EVALUATION STANDARDS FOR FOREIGN RESEARCH UNITS

December 2022
INTRODUCTION.................................................................................................................. 3

FIELD 1: Research policy of the unit...................................................................................... 5
  Standard 1: The research unit sets scientific objectives, including the prospective dimension of its policy........................................ 5
  Standard 2: The research unit has appropriate resources for its activity profile and research environment........................................... 6
  Standard 3: The research unit complies with regulations on human resources management, safety and sustainable development................................. 6

FIELD 2: Attractiveness and international recognition .......................................................... 7
  Standard 4: The research unit is attractive thanks to its international scientific influence.......................................................... 7
  Standard 5: The research unit is attractive thanks to the quality of its policy for welcoming researchers........................................ 7
  Standard 6: The research unit is attractive thanks to the recognition it has received through successful participations in competitive calls for proposals.................................................................................................................. 8
  Standard 7: The research unit is attractive thanks to the quality of its equipment, its technological skills and its access to research fields........................................................................................................................................................................... 8

FIELD 3: Scientific output....................................................................................................... 9
  Standard 8: The scientific output of the research unit meets quality criteria.............................................................. 9
  Standard 9: The scientific output is proportionate to the research potential of the research unit and distributed among its staff................................................................................................................................. 9
  Standard 10: The scientific output of the research unit respects the principles of research integrity, ethics, open science and the protection of scientific and technological heritage................................................................. 10

FIELD 4: Link between research and education..................................................................... 11
  Standard 11: Policy for research-based learning......................................................................................... 11
  Standard 12: Implementation of the strategy linking research & education......................................................................................... 11

FIELD 5: Inclusion of research activities in society ................................................................. 12
  Standard 13: The research unit interacts with non-academic actors............................................................................................. 12
  Standard 14: The research unit develops products or deliverables for the socio-economic world.................................................. 12
  Standard 15: The research unit shares its knowledge with the general public and participates in public debates.................................................................................................................................................................................. 13
INTRODUCTION

This document features the evaluation standards for the evaluation of foreign research units.

Principles

The evaluations of research units conducted under this framework respect the following principles:

- The evaluation of research units is a peer review, carried out by an expert committee;
- These experts are appointed by the Hcéres in compliance with the principles of neutrality, expertise, balance, absence of conflict of interest, independence and integrity laid down in the research code and the evaluation charter;
- The evaluation is collegial; the chair of the expert committee guarantees this;
- The evaluation report, published on the Hcéres website, is signed by the chair of the expert committee, on their behalf, and countersigned by the Hcéres President;
- The evaluated research unit is given the opportunity to comment throughout and at the end of the evaluation;
- The evaluation is carried out with due respect for the autonomy of the research unit and the responsibilities of its governance bodies and its top executives.

Although not formally part of the European standards and guidelines (ESG) for quality assurance in the European higher education area - as these European Standards developed in the context of the "Bologna process" are relevant to the field of higher education in Europe - this framework takes into account several fundamental principles of the ESG, including the following ones:

- The objectives of the evaluation are explicit and public;
- The evaluation processes are based on appropriate procedures, known to both evaluators and evaluated;
- The standards and evaluation criteria are explicit and public;
- The evaluation is based in particular on a self-evaluation carried out by the research unit.

Objectives of the evaluation

The Hcéres missions specify the main objectives of the evaluation of a research unit:

- To issue assessments based on the quality of the achieved results for the attention of the research unit, public actors, partners and interested publics: these assessments specify the strong and weak points and are accompanied by recommendations;
- To provide advice to assist the research unit in the development and implementation of its institutional policy and in the allocation of resources to its internal components.

Structure of the framework

Fields of evaluation

The fields of evaluation define the scope of the evaluation procedures, i.e. the main aspects on which the expert committees may be requested to evaluate how the units and their teams carry out their mission. Each field of evaluation has several standards associated with it. This framework includes five fields of evaluation. They involve the characteristics of the unit, its resources and organisation, its attractiveness, its research products, the link with education, particularly doctoral training, research, and the societal impact of its activities in the broad sense.
Standards

The standards specify the expectations for which the evaluation estimates the level of achievement. The set of standards therefore constitutes the scope of the field of evaluation with which they are associated.

Criteria

A set of criteria is associated with each standard. The criteria specify the way in which the standard can be reflected in the self-evaluation report. Without being exclusive or exhaustive, the criteria define the topics that will be examined by the experts. This will enable them to verify the level of response of the evaluated entity to the expectations expressed by the standard with which they are associated.

A set of qualitative and quantitative data is associated with each criterion and allows the evaluation methods to be specified. Depending on the situation, these data are common to all scientific fields (Science and Technology, Life and Earth Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences) or related to the specific practices of a community.

The research unit

Research units are structures with complete or some autonomy, within a national or local research structure or within research and higher education institutions. Their objective is to produce knowledge leading to academic output as well as discoveries and/or innovations. Research and higher education institutions may be universities, their components or research centres.

The faculty

This word refers to all professors or assistant professors who teach in a higher education institution and who carry out research, and to the permanent or temporary teaching staff who are part of the staff of the unit. The professors and researchers have defended a thesis. PhD students are considered as young researchers.

This group is different from administrative staff and research support staff (engineers, technicians, etc.).
FIELD 1: RESEARCH POLICY OF THE UNIT

This field of evaluation is divided into three standards relating to the adequacy of the research policy implemented by the unit (including its prospective dimension) with its human resources, financial and logistical means, and with responsible practices in terms of human resources, safety and environmental footprint.

Standard 1: The research unit sets scientific objectives, including the prospective dimension of its policy.

Strategic choices

C1. The research unit expresses a clear vision of its research environment and has a thorough knowledge of its stakeholders. It takes into account the research and innovation policy of its supervising authority.

C2. The research unit sets up its ambitions and research priorities in relation to its identity, and structures the organisation of its activities around its choices.

C3. In defining its ambitions and priorities, the research unit assesses the quality and evolution of its scientific output in the national and international context of its scientific field(s). It identifies the major contributions and achieved successes during the reporting period.

C4. The research unit assesses the successes and limitations of the actions carried out to promote the emergence of new research topics, risk-taking and interdisciplinarity.

C5. The research unit involves all its staff in the design of its research and innovation policy as well as in its implementation.

C6. The research unit is able to analyse the economic and societal impacts of the policy it conducts.

C7. The research unit explicitly identifies how it has followed the recommendations of any previous evaluation.

Internationalisation of research activity

C8. In implementing its research policy, the research unit relies on strategic international partnerships with foreign research units or international and multinational organisations.

C9. The research unit positions itself on calls for proposals involving bilateral or multilateral, regional and international partnerships.

C10. The research unit promotes and financially supports the missions of its researchers abroad in its development strategy.
**Standard 2: The research unit has appropriate resources for its activity profile and research environment.**

C1. The research unit has an activity profile in line with its missions and the capacity of its human resources.

C2. In line with its activity profile and research environment, the research unit ensures that it has the necessary financial resources.

C3. The research unit pools some of its own resources with other research entities to encourage collective research activities and the emergence of innovative topics.

C4. The research unit ensures that its scientific objectives are in line with the available premises, infrastructure, platforms, equipment, software and documentary resources.

**Standard 3: The research unit complies with regulations on human resources management, safety and sustainable development.**

C1. The research unit complies with human resource management principles that respect gender balance and guaranty a non-discriminatory access of its staff to training, internal mobility and career development.

C2. The research unit recruits its staff taking into account, for example, the principles of the San Francisco Declaration (DORA) or a criterion such as the HRS4R (Human resources strategy for researchers).

C3. The research unit pays attention to the working conditions of its staff, their health and safety and the prevention of psychosocial risks.

C4. The research unit applies recommendations on the prevention of environmental risks and the achievement of sustainable development objectives, with a particular focus on reducing the environmental impact of its activities.
FIELD 2: ATTRACTIVENESS AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Attractiveness and international recognition can be defined as the capacity of a research unit to become attractive within national and international scientific communities. Attractiveness results from the recognition of the unit by these communities. This field of evaluation consists of four standards which relate respectively to the scientific influence of the members of the research unit, the quality of its policy for managing and welcoming researchers in relation to the PhD programs, its ability to obtain funding from competitive calls for proposals, and the quality of its equipment and its management.

**Standard 4: The research unit is attractive thanks to its international scientific influence.**

C1. Members of the research unit are invited to present their work at national, regional and international scientific institutions and congresses.

C2. The research unit organises major regional and international congresses, or its members are part of the scientific committees of these events.

C3. Members of the research unit have editorial responsibilities in international peer-reviewed journals and collections.

C4. The members of the research unit participate in governing bodies for research or scientific expertise at local, national, regional and international level, in particular to build the European Research Area, if the unit belongs to a member or affiliated country.

C5. The research unit has members of internationally recognised academies, scientific institutions and international societies.

C6. The research unit has received various national, regional and international scientific awards and distinctions.

C7. The research unit pays attention to its home institution’s position in international rankings of scientific outputs and the number of prizes awarded to its researchers.

C8. The unit has mechanisms for monitoring its performance indicators, especially bibliometrics. It carries out self-assessments at a pace known to the staff.

**Standard 5: The research unit is attractive thanks to the quality of its policy for welcoming researchers.**

C1. Within the research unit, national and international early career researchers (PhD students, post-doctoral fellows) benefit from a quality environment and management that provide them with favourable working conditions.

C2. The research unit regularly attracts junior and senior researchers who apply for permanent positions. It provides them with an environment contributing to the development of their research activities and recognises their own contribution.

C3. The research unit is able to host renowned visiting researchers.

C4. The research unit supports the outgoing mobility of junior and senior researchers.
C5. The research unit implements an operational strategy for research integrity and open science.

**Standard 6: The research unit is attractive thanks to the recognition it has received through successful participations in competitive calls for proposals.**

C1. The research teams of the unit successfully apply to local, national, regional and international calls for proposals.

C2. The research teams of the unit carry out projects financed by local, national, regional or international public or private funding agencies or by foundations or associations.

C3. The research unit is able, from its own resources, to finance PhDs, Post docs, engineering and technical staff, chairs and large equipment.

**Standard 7: The research unit is attractive thanks to the quality of its equipment, its technological skills and its access to research fields.**

C1. The research teams of the research unit use platforms, large equipment and demonstrators that have been awarded a label or a certification.

C2. The research unit has a strategy of developing, maintaining and updating its platforms, large-scale equipment and demonstrators, as well as a strategy of opening them up to third parties.

C3. The research unit has qualified technical staff for the management of its platforms, heavy equipment and demonstrators.

C4. The unit supports its researchers in accessing their research fields and implements the conditions for their success and security.
FIELD 3: SCIENTIFIC OUTPUT

This field of evaluation is divided into three standards which deal respectively with the qualitative, quantitative, and ethical aspects of scientific output.

**Standard 8: The scientific output of the research unit meets quality criteria.**

C1. The scientific output of the research unit is based on solid theoretical and methodological foundations.

C2. The scientific output of the research unit is original.

C3. The scientific output of the research unit makes a significant contribution to knowledge.

C4. The scientific output of the research unit appears in international peer-reviewed journals and books.

C5. The scientific output of the research unit takes the form of co-publications with partners of the highest international level.

**Standard 9: The scientific output is proportionate to the research potential of the research unit and distributed among its staff.**

C1. The scientific output is in line with the research potential of the research unit. It does not compromise research quality to quantity.

C2. The scientific output of the research unit is evenly distributed between the teams.

C3. All permanent researchers and professors contribute to the scientific output of the research unit.

C4. All PhD and post-doctoral students participate in the scientific output of the research unit.

C5. The research unit is careful to support researchers and professors ranked among the highly cited researchers by databases such as Web of Science or Scopus.

C6. The research unit pays attention to its mention in scientific production databases such as Web of Science or Scopus and actively ensure its better representation in these databases.

C7. The research unit pays attention to the national and international rankings of its home institution, which include data on scientific output. It provides information to its institution so that it can inform the ranking agencies of the exact outputs of the research unit. It analyses the evolution of indicators and rankings over time.
Standard 10: The scientific output of the research unit respects the principles of research integrity, ethics, open science and the protection of scientific and technological heritage.

C1. The scientific output of the unit is the result of honest and scientifically sound research activities.

C2. The scientific output of the unit is the result of research that respects human and animal life.

C3. The scientific output of the unit respects the principles of open science by sharing publications, methods, data, codes and other elements of the scientific process as widely and quickly as possible.

C4. The research unit pays attention to the management of dual-used research and the non-proliferation of nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical means of mass destruction.

C5. The research unit protects the discoveries of its researchers and ensures effective protection against external interference, in particular by protecting the premises, access to databases and to the information systems. It actively protects the scientific and technological heritage and puts its researchers in touch with support staff to ensure that their most sensitive research is protected.
FIELD 4: LINK BETWEEN RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

This field of evaluation is divided into two standards. They relate respectively to the capacity of the unit to link research to all the study programmes in its environment and to their implementation.

Standard 11: Policy for research-based learning

C1. The research unit sets a policy for research-based learning and courses on research methods in the 1st and 2nd cycles of the research and higher education institutions in its environment.

C2. Where appropriate, the unit participates in doctoral training programmes, articulated with its education and research policy, with the potential support of international partners.

C3. Where appropriate, the unit coordinates and harmonises the training programmes, support and supervision practices for PhD students to ensure their success and employability. These practices are carried out in the scope of PhD programs and research seminars.

C4. The unit ensures that its programmes are research-based through the participation of professors and researchers in the courses.

Standard 12: Implementation of the strategy linking research & education.

C1. The unit supports and guarantees that students and PhD students in the research units are welcomed and mentored in quality conditions.

C2. The unit provides training in research integrity and ethics, in particular for PhD students.

C3. The knowledge management policy is included in the research-based learning policy of the unit particularly for acquiring and accessing resources and contributing to the learning materials which the documentation service is associated with.

C4. The setting of physical and digital spaces in libraries and their accessibility meet the needs of the public and are improved, where appropriate, through partnerships.
FIELD 5: INCLUSION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN SOCIETY

In this field of evaluation, "society" is understood in a broad sense: the inclusion of the activity of the research unit in society may cover the economy, health, culture, environment, etc. The field is divided into three standards, which deal respectively with the interactions of the research unit with actors from the non-academic world, the products of its research for socio-economic actors and its interventions in the public sphere.

Standard 13: The research unit interacts with non-academic actors.

C1. The research unit establishes partnership agreements with non-academic actors and develops collaborative research projects with actors from the socio-economic world. It assesses the mutual benefits that result from these projects.

C2. While answering requests from the non-academic world, the research unit addresses issues of proven scientific and technological value, in line with its research policy.

C3. The research unit initiates non-academic partnerships that meet technological, environmental or societal challenges.

C4. The research unit welcomes professionals and promotes the participation of its staff in non-academic structures.

C5. The research unit hosts PhD students whose research is fully or partly funded by non-academic partners.

C6. The research unit benefits from agreements for the continuing education of non-academic socio-economic actors.

C7. The research unit is involved in participatory science activities.

Standard 14: The research unit develops products or deliverables for the socio-economic world.

C1. The research unit develops scientific and technological resources that are valued economically. It pursues an active policy of intellectual property protection, including patenting.

C2. The research unit promotes the placement of young and experienced researchers in innovation structures such as incubators.

C3. The research unit is involved in the creation of start-ups. It contributes, where appropriate, to job creation and to the improved competitiveness of companies and/or its local environment.

C4. The research unit disseminates its results to the socio-economic world.

C5. Teams from the research unit contribute to the development of standards, procedures, recommendations and evaluation frameworks that are recognised by competent bodies (ISO, etc.).

C6. Through its expertise or recommendations, the research units advises social actors: international bodies, political figures, public administrations, consumer associations, patients’ associations, etc.
Standard 15: The research unit shares its knowledge with the general public and participates in public debates.

C1. The research unit makes the most of its scientific skills to organise events for the general public (exhibitions, performance, concerts, shows, etc.).

C2. The members of the research unit, in line with their scientific skills, integrate scientific mediation. They intervene in the media, on the Internet or on social networks in compliance with research integrity and ethics.

C3. The research unit organises awareness-raising activities for a variety of audiences.