

GUIDELINES FOR DISTANCE EVALUATIONS



Time to Rethink How We Conduct Site Visits?

CAUSE

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused SQAA and other quality assurance agencies to **adapt its procedures**, because of the health risks associated with on-site visits. The latter were immediately cancelled so the agency had to **react as quickly as possible**. In order to resume our work in the optimal way possible, we prepared the Guidelines for distance evaluations and took the site visits online.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The guidelines are meant for all the important stakeholders involved in the procedures – **agency employees, experts, higher education and higher vocational institutions**. Slightly amended guidelines were later on also **adopted by CEENQA** - not with the intention to unify the procedures between agencies, but as to assist its members and provide additional input on how a site visit can be organized.

LESSONS LEARNED

Despite the fact that some of the COVID-19 restrictions and health risks have since then been alleviated, the guidelines still remain a **valuable tool for conducting site visits** and will remain so in the future, when the good practices of face-to-face and virtual site visits adopt a new form of **hybrid approach to evaluations**.

AIM

The aim of these guidelines is to assist all stakeholders in **planning, organizing and conducting** distance evaluations. The document provides guidance where needed and leaves the other parts of the procedure intact. It is first and foremost a very pragmatic tool, dealing mainly with **technical and organizational aspects** of the online site visit.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

In the early part of 2020 first **pilot evaluations** were conducted to test out the practical considerations of such visits. Although some challenges were identified, our surveys clearly show, that all the important stakeholders reacted **extremely positively** to the adjustment. Because of the success of the pilot evaluations, all of our procedures have since moved online without any major issues or disruption.

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