

# **The Institutional Review Programme: European University Association (EUA)**

(March 2002)

The long-term aim of the Institutional Review Programme is to strengthen institutional autonomy and support institutional change in universities. The focus is on the institution as a whole. The Institutional Review Programme does not judge the quality of teaching and learning or that of research, nor does it rank European universities. The Institutional Review Programme is responsive to the university's needs, mission, culture and situation. It is future-oriented since it emphasises the development of the university. It aims to assess the internal monitoring of quality and their use in the strategic development of the university. Moreover, it has a formative orientation (i.e., to help develop and improve the university's strategic and quality management) rather than a summative one (i.e., passing judgements for accountability reasons).

The review team includes three (former) rectors and an academic secretary who act as international colleagues ('peers'). During a preliminary visit, the review team becomes acquainted with the university and its environment. In the main review visit, three months later, the focus is on finding out whether, how, and how effectively the university's strategic policies are being implemented throughout the institution. The review team's conclusions and recommendations are laid down in a review report that is presented to the university.

Since its pilot phase in 1994, 80 universities from across Europe, as well as Latin America and South Africa, have undergone the Institutional Review. Initially, the Programme was created to raise awareness of the need for quality assurance in Europe. Today, with the development of such procedures in most countries, this EUA activity - with its focus on the capacity to change - is more relevant than ever before. With the Bologna Declaration, the European higher education landscape is changing drastically. Reforms are being introduced in many countries and change is the order of the day in most institutions. In addition, transnational higher education (i.e., involving higher education establishments and students from different countries) has become more common as universities are less bound by state borders than they have been for several centuries. The increased mobility of students and researchers means that, in order to survive, universities are required to develop their strengths and enhance their ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

The main purpose of the Institutional Review Programme is to help higher education institutions develop their capacity to change in order to adapt to this evolving environment.