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General Description:

Title: ACADEMIC STAFF EVALUATION AT IST (RADIST)

Keywords: quality, multicriteria decision analysis, academic staff evaluation, performance appraisal of faculty, faculty performance measurement, decision support systems

Starting date: 2010

Dimensions and categories:

(Click on the dimension and category/ies your practice is related to)

	Financial feasibility	Social and environmental responsibility	People	Recognition & Reputation	Quality Management	Infrastructure & Equipment	International orientation	Regional engagement
Education			x	x	x			
Research			x	x	x			
Knowledge Technology transfer			x	x	x			

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Webpage of the practice (if any): https://fenix.ist.utl.pt/ccad/lateral/regulamentos?locale=en_EN	

Characteristics of the strategic management practice:

Executive summary (maximum 250 words)

The Portuguese law, revised in August 2009, requires public universities and polytechnics to evaluate their academic staff at least once every three years, according to regulations to be approved by each institution based upon a set of principles established in the law.

Staff member evaluation aims at shaping individual staff member activity and is an instrument to regulate their carrier.

Many Higher Education Institutions (HEI) already had some form of evaluation of teaching and research units are subject to a national evaluation. The new system, however, is linked to carrier development and focus on the individual academic staff member's performance.

Instituto Superior Técnico (IST), the faculty of engineering of the Technical University of Lisbon, has opted to develop an elaborate process, based on a multiple criteria approach (RADIST).

The procedure has a significant number of degrees of freedom in order to be aligned with the institutional mission and goals and to consider the breath of the activity of the members of the academic staff.

Focus of the practice (maximum 300 words)

(Describe the initial situation, the context and objectives. Along with the justification of its needs, the level of integration within the context and the value added)

The evaluation of academic staff, is an element of institutional management, and the way it is carried out as well as the criteria used, conditions academic staff's activity. In the long run, it will shape the body of faculty and will influence institutional performance and quality.

Most of the regulations approved by Portuguese HEI take into account four domains of activity – teaching, research, extension and management – with variations in the weight each one has in the final result. Some of them even define different profiles of the members of staff, with different emphasis on each of the four domains, according to which the evaluation takes place. IST has opted for a comprehensive process based on a multiple criteria approach regulated in a document known as RADIST. Although guidelines and the role and performance expected are aligned with the mission and goals of IST, it gives the evaluator a significant degree of freedom to take into account differences of profile of individual members of the academic staff and their relevance for institutional performance.

The process is conducted by a Council for the Evaluation of Academic Staff, specifically established for the process, and includes five phases: self-evaluation, evaluation, harmonization, notification of results and final approval of marks.

The evaluation phase procedures focuses on four domains of activity: teaching, research, knowledge transfer – including extension and science diffusion, as well as social and economic use of knowledge – and institutional management. These four domains cover most of the activities of academic staff members, although each one will have a specific profile, with more or less emphasis on each of the domains. This is taken into consideration, by giving each of these four domains a variable weight: teaching 20 to 40%; research 40 to 60%; knowledge transfer 5 to 30%; and management maximum of 20%.

Implementation of the practice (maximum 300 words)

(Describe the implementation of the practice: actions, timing, resources applied. Degree of adjustment of the practice deployment with the objectives, areas and the planned approach)

The sequence of the procedure is the following:

- 1 - The activities, publications, etc. of each member of the academic staff are translated into numbers, according to tables and formulas included in the regulation, producing the quantitative component;
- 2 - For each criterion a qualitative component is defined by the evaluator that, multiplied by the quantitative component, gives a value of performance associated with each criterion;
- 3 - This performance result is normalized by a target and limited by a ceiling, both defined beforehand at the beginning of each period being evaluated, giving a result for each criterion;
- 4 - The results of the criteria are weighted to give the performance in each of the four domains;
- 5 - These results are assigned percentages, according to the ranges defined, in order to maximize the final result;
- 6 - The final result is converted into a final mark.

The degrees of freedom of the process are the following:

- a) The value assigned to each item included in a criterion: defined in the regulation;
- b) The qualitative components: defined by the evaluators;
- c) The targets and ceilings: defined by the President of IST;
- d) The weight of each criterion and of the range of percentages of the four domains: defined by the council for evaluation of the academic staff;
- e) The range of values corresponding to the four levels of the final mark: defined in the regulation, but that may be altered by the council for evaluation of the academic staff.

Such a large number of degrees of freedom allows for the adaptation of the process, and each individual member of the academic staff easily identifies the impact on the final mark of his/her options in terms of activities.

Achieved results (maximum 300 words)

(Describe the achieved results in relation to the planned objectives, also with the changes introduced during the practice implementation. Additionally it values the contribution of qualitative and quantitative data that demonstrate the fulfillment of the objectives)

The first application of this procedure took place in 2010 and covered two distinct periods: 2004 to 2007 and 2008 to 2009.

From the point of view of understanding the procedure and try to explore its functioning, it is the second period, with the evaluation being compulsory, that is relevant, in spite of the procedure having been defined after the period under evaluation, unlike future applications. However, the statistics of the results may give some indication whether it is working properly or not. For instance, as in this period the option for the alternative curriculum evaluation was freely taken by each individual member of the academic staff, a high percentage opting for this alternative would indicate that the multiple criteria approach was viewed with suspicion.

The first results disclosed show that 85% of the 855 academic staff members opted for the multiple criteria approach. This percentage varies according to the department, but it ranges from 76% to 95%.

Other results may give an indication of the way the multiple criteria procedure is working, at least as an alarm indicator if they are very far from what is to be expected. Such indications could come from the percentage of each profile, defined as a pair of the two domains with best results for each member of staff, or that of the domains in which the members of the academic staff have best results. Knowing the academic staff of IST, it is to be expected that the combination of education and research will dominate the profiles, with these two domains clearly prevailing over the other two. If this is not the case, it could mean that the criteria and targets in the different domains are not properly balanced.

Assessment and review (maximum 200 words)

(Describe the evaluation process and review and proposals made for improvement identified and introduced into the practice. And the degree of learning from the results obtained and not obtained)

How effective the procedure will be in capturing all aspects of activity of the members of the academic staff and in having a positive effect in shaping that activity, by being aligned with institutional missions, is still not possible to measure. This is a slow process, as is quality improvement as a result of quality assurance processes in general.

Such a process aims at being fair, in the sense that those that have better quality results and greater contribution towards the development of the institution have better marks and are more likely to benefit in their carrier. There is no such thing as an absolutely fair evaluation process. Quantitative approaches, although more to the fact, tend to ignore subtleties of quality and qualitative approaches depend more on the evaluator, although they may capture quality. The process described tries to combine quantitative components with qualitative assessment.

These are some of the main conclusions of this process evaluation report (July 2011):

-The performance evaluation (periods 2004-2007 and 2008-2009) ran efficiently, and, in the last period, were assessed all teachers as required by the law.

-The evaluation enabled a better quantitative and qualitative understanding of the activities developed by teachers and, as such, by IST departments

-Performance evaluation results also allow to verify the existence of different activity profiles in the various departments of IST.

-Performance evaluation at IST in both periods resulted in the award of a high number of mentions maxims ("Excellent").
- Given the small amount of complaints, we may conclude that the evaluation process did not result in significant distress among IST academic staff.

Innovative character and transferability (maximum 200 words)

(Describe the aspects of internal innovation (at the institution) and innovation as respect to the context (at the university system) of the practice. As well as the elements and aspects that can be applied to a different context and possible recommendations that should be taken into account in a benchmarking opportunity)

Some other Portuguese institutions, where profiles have been defined, have considered that each member of academic staff is allocated to one of a limited number of profiles. Others define the set of goals and targets for each member of the academic staff to achieve.

The innovative IST multi-criteria model was followed by other Portuguese HEI, as targets and ceilings are defined by management of each institution as a way of defining the performance expected from the members of academic staff in each criterion. By changing the targets, the performance required may be more or less demanding in absolute terms or in relative terms among criteria.

The procedure has the potential and the degrees of freedom to be aligned with different institutional missions and goals and to consider the richness of the activity of most members of the academic staff. And, whenever it does not, the alternative route of curriculum evaluation is always available.

Interest in this practice was demonstrated by several Portuguese institutions of higher education, with the presentation of the IST model in various universities and various events, as was the case of this presentation: "[Modelo de Avaliação de Docentes do IST](#)" presented in March 2010, under the Plenary Session of the Commission for Education and Training at the Portuguese Institute for Quality.

Upload supporting documents (max 5MB)

[Academic Staff Evaluation at IST](#)

Paper presented at the Fifth European Quality Assurance Forum (Building Bridges: Making sense of QA in European, national and institutional contexts) in November 2010, Lyon, France.

[Faculty evaluation using multicriteria value measurement](#)

Article published in: MACMESE'10 Proceedings of the 12th WSEAS international conference on Mathematical and computational methods in science and engineering
Pages 287-290

Authorization to publish this practice in EUSUM website?

- Yes