



Institutional Assessment and Quality Assurance (IAQA) Handbook

This Handbook has been prepared by the Office of Academic Secretary (OAS) according to the requirements of the CEU IAQA Policy (P-1103-01). It has been reviewed by the Senate Academic Quality Assurance Committee (SAQAC) in November 2011 and revised in May 2013. The Handbook will be revised at regular intervals. Comments and suggestions on future editions of the Handbook should be sent to asrd@ceu.hu.

CEU Provost

CEU Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

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1. Introduction

Institutional Assessment and Quality Assurance (IAQA) is a term used at CEU for all processes of assessment, planning and quality assurance. IAQA is used to achieve CEU's goals of academic excellence in teaching and learning, effective management and administration and other objectives of the CEU Strategic Development Plan. The other purpose of IAQA is to ensure external accountability before its diverse stakeholders such as:

- ✓ Prospective and current students and alumni;
- ✓ Academic partners with which CEU operates joint education and research programs;
- ✓ Funding bodies such the European Commission, and other government and private donors.

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide a quick and clear reference to the IAQA requirements at CEU and guidance on their effective implementation together with examples of best practices from various CEU units.

The Handbook has been prepared by the Office of Academic Secretary (OAS). The Handbook is periodically updated and the most current version can be found at the CEU Website in the Policy registry <http://www.ceu.hu/documents>. It is periodically reviewed by the Senate Academic Quality Assurance Committee (SAQAC). Feedback and suggestions for this Handbook can be sent to OAS (asrd@ceu.hu).

2. Organization of IAQA at CEU

This section deals with organization of IAQA at CEU. It lists and explains the key policies and other official documents as well as specifies institutional responsibilities in this area.

2.1 Policies and official documents

CEU has a number of policies and official documents relevant to IAQA. All CEU policies are available at the CEU Policy Registry (www.ceu.hu/documents). Each Policy and other official document is accompanied by a "Document Information Sheet" which contains such information as the date of adoption and the date of entry in force. Since 2011-2012 AY, the Document Information Sheet also lists the **Lead Unit** which is the 'owner' of the Policy and is responsible for communicating and implementing it. The Lead Unit can usually be contacted for any queries related to a particular Policy.

2.1.1 IAQA Policy

The IAQA Policy, adopted in March 2011 and amended in October 2011, is the main document regulating IAQA at CEU. In particular, this Handbook is prepared following the relevant requirement of the IAQA Policy. The IAQA Policy defines the main principles, organization and mechanisms of IAQA at CEU as well as the responsibilities for activities at the institutional, department/unit, and program level. It is based on the University's mission and strategic goals; involvement of and ownership by faculty and staff; continuous planning, feedback and improvement loop; and a differentiated systematic approach whereby distinct processes at various units and programs are organized and managed in a coherent and systematic way so that they inform and support each other.

The IAQA Policy requires a presence of a planning, assessment and review cycle at all levels at CEU. At the institutional level, IAQA processes are designed to support the preparation, implementation, monitoring and periodic revision of the SDP as well as budget plans and other CEU-wide plans. At the department/unit level, IAQA processes include collection and use of information related to the teaching, research and outreach activities.

The IAQA Policy also requires each degree-granting CEU program to have clearly defined learning outcomes as well as a process (including annual reviews) for continuous assessment of its quality, especially in terms of achieving its learning outcomes.

These and other requirements of the IAQA Policy are explained and elaborated throughout this Handbook.

2.1.2 Other relevant policies

Several CEU policies adopted in 2010-2011 support the implementation of Standards 7 and 14 of the Characteristics of Excellence of the Middle States Commission for Higher Education (MSCHE), including:

- ✓ The **Policy on Establishing, Operating, Assessment and Renewal of Research Centers at CEU** (December 2010) requires each Research Center to have a work plan and to submit an annual report as well as requires the budgeting of Research Centers to be aligned to their plans and reports based on a bi-annual assessment of Research Centers by the Pro-Rector for Social Sciences and Humanities.
- ✓ The **Academic Staff Handbook** requires Individual Academic Activity Reviews (IAARs) of all faculty. Students' perception of the quality of teaching, particularly

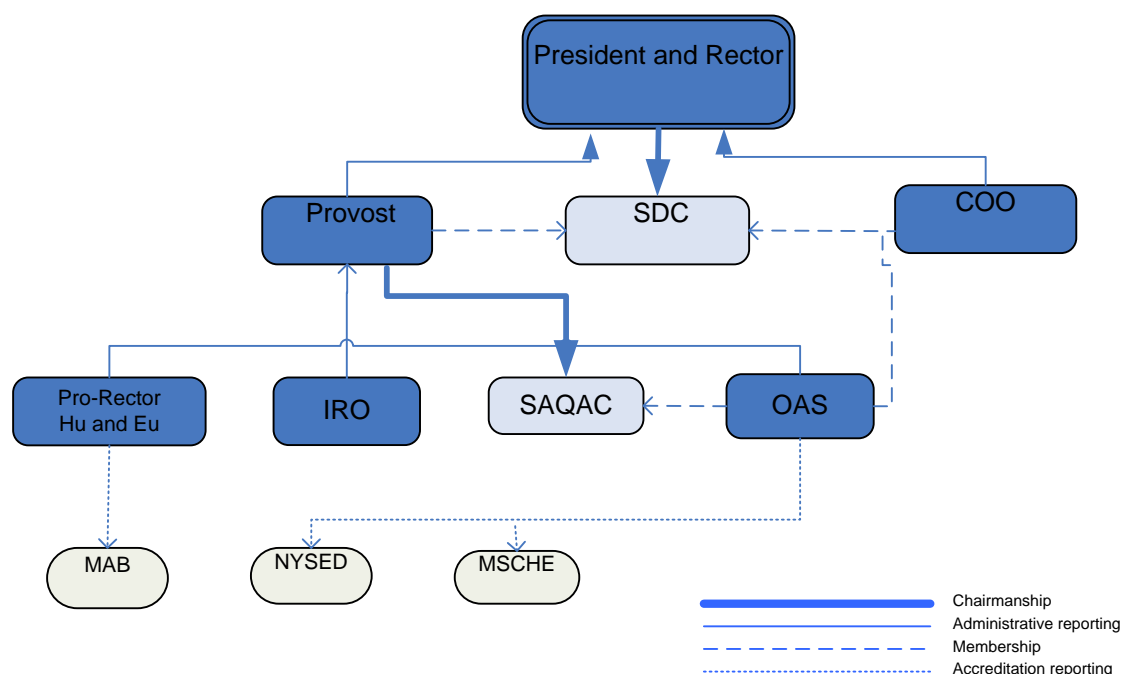
perceptions of 'how well the stated learning outcomes were achieved' is one of the evaluation criteria which are used for faculty promotion and appointments.

- ✓ The **Policy on Students Rights, Rules and Academic Regulations** requires each program to have specifications available to its students.
- ✓ The **Policy and Guidelines on Establishing, Operating and Modifying Degree Programs** provide detailed requirements on developing and operating degree programs at CEU with particular attention to defining and assessing student learning outcomes. It is accompanied by the **Guidelines on Program Specifications** also included in this IAQA Handbook.

2.2 Organizational structure

At the institutional level, the responsibilities for IAQA at CEU are organized as shown in the chart below:

Figure 1. Organization of IAQA at CEU



Note: This chart only reflects institutional level roles and responsibilities and reporting to the main external accreditation bodies.

2.2.1 Senate Committees

IAQA efforts at CEU are overseen by two committees of the Senate.

The Senate Academic Quality Assurance Committee (SAQAC) is chaired by the Provost and further includes members elected by the CEU Academic Senate as well as the Academic Secretary as an ex-officio member. The SAQAC's role is defined by the IAQA Policy (Section III):

"The Senate Academic Quality Assurance Committee (SAQAC) is elected by the Senate with the responsibility to evaluate strategy reports of academic units (section IV.B.1) and provide advice to the Provost on other matters of quality assurance of academic activities. The SAQAC approves the IAQA Handbook. The Provost is the ex officio chair, and the Academic Secretary is an ex officio member of the committee. At least four additional CEU faculty members are elected to the committee. If there is need, an external member may be elected to the SAQAC."

The current membership of the SAQAC is available online at <http://www.ceu.hu/about/organization/governance/committees/quality-assurance-committee>.

The Senate Committee on Strategic Development (SDC) is chaired by the President and includes the Provost, the Pro-Rector for Social Sciences and Humanities, the Vice-President for Administration, the Academic Secretary, several department heads, the Director of the Open Society Archive, the Senior Vice-President for Enrollment Management and Alumni Affairs and a student representative. The SDC coordinates the preparation and implementation of the CEU Strategic Development Plan.

CEU has assigned specific administrative responsibilities for various aspects of IAQA processes to individuals and units. The responsibilities are shown in Figure II.1.

Academic Secretary

According to the IAQA Policy, the Academic Secretary coordinates IAQA processes at CEU. The Academic Secretary is appointed by the President after being endorsed by a vote of the Senate.

Academic Secretary's main responsibilities related to IAQA include:

- Overall coordination of IAQA activities at CEU, including preparation of relevant policies, collection, interpretation and safe-keeping of IAQA documentation and data, particularly for the purposes of academic accreditation;
- Overseeing the implementation of the IAQA Policy;
- Preparing and revising at regular intervals the IAQA Handbook;
- Serving as the Academic Liaison Officer with the MSCHE;
- Overseeing registration of CEU programs with NYSED;
- Providing support to the SAQAC.

2.2.3 Pro-Rector for Hungarian Affairs

The office of the Pro-Rector for Hungarian Affairs was created in 2005 to serve as a liaison between CEU and the Hungarian Government and facilitate accreditation of CEU and its programs in Hungary. The Pro-Rector for Hungarian Affairs closely works with the Academic Secretary on all IAQA matters.

2.2.4 Institutional Research Office

The Institutional Research Office (IRO) was established in 2010 to support CEU administration with accurate information and perform various assessments and studies. The IRO supports the IAQA process at CEU by collecting relevant institutional assessment data.

2.2.5 Departments/Units/Programs

The IAQA Policy assigns responsibilities for assessment and planning at relevant levels to heads of departments, units and programs. The IAQA Handbook recommends that departments appoint Curriculum Committees of two to four faculty members who can systematically engage with these issues.

3. External accreditation and reporting

CEU is an American university located in Hungary. An increasing number of CEU programs are registered in Hungary and CEU is recognized as a Hungarian university. This means that CEU must comply with both US and Hungarian accreditation requirements. Moreover, CEU needs to respect the 'soft standards' of the European higher education area, particularly the Bologna process. This is because the majority of CEU students come from European countries and there is a growing number of student exchanges and joint programs with other European universities.

This section of the Handbook summarizes accreditation requirements and processes of external agencies that CEU should comply with.

3.1 Institutional accreditation with MSCHE

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (www.msche.org) is the unit of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools that accredits degree-granting colleges and universities in the Middle States region, which includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and several locations internationally.

The Commission is a voluntary, non-governmental, membership association that defines, maintains, and promotes educational excellence across institutions with diverse missions, student populations, and resources. It examines each institution as a whole, rather than specific programs within institutions.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education accredits CEU as an institution. In order to be accredited by the MSCHE, CEU has to comply with its Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education. The Characteristics contain two Standards particularly relevant to the IAQA:

- ✓ **Standard 7:** The institution has developed and implemented an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.
- ✓ **Standard 14:** Assessment of student learning demonstrates that, at graduation, or other appropriate points, the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional and appropriate higher education goals.

The [CEU Status of Accreditation](#) is available from the MSCHE website.

3.2 Accreditation requirements of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB)

From 1993-2005 CEU operated in Hungary as a foreign higher education institution. In 2005, CEU was recognized as a Hungarian University. The CEU Pro-Rector for Hungarian Affairs oversees fulfilling requirements of Hungarian legislation at CEU. At the institutional level, these requirements envision institutional accreditation preceded by a self-study.

At the program level, CEU does not require all its degree programs to be accredited in Hungary. Those programs that decide to obtain Hungarian accreditation should follow specific steps which can be explained in detail by the Office of the Pro-Rector for Hungarian Affairs.

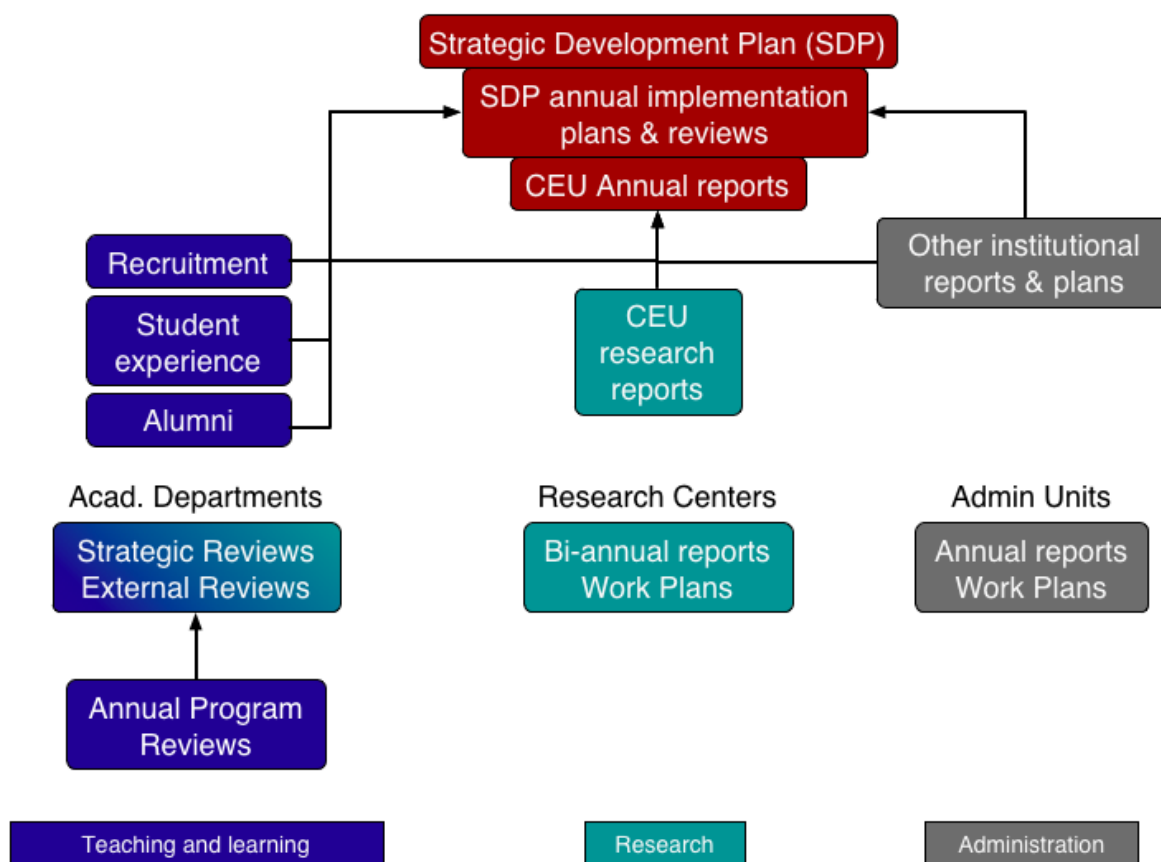
3.3 Program registration at the NYSED

CEU has an absolute charter (granted in 1995) from the New York State Board of Regents/New York State Education Department (NYSED). All CEU degree programs must be registered with the NYSED before they can be operated. The Policy on Establishing, Operating and Modifying Degree Programs established the general framework for this process. Approval from the NYSED is also required for certain changes in degree programs (see section 7 of this Handbook for detail).

Information and guidance on registering CEU programs with NYSED can be obtained from the Office of Academic Secretary (asrd@ceu.hu).

4. Institutional assessment and planning

The main elements of institutional assessments processes at CEU are shown in the chart below:



4.1 Strategic planning process and annual reports

The main institutional-level plan at CEU is the Strategic Development Plan (SDP). The development and implementation of the SDP is coordinated by the Strategic Development Committee appointed and chaired by the President and Rector. The SDP 2012-2017 was approved by the CEU Board of Trustees. The SDP is available at <http://20.ceu.hu/strategic-plan>.

SDP 2012-17 envisions an implementation mechanism which is based on the following elements:

- ✓ Continuous operation of the SDC which will provide overall oversight to the implementation of SDP 2012-17 and related review and assessment processes;
- ✓ Preparation of yearly implementation plans with concrete measures and activities for achieving the stated goals and objectives within SDP 2012-17;
- ✓ Annual reviews of the implementation of SDP 2012-17 in order to monitor the progress made toward achieving the stated goals and objectives;
- ✓ Ensuring that plans of individual entities within CEU are aligned with the priorities set forth in SDP 2012-17.

Another assessment activity at the strategic level is the preparation of the Annual Report. The first CEU Annual Report was prepared in 2010. The Annual Report is prepared with widespread involvement of the CEU community and has served both external and internal audiences by

providing an opportunity for self-reflection on both challenges and achievements. Annual Reports are now planned to be developed at the conclusion of each calendar year by the Communications Office.

4.2 Assessment of institutional effectiveness

Assessment of institutional effectiveness at CEU focuses on three major areas of CEU operation: (a) teaching and learning; (b) research and [c] outreach and civic engagement. In each of these areas the main purpose of the assessment is to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Development Plan and increase the effectiveness of CEU operation in line with its institutional priorities.

In addition to the regular assessment activities discussed in this section, CEU conducts one-off reviews of its operations in strategic areas. These include the Review of Communications conducted in 2010, the Review of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2003-13 and the Review of Library Operations conducted in 2011.

4.2.1 Teaching and learning: students and alumni

Assessment of teaching and learning at CEU can be divided in two parts. The first, primarily taking place at the institutional level, focuses on prospective applicants, students and alumni as described in this section. The second part, primarily taking place at the program level, focuses on evidence of student learning as is described in section 7.

Admission and recruitment reports

Admission and recruitment information is collected and analyzed by the Student Services Office with support from the IRO. The list of reports related to student recruitment at CEU is provided in Table below. These reports are communicated to the appropriate levels and bodies (e.g., Heads of Departments, the Academic Forum, the SDC, the SAQAC, the Senate, etc.). The reports are then used to help make relevant plans and decisions such as selection of various recruitment tools, determination of admission offers, identification of targeted focusing recruitment regions etc. Recruitment reports can be requested from the Student Services Office.

Table 0.1. Regular recruitment, admission and enrollment surveys at CEU

Report Title	Audience	Frequency	Description
Recruitment and Application Report	Academic Forum, Senate	Annual (Oct)	A brief text overview of recruitment activities in the preceding year.
Comparative Application Report by Dept. & Program	Academic Forum, Senate, internal recruitment, admissions, student services	Annual (Oct)	A chart with application numbers by department and program for the current AY compared to the last AY.
Comparative Application Report by Citizenship	Academic Forum, Senate, internal recruitment, admissions, student services	Annual (Oct)	A comparison of total application numbers by citizenship of the current AY compared to the last AY.
Yield Report by Citizenship	Academic Forum, Senate, internal recruitment, admissions, student services	Annual (Oct)	A table showing applications, applicants (individuals applying), offers of admission, acceptances of offers, and the corresponding percentages, organized by country of citizenship.
Yield Report by Department and Program	Academic Forum, Senate, internal recruitment, admissions, student services	Annual (Oct)	A table showing applications, applicants (individuals applying), offers of admission, acceptances of offers, and the corresponding percentages, organized by academic department and program.
Applications Received	Recruitment/Admissions; extracts to department heads	Bi-Weekly from Nov 1 to June 15	A chart and corresponding table showing applications submitted (by dept and program) for the next AY, compared with applications received by the same date the prior year.
Application Data Source Report	Recruitment and admissions	Annual (Oct)	Responses from admission application data to the question "How did you hear about CEU"?
Application Trends Report	Recruitment and admissions; Dept. heads	Annual (Oct)	Application numbers by department and program for the past five years.

Student surveys

Every year CEU conducts an entrance survey of incoming students at the time of their enrollment. The results of the survey are available from Student Services. CEU is planning to conduct exit surveys focused on student experiences during their studies. CEU had previously conducted bi-annual exit surveys, but the practice was stopped in 2007. However, re-establishment of the bi-annual exit survey will begin in 2012. The expectation is that results of the exit survey will be used to improve Student Services, CEU Campus and Facilities Operation and selected aspects of teaching and learning.

Alumni surveys

Alumni surveys at CEU are coordinated by the Alumni Relations and Career Services Office (ARCS). Regular alumni surveys conducted since 2007 include:

- ✓ **First Destination Surveys** focusing on the careers and satisfaction of recently graduated alumni;
- ✓ More narrowly targeted annual events and program satisfaction surveys.

In addition to these regular surveys, the ARCS in cooperation with other units has conducted the following targeted surveys:

- ✓ The **Alumni Update Survey** (2008) targeting all students, rather than only recent graduates, and focused on their career destinations. This survey also included questions on alumni's perceptions of the usefulness of their studies at CEU for their careers and thus supported compliance with Standards 7 and 14.
- ✓ The **Doctoral Careers Survey** (2010) focusing on careers of PhD graduates from all years and their level of satisfaction with studies at CEU. The outcomes of this survey are currently used in the Review of PhD Studies at CEU conducted by the Provost with the aim to improve the model of PhD education at CEU (Annex 5.12).
- ✓ **The 20th Anniversary Alumni Update survey** conducted in Fall 2011 was designed jointly by the ARCS and the OAS. Once again, the survey contains questions on alumni's perceptions of the usefulness of their studies at CEU for their careers which will allow comparison with the results of the 2008 Alumni Update Survey.

Moving forward, the IAQA Handbook envisions a regular integrated alumni survey, which will systematically address the matters of CEU institutional effectiveness and learning from the alumni perspective. In particular, information from alumni surveys will be communicated to individual departments and discussed at the Academic Forum, the Senate, the SDC and the SAQAC.

The results of alumni surveys can be obtained from the ARCS at arcs@ceu.hu.

4.2.2 Research, civic engagement and outreach

CEU regularly evaluates the effectiveness and the intensity of its research activities. The Academic Cooperation and Research Support Office (ACRO) prepares an annual Activity Report summarizing all external funding for research and education at CEU.

In the future, the report will be supplemented by the information on the intensity of CEU research in its flagship areas such as the number of involved faculty, publications, theses and research projects.

5. Assessment within administrative units and services

According to the IAQA Policy (Section IV.E):

"non-academic units prepare their Work Plans and annual reports as necessary submitted and approved by the Vice-President for Administration. The Vice-President for Administration shares those materials that are relevant to CEU-wide IAQA processes with the OAS. The IAQA Handbook should provide guidance on preparing Work Plans."

At the end of each academic year the achievements of a unit as well as the Work Plan for the next academic year are discussed between the head of the unit and the Vice-President for Administration.

Work Plans of administrative units and services can follow formats most appropriate for the nature of operations of these units and services. A typical Work Plan should contain the following elements:

- ✓ Unit's mission or overarching purpose;
- ✓ Goals and objectives of the unit and their overlap with the CEU SDP goals and objectives and institutional priorities;
- ✓ Planned activities, measures, and outcomes with targets as appropriate;
- ✓ Timelines and responsibilities for undertaking the planned activities.

6. Assessment within academic units (schools and departments)¹

6.1 Reviews of academic units

Academic Units at CEU should undergo regular strategic reviews. In addition, the President can initiate external (extraordinary) reviews of selected Units.

6.1.1 Regular strategic reviews

Section IV.B.1 of the IAQA Policy defines a procedure for strategic reviews of every academic Unit which must occur every five years. According to the IAQA Policy:

"A strategic review should evaluate the curriculum, the quality of teaching, the recruitment and the placement of graduates of the educational programs delivered by the Unit. This review is more general and strategic than annual reviews of individual teaching programs described in section IV.C. The strategic review should also cover research and outreach activities of the Unit as well as the quality of its administration."

Strategic reviews are undertaken by the units themselves, but their results are reported to the President, the Provost and the SAQAC. The SAQAC analyzes such reviews and makes recommendations concerning the development of new teaching programs and other measures. The review reports and the SAQAC analysis are also provided to the Senate.

A strategic review of an academic unit should result in a Strategic Review Report covering the following topics (each focusing on the change in the time since the last Strategic Review):

A. Teaching and Learning

The review of teaching and learning at the academic unit should provide strategic reflection on the degree programs delivered by the Unit. This review can use materials of the Annual Reviews of degree programs (see Section 7.2.2), students and alumni surveys, feedback from visiting faculty, and other relevant materials. It should address the following topics:

- Their relevance with reference to job markets, societal needs, etc.;
- Their relevance to the CEU overall academic direction and strategic goals;
- Overall reflection on the success of the programs (as evidenced for example by the application trends, students' and alumni feedback);
- More specific reflection on the adequacy of resources, student numbers, and the quality of teaching;
- Reflection on the content and assessment of MA and PhD theses in light of program learning outcomes.
- Proposals for the future of the programs (including 'no change' proposal, addition or removal or tracks or specializations, change of names, introduction of new programs, additional external accreditation);
- Any other relevant proposals (e.g. concerning resources, external academic cooperation, etc.)

¹ Research Centers are also Academic Units but there is a separate review process.

B. Research

- Summary of strategic research directions and their alignment with the CEU Research Areas and academic direction;
- Highlights of research output (publications, awards, research projects);
- Proposals for strengthening research.

C. Communication, outreach and civic engagement

- Summary of Unit's outreach and civic engagement activities and their relation to the CEU strategic goals; these may include:

* Public lectures, conferences and other external events;

* Cooperation with and support provided to:

- Open Society Foundations network and other NGOs
- Policy makers
- Professional communities
- Other higher education institutions
- Communication activities: the website and other products
- Proposals for strengthening communications, outreach and civic engagement

* Adequacy of the unit's website

D. Overall reflections

Reflections on the Unit as a whole including the interaction between teaching and research highlighting potential synergies or tensions.

Areas of concern: for example, would an external assessment be helpful to the Unit particularly if there are differences of opinion on current and future directions. E. Composition of the Review Committee

The Review Committee consists of the Unit Head as Chair of the Committee, the Head of the Doctoral Program (where applicable), one junior faculty member and any other faculty member the Head may wish to appoint. Units are encouraged to include external reviewers, one of whom may be external to the CEU and the other a faculty member at another CEU Academic Unit. Where applicable and when useful to the Unit, a practitioner of the discipline being taught may be appointed.

F. Strategic Review Report

The Strategic Review Committee organizes the preparation of the Strategic Review Report in a way that involves all faculty and staff as well as student representatives and ensures their meaningful input. A report by the external reviewers, where applicable, is to be incorporated in the Strategic Review Report in a distinct section. The Review Committee may wish to reflect on the external reviewers' report in the main body of the Strategic Review Report. It is recommended that an early draft (or extended outline) of the Report be circulated to all faculty and staff for comments and discussion. Faculty and staff discussion of the final report before its submission to the President and Rector as well as the Provost is also recommended.

6.1.2 External (extraordinary) reviews

According to the IAQA Policy (Section IV.B.2), external extraordinary reviews may be initiated by the President:

"in cases when a significant change concerning the Unit is contemplated as well as during the preparation for accreditation, initiation of joint programs with other institutions, as a result of other issues identified by the Rector and brought to the attention of the Senate, or upon request of the Board of Trustees".

The procedure for the reviews is defined by the IAQA Policy (Section IV.B.2) and overseen by the President and Provost in consultation with the SAQAC.

6.2 Assessment and renewal of research centers

CEU operates several Research Centers reflecting its character as a research-intensive university and its commitment to innovative inter-disciplinary research. The President decides on establishing new Research Centers. The up-to-date list of Research Centers at CEU is available at www.ceu.hu/research/centers.

The IAQA Policy as well as the Policy on Establishing, Assessing and Renewing Research Centers define a procedure for assessment and planning in CEU Research Centers. Each Research Center should have a Charter, a Work Plan and produce bi-annual (or annual) reports on all activities.

The Charter of a research center at CEU should contain:

- ✓ Name of the Center;
- ✓ Purpose of the center - short mission and/or vision;
- ✓ Members – faculty, staff and researchers involved in the center's activities;
- ✓ Members of the Advisory Board – if applicable;
- ✓ Organizational structure – if applicable;
- ✓ Main activities (research projects, public events, policy advice, involvement in teaching etc.);
- ✓ Web-site.

The bi-annual report of the research center should contain:

- ✓ The brief rationale for the existence of the Center, with reference to its history, CEU strategic goals and wider scientific and societal goals;
- ✓ Involvement of CEU departments, faculty and PhD students as well as external stakeholders (Advisory Board, guest researchers, etc.) in the activities of the center;
- ✓ Activities in the last two years including publications, projects and events.

A plan of research center should focus on the nearest two years and include the overall goals and projected outcomes and activities.

The Pro-Rector for Social Sciences and Humanities in consultation with the Provost and the SAQAC reviews reports and plans of every Research Center and provides recommendations to the President on the continuation of its activities.

7. Quality Assurance in degree programs

CEU aims to provide degree programs that reflect the overall academic direction of the university, are developed to the highest standards of academic excellence and are highly demanded by prospective students.

CEU degree programs are at the heart of teaching and learning at CEU and therefore the IAQA system places a special focus on quality assurance at this level. Quality assurance processes at the program level are regulated by the IAQA Policy, the Policy on Students Rights, Rules and Academic Regulations, and the Policy on Establishing, Operating and Modifying Degree Programs at CEU.

7.1 ESTABLISHING, OPERATING AND CHANGING DEGREE PROGRAMS AT CEU

According to the Policy on Establishing, Operating and Modifying Degree Programs at CEU:

"An initiative on establishing a new degree program normally comes from an academic school, a department or a group of departments or schools. In particular, Strategic Reviews of Academic Departments (see section 6.1.1 of this Handbook) may result in recommendations for establishing or modifying degree programs. Proposals for establishing new degree programs shall be discussed with the Provost and the President who would undertake necessary consultations and give their endorsement for introducing the program proposal to the Academic Senate.

The first formal step of establishing a program is its presentation to the Academic Forum and the Senate. A new program proposal (Form F-1112-01-A) should be filled in and presented to the Academic Forum and the Senate by the Head of relevant Department or School.

Following Senate's approval, the Program shall be registered with the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The procedure of registration including relevant external reviews is described in the Institutional Assessment and Quality Assurance (IAQA) Handbook and is overseen by the Office of the Academic Secretary (OAS).

For programs intended to be accredited in Hungary, a separate procedure on obtaining consent of Hungarian Accreditation Board for establishing (where appropriate) and launching the program shall be followed. The procedure is overseen by the Pro-Rector for Hungarian Affairs.

The President and Rector informs the Academic Committee of the Board of Trustees of the new degree programs established at CEU.

7.2 Operating a degree program. Annual reviews.

The IAQA Policy and the Policy on Degree Programs provide overlapping requirements for quality assurance in degree programs.

According to the Policy on Degree Programs:

"Every program shall be subject to quality assurance including thorough Annual Reviews and as part of the Strategic Reviews as defined by the IAQA Policy and detailed in the IAQA Handbook."

According to the IAQA Policy:

"Each CEU teaching program (degree and non-degree) should incorporate appropriate planning, assessment and review elements compatible with this Policy, other CEU policies and the requirements of accrediting bodies."

7.2.1. Program Specifications

Each CEU program should have written Program Specifications which provide complete, accurate and current information on the program for prospective and current students, central administration, accrediting bodies and other audiences.

According to CEU Students Rights and Academic Regulations Policy, program specifications should:

“[be] prepared in accordance with applicable CEU standards and including residency, attendance and degree requirements, information on accreditation and the final degree award. Program Specifications should also specify the jurisdiction of program directors and head of departments; depending on the specifications, some responsibilities of heads of departments may be systematically delegated to program directors”.

According to the Policy on Degree Programs:

“The Head of Department or School which delivers a degree program (the Head of Program in case of inter-departmental programs) shall ensure that a Program Specifications document is properly and regularly updated reflecting its current status and content.

a) Program Specifications shall as a minimum contain information defined in Annex 1 to this Policy.

b) Program Specifications shall be (i) posted on the program (Department's or School's) website; (ii) accessible to enrolled students in printed or electronic form; (iii) be communicated to the Students Records Office and the Office of Academic Secretary”.

According to the IAQA Policy:

“Each degree-granting CEU program should have:

- *Program Specifications prepared in accordance with CEU requirements defining the goals, the learning outcomes and other key aspects of the program as well as syllabi of individual courses;*

[...]

The IAQA Handbook should provide guidance on the suggested content and format of Program Specifications, assessment and review processes.”

The content of Program Specifications is provided in Annex 1 to the Policy on Degree Programs and in Box 1 below.

Box 1. Content of Program Specifications (Annex 1 to Policy on Degree Programs)

1. Department(s) or School(s) responsible for program delivery;
2. The full name of the program (in English and in Hungarian if the program is accredited in Hungary);
3. The type of degree (this can be incorporated in the name e.g. "Master of Arts in Art History");
4. The date the program was established;
5. Accreditation information with dates of accreditation (NYSED - mandatory; Hungarian authorities, other professional or academic bodies);
6. The length of the program in months; the date of start and end of the teaching cycle;
7. The total number of credits (counted as CEU and ECTS credits);
8. The overall aims of the program (with reference to CEU strategic aims and/or wider societal goals, the needs of the labor market and other factors as relevant);
9. Expected learning outcomes formulated as abilities of students to demonstrate certain understanding, skills or competencies after graduation;
10. Eligibility requirements for admissions to the program;
11. The structure of the program including:
 - Major modules or blocks (e.g. The introductory module; thesis writing period; teaching and research assistantships for PhD students) and their length and number of credits;
 - The list of mandatory and elective courses; each course should have the indication of the course title, number of credits, course instructor, any pre-requisites, whether the course is optional or mandatory and the time (semester) when the course is taught;
 - Study streams or tracks if appropriate;
12. Conditions of degree award
13. The name and contact information of the Program Director;
14. The URL of the program website (e-learning site if appropriate);
15. Additional relevant information such as:
 - Whether the program is operated and degree awarded jointly with other institutions
16. Syllabi of individual courses do not need to be included, but the Program Specification should clearly indicate where these syllabi are available (electronically or in paper form).

Some CEU Departments maintain separate documents for academic program description above and rules of assessment and program management, called the Department Handbook.

The main objective of degree programs operated by CEU is to ensure high quality of teaching and learning. Therefore each program should clearly specify its learning outcomes and have appropriate mechanisms to measure these. Section 7.2 of this Handbook provides detailed guidance on defining and measuring learning outcomes.

7.2.2 Annual Reviews

Annual Reviews of degree programs are a key element of their assessment and quality assurance. According to the IAQA Policy:

“Each degree-granting CEU program should have:

[...]

- *a process for continuous assessment of the quality of the program, especially in terms of achieving the Program's learning outcomes;*
- *an annual review process; the review should reflect on the quality and outcomes of the program and may lead to adjusting the Program Specifications, the planned number of students or other aspects of the Program;*

The [...] documented process and outcomes of program review should be available to the Provost and the Academic Secretary.

[...]

The IAQA Handbook should provide guidance on the suggested content and format of Program Specifications, assessment and review processes.”

Annual Review is the process of reflection on the previous academic year and action planning for the coming academic year. It should be based on a "conversational, not confrontational" approach; honest evaluations based on evidence of what has worked well and less well. The purpose of annual program reviews is to ensure that the standard of the programs is being maintained and to improve teaching and learning. The focus of the annual review should be on:

- ✓ particular achievements and good practice;
- ✓ any issues beyond the Department's control that have affected the program;
- ✓ items that need to be addressed in the short term and recorded in the action plan;
- ✓ trends and developments within the professional and academic community and the external environment that need to be addressed in a longer-term.

Although Annual Review can be conducted in any format, it is recommended to use the Annual Review Checklist provided in this Handbook.

It is important that most of the faculty actively teaching on the Program participate in Annual Reviews. Inviting students or alumni representatives for parts of the Annual Review which are not dealing with specific assessment results is advisable. Some CEU programs also invite external participants (e.g. faculty of partner universities, visiting faculty, External Examiners) to participate in Annual Reviews.

Annual Reviews can be conducted at any time, but it is more natural to have them either at the end or at the beginning of the academic year. Some programs conduct Annual Reviews together with the faculty meeting focused on these results and decisions on degree awards. Reports of Annual Reviews should be filed with the OAS by October 1 of each academic year. The Provost and the SAQAC provide comments to the reports by December 1.

Box 2. Program Annual Review Checklist

Part I. Program's profile

Over the past academic year, have there been any changes in the unit's mission and/or programs' profile, and/or any significant changes of the curriculum? If yes, please describe the rationale and substance of the changes.

Part II. Annual assessment of programs

1. Review of the Action Plan from the previous year and the comments on the previous Annual Report from the SAQAC. Report on the actions that followed from the Action Plan. For units that underwent the strategic review in the previous year (in 2014-15: Department of Sociology and Department of Legal Studies), review of actions that followed from the strategic review.
2. Trends in recruitment, admission, progression and graduation of students (by program). Data will be supplied by the Institutional Research Office and posted under O:/IRO/Public Folder/*Your academic unit's name* (contact person: Agnes Benedek, benedeka@ceu.edu).
3. Achievement of program-level learning outcomes as evidenced by students' theses or other evidence. Use of evidence of student learning for program improvement: How did a particular cohort perform (with reference to the program learning outcomes)? What factors are responsible for the deficit of learning? What steps have been taken towards improvement where learning deficits have been identified? Note: use of thesis-grading sheets built on the basis of program learning outcomes can facilitate this assessment. At least one dedicated faculty meeting per year to discuss the findings on student learning is suggested. Template and/or examples will be provided by CTL.
4. Student feedback (through student evaluations, student representatives and in other forms). How is student feedback used for course and program improvement? Exit survey results will be supplied by the Institutional Research Office and posted under O:/IRO/Public Folder/*Your academic unit's name* (contact person: Agnes Benedek, benedeka@ceu.edu). In addition to exit surveys, units should employ other modes of evaluation and feedback, including regular meetings with students, either in the form of townhalls or meetings of the unit head and program director with student representatives. There should be at least two such meetings per academic year, one in the fall to collect student feedback, and one in the spring to collect any additional feedback and report back to the students on the use of their feedback for program and course improvement. Results of these meetings should be reported in this section. (In case no meetings with students were held during the academic year 2015-16, units should involve current student representatives in contributing to this section of the report, to the extent possible).
5. Rationale for an Action Plan for the next academic year addressing any issues identified.
6. Other comments.

Required attachments:

- Action Plan for the academic year 2016-17
- Curriculum map (if not previously submitted or if modified over the past year)²

7.3 Modifications to degree programs

According to the Policy on Degree Programs:

“8. Minor modifications (e.g. changing the content of some courses or replacing some of the teaching faculty) should be reflected in Program Specifications and communicated as described in section II.6.b of this Policy.

² A curriculum map is a table or a diagram of a program's curriculum that shows how different courses are aligned to meet and assess the program learning outcomes, and is used to identify and help address academic gaps, redundancies, and misalignments for purposes of improving the overall coherence of a program of study. For examples, please turn to the Office of Academic Secretary at asrd@ceu.edu

9. Major modifications (such as changing the duration, the number of credits, the eligibility requirements, the name of the degree, introducing new tracks or specializations) should be approved by the Academic Senate and registered with the NYSED as described in items I.3 and I.4 of this Policy. In such cases, the OAS determines the documents that need to be provided to the Senate and the NYSED.

10. The OAS determines and can provide advice on whether particular modifications to the Program shall be considered minor or major”.

The following checklist provides a guidance of what can be considered major modifications to the degree programs:

Box 3. Changes and Adaptations Requiring State Education Department Approval

Changes in Program Content (all programs)

Any of the following substantive changes:

- Cumulative change from the Department's last approval of the registered program of one-third or more of the minimum credits required for the award (e.g., 20 credits in an associate degree program)
- Changes in the program's focus or design (e.g., eliminating management courses in a business administration program), including a change in the program's major disciplinary area
- Adding or eliminating an option or concentration
- Eliminating a requirement for completion, including an internship, clinical, cooperative education, or other work-based experience
- Altering the liberal arts and science content in a way that changes the degree classification, as defined in Section 3.47(c)(1-4) of [Regents Rules](#)

Other Changes (all programs)

1. Program title
2. Program award (e.g., change in degree)
3. Mode of delivery (**Note:** if the change involves adding a **distance education format** to a registered program, please complete the [distance education application](#).)
4. Discontinuing a program
5. A format change that alters the program's financial aid eligibility (e.g., from full-time to part-time, or to an abbreviated or accelerated semester)
6. A change in the total number of credits of any certificate or advanced certificate program

Establishing New Programs Based on Existing Registered Programs

1. Creating a dual-degree program from existing registered programs
 2. Creating a new program from a concentration/track in an existing registered program
-

8. Assessment of student learning

8.1 Institutional level

8.1.1 CEU learning goals

The CEU Strategic Development Plan for 2012-2017 states:

"The University will work toward ensuring that the path of learning at CEU leads every student to:

- ✓ *Master the essential knowledge and skills in the field in which she/he is educated and be familiar with the knowledge frontier in that field and its connections with other disciplines.*
- ✓ *Be able to use critical thinking to address complex problems and extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice. Understand the value of scientific inquiry and method and be able to use research and research results in their professional work.*
- ✓ *Be aware of and able to recognize differences between facts, ideologies and opinions, and to assess them critically. Understand the inherent fallibility of human knowledge, its open-ended character, the process of continuous evolution of knowledge, and the value of free and open critical inquiry for such evolution.*
- ✓ *Master communication skills in English at a high professional and scholarly level.*
- ✓ *Understand the values of open society."*

Though CEU does not evaluate achievement of these goals at the institutional level, they provide strategic orientation for programs and courses delivered at CEU”.

8.2 Program-level definition and assessment of students' learning

The IAQA Policy requires that each CEU program should have clearly defined learning outcomes and that achievement of these outcomes should be assessed. This section provides guidelines on developing and assessing program learning outcomes.

8.2.1 Guidelines on program-level learning outcomes

All CEU departments should develop program-level learning outcomes for both Masters and PhD levels. These learning outcomes should be aligned to CEU's mission, CEU-wide learning goals and other strategic aims as outlined in the Strategic Plan. They should be made publicly accessible, should be aligned to the overall goals of the host department, be specific and measurable by the end of the degree program, describing knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that can be measured with appropriate higher-education assessment methods.

Program-level learning outcomes should fulfill the following functions:

- Describe to prospective students the expected results of the program's teaching and learning activities;
- Clearly define the knowledge, skills and values that all graduates must achieve and demonstrate to attain a particular degree;
- Guide curriculum design approaches and activities – selection of appropriate content, mode of delivery and assessment – towards the integrated learning needed by a graduate of the program;

- Represent a starting point for the review of the curriculum and of teaching and learning activities as well as for the evaluation of the degree program's achievements.

Program-level learning outcomes should be made specific to the level and type of the degree-program. Typically, Masters-level outcomes should describe graduates' abilities that would demonstrate a broad understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the forefront of the discipline or a broad understanding of a selection of mutually informing perspectives and disciplines in a specialized field. These outcomes should indicate that graduates are ready for independent thought and application of knowledge in professional or academic settings. Master's level graduates should be prepared for employment requiring complex decision-making, good communication and self-management skills and/or for continuing their studies at doctoral level.

Graduates of PhD programs should demonstrate a deep and complex understanding of a specialized discipline including at the forefront of knowledge. They should be able to create new knowledge in the field. PhD graduates should be able to communicate, apply or promote disciplinary knowledge in various educational, professional and social contexts through research, publication, teaching or professional practice. They should be prepared for professional engagement in positions requiring advanced research skills, communication and writing abilities, high level of personal responsibility and self-management.

There are several possibilities to categorize program-level learning outcomes. One option is to define them in three major clusters: **knowledge**, **skills** and **attitudes/values**. In each of the three clusters there are further options to specify types of learning outcomes: knowledge that demonstrates mastery of the subject matter (for instance ability to compare existing theories in international relations and choose the most appropriate one in the analysis of certain contemporary issues) and general, graduate-level social science knowledge (knowledge of recent theoretical and methodological developments in several important areas in the contemporary social science field).

In the area of skills again one can talk about subject-specific skills (for example ability to carry out policy analysis or design a research plan in comparative history, ability to read and discuss complex philosophical texts from both historical sources and contemporary works), cognitive skills (e.g. critically evaluate theoretical, conceptual and case study material, do a literature review), as well as transferable skills. The latter is a large group of skills that students develop while completing various tasks and assignments within a degree program, but can be used later in different contexts or even after graduation – in which case the skill becomes a true professional competence in the broader labor market. Depending on the subject matter and on the profile of a given degree program, learning outcomes that are defined as transferable, fall in one of the following categories:

1. intellectual skills (ability to distinguish between facts and opinions, ability to analyze, synthesize)
2. self-development (learning to learn, identify one's own needs)
3. communication skills (oral, written communication, presentation skills)
4. organizational skills (self-management, ability to prioritize)
5. inter-personal skills (working in teams, distribution of tasks, conflict resolution)
6. computer literacy
7. numeracy (basic skills in statistics, ability to interpret graphs)

Obviously, transferable skills are not the primary outcomes of any degree program at CEU, but most if not all of them need to be developed if a program's goal also emphasizes employability of its graduates.

In the third major category of learning outcomes – attitudes and values – CEU's Strategic Plan has already identified the ones that the university wants to promote. When reflecting on these values at the level of programs, one needs to make them more discipline and subject specific (for instance how does interdisciplinary and problem-focused approaches translate into the learning outcomes of the sociology MA program, or a History PhD?)

In ideal case program level learning outcomes should be realistic (appropriate for the given level), achievable by the end of the degree program, and measurable. They should describe an integrated learning achievement that is the result of students completing all the degree program's requirements (course work, assignments, or internship/laboratory work in case of some programs). In light of that, all individual courses contribute to the achievement of these program-level learning outcomes; however, the integrated learning that is desired to be achieved by the end of the program is best measured with capstone assignments (such as comprehensive exams, final MA and PhD theses), rather than with term papers or essays written for specific courses.

In order to make the learning outcomes specific and measurable, they should be described as an ability, with the help of an active verb – rather than a passive state of the mind. Instead of saying that graduates "are expected to be familiar with (or understand, or appreciate) existing theories in the field of ...", a measurable learning outcome that also defines the level of understanding required from students would rather read: "graduates will be able to synthesize and evaluate the foundational assumptions, central ideas and dominant criticisms of behaviorist and cognitivist approaches ..."

At the level of PhD programs (as well as in case of some Masters programs), learning outcomes should also describe abilities connected with the creation of new knowledge in the field and theorizing.

Program level learning outcomes are not simply a sum of the learning outcomes of individual courses. Rather, they should offer a strong basis for defining the role of each individual course – particularly of core and mandatory courses – in their development and help departments give a specific direction to teaching and student learning.

8.2.2 Achieving program learning outcomes through individual courses

Program-level learning outcomes are achieved through teaching and learning in individual courses. Therefore it is important that these courses are designed and delivered with the program-level learning outcomes in mind. The best method to ensure such consistency is through an ongoing dialogue on both program- and course-level outcomes among faculty. The Annual Reviews (see section 7.2.2 of this Handbook) can provide good space for such a dialogue. More formal methods include 'outcome grids' where program-level outcomes are mapped onto different courses, but these are often better to articulate rather than to achieve integration. Regular assessment of student learning at the program level discussed in the next section could also highlight the relationship between the program- and the course-level outcomes.

Learning outcomes of individual courses can only be achieved if both teaching activities and assessment methods are designed with these outcomes in mind. In order to achieve consistency, effectiveness and transparency in CEU programs, the Policy on Degree Programs requires that each CEU course is described according to the CEU Course Syllabus Guidelines (Box 8.2.2)

Box 4. Syllabus Guidelines

For further support please also see the syllabus template in Appendix 1

1. Course Title:
2. Lecturer:
3. No. of Credits (CEU/ECTS where applicable). Expected student workload broken into class (contact) hours, independent work and other activities.
4. Semester timing of the course:
5. Relationship with other courses (e.g. Prerequisites)
6. Course Level – (Masters or PhD; for 2 year Master programs the year can be defined)
7. Background and overall aim of the course. These can relate to program objectives, CEU strategic goals or wider societal problems.
8. The learning outcomes of the course – these are the achievements of the students as they leave the course. They should be related to the course goals and overall learning outcomes of the program. It is advised that this section starts with: "By the end of the course, students will be able to:" and continues with enumerating a range of knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes (normally four to six), that are realistically achievable and assessable in the framework of the course. E.g. "students will be able to undertake gender-sensitive analysis of public policy", or "critically discuss competing theories in the field of nationalism", or "perform a narrative analysis of a medieval text", etc.
9. More detailed presentation of course contents. This may include a longer narrative explaining the intellectual foundations of the course, for instance, but must include a week by week breakdown. If the course has flexible content (e.g. it can be modified after clarifying the initial knowledge of students enrolled in the course), this should be explained here.
10. Breakdown by week or by topic including the following:
 - * Topic description
 - * Reading for the week/topic divided into compulsory and optional. The more choice is provided in these categories, the more notes or explanations should be provided;
 - * Teaching formats (lecture, seminar etc); seminar questions if appropriate;
11. Assessment: Types of assessment should be clearly expressed with a short description and with the percentage breakdowns for the course overall. Assessment methods should be focused on verifying the achievement of the stated learning outcomes.
12. Such further items as the course website (e-learning site), assessment deadlines, office hours, contact details etc.

8.2.3 Assessing program-level learning outcomes

The IAQA Policy requires that all programs incorporate mechanisms by which achievement of their learning outcomes is assessed. There are several methods to assess program-level learning outcomes. They work best in combination with the program annual review.

Assessment based on formal course assessments

This method works for programs where (a) there is a strong link between the program- and course-level learning outcomes and (b) the formal assessment methods are strongly linked to

course-level learning outcomes. If these two conditions are met, the achievement of the program-level learning outcomes can be linked to formal assessment of student performance in individual courses. For example, if a program contains a learning outcome formulated as "a successful graduate should be able to compose professional reports such as policy briefs" and if there is a course where students are asked to produce a professional report then successful students' performance in this course can be considered as evidence of achieving this program-level outcome. Naturally, in this example course-level assessment criteria should incorporate the review of this ability.

Assessment based on theses and dissertations

Theses and dissertations are capstone assignments which concentrate everything a student learned at a CEU program and are therefore especially suitable to provide material for assessing program-wide learning outcomes.

This is the preferred method at CEU due to its strong focus on integrating teaching and research and on developing professional and academic skills of its graduates. This is also appropriate because in many CEU programs graduate theses and dissertations are discussed and evaluated by more than one faculty member and thus can easily support a reflection on the program as a whole.

In order to assess program-level learning based on theses and dissertations, the following elements should be in order:

1. Thesis grading criteria which are explicitly linked to the program learning outcomes.
2. A process of discussing and evaluating theses which involves several faculty members. Such a process can be conveniently organized around the annual review as described in section 7.2.2 of this Handbook.

Other assessment methods

Learning outcomes can be assessed outside of the formal grading systems and not in connection with theses and dissertations. This requires a systematic review of evidence of students learning. Such evidence may be presented in students' assignments, exam papers or other work. In order to systematize this evidence, such tools as e-portfolios can be used.

Appendix 1 COURSE SYLLABUS TEMPLATE

COURSE TITLE

Instructor:

Name, title

Department

Central European University

Semester/term, year

Course level (MA, PhD)

Credits (# ECTS Credits)

Pre-requisites (if applicable)

Course e-learning site:

Office hours: days, location

Course Description

{This as a rule is a narrative outlining the background, thematic scope of the course, its main aims and structure and whatever else the instructor believes important to be stated/ highlighted at the outset of the course}

Learning Outcomes

{Specific statements of what students will know and be able to do as they leave the course, achievable and measurable through course assignments. Courses would normally have 4-6 learning outcomes. Those should in turn relate to learning outcomes of the program (as stated in program specifications). Some examples from different courses/ subjects are given below}

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- ✓ Undertake gender-sensitive analysis of public policy
- ✓ ...
- ✓ Critically discuss competing theories in the field of nationalism
- ✓ ...
- ✓ Perform a narrative analysis of a medieval text

Course Requirements

{In deciding on the number and kinds of assessment for the course the instructor should take care to make sure all the learning outcomes stated above can be adequately assessed through those methods. Additionally, the instructor should take care that formative assessment is in place – i.e. there is a mid-course assessment to make sure that the learning outcomes are being achieved by the students and to allow for mid-course corrections if necessary. There should thus be a minimum of two assessment methods in the course}.

- (1) Assessment type 1 (% of the final grade). Detailed description of the assignment specifying grading criteria – i.e. on what basis will be the grade/points for this assignment awarded.

- (2) Assessment type 2 (% of the final grade). Detailed description of the assignment specifying grading criteria – i.e. on what basis will be the grade/points for this assignment awarded.

- (3) Assessment type 3 (% of the final grade). Detailed description of the assignment specifying grading criteria – i.e. on what basis will be the grade/points for this assignment awarded.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date. Session title.

Short description of the session

{Further information may be provided on sub-topics, seminar questions, assignments due, etc.}

Reading:

Mandatory and optional

{Other divisions within readings are possible depending on the subject, e.g. primary and secondary sources, theoretical and applied sources, remedial (e.g. read this if you have difficulties reading the mandatory sources), enrichment/option (e.g. read this if you have an in-depth interest in this specific area, etc.}