



PEER REVIEW
AND SITE VISIT



Before the site visit takes place the peer review group will be familiar with the basic documents that lay out the background and procedures of AVEPRO's work:

1. "Briefing Note for Institutions"
2. "Guidelines for Internal Evaluation"
3. "Preparing the Self-Evaluation Report: Notes for Guidance"

The group will receive the Faculty or unit's Self-Evaluation Report (electronic version and hard copy) at least three weeks before the site visit. The programme for the site visit will be agreed in good time (see the 'sample site visit programme'). Members of the group will make their own travel arrangements and will be reimbursed by the institution they visit.

Objectives

The objectives of the peer review group are to:

- Clarify and verify details of the self-evaluation report
- Verify how well the mission, aims and objectives of the unit are being fulfilled, having regard to the available resources, and comment on the appropriateness of the unit's mission, objectives and strategic plan
- Confirm the unit's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as outlined in the self-evaluation report
- Discuss any perceived strengths and weaknesses not identified in the self-evaluation report
- Check the suitability of the working environment
- Comment on the recommendations for improvement proposed in the self-evaluation report
- Make any additional recommendations for improvement, as deemed appropriate, but with due consideration for resource implications.

Function

The review group will:

- Study the self-evaluation report
- Visit the unit over one/two days
- Clarify and verify details in the self-evaluation report, and consider other relevant documentation
- Review the activities of the unit in the light of the self-evaluation report
- Prepare a draft report and present the main findings in an exit presentation to staff and students invited by the Dean
- Write the peer review group report and deliver it to AVEPRO within six weeks.



The Report

In keeping with the formative nature of the process the review group express their recommendations in a positive manner that encourages quality improvement. Such an approach is in keeping with the spirit of a process in which an ethos of partnership and trust ensures that real enhancement can result.

As part of the report the peer review group should:

- Confirm and comment on the details of the self-evaluation report
- Provide an overview of the present state of the unit
- Comment briefly on each aspect of the unit's activities
- Acknowledge achievements and quality where they exist
- Point out unambiguously any deficiencies or inadequacies in management and operations that might be eliminated or ameliorated
- Identify critical resource limitations (if any) that bar the way to achieving improvements
- Comment on all plans for improvements that the unit has made in the self-evaluation report
- Emphasise the recommendations for improvement that the review group consider appropriate

Responsibilities of the Peer Review Group

The Chair will act as secretary to the group and write the final report.

The Chair will assign to individual members of the group primary responsibility for taking notes in specific areas, e.g. research, teaching and learning, etc. Each member of the group will comment on preliminary drafts of all sections so that the completed draft will reflect the views of the whole group. It is suggested that the early chapters (factual material) could be completed before the visit.

In the early stages of the site visit the working meals (including those in the hotel) should be used for an exchange of general views on visits and meetings up to that point, things yet to be done, information yet to be found etc.

Experience shows that it is important that the PRG meet with individual members of the Faculty. So even if no volunteers show up, the PRG should go and seek them.

When the site visit is over no member of the PRG should be in contact with any member of the Faculty on matters relating to the SER, the site visit or the PRG Report.

The Chair will prepare an oral report on the main findings and recommendations.

The PRG will present their findings and recommendations to a group of staff and students chosen by the Dean. This will simply be a presentation of the preliminary findings of the PRG and will not involve discussion with the Faculty. It will be made clear to the Department that these findings may be modified in the light of subsequent discussion and reflection. During the presentation no



comment, facetious or otherwise, should be made in relation to any one who has participated in the site visit.

Within six weeks of the site visit the Chair will complete the PRG Report, with the agreement of the other members of the group, and submit it to AVEPRO.

Sample Programme for Site Visit to a Faculty

Day 0

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Afternoon | Arrival of Review Group in Hotel |
| 18.30 -19.45 | Briefing meeting of Review Group in hotel |
| 20.00-22.00 | Dinner, Review Group and senior Faculty members |

Day 1

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 8.30 | Review Group collected at hotel |
| 9.00 – 9.30 | Meeting with Dean |
| 09.40-11.00 | Meeting with Coordinating Committee |
| 11.00-11.30 | Coffee break |
| 11.30-12.30 | Meeting with Heads of Departments |
| 12.30-13.00 | Guided tour of faculty building(s) and facilities |
| 13.00-14.15 | Lunch, Review Group alone |
| 14.30-15.00 | Meeting with undergraduate students |
| 15.00-15.30 | Meeting with research students |
| 15.30-16.15 | Meeting with teaching staff |
| 16.30-17.15 | Meeting with vice-dean for research and researchers |
| 17.30-18.30 | Meeting with external partners |
| 18.40-19.30 | Debriefing meeting, Review Group at hotel |
| 20.00 | Dinner, Review Group alone |



Day 2

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 08.30 | Review Group collected at hotel |
| 09.00-10.00 | Meeting with senior administrators, rector, bursar, registrar, etc. |
| 10.00-11.00 | Private meetings with individual staff members |
| 11.00-13.00 | Review Group alone to prepare exit presentation |
| 13.00-14.30 | Lunch |
| 14.30-15.00 | Meeting with Dean to discuss findings and recommendations |
| 15.00-16.00 | Review Group presents findings and recommendations to faculty |

Site Visit Housekeeping Details

The University or Faculty will:

- Arrange hotel accommodation for the peer review group
- Provide a room as a headquarters for the PRG, a room for the exit presentation, and a room for the meetings to be held during the site visit
- Make available to the PRG samples of student theses, examination papers, questionnaires, and other relevant documents.
- Circulate in the unit a notice informing staff and students of the dates of the site visit and inviting staff to meet individually with the PRG
- Provide photocopying facilities for the PRG
- Provide coffee, tea, mineral water; and also a light working lunch (sandwiches, fruit, coffee, tea, mineral water) for the PRG on days one and two.