutions. The head of peers submits his/her recommendation to the rectorate and the OU requesting further comments.

3. Comments on the evaluation design and peer selection (1 week)

The organizational unit has the opportunity to comment on the evaluation design (objectives, topic, schedule, resources etc.) as well as the recommendation of peers. Objections against peers have to be based on facts. The subunits of the OU are to be included in the assessment.

Furthermore, also the senate is to submit a statement regarding the evaluation design.

Additionally, a written declaration of consent has to be obtained from the peers that includes the following aspects:

- The binding commitment of the peers for the entire duration of the evaluation
- Obligations arising from the participation are to be fulfilled.

- Nondisclosure agreement (Obligation of confidentiality)
- Adhering to the GL for evaluation by the OU at the BOKU (University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences)

4. Selection of evaluation design, contractual agreement (1 week)

The statements may prompt a revision of the evaluation design. Subsequently, the final version of the evaluation design and a written agreement are devised, stipulating rights and obligations of the rectorate and the organizational unit, as well as mutually binding consequences of the evaluation (agreement on objectives and performances: identification of potential goals and measures as a result of the evaluation).

This written agreement also specifies which results are to be accomplished, which other OUs shall issue comments, what type of information has to be published in what format and the costs of the procedure.

II. Internal evaluation (7 weeks)

5. Generation of a self assessment report by the OU (5 weeks)

The first step will constitute the formation of a working group within the organizational level, including, aside from the head of the OU and his/her deputy, representatives of professors, other academic staff, non-academic staff and students (ÖH, Austrian National Union of Students).

5 weeks are allotted for this important evaluation task, also including a critical reflection process, a discussion and a creative developmental process within the OU that may be assisted by external consultation if necessary.

6. Statement regarding the self assessment report (1 week)

Organizational units that cooperate closely within research or education (e.g. joint academic programs) or with whom infrastructure is used conjointly shall submit a statement regarding the self assessment report or parts of it. Furthermore, the senate shall also issue a statement. Additionally, representatives of central service units or research institutions may submit a respective statement. The head of peers is to decide which additional organizational units will be asked to submit statements.

Student representatives shall also prepare a statement. This will include students pursuing Bachelor's, Master's and PhD degree programs.

7. Submission of documents to the peers (1 week)

The following documents are submitted at least two weeks prior to the site visit to the peers and shall be reviewed accordingly:

- Self assessment report of the organizational unit
- Statement regarding the self assessment report (by evaluated OU, possibly additional OUs, senate, service units, student representatives)
- Documents assessing the development of the OU (e.g. relevant aspects of the development plan of the department)
- Relevant aspects of the university development plan
- Results of previous evaluations
- Data from research databases, BLIS SAP, TUWIS, DWH (Datawarehouse)
- Results of the benchmarking process (if the benchmark universities have approved the disclosure of data to third parties).

III. External evaluation (9 weeks)

8. Site visit, inspection of facilities (3 days)

A detailed program shall be devised for this purpose and submitted to the peers one week prior to the visit. 3 days are to be allotted for the site visit, while the peers are expected to arrive one day prior to the visit at the premises. The peers will be given details on the course of the procedure on the eve prior to their visit.

The peers shall meet with the following individuals:

- Self assessment report of the organizational unit
- University management,
- Head of the OU,
- Professors & teaching staff with a postdoctoral lecturing qualification,
- Other academic staff,
- Non-academic staff
- Student representatives (ÖH).

Further meetings with other persons or groups may be scheduled as well.

The premises of the OU and subunits shall be visited following the meeting.

The evaluation is supposed to not only assess the performance of the OU but to also provide further assistance in its future development by the international experts. Thus, a workshop shall be organized together with representatives of the OU on the last day of the visit. The peers are expected to share their impressions at the workshop and give first recommendations. Furthermore, this workshop will present an opportunity for both parties to clarify further questions that may have arisen after the site visit and to provide further information in order to solve possible misunderstandings. Additionally, proposals of the peers shall be discussed in order to conjointly elaborate on possible solutions and development perspectives.

9. Generation of final report (2 weeks)

The peers shall generate a written evaluation based on the presented documents and data, the self assessment report of the OU and the site visit. This evaluation report will be referred to in the following as the final report. It is supposed to include the following aspects:

- Goals of the evaluation
- A brief description of the OU and the course of the procedure,
- A differentiated and critical assessment of the performance of the OU, previous strategic positioning, as well as short, medium and long term measures,
- A SWOT analysis regarding the current state and proposed development perspectives,
- Realistic recommendations for efficiently achieving pursued objectives,
- Further BOKU-wide recommendations,
- Measures for implementation.

The final report shall include an appendix that aside from the evaluation design includes all documents that have been presented to the peers (See item 7).

Mostly international peers will participate in the evaluation, therefore the final report shall be written in English. In the event all peers speak German, the final report may also be composed in German.

Two weeks will be allotted to the peers for generating the final report and subsequently presenting it to the OU. The head of peers is responsible for submitting the report on time.

10. Statement by the OU (2 weeks)

Following the receipt of the confidential final report the organizational shall issue a statement within 14 days. The deadline is to be specified ahead of time.

11. Inclusion of statements (3 weeks)

The peers are required to include the statements within three weeks after issuance and to generate an updated version of the final report. In the event statements will not be included, this decision has to be objectively justified. Ultimately, the final report shall be submitted to the rectorate, the senate and the evaluated OU.

12. Presentation and discussion of the final report (1 week)

The rectorate has to call a meeting within one week, where the head of peers will present the final report to the rectorate and the OU, and where the results will be discussed. This meeting may also be attended by representatives of other involved OUs, platforms and service units. The works council, a representative of the Arbeitskreis für Gleichbehandlungsfragen at the BOKU and student representatives (ÖH) are invited as well. In any case two representatives of the senate shall attend the meeting.

IV. Implementation and follow-up measures (2 weeks/1 year)

13. Determining implementation measures for the evaluated OU (1 week)

Necessary follow-up and implementation measures for the OU will be determined based on the final report and the discussion process mentioned under item 12. Resulting obligations for the rectorate and the OU shall be stated in writing. The evaluation may also produce implementation measures for other OUs, platforms and service institutions. They are to be determined by the rectorate and the OU. Respective and mutually binding obligations are to be stated in writing.

The works council and the Arbeitskreis für Gleichbehandlungsfragen are to be consulted if necessary.

14. Agreement on objectives (by December)

Based on a contractual agreement between the rectorate and the OU, named parties shall determine the objectives of the evaluation and measures that are to be implemented by the OU within a given timeframe, as well as the resources that will be allocated by the rectorate for this purpose.

Objectives and measures stated in this agreement will also be included in the agreement on objectives between the rectorate and the evaluated organizational unit for the following year. Medium to long term objectives and measures will be included in agreements for subsequent performance assessment period(s) (3 years each).

15. Publication of results (1 week)

Ultimately, the rectorate will publish the evaluation results according to UG 2002 § para. 1 Z 10. Generally, an anonymous executive summary will be published.

16. Interim report of the OU on implemented measures (1 year)

In order to ensure the implementation of objectives and measures 12 months upon conclusion of the evaluation a meeting will be held between the OU and the rectorate. The OU is expected to prepare a brief report on implemented measures and objectives and to present it during the meeting. Results will be discussed and modifications jointly determined.

This working meeting may be attended by representatives of the senate, of relevant OUs, platforms, service institutions, the works council and the Arbeitskreis für Gleichbehandlungsfragen, as well as student representatives. All named representatives shall receive a copy of the report.

17. Report issued by the head of peers regarding the progress (2 weeks)

The head of peers shall generate a report regarding the progress based on the interim report, which shall assist in further planning and implementation activities.

No other reports on implementation measures will usually be required after the aforementioned progress report; further results will be presented during meetings between the rectorate and the OU for the preparation of internal objectives.

18. EXPLANATORY NOTES

- After resolution of the present guidelines by the senate a questionnaire will be devised conjointly with the rectorate and the senate for the generation of the self assessment report by the OU.
- Furthermore, drafts of contracts and requirement specifications for the peers and the head of peers are to be generated.
- The department of quality assurance shall prepare a target/actual comparison of the chronological sequence and the results of the evaluation based on the specifications of these guidelines. This comparison may serve as basis for modifying and developing the guidelines further.

Appendix: Standards for Evaluation by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Evaluation - DeGEval
Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education
Area of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - ENQA

Appendix:

1. Standards for Evaluation by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Evaluation (DeGEval, German Evaluation Society)

The standards published by the DeGEval can be summarized as follows, an overview can be found at: http://www.degeval.de/index.php?class=Calimero_Webpage&id=9023

Utility

- Identification of involved and concerned individuals
- Determining the evaluation purpose
- Credibility and expertise of reviewers
- Selection and extent of information
- Transparency of values
- Completeness and clarity of reporting
- Timeliness of the evaluation
- Utilization and utility of the evaluation

Practicability

- Adequate methods
- Diplomatic procedure
- Efficiency of the evaluation

Fairness

- Formal agreements
- Protection of individual rights
- Complete and fair assessment
- Impartial procedure and reporting
- Publication of results

Reliability

- Description of evaluation objective
- Context analysis
- Description of purpose and procedure
- List of sources of reference
- Valid and reliable information
- Systematic error detection
- Analysis of qualitative and quantitative information
- Well founded conclusions
- Meta evaluations.

2. ENQA Standards and Guidelines

The „Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area“ that were passed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in the context of the Bologna follow-up conference in Bergen in 2005 shall be summarized in the following, see also:

http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050221_ENQA_report.pdf

1. **European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions**
2. **European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance of higher education**
3. **European standards for external quality assurance agencies**

1. **European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance**

Policy

Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards

Assessment of students

Quality assurance of teaching staff

Learning resources and student support

Information systems

Public information

2. **European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance**

Use of internal QA procedures

Development of external QA processes

Criteria for decisions

Processes fit for purpose

Reporting

Follow-up procedures

Periodic reviews

System-wide analyses

3. **European standards for external quality assurance agencies**

Use of external QA procedures for Higher Education

Official status

Activities

Resources

Mission statement

Independence

External QA criteria and processes used by the agencies

Accountability procedures