

# Evaluation Charter

Approved by the Collège (Board of the Hcéres)  
September 18, 2024



## THE HIGH COUNCIL FOR THE EVALUATION OF RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION'S COLLÈGE

**Considering** the objectives assigned by law<sup>1</sup> to Hcéres' activities which include:

- issuing well-supported evaluations of the quality of research and higher education activities carried out by the institutions and entities evaluated, brought to the attention of public stakeholders, their partners and interested members of different types of audiences;
- providing opinions designed to help institutions contributing to public higher education and research services to draw up and implement their institutional policies and allocate resources to their internal components, and to support the French government while preparing multi-year contracts with institutions and allocating resources to them;
- contributing to the development of strategies carried out by those involved in higher education, research and innovation, including designing and evaluating public policies;

**Considering** the principles guiding research and higher education evaluation<sup>2</sup>, namely:

- periodic evaluation procedures covering research, study programmes and results;
- implementation of peer-review based evaluation for both research and education, with the possibility to appeal the results;
- procedures inspired by international best practices, and based on objectivity, transparency and equal treatment of the evaluated entities;
- the independence and publicity of evaluation reports;

In addition, in the field of higher education, the principles of the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area (ESG) adopted by the European ministers in charge of higher education on May 14 and 15, 2015;<sup>3</sup>

**Considering** that enforcing regulations<sup>4</sup>, which stipulate that Hcéres' evaluation reports, drafted collegially by each expert panel, are signed by the panel's chair and countersigned by Hcéres' president, implies collaborative work by the expert panel and the Hcéres team;

**Considering** the ethical obligations to which the members of the Hcéres Collège, its staff and experts<sup>5</sup>, are subject, as set out in Hcéres' internal regulations;<sup>6</sup>

**APPROVES the present Charter defining the principles and measures designed to guarantee, in particular, the quality, transparency and publicity of evaluation procedures.<sup>7</sup>**

---

<sup>1</sup> Article L. 114-3-1 of the French Research Code.

<sup>2</sup> Articles L. 114-1 to L. 114-3-2 of the French Research Code.

<sup>3</sup> Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area (ESG).

<sup>4</sup> Articles R. 114-15 and R. 114-10 of the French Research Code.

<sup>5</sup> Pursuant to articles 9, 13 and 14 of Act no. 2017-55 of January 20, 2017 on the general status of independent administrative authorities and independent public authorities.

<sup>6</sup> Adopted by the Collège on May 9, 2022 and published in the Journal officiel de la République française on June 26, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Article R. 114-3 of the French Research Code.

## **I - Hcéres' evaluation reports have a dual purpose: to help the evaluated institutions and entities to improve the quality of higher education and research, and to enlighten authorities to which they report in the context of their public policy.**

Periodic evaluation of institutions, research organisations and study programmes, enables Hcéres to evaluate their progress on a regular basis. It also enables Hcéres to assess whether recommendations from previous evaluations have been taken into account, and whether objectives set in contracts with the French government have been met.

Hcéres invites public authorities, institutions evaluated and other parties involved in the evaluation to share opinions together prior to the evaluation.

Hcéres' evaluations are accompanied by recommendations, and are designed to be useful to the institutions and entities evaluated, as well as to public authorities and users. They help to improve operators' performance, and hence the quality of higher education and research, as well as reinforcing France's position in the field of research and higher education.

Hcéres' evaluation reports and the analyses included are coherent, well-argued, readable and accessible. They are communicated to entities concerned, as well as to the supervisory ministries.

In accordance with regulations, evaluation reports are public and subject to confidentiality protected by law. Personal anonymity is guaranteed as much as possible.

## **II - Hcéres adopts and implements appropriate and transparent evaluation standards and procedures.**

Hcéres' evaluations are based on a set of guidelines adopted by the Collège. The guidelines are used to ensure that the evaluation fits each institution and entity's purpose.

Hcéres rigorously and exhaustively informs the evaluated institutions and entities of the objectives, procedures and conditions under which the evaluation is conducted, as well as the composition of expert panels.

All evaluations are data-driven, and rely as far as possible on publicly available data.

Hcéres carries out its evaluations in compliance with the requirements of research integrity.

## **III - Hcéres and the expert panels are collectively committed to the quality of the evaluation reports.**

Each evaluation results from a collective effort, while each stakeholder contributes according to their field of expertise to the quality of the analysis and its presentation, as well as to the relevance of the recommendations.

Hcéres carries out evaluations under its own responsibility, pays specific attention to ensuring the quality and diversity of its expert panels.

Hcéres selects its experts on the basis of their proven experience and skills, in line with the evaluation missions entrusted to them, while ensuring diversity of expertise and a balanced representation of men and women. Expert panels include academic and student experts, as well as other experts in higher education and research, public policy evaluation or the socio-economic sector, with expertise in research, innovation, teaching policy, public policy, governance and management.

Hcéres provides training for experts. Expert panels are supported by a team of scientific and administrative staff. Jointly with the expert panel's chair, it ensures that the work proceeds with collegiality, and that the diversity of the experts' assessments is taken into account. Hcéres ensures the quality of the exchanges taking place between the expert panels and the institutions and entities evaluated. During the drafting and finalisation phase of the evaluation reports, it ensures the consistency and quality of the reports, as well as equal treatment of the evaluated institutions and entities.

Experts:

- respect the ethical obligations specified in titles 4 and 5 of the internal regulations adopted by the Hcéres Collège, in accordance with 4° of article R. 114-4 of the French Research Code, particularly with regards to the risk of conflicts of interest;

- demonstrate impartiality and the utmost rigor in carrying out their mission, which includes studying self-assessment reports and additional documents provided by the institution or entity being evaluated, or produced by Hcéres or available elsewhere, conducting interviews and participating in the drafting of evaluation reports;

- prepare evaluation reports on a collegial basis;
- are bound by the rules of professional secrecy indicated in articles 226-13 and 226-14 of the French penal code. They shall exercise discretion and respect the confidentiality of exchanges, information and documents they read;
- ensure that they do not have any personal dealings related to the evaluation procedure, during the duration of the assignment, with the institutions or entity evaluated, nor to communicate the evaluation's results to anyone before they are publicly revealed.

#### **IV - Hcéres maintains an ongoing dialogue with the institutions and entities evaluated.**

Within the framework of the guidelines adopted by the *Collège*, Hcéres adapts the evaluation criteria and approach to the evaluated institutions and entities' diversity, missions and disciplinary fields. It takes into account the expectations of the institutions and entities being evaluated as well as the authorities they report to. It conducts evaluations while respecting institutions' autonomy.

Institutions and entities are expected to fully involve themselves in the evaluation process, in particular by carrying out an in-depth self-assessment and providing Hcéres with the required data and factual information. The quality of the self-assessment report is taken into consideration in the evaluation.

Evaluation requires:

- constant exchanges throughout, and at the end of the evaluation procedure;
- communication of the final evaluation reports for comments to the institutions and, where applicable, to the evaluated entities attached to them;
- publication of the final reports, including comments from the institutions and, where applicable, from evaluated entities.

If, at the end of the evaluation period, the evaluated structure considers that the principles and measures of the present charter have not been respected, an appeal can be made.

#### **V - Hcéres pursues a policy of continuous improvement.**

Hcéres is committed to the continuous improvement of its practices, enriched in particular by feedback and international comparisons. It implements self-evaluation mechanisms and undergoes an external evaluation every five years.

Hcéres is committed to:

- simplifying and harmonising its evaluation standards;
- lightening the burden on the institutions and entities evaluated, particularly when the evaluation carried out by Hcéres has to be coordinated with the work of specialised evaluation bodies;
- consulting with stakeholders in the development of evaluation objectives, guidelines and methodologies;
- using relevant and useful data processing systems;
- following up with the implementation of previous evaluation recommendations.

Hcéres reports on its work to its *Collège*, in order to identify all the consequences of the evolutions of the evaluation approach it undertakes.

**The present charter is public and brought to the attention of the evaluated institutions and entities. Hcéres' experts and staff undertake to comply with its principles and measures.**