



Elos – education stretching borders

Quality Review

Guidelines for external assessment

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Introduction

Elos – education stretching borders is an educational concept which seeks to promote the European and international dimension in education. It is about preparing young people for a future in a society in which European integration and globalization are a reality. Elos enables them to function in such a society, to deal with its challenges and to take advantage of the opportunities that arise, in a responsible and well-informed manner.

In brief, Elos is about students developing Europe Competence, being willing and able to act as an active citizen in a European and wider international context. It is also about schools integrating this approach into their curriculum and school policies, and collaborating with partner schools and organisations abroad to develop a truly European learning environment.

Elos has been created by the European Elos network. An important step towards the recognition of Elos as an educational concept with strong added value, is the realization of quality improvement and monitoring. It is in the interest of the Elos network, the Elos schools and students/ pupils and their parents that quality is pursued and maintained, so that all those concerned can rely on a guaranteed level of quality.

In most countries participating in Elos, there is no regular School Inspection aimed at specific programmes which are offered by a school. The Elos network feels that a Quality Review procedure is a prerequisite for the future of Elos. Since the network includes many different countries and educational systems, the members of the network¹ have chosen a quality monitoring policy that will recognise two types of Quality Review system, so that each country can choose the system that best fits their educational conditions and environment.

In this brochure, an explanation is provided on the Elos – education stretching borders Quality Review Procedure which will take place based on the Elos International School Standard and the Common Framework of Europe Competence. These documents are the core of Elos. The Elos Quality Review Procedure is aimed at the educational aspects which are specific for Elos.

The document also provides practical guidelines for the Quality Reviewer(s) in their role as external assessors to assist them in preparing for, carrying out and reporting on the Quality Review Framework.

¹ The international Elos Quality Review procedure is a basic assessment; where regional or national criteria are above the School Standard, this counts for those networks

2 The Quality Review

The Elos Quality Review Procedure has two functions. In the first place it functions as a guarantee in order to quality assure the Elos learning experience. Pupils and their parents should be able to depend on Elos schools providing an education that actually adds value to students' international and European education. In addition, Elos schools should be able to be confident that their position will not be undermined by schools with a poorly functioning Elos programme, and it should also help them identify good (Elos) partner schools abroad. Secondly, the Quality Review has a function as a stimulus. The activities around the Quality Review can add value to the school's own quality assurance and the quality of the Elos concept in general.

2.1 The Quality Review contents

A good Elos school is a school that creates an environment where pupils achieve the optimal level of the Common Framework for Europe Competence. The Elos school has a policy and an organisation which are designed to accomplish this, following the Elos International School Standard. The Quality Review will investigate to what extent the implementation of the Elos programme is of sufficient quality and to what extent the Elos programme enables students to achieve the defined European Competences. In the event of lack of achievement with regard to the programme, certification will be postponed, and a second Quality Review will take place within a year's time during which the school will need to address the Elos issues which fail to meet the standard. The quality characteristics have been established in the Elos International School Standard, with reference to the Common Framework of Europe Competence that describes student competences. The Elos School Standard and the CFEC combined form the Quality Review framework.

2.2 The two types of Quality Review

The Elos Quality Review procedure offers two possible types of review:

- 1. A Quality Review based upon the collection and analysis of written evidence, followed by an interview with one or two representatives of the school at the offices of the regional/national coordinator or by phone.**

2. A Quality Review based upon the collection and analysis of written evidence, followed by a school visit.

The two types of Quality Review start with a self-assessment by the school using the self-assessment framework and end with a Quality Review Report written by the regional/national coordinator using either the Quality Review report QR 1 Interview or Quality Review report QR 2 School visit.

If a school's Elos programme does not (yet) comply with the Elos International School Standard, it can lead to further actions.

Further inquiries

Further discussion will take place if the Elos Quality Review raises areas of concern in Elos practice. The further inquiries can have the following objectives:

- validation of the results of the Elos Quality Review;
- further analysis of the established shortcomings;
- stimulus for the school to draw up an improvement plan.

2.3 The procedure for the two types of Elos Quality Review

Preparation: the moderation process

The Quality Reviewer(s) comprises a minimum of two persons; one of which should be the regional/national coordinator. Prior to the Elos Quality Review, the Quality Reviewer(s) reviews information from the school with the help of the Elos International School Standard; the school performs a written self-assessment based upon that standard, and includes examples of special modules/lessons, project descriptions and student portfolios. The Quality Reviewer(s) will send the self-assessment framework at least 4 weeks prior to the school visit or interview. The school needs enough time to conduct the self-assessment and collect the evidence. The completed assessment provides an overview of the Elos programme. If the Elos school has its own system for self-evaluation, the Quality Reviewer(s) should be provided with this information.

Implementation

1. A Quality Review based upon the collection and analysis of written evidence, followed by an interview with two representatives of the school at the offices of the regional/national coordinator or by phone

- An analysis of the written evidence provided is undertaken;

- An overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the Elos programme at the school is given;
- An appointment for an interview at the offices of the regional/national coordinator is made.

This first option is the minimum requirement for a thorough quality review of an Elos school. The time allocation for this option is: one person for one and a half days.

The costs of the quality review will be calculated based on the valid hourly rate in the respective country. The national/regional coordinator will advise the school of the costs of the assessment process when the first enquiry is made.

2. A Quality Review based upon the collection and analysis of written evidence, followed by a school visit.

The most important activities during a school visit are:

- an interview with the school head(s) and the Elos coordinator;
- an interview with teachers that are involved in Elos;
- an interview with pupils;
- an interview with parents/guardians;
- where necessary, collect supplementary information and verify preliminary findings
- a final meeting with the school head(s) and/or the Elos education coordinator in which the findings are verbally reported.

This second option takes a more developmental approach, which schools and their board and teachers can benefit from. Investing in this option clearly means investing in the development of the school.

The time allocation for this option is: two persons for two days, which makes a total of 4 days. The costs of the quality review will be calculated based on the valid hourly *or daily* rate in the respective country. The national/regional coordinator will advise the school of the costs of the assessment process when the first enquiry is made.

Optional, for those countries where this is acceptable and useful :

- observation of a number of lessons, spread over the different social sciences, science subjects, creative and physical education and spread over the school years. Preferably lessons with EIO-activities.

Conclusion

The conclusion of both types of Elos Quality Review consists of a report. The regional/national coordinator uses the templates provided by the Elos network. The regional/national coordinator first sends a draft report to the school head(s) and the Elos coordinator of the school. There is then the opportunity for school leaders to indicate factual errors and omissions in the report. Subsequently, the regional/national coordinator sends the final report to the school head(s) and the Elos coordinator. Discussed in the report are:

- a quality profile of the Elos programme in the school;
- a summarised view of the educational quality of the Elos programme, taking into account the present position of the Elos school (referenced against their self-assessment);
- the publication of the content of the report is the responsibility of the school;
- a grid will be provided which gives an overview of the levels the school has achieved in the four domains;
- subject to the assessment, a statement of the way in which the Elos Quality Review for the school will take shape over the next few years. This will be a negotiated agreement with the school.

3 The Quality Review framework

All elements which are of importance to the Quality Review are briefly explained in this paragraph. In paragraph 3.1, the position of the Elos programme is discussed. Paragraph 3.2 contains a short overview of the quality characteristics and paragraph 3.3 explains how the assessment is carried out.

3.1 The position of the Elos programme in the school

Prior to the Elos Quality Review, the Quality Reviewer(s) will gather information about the present position of the Elos programme at school.

3.2 The quality characteristics

The Elos International School Standard which is central to the Elos Quality Review, contains twenty-two criteria grouped into five areas/general indicators. Those general indicators come from the Elos letter of commitment that all schools sign when joining the Elos network. All schools should thus be familiar with the general indicators. In this paragraph the criteria are mentioned per area/general indicator. How these criteria are made operational is discussed in paragraph 1.1.1(a)(i)4.

I – Education process/Learning environment

The Quality Review will assess how the school includes a European and International Orientation ('EIO') in a variety of lessons and through activities abroad, so that students can develop their 'Europe Competence' gradually during their whole school career (knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students need for their future as 'European (and international) citizens'. Using jointly developed products, such as the Elos portfolio for students and other instruments to support EIO learning and assessment.

II – School curriculum and policy

The Quality Review will assess how the school strives towards embedding the Elos goals in the school curriculum and in the school policy to ensure coherence and sustainability.

III – Institutional capacity and organisational structure

The Quality Review will assess how the school builds the institution's internal capacity to achieve Elos goals, and how the organisational structure adds to the achievement of those goals.

IV – International cooperation

The Quality Review will assess how the school is involved in structural international mobility activities with schools/colleges and – if applicable - other organisations abroad.

V- Quality assessment

The Quality Review will assess how the school takes part in general monitoring and evaluation activities at school level, national level and international level, and other relevant studies (when requested).

3.3 The assessment

In the assessment of the quality characteristics/criteria within the five areas, the Quality Reviewer(s) looks into how much these contribute to the realisation of the Elos goals (little, sufficiently or substantially). In this way, an assessment is made for each of the five general indicators (I to V). The assessment is based upon criterion-references that underpin each indicator. The first criterion of each general indicator is compulsory; a school has to fulfil 80% of the criteria in the Elos International School Standard in order to receive an Elos school certificate.

This assessment is expressed in three levels:

Partly realized

This is a signal that the Elos programme shows strong and weak points in this general indicator, but the most important criteria are still capable of improvement.

Mostly realized

The Elos programme shows more strong than weak points in this general indicator. The quality of some of the criteria could be further improved.

Completely realized

The school functions optimally in all or practically all of the criteria.

4. The Self-Assessment Framework: five general indicators and twenty-two criteria

Assessment

The assessment is principally based on the information that the Elos school provides in preparation for the Elos Quality Review.

4.1. General Indicator A – Education process/Learning environment

Including a European and International Orientation ('EIO') in a variety of lessons and through activities abroad, so that students can develop their 'Europe Competence' gradually during their whole school career (knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students need for their future as 'European (and international) citizens'. Using jointly developed products, such as the Elos portfolio for students and other instruments to support EIO learning and assessment.

Criteria

A.1. The school has completed an inventory of EIO elements in all programmes of learning that typically include European and international topics for all students. Based on this inventory, the school has discussed how to better streamline the EIO elements in the relevant subjects across school years and across subjects and programmes of learning.

A.2. At least 3 school subjects contribute to meeting Elos objectives.

A.3. In these subjects, teachers and students also use teaching/learning materials in a foreign language, related to EIO topics. This can be part of a class exchange project.

A.4. In foreign language subjects involved in Elos, students and teachers use the target language and focus on communication skills in international cooperation.

A.5. Students self-evaluate their foreign language skills based on the levels in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and realize which level in their first (main) foreign language would allow them to communicate, to study and to work abroad (depending on school type, A2-B2). Students actively involved in Elos work towards achieving a level of foreign language knowledge that allows them to communicate, to study and to work

abroad. Students use self-evaluation (for example in a language portfolio) to monitor and plan their work.

A.6. Students actively involved in Elos learn to describe, evaluate and record their European and international activities regardless of the fact of whether these activities have taken place in a formal, non-formal or informal learning environment.

A.7. Students are encouraged by the school to learn a second foreign language that allows them to communicate with students abroad (depending on school type, A1-B2).

A.8. Plans specify how students will be actively involved by the teachers in EIO subjects and activities (in the process from preparation to follow-up). Students document in their portfolio (or other documents) how they are actively involved in EIO.

Norms

General indicator A is assessed as 'more strong than weak' when at least the criterion A.1. is positively assessed, as well as the required number of criteria to comply with a total of 80% of the criteria of the standard.

4.2 General Indicator B – School curriculum and policy

Striving towards embedding the Elos goals in the school curriculum and in the school policy to ensure coherence and sustainability.

Criteria

B.1. The place that Elos is given within the school is evident in most school documents, such as school policy documents and information material for parents and students.

B.2. The school offers a programme consisting of at least 2 special EIO activities annually in the school (environment) in addition to any international mobility. These may include: international guest speakers, international arts or sports activities, participation in international contests, contacts with institutions, factories, firms or businesses in other countries, international contacts with peers using digital technologies (virtual mobility), et cetera. Activities should be offered to more than one class, and to different age groups, but do not have to be compulsory. Schools have freedom of choice in their EIO activity.

B.3. The school has discussed the CFEC and how EIO could be offered in lessons, activities at home and abroad in a way that allows students' progression over time and has taken action to implement the results. The European and international dimension should always be included.

B.4. The school will recognize students' achievements with respect to European and International Orientation in informal or non-formal learning environments. The CFEC serves as an indicator.

Norms

General indicator B is assessed as 'more strong than weak' when at least the criterion B.1. is positively assessed, as well as the required number of criteria to comply with a total of 80% of the criteria of the standard.

4.3. General Indicator C – Staff competence and institutional capacity

Building the institution's internal capacity to achieve Elos goals.

Criteria

C.1. The school management supports the Elos Coordinator and/or Elos Team at school and encourages other staff members to participate in Elos (within the school, using internal communication channels).

C.2. At least one teacher from each of the organisational units (whichever applicable: school sector/department, subject area team, work-related learning programmes, etc.) has been informed about Elos and asked to get involved in an Elos Team. At least one teacher from half of the organisational units (whichever applicable: school sector/department, subject area team, etc.) is involved in Elos.

C.3. Elos is a regular item on the agenda of meetings in the school.

C.4. The school management provides sufficient facilities for the coordination of the concept, its development and implementation, as discussed with the Elos Coordinator (such as time for the coordination activities, attending Elos events abroad, EIO teacher training, materials, etc.).

C.5. Plans specify training needs of teachers and management with regard to EIO (as relevant to their subject or general knowledge level), to foreign language knowledge (as required for their involvement in international education projects) and ICT (as necessary for online learning and communicating). The school facilitates teachers to participate in training activities related to Elos.

Norms

General indicator C is assessed as ‘more strong than weak’ when at least the criterion C.1. is positively assessed, as well as the required number of criteria to comply with a total of 80% of the criteria of the standard.

4.4 General Indicator D- International cooperation

Being involved in structural international exchange activities with schools/colleges and – if applicable - other organisations abroad

D.1. Via email and/or a form of electronic learning environment, students actively involved in Elos have international contacts in various subject areas with peers abroad. In order to achieve this, the school organizes educational projects with at least 1 steady international partner school and -if applicable- an international partner organisation (e.g. within eTwinning, Comenius or other programmes).

D.2. Most students actively involved in Elos can participate in at least one student social and/or working experience abroad (including educational cooperation) and a stay with a host family during his/her time at school. (If circumstances require, he/she can be given an alternative to staying with a host family).

D.3. Where educational laws allow this, individual students actively involved in Elos can follow part of their study programme in another European country, and receive credit for work completed abroad, as determined by a mutual agreement between the partner schools

D.4. International job and career orientation are offered by the school.

Norms

General indicator D is assessed as ‘more strong than weak’ when at least the criterion D.1. is positively assessed, as well as the required number of criteria to comply with a total of 80% of the criteria of the standard.

4.5 General Indicator E - Quality assessment

Taking part in general monitoring and evaluation activities at school level, national level and international level, and other relevant studies (when requested).

Criteria

E.1. Evaluation at school level includes self-evaluation and a form of external Quality Review (such as peer panels, school visits etc.).

E.2. When requested, the Elos core team and school management complete relevant evaluation forms (such as end user questionnaires, etc.).

Norms

General indicator E is assessed as 'more strong than weak' when at least the criterion E.1. is positively assessed, as well as the required number of criteria to comply with a total of 80% of the criteria of the standard.

Overall:

If a school fulfils the first criterion of each general indicator and a total of 80% of all criteria, the school will be awarded an Elos certificate and will obtain the right to hand out Elos student certificates.

5. Preparation for school visit and interview

Quality Review 1: Interview

The national/regional coordinator communicates clearly with the school when the interview takes place at the office of the national/regional coordinator or by phone. They are also informed about what is expected of the school in order to have an effective and well prepared interview.

The national/regional coordinator will provide the school with the following information at least 6 weeks prior to the interview:

- Template self-assessment framework with guidelines on how to use the template
- Elos school standard
- CFEC
- Guidelines for external assessment

The school will send the self-assessment framework and the supporting evidence by e-mail to the national/regional coordinator at least 4 weeks before the interview takes place.

The school will be responsible for the following actions in preparation of the visit:

- Sending the national/regional coordinator the self-assessment framework and supporting evidence on time

Quality Review 2: School visit

The national coordinator and the second assessor communicate clearly with the school when the visit will take place and what is expected of the school in order to have an effective and well organised visit.

The Quality Reviewer(s) will provide the school with the following information at least 6 weeks prior to the school visit:

- Template self-assessment framework with guidelines on how to use the template
- Elos school standard
- CFEC
- Guidelines for external assessment

The school will send the self-assessment framework and the supporting evidence by e-mail to the national coordinator at least 4 weeks before the school visit takes place.

The school will be responsible for the following actions in preparation of the visit:

- A programme for the school visit which include the items mentioned in section 2.3
- Sending the national/regional coordinator the self-assessment framework and supporting evidence on time

6. Example questions for school visit and interview

The following example questions can give the Quality Reviewer(s) and/or the national/regional coordinator inspiration in preparation of the school visit and interview.

After the collecting of evidence and self-assessment framework provided by the school the Quality Reviewer(s) and/or the national/regional coordinator will review the documents. The following questions could be asked:

- How are activities organised at school?
- What measures have been taken to realise plans?
- Who decides?
- How often does it take place?
- In what way is evidence documented?

For the specific areas of the Quality Review Framework the following questions could be asked:

A. Educational process/ learning environment

The Quality Review will assess how the school includes a European and International Orientation ('EIO') in a variety of lessons and through activities abroad, so that students can develop their 'Europe Competence' gradually during their whole school career (knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students need for their future as 'European (and international) citizens'. Using jointly developed products, such as the Elos portfolio for students and other instruments to support EIO learning and assessment.

- **How do you streamline the different subjects which give attention in their lessons to EIO?**
- Which school subjects contribute most to meeting the Elos objectives?
- Does the school use learning material in foreign languages?
- Do students document their EIO-skills in a portfolio (or other document)?
- Do language teachers use the target language in their lessons?
- Do students know what their level in foreign languages is according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages?

- B. School curriculum and policy
- C. Institutional capacity and organisational structure
- D. International cooperation
- E. Quality assessment

Example questions for the other sections can be added if decided that this section is useful for external assessors.

Comentário [LG1]: Do we think it is?

Comentário [fa2]: It is very useful and contributes to establish a “common” criteria.