Follow – up activities

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- What is FU
- Aim of FU
- Legal Framework
- Methodology

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What is FU?

Follow-up activities in quality ensure improvements are implemented after evaluations, involving progress tracking, corrective actions, data analysis, stakeholder communication, and continuous monitoring to close the quality feedback loop and drive ongoing enhancement in processes, projects, or study programs.

Follow-up activities in quality assurance (QA) are critical, iterative steps taken after audits, tests, or inspections to ensure that identified issues are resolved, processes are improved, and standards are maintained

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Aim of Follow-up activities

The follow-up process aims to address the shortcomings identified during the external review of a higher education institution, implement improvements based on expert recommendations, and ensure transparency in the changes made.

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- **Legal Framework:**
- ESG standards
- Framework Law on HE in BiH article 48
- Decision on norms determining minimum standards in the field of higher education in BiH
- Recommendations for regulating the accreditation procedure of higher education institutions of the 1st and 2nd cycles of studies
- CEAs documents

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❖ ESG standards 2.2 Designing Methodologies Fit for Purpose

Guldellnes:

The aims, objectives and implementation of the processes will:

- bear in mind the level of workload and cost that they will place on institutions;
- take into account the need to support institutions to improve quality;
- allow institutions to demonstrate this improvement;-
- result in clear information on the outcomes and the follow-up.

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ESG standards 2.3 Implementing processes

- **Standard:** External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include
- a self-assessment or equivalent;
- an external assessment normally including a site visit;
- a report resulting from the external assessment;
- **a consistent follow-up.**
- **Guidellnes:** External quality assurance does not end with the report by the experts. The report provides clear guidance for institutional action. Agencies have a consistent follow-up process for considering the action taken by the institution. **The nature of the follow-up will depend on the design of the external quality assurance.**

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ESG standards 2.6 Reporting

- **Standard:** Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.
- **GuIdelInes: The report by the experts is the basis for the institution's follow-up action of the external evaluation and it provides information to society regarding the activities of an institution.**

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- **In order for the report to be used as the basis for action to be taken, it needs to be clear and concise in its structure and language and to cover:**
- **context description (to help locate the higher education institution in its specific context);**
- **description of the individual procedure, including experts involved;**
- **evidence, analysis and findings;**
- **conclusions;**
- **features of good practice, demonstrated by the institution;**
- **recommendations for follow-up action.**

The preparation of a summary report may be useful.

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Framework Law on HE in BiH, article 48 alinea 8

- Although it is not prescribed under the term follow-up activities, indent 8 of Article 48 of the Framework Law on Higher Education:
  "the determination of quality standards, analysis of quality, and the provision of recommendations aimed at eliminating deficiencies in the quality of study programs and higher education institutions;"
  grants the Agency jurisdiction over follow-up activities, which enables it to carry out follow-up activities in the following manner:
- monitors the publication and implementation of action plans and annual progress reports of accredited higher education institutions on their websites;
- analyses quality based on reports of expert panels, action plans, and annual progress reports of accredited higher education institutions;
- provides recommendations aimed at eliminating deficiencies in the quality of study programs and higher education institutions, based on quality analysis;
- organizes workshops on selected topics to assist higher education institutions in eliminating the identified deficiencies.

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❖ Decision on Standards Establishing Minimum Requirements in Higher Education in BiH

- Upon receiving the **Accreditation Decision**, the HEI prepares a **Follow-Up Action Plan** with a defined timeframe and designated responsible persons for implementing recommendations aimed at improving internal quality from the Expert Panel Report, and publishes it on its website.
- Once per year, the HEI prepares a **Report on activities undertaken** in implementing the Action Plan, which must include the actions taken, the level of implementation, any deviations from the Action Plan, and the circumstances that led to those deviations. The HEI must publish this report on its website.

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Decision on norms determining minimum standards in the field of higher education in BiH defines:

- Additionally, in each **Accreditation Recommendation**, the Agency specifies that the HEI, upon receiving the Accreditation Decision, must conduct a detailed analysis of the Expert Panel recommendations and develop an **Action Plan** in accordance with the regulations of the competent education authority and the Decision on Standards.
- The Action Plan must include:

- appointment of a responsible person for drafting, implementing, and monitoring the Action Plan, with clearly defined responsibilities
- a timeframe for implementing the recommendations, as well as the necessary financial and human resources
- defined measurable indicators for monitoring implementation of the Action Plan

The same requirements apply in cases where the Agency issues a **Letter of Expectation**.

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❖ Letter of Expectation

- For HEIs that have received a **Letter of Expectation**, follow-up activities have a **corrective and time-limited nature**:
- The institution has **one year** to improve criteria that were assessed as partially met
- The Action Plan is not only a development document but also **evidence that identified deficiencies are being addressed**
- After one year, the Expert Panel reassesses the institution, verifies the implementation of recommendations, and evaluates whether the previously partially met criteria have been improved
- The results of follow-up activities directly affect whether the institution can be accredited

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❖ Recommendations for Regulating the Accreditation Procedure of HEIs for First and Second Study Cycles

Follow-up activities (Action Plan and Report on implementation of the Action Plan)

- Each accredited HEI or study program, no later than **three (3) months** after receiving the Accreditation Decision, prepares and has adopted by the responsible body an Action Plan for implementation of recommendations (hereinafter: Action Plan), makes it publicly available, and submits it to the competent education authority
- The Action Plan contains a list of activities aligned with Expert Panel recommendations, timeframe for implementation, activity holders/responsible persons, and resources required for implementation
- Each accredited HEI reports to the competent education authority on implementation of the Action Plan at intervals defined by acts of the competent education authorities

Templates for the Action Plan and Annual Report on its implementation are an integral part of this Recommendation.

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❖ Documents of Competent Education Authorities (CEAs)

- CEAs adopt Rulebooks on accreditation of HEIs and study programs, in which they define their role in follow-up activities.
  Existing accreditation Rulebooks regulate this issue in more detail.
  However, differences exist regarding who monitors implementation of the Action Plan.

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❖ Views of Accredited HEIs on the Main Phases of the Accreditation Process

- The Agency conducted an analysis of the views of accredited HEIs, and the results show that recommendations from external evaluations have a real impact on institutional improvement, confirming the importance of follow-up activities.
- 63% of HEIs state that recommendations from the last report were fully useful, while 31.8% consider them partially useful
- All institutions state that recommendations were fully or partially implemented
- Based on open responses, implementation of recommendations improved:
  - strategic documents and internal regulations
  - study programs and learning outcomes
  - internal quality assurance systems
  - information systems and transparency of operations
  - human resources and international cooperation
  - student support

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- SMEQA project analysis

Subsequent activities for the accreditation of the study programme												
QUESTION	Competent education authority											
	BPK	HNK	KS	HBŽ	PK	SBK	TK	USK	ZHK	ZDK	RS	BD
6.1.B. Do regulations under your competence define the obligation to prepare an Action Plan for implementing Expert Panel recommendations in the accreditation procedure of a study program?	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	TES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
6.2.B. Do regulations under your competence define the minimum/mandatory content of the Action Plan for implementing Expert Panel recommendations in the accreditation procedure of a higher education institution?	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
6.3.B. Do regulations under your competence define a deadline for preparing the Action Plan in the accreditation procedure of a study program?	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
6.4.B. Do regulations under your competence define the obligation to submit the Action Plan to the competent ministry?	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES
6.5.B. Do regulations under your competence define the obligation to publish the Action Plan on the HEI website?	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
6.6.B. Do regulations under your competence define consequences for an HEI if it fails to prepare/submit/publish the Action Plan within the set deadline?	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO

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❖ The table highlights the following:

- Most competent education authorities define the obligation to prepare the Action Plan, the deadline for its preparation, its minimum content, as well as the obligation to submit it to the competent authority and to publish it on the HEI website
- Most competent education authorities do **not** define consequences for HEIs if they fail to prepare/submit/publish the Action Plan within the set deadline

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❖ Next Steps

➢ **Competent Education Authorities should prescribe:**

- the obligation to prepare an Action Plan based on Expert Panel recommendations, with defined deadlines and content
- the obligation to publish the Plan on the HEI website and submit it to the competent education authority
- consequences for HEIs in case of non-preparation or non-submission within the prescribed deadline
- mechanisms for monitoring implementation of follow-up activities

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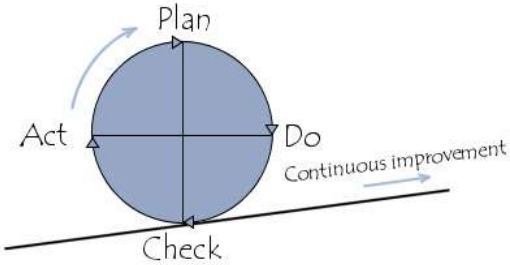
❖ Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

- Strengthen the link between follow-up activities and the **PDCA (Deming) cycle**
- Integrate follow-up into continuous quality improvement, not only as an activity prior to (re)accreditation



- Establish a clear and documented follow-up process:
  - **Plan** – planning activities based on external evaluation recommendations
  - **Do** – implementation of planned activities
  - **Check** – monitoring and evaluation of implementation
  - **Act** – corrective and improvement measures

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❖ *Agency*

- Intensify application of indent 8, Article 48 of the Framework Law on Higher Education
- Introduce into decisions appointing Expert Panels an obligation for specific analysis of follow-up implementation
- Continue organizing workshops for competent education authorities and higher education institutions

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