

## Terms of Reference

### Goal of the Evaluation

ETH Zurich considers peer reviews to be the most suitable tool for ensuring and improving the quality of research and education. Therefore, it has its departments assessed periodically by an international team of reviewers. These experts are asked to evaluate where the respective department stands internationally and how well visions and strategies are corroborated by past activities, future plans and resources (budget, personnel, infrastructure). They are also asked to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the department, its research groups, professors and programmes.

The reviews are based on the portrayal of the respective department, student and graduate surveys, and a site visit.

### Questions for the Evaluation Committee

As members of the review team you are asked to address, and – as far as possible – to comment on the list of issues presented below. You may, of course, want to focus on additional aspects that you consider to be important, both positive and negative.

### SWOT Analysis

- Please assess the department's overall strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats it faces.

### Vision and Strategy

- Does the department present a sound vision and well-founded strategic aims?
- Are the present and future activities of the department aligned with its vision and broader strategic aims?
- Are the organisation and culture of the department in a position to react to changes and address the challenges of a dynamic and diverse environment?
- Define the department's priorities.

### Research

- **Research Areas**
  - Are the department's research areas focused on the mission goal and are they of adequate scientific value?
  - Assess the impact of the department's researchers in their respective fields.
  - Assess the financial support of projects by public grants and private institutions (industry, etc.).
- **Relations / Interdisciplinary Activities**
  - Are professors well established in their specific research community, both nationally and internationally?
  - Is research collaboration with other entities inside and outside the institution (other universities, industry, public institutions and agencies etc.) adequate?
  - Is interdisciplinary research among the relevant fields of expertise adequately facilitated and conducted?
- **International Standing:** How do the activities and research results of the department and its research groups compare at an international level?

### Teaching

- **State-of-the-art Curricula**
  - Are the degree programmes and their courses internationally competitive? Do they guarantee a solid specialist education and accommodate future fields? Do the qualification profiles focus on the relevant competences?
  - Is student diversity addressed by the department, in particular where either women or men are in the minority?
  - Does an appropriate range of performance assessments test the target competences effectively?
- **Curricula Structure:** Is the overall concept of each degree programme clearly recognisable? Do curricula focus on what is significant, and do they offer the right number of choices?

- **Quality Assurance**
  - Is sustainable degree programme quality ensured (e.g. through consideration of teaching evaluation data and findings)?
  - Do faculty have access to programmes, courses and support options for development of their teaching?
- **Doctoral Studies:** How do doctoral programmes compare to those of other top international universities?
- **Continuing Education:** Is there an overall concept for Continuing Education programmes, short courses and distance education? What is provided for the lifelong learning of alumni?

### **Resources**

- Are the available resources (staff, faculty, operating budgets, equipment, infrastructure, other) adequate qualitatively and quantitatively to meet the department's obligations in teaching and research and to promote the goals of the department?

### **Human Resources: Development and Diversity**

- Assess the department's career development schemes for DScs, post-docs, and senior scientists.
- Assess the tenure process and the appointment of Assistant Professors.
- Assess the department's measures to foster gender balance and diversity at all levels.

### **Review Report**

The Chair of the Review Team is responsible for preparing the report. At the debriefing on the last day of the evaluation the Review Team is to present its key findings and a draft of the report should be available.

The final report is to be handed in no later than a month after the site visit. It should reflect the opinion of the whole Review Team, but also reflect the range of opinions where useful. The report will serve the Executive Board and the respective department as an assessment of its standing and as a basis for measures and decisions to be taken.

If possible, the report should be structured as follows:

- Introduction
- Executive Summary / SWOT Analysis / Key recommendations
- General impressions regarding the department and its activities:
  - Strategy and Organisation
  - Research
  - Teaching and Curricula
  - Infrastructure
  - Services
- Assessment of the activities of individual institutes