



OPEN ECBCheck

Structure, Certification
Process and Review

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A. Introduction to the Training Handbook

Dear colleagues –

Welcome to the training on self-assessment and peer-review with the Open ECBCheck Framework. One of the objectives of this training is to understand the different views and needs of organisations and individuals in the field of e-learning – and it is great that we have gathered such a diversity of participants for exchanging our views and discussing quality.

The basic logic of the course is foreseeing 4 steps:

- 1. You will be introduced to the Open ECBCheck initiative and the tools which have been developed.*
- 2. You will practically undergo a self-assessment*
- 3. You will be introduced to the method of peer- review*
- 4. You will practically conduct a peer review.*

The course will enable you to make your own experiences with the Open ECBCheck. It is intended to enable you to become a certified peer-reviewer for the open ECBCheck community.

Some words on the initiative

Open ECBCheck is a low cost-community based peer review community. The community consists of several UN organisations, universities and other organisations in the field of accreditation and quality development. All those organisations are concerned about quality development in the field of e-learning for capacity building. This is important. It means that Open ECBCheck is NOT an accreditation program which offers accreditation, for example, for a higher education e-learning programme.

It is designed for capacity building organisations and their partners and it offers a quality framework which enables individuals like teachers, content developers and organisations to assess the quality, to be validated through a peer review and to enter into an improvement cycle.

Open ECBCheck is targeting programmes and courses. This is important, because the tools for programmes are naturally different from those for institutions and also from those of courses. For our common course we will all work on programme and/or course level.

!! By the way – courses are defined as shorter self-study units, like many web based training courses are: No tutors and just a few hours long.

Programmes are defined as longer units. We defined in the beginning that a Program has at least 100 hours of total workload for students and usually consists of a number of units that build upon one another or enlarge the topic. At least 20% of a program needs to be computer based. Blended learning therefore – usually - falls under the programme category. Also – programmes are usually supported through eTutors. !!

As already said: In this training we are focusing on programmes - every one of you therefore needs to have a programme at hand which s/he can analyze with the self-assessment framework - and which later then can be peer-reviewed by another member of our course. We have provided some examples which we can use in our course.

One thing before we start:

*The course is a first edition of its kind. We probably have lots of things which need improvement or need to be explained better. As Open ECBCheck community we all therefore need to give feedback and advice on this, so that we can improve the course. **Our ultimate goal** is to fix and improve everything and then give away the complete course free and open, so that you can run it for your clients on your platform(s). Keep this in mind, and give us your best feedback.*

The last and very important thing for this introduction is the following: The Open ECBCheck tool has been developed and validated in one international validation cycle already. However, we would like to use this training course and your experience as well to improve the tool. Therefore – if you come across anything which you would like to change, be it in the wording of the criteria or in the tools from a technical perspective – please let us know.

Now – we wish you fun and a good time – and interesting conversations!

B. About Self-Assessment and Peer-Review

In this section we will introduce you to the concept of self-assessment and peer-review. The aim of the Open ECBCheck Community is to create and maintain a community-based, low-cost certification of e-learning programmes and courses.

How do we approach this?

STEP 1: First we encourage organisations to become part of the Open ECBCheck Community. This can be done easily by joining the group through registering on the webportal (www.ecb-check.org). Joining the Open ECBCheck implies that an organization shares the basic values and commits itself to quality improvement, sharing of experiences and openness to other partners in the community. During the Dakar meeting of Open ECBCheck in May 2009 the Open ECBCheck advisory group developed the Open ECBCheck Charter. This is a document which we ask organisations to sign in order to become member of Open ECBCheck.

STEP 2: Once an organization is part of the Open ECBCheck group, has access to the website and made its first experiences with the Open ECBCheck tools we encourage them to take part in training like this. This will give insight into the way self-assessment and peer-review works and can be used to benefit the own organization. If an organization is interested it can undergo a self-assessment of its own courses, programmes, and even of its whole institution. The institutional self-assessment however, is only meaningful for organisations which have defined ICT as the core pillar of their organizational strategy. This is easy. The self-assessment tool is an online tool and available for all who registered to the Open ECBCheck website – at www.ecb-check.org. During the first week we will also ask you to go there and register.

!! We encourage you at this point to go to download the Open ECBCheck self-assessment framework from the ecb-check website or in the Moodle environment of this course. Make yourself familiar with the process, think about how it would fit your own e-learning activities, or your organization!!

An organization can use the self-assessment tools first of all for their own improvement. It can see where there is still room for improvement and what can be done better. At a later stage we will introduce the 2-stage system of Minimum criteria and excellence Criteria.

STEP 3: If an organization has undergone a self-assessment it can ask the Open ECBCheck Secretariat to assign a peer-review to its self-assessment. Then two independent reviewers are searched for and assigned to the self-assessment. The two reviewers try to confirm and validate all information which had been given in the self-assessment forms on basis of all the supporting evidence the candidate organization has submitted. This evidence can e.g. be course brochures, lists of course objectives, course materials or scripts. In the online self-assessment form all these can be uploaded for review.

The reviewers are asked to analyze if they go conform with the self-assessment or if they see would come to a different conclusion than the candidate organisations which has submitted the self-assessment for review. Should the reviewers conclude that they would change the assessment on one or the other criteria they are asked to provide a LEARNING Report. This is meant to help the candidate organization to make necessary improvements. In case of doubt between the two reviewers, a third one is asked for his or her opinion.

STEP 4: If the peer-review is successful and the reviewers confirm the self-assessment, then the candidate organization receives the Open ECBCheck certificate for the respective course.

C.A look at the Open ECBCheck Organization: Structure of the different actors and committees in Open ECBCheck

For a sound, independent and credible process the distinction between those entities who are involved into the organization of the certification process, those who are reviewing the self-assessment and those who are awarding the label as well as those who “own” the label. The review body and the awarding body are of high importance to guarantee independence of the awarding decision, to improve reliability and to foster credibility of the label. Based on these requirements, the governance of Open ECBCheck relies on five distinct bodies which are the *Open ECBCheck Steering Group*, the *Open ECBCheck Administrative Office*, the *Open ECBCheck Awarding Body* and a group of *Peer-Reviewers* as well as the membership body of open ECBCheck. Their composition, roles and responsibilities are described below in more detail:

1. The Open ECBCheck Steering Group

The Steering group owns the label. *All members of the steering group shall be* are deeply committed organisations from the field of Capacity Building or expert organisations in the fields of e-Learning and Quality (e.g. research centers, universities). The “Open ECBCheck Steering Group” is responsible for the strategic development of Open ECBCheck to continuously adapt the label to the community’s needs. The Steering Group also is responsible for the maintenance of the quality criteria for programmes/courses based on current insights from research and practice. The steering group has to meeting once per year in a one day meeting to decide on the next year’s issues. The meeting will be prepared and convened by the open ECBCheck Administrative Office which has a seat as observer without voting right in the steering group. All decisions have to be taken with simple majority vote, except for decisions which concern the composition of the governance scheme of Open ECBCheck. The steering group shall furthermore meet on request of at least three members as often as necessary (through email, web conference, and teleconference); all meetings shall be minuted and made available to all members afterwards.

2. Open ECBCheck Administrative Office

The *Open ECBCheck Administrative Office* is responsible for the smooth operation of the OpenECBCheck community label. This responsibility includes being the first access point for all parties involved into the label, especially the first contact to and information for organisations that

are interested in joining the initiative or obtaining the Open ECBCheck label. The Administrative Office is also responsible for all coordination processes for the Open ECBCheck label, e.g. follow up on running accreditation processes or organization of meetings etc. Furthermore, the Open ECBCheck Administrative Office is responsible for the administration of the OpenECBCheck web pages as well as all collaborative tools used by members and bodies of the community.

Administration of the webpage includes another important task, the Administration Office is as well responsible to update the official list of programmes/courses as well as organisations that have successfully obtained the label published on the web pages of Open ECBCheck. This list is the only reliable source for external parties to be sure a member organization has obtained the label.

Another important responsibility of the “Open ECBCheck Administration Office” is to keep an overview of the available peer-reviewers, this includes keeping track of their OpenECBCheck peer-review experience, providing information on the peer-reviewers to organisations that start the peer-review and all necessary coordination processes for the peer-review. The Administrative office is hosted through an organization and the hosting organization is elected by the members of the Steering Group for a term of three years. In addition the steering group is responsible for confirming the candidature of the peer-review candidates, and elects the host of the administrative office.

3. Open ECBCheck Awarding

The *Open ECBCheck Awarding Body* takes the final decision whether a label is awarded for a programme/course or institution. This group consists of a mix of experts from the fields of e-Learning and Quality as well as of members of the Capacity Building community. The members are elected by the Advisory Board and cannot be members of the Advisory Board at the same time. The Awarding Body receives a peer-review report on the self-assessment from the peer-reviewers together with a recommendation whether the label should be awarded or not. Based on this information, the Awarding Body decides with a majority decision about awarding the label. The division between the bodies responsible for the decision and review of the self-assessment is important to guarantee independence of the awarding decision, to improve reliability and to support credibility of the label itself. This separation of responsibilities also requires that none of the appointed peer-reviewers is a member of the Awarding Body.

There are at least 6 members in the awarding body and one additional chair. The chair is elected from the members of the awarding body. In addition the open ECBCheck Administrative office has one seat in the awarding body as an observer without voting rights. The awarding body is appointed by the steering Group. Three seats in the awarding body may be given to steering group members

whereas the remaining seats shall be given to external repudiated experts. The awarding body members are appointed for a term of three years.

4. Peer-reviewers

The *Peer-reviewers* are of crucial importance for the process of awarding the Open ECBCheck label and for providing the reviewed organization with a learning opportunity. They are responsible for the peer-reviews of institutional or programme related self-assessments and write a self-assessment review report for the Awarding Body as well as the learning report for the institution. In order to become a peer reviewer a candidate must apply to the administrative office. The minimum requirement is that s/he has undergone the peer-review training or can evidence other credentials which show that s/he is familiar with the quality system in depth. A peer-reviewer is appointed by the administrative office and finally confirmed by the Steering Group. Peer-reviewers have to agree that their credentials and identity is made public on the Open ECBCheck website in the register for peer-reviewers.

5. Members of open ECBCheck

The members of open ECBCheck: Every individual or organization can become a member of the Open ECBCheck membership group by applying to the administrative office and signing the declaration of intent on the Open ECBCheck website. Every member has the right to gain access to the web tools and the Quality WIKI from the OpenECBCheck Administrative Office, as well as to attend the meetings and webinars of Open ECBCheck. A member can be excluded if it is becoming known that he is harming or misusing the Open ECBCheck Concept.

D. Step-by-Step Certification Process of Open ECBCheck

ECBCheck is a new accreditation and quality improvement scheme for **E**-Learning programmes and courses in international **C**apacity **B**uilding. ECBCheck supports capacity building organizations and other actors to measure how successful their e-learning programmes are and allows for continuous improvement through peer collaboration and benchlearning. ECBCheck has been developed through an international effort of many organisations and experts from the field of international capacity building, higher education and vocational education and training in an innovative and participative process.

- Open ECBCheck is focusing on quality improvement and innovation for e-learning programmes in capacity building. Providing international benchmarks, it will dramatically enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of capacity building processes which are using partly of fully technology-enhanced learning.
- Compared to other quality initiatives in the area of technology-enhanced learning, ECBCheck has a focused approach, relating to e-learning programmes and courses as a whole and not only to learning software. The ECBCheck will build on broad stakeholder involvement.
- The ECBCheck process is structured in several stages and offers a clear structured approach in each of the accreditation steps.
- The ECBCheck provides a certification as a result but encourages continuous quality improvement and focuses on innovation. It ensures continuous quality improvement since it serves as a review instrument for self-assessment of programmes.

In this briefing paper it is described how the Open ECBCheck certification process functions.

1. Becoming member of Open ECBCheck and Gaining Access to Certification

This section describes the certification process which an organization has to undergo in order to self-assess, review and certify a course or program. In general terms, Open ECBCheck combines the elements of an open professional community, self-assessment, benchlearning and external peer-reviews within the community to achieve quality certification and development. This approach ensures a high acceptance of the label within the international community of Capacity Building Organisations. Furthermore, the suggested governance system is designed to be operated at low cost.

- *Level 1:* Organisations may become members of a professional community to demonstrate their interest in quality by signing a declaration of intent (see www.ecb-check.org).
- *Level 2:* Once organisations have signed the declaration of intent, they gain access to all tools, web-based assessment instruments and the Quality WIKI in which they can actively share their experiences on quality development and professionalization of their quality practices. They also have the possibility to use and adopt the provided Self-assessment questionnaire for a self-assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement within single programmes or the whole institution.
- *Level 3:* In a third step organisations who are also interested in a more formalized review of their practices and a certification process can undergo a structured review procedure which if successfully completed, will lead to the awarding of the Open ECBCheck label. This process is based on an extensive self-assessment supported by a web-based ToolKit.

Figure 1 illustrates an exemplary life-cycle of an organization within the Open ECBCheck community. It is not compulsory that an organization completes the formal certification process, however it is recommended to benefit from all possibilities for quality development that are offered by Open ECBCheck.



Figure 1 Exemplary Life-Cycle of an Organisation within the Open ECBCheck community

2. The Open ECBCheck Certification Process

In the following, the certification process for programmes/courses is described. This process is divided into six steps (figure 2) that are described in more detail in the following section.

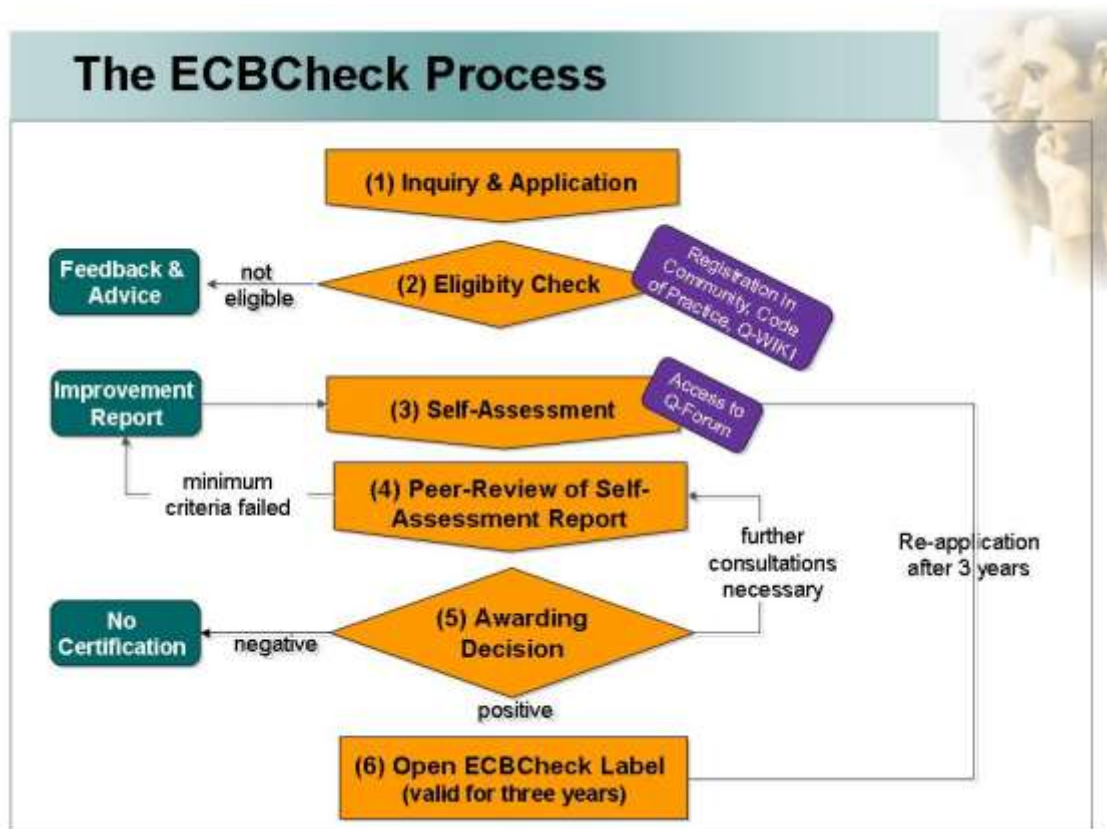


Figure 2 Certification Process of Open ECBCheck

- Step 1: First the organization that seeks for obtaining a label needs to contact the Open ECBCheck Administration Office for a first inquiry. In this step, the applying organization is informed by the Administration Office about the process that needs to be completed to obtain the label as well as about all costs and tasks. If the institution decides to continue the process, the eligibility application will follow.
- Step 2: In the second step the applying institution has to fill in a first brief questionnaire to find out whether the program/course have a realistic chance to obtain the label (Annex 2).

This application form is evaluated by the Administration Office and it is decided whether the programme/course is eligible. If it is decided that the programme/course is not eligible, the Open ECBCheck Administrative Office provides the institution with feedback on the reasons as well as advice on the question whether a re-application would be an option in the future and what issues would have to be changed before. If the organization is decided eligible the process can be taken further. This eligibility check is of importance to make sure that a programme or course falls into the scope of Open ECBCheck. In the end of this step an organization will be registered to the Open ECBCheck web tools and gain access to the Quality Wiki.

- Step 3: The next step, self-assessment of the organization, is very crucial. The organization will be provided with access to a web-based ToolKit that is the foundation for the institution to perform an extensive self-assessment of their course/ program. This self-assessment is evidence based and thus organisations that conduct the assessment are not only required to record self-evaluations for each criterion within the ToolKit but they are also required to provide proof for their rating. This proof may be provided in form of protocols, concept papers, curricula, information brochures or any other document that may proof the self-rating.

The self-assessment has two targets. On the one hand, it is an assessment of the quality of programmes and forms the foundation for the decision if a label will be granted and thus needs to be thorough, extensive and enough proof has to be added to the self-assessment report, which will be the result of the self-assessment. On the other hand, the self-assessment has a learning function for the organization and will provide the organization with the possibility to identify areas of improvement. If the organization performing the self-assessment has finished the self-assessment report, it can submit it to the Open ECBCheck Administration Office.

- Step 4: During the self-assessment phase, the Administrative Office proposes two peer-reviewers that will receive the self-assessment report for review. These peer-reviewers are as well members of the Open ECBCheck community and should be members of the official Open ECBCheck Pool of Peer-reviewers. While assigning peer-reviewers the Administrative Office has to take into account that there are no known potential interest conflicts (e.g. the institution of the peer-reviewer may be a competitor of the institution providing the self-assessment; also the institutions may be close partners, a sign of possible positive prejudice).

When the self-assessment report is finished and the peer-reviewers are set, the peer-review process begins as the next step based on a peer-review guideline (see Annex 5). For each criterion, the reviewers assess whether the rating of the organization is reasonable with regard to the provided proof and description by the organization. Within the process, it is not only assessed whether the required documents and proof *are* provided but also the provided information it is reviewed on comprehensibility and possible areas for improvement are identified. Three criteria need to be satisfied for a positive result of the peer-review: clarity of provided information, comprehensiveness of provided information and validity. Clarity of information relates to the question, if the provided information on a criterion is clearly understandable. Comprehensiveness relates to the question if all necessary information has been included to back up the rating of a criterion within the self-assessment. And finally, validity is related to the question, if the rating of a criterion is reasonable in light of the provided proof. IN addition the applicant has to provide a link and a guest account access to the course or program, so that reviewers can check the course directly from inside. If data or details are unclear or unsatisfactory, peer-reviewers will have to ask the organization via the Open ECBCheck Administrative Office to provide missing or update incomplete parts of the self-assessment report. The additional data or details have to be provided within an acceptable timeframe defined by the Administrative Office.

The peer-reviewers then write a peer-review report based on the provided self-assessment and materials to proof the results. This peer-review report contains three main areas. Firstly, the reviewers provide the organization with a summary of the self-assessment review including most importantly all criteria where the peer-reviewers disagreed with the self-assessment rating with a corresponding reason. Secondly, the peer-review report includes a recommendation, whether an institution or a program should be awarded with the Open ECBCheck label that is considered by the Open ECBCheck Awarding Body. Thirdly, the peer-reviewers write a detailed learning report that highlights those shortcomings and contains improvement possibilities and suggestions. As soon as the peer-review report is completed it is submitted to the attention of the Administrative Office.

- Step 5: In the fifth step the Awarding Body will be provided with the anonymous peer-review report for a programme/course or institution. The decision whether a label is granted will be taken by simple majority vote of the Awarding Body and does not need to correspond with the suggestion of the peer-review report. If the peer-review report is not satisfactory to decide, the Awarding Body will have to send back the report for a revision via

the Administrative Office. Again, the Administrative Office has to set an appropriate deadline. If the decision is positive, the Awarding Body will inform the institution about the completion of the process and the Administrative Office to update the official register of institutions or programmes/courses that obtained the label. Furthermore, the Awarding Body forwards the learning report from the peer-reviewers to the organization for further improvement.

- Step 6: After awarding, the label is valid for three years and an organization needs to report on achievements based on the learning report and also may re-apply for certification. If the decision is negative, the Awarding Body will inform the institution about the reasons for not awarding the label and will as well provide the learning report for possible improvements. Any institution or program/course will need to wait for about one year before a re-application will be possible and the Awarding Body has to offer advice to the organization what would be the minimum required changes to make a reapplication reasonable. The Administration Office has to be informed about the rejection to make sure that there is no reapplication before the one year waiting period.

E. Events and Timetable until 2013

Event	Time
Virtual Meetings	
1. Webinar	M4, 8. April 2011
2. Webinar	M6 FR 10.6.2011
3. Webinar	M9 FR 23.9.2011
4. Webinar 1/2012	
5. Webinar 2/2012	
6. Webinar 3/2012	
7. Webinar 4/2012	
Conferences and Meetings	
1. E-Learning Africa 2012	May 2012
2. E-Learning Africa 2013	May 2013
3. Online Educa 2012	December 2011
4. Online Educa 2012	December 2012
5. Online Educa 2013	December 2013
Steering Committee Meetings	
1. Steering Group Meeting in 2012	December 2012
2. Steering Group Meeting in 2013	December 2013
Certification Processes and Training Events	
1. Support of 30 Certification processes in 2012 and 30 in 2013	
2. Three day training event in 2012	
3. Three day training event in 2013	

Annex1: Open ECBCheck Charter

1. ECBCheck

Open ECBCheck is a new community based peer-review and quality improvement scheme for E-Learning programmes and institutions in international Capacity Building. It supports capacity building organisations to measure how successful their e-learning programmes are and allows for continuous improvement through peer collaboration and benchmarking. Open ECBCheck forms a participative quality environment which allows its members to benefit in a variety of ways by having access to tools and guidelines for their own practice on the one hand, and being able to obtain a community based label on the other hand.

The advisory group consists of major international stakeholders who are committed to the advancement of efficient and meaningful use of appropriate information technology to enhance the quality of education (e-learning).

2. Declaration

We, the undersigned hereby declare that in our capacity as a member of the ECBCheck international Advisory Board, we commit to

- adopting and supporting the criteria set out in the ECBCheck Framework in order to create opportunities for learning for improvement
- supporting ongoing processes for mutual self-assessment and review wherever the need arises in consultation with other members of the ECBCheck International Advisory Board
- cooperating with other institutions in implementing the ECBCheck Framework creating and maintaining communities of practice in an open network in order to share practices for enhancing learning through use of ICT

With a view to achieving the following

- raising awareness among the international communities about the benefits of being an ECBCheck user and build capacity
- quality improvement + quality assurance that could lead to (voluntary) certification for the institutions and organisations worldwide that use e-learning for capacity development programmes
- an ongoing capacity building process for all those involved in the process while ensuring that the process will be open to all those taking part
- continuous improvement of the quality and governance model of ECBCheck

The participation is voluntary and does not demand funding of activities.

Annex 2: Eligibility Application for a certification process

Open ECBCheck Eligibility Application Form

To be eligible to begin with the Open ECBCheck certification process for either a programme/course or the full institution, an organization needs to demonstrate that the prerequisites for an certification process are fulfilled. To support the decision on eligibility an organization is required to fill in the following application form and return it to the Open ECBCheck Administrative Office.

1. Information on applying organization

Name and address of the organization			
Name, function and contact details of staff responsible for the submitted application. These contact details will be used for communication during the certification process.			
Certification is sought on ...	Programme level (2)	Course level (3)	
Date of application			

2 Information of the Programme or Course

Basic information on the programme or course	
Name of the programme/course that is sought to be certified	
Name and contact details of the person in charge of the programme/course.	
Year the programme/course has been run/published the first time	
Number of times the programme has been running	
Length of the programme in total (months)	
Number of participants actively taking part in the programme or	

number of users of a course			
Eligibility of the programme or course			
Is the programme/course used within the field of Capacity Building (yes/no)			
How many hours of total participant learning effort are required to complete the educational offer? (>100 programme criteria apply, <100 course criteria apply)			
Is the programme or course technology enhanced, thus using either interactive media or computer supported collaboration for more than 20% of the overall duration?	yes	Please describe the methods that are used	
	no		
Has the programme run before?	yes	How many times?	
	No		

Annex 3: Review Guide



OPEN ECBCheck

*Certification for E-Learning in Capacity
Building*

Peer-Review Guideline

Version 2011

(www.ecb-check.org)



Acknowledgements

Open ECBCheck is an initiative of InWEnt gGmbH and European Foundation for Quality in E-Learning. The criteria are licensed under the creative commons license and can be distributed, used and modified without restrictions, provided their non-commercial use.

Open ECBCheck has been developed by a group of international capacity building organisations in a two year process and is updated annually. The current version is available at <http://www.ecb-check.org> in the Version 2010.

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Further organisations can be found at www.ecb-check.org

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1. Whom is the Peer Review Guideline for?

This document is outlining the process of peer-review which is foreseen as an important step for those organisations who are interested to obtain the label “Open ECBCheck quality certified”. The Open ECBCheck review process is a community based mutual peer-review process. It involves all organisations interested in obtaining the label to undergo a peer-review as well as to serve as peer-reviewers themselves.

The Open ECBCheck label is targeted at those organisations that are providing e-learning programmes or courses. They can evaluate their offerings on basis of the Open ECBCheck Quality Framework and can ask for a peer-review. Peer-reviewers can be members from all those organisations who themselves have conducted a self-assessment or who are otherwise permitted to be part of the pool of peer-reviewers by the Open ECBCheck Secretariat.

The document is targeted to those individuals who want to carry out a peer-review. It will

- clarify the role of a peer reviewer
- help them to check if they fulfill all the necessary criteria of being a peer reviewer
- introduces them to the role and tasks of a peer reviewer
- give them hints and examples of a good peer review.

All peer-reviews are based on the principles of being anonymous, unbiased and objective.

2. Some Background: What is Open ECBCheck?

Open ECBCheck is a new accreditation and quality improvement scheme for **E**-Learning programmes and courses in international **C**apacity **B**uilding. ECBCheck supports capacity building organizations to measure how successful their e-learning programmes are and allows for continuous improvement through peer collaboration and benchmarking. ECBCheck has been developed through an international effort of numerous organisations and experts from the field of international capacity building, higher education and vocational education and training in an innovative and participative process: InWent gGmbH (www.inwent.de), Germany and the European Foundation for Quality in E-Learning (www.qualityfoundation.org) are hosting a multistakeholder

advisory board to steer the development and maintenance of the quality certificate and continuously validate the outcomes.

- Open ECBCheck is focusing on quality improvement and innovation for e-learning programmes in capacity building. Providing international benchmarks, it will dramatically enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of capacity building processes which are using partly or fully technology-enhanced learning.
- Compared to other quality initiatives in the area of technology-enhanced learning, ECBCheck has a focused approach, relating to e-learning programmes and courses as a whole and not only to learning software. The ECBCheck is building on broad stakeholder involvement.
- The ECBCheck process is structured in several stages and offers a clear structured approach in each of the accreditation steps.
- The ECBCheck provides a certification as a result but encourages continuous quality improvement and focuses on innovation. It ensures continuous quality improvement.

Three steps to quality

Open ECBCheck forms a participative quality environment which allows its members to benefit in a variety of ways by having access to tools and guidelines for their own practice on the one hand, and being able to obtain a community based label on the other hand. Three steps to quality are suggested:

1. Organisations become members of the Open ECBCheck professional community and document their commitment to quality by joining the open ECBCheck charter (<http://www.ecb-check.org>)
2. Candidate organisations are using the Open ECBCheck self-assessment framework to reflect their own quality practices. The self-assessment framework is available as online version at www.ecb-check.org and as offline version (PDF) downloadable from the Open ECBCheck Website.
3. On basis of a detailed self-assessment process, members of the Open ECBCheck Community can enter into mutual peer-review partnerships to improve the quality of their e-learning offers through a learning report.

3. What do we want to achieve with the peer-review?

Open ECBCheck is an open peer-review community. The process is based on a mutual involvement into peer-reviews of self-assessments. Your organization or maybe you in person should conduct a peer-review as well as receiving a peer-review. This is viewed as a learning process which supports the improvement of quality of an organization's programmes and courses.

The peer-review serves two main targets:

- **Certification:** The peer-review will lead to an overall appraisal and recommendation for certification of the candidate's course or programme. This judgment is provided to the Awarding Body and is the basis for the decision process for certification.
- **Learning & Improving:** The peer-review is important to provide the organization with a learning opportunity based on the peers' experience and suggestions. During the peer-review, a number of possibilities for improvement will be identified. These improvement possibilities are enriched with suggestions and included in a learning report which includes all suggestions and comments from the peer-review.

4. What are the requirements for a peer-reviewer?

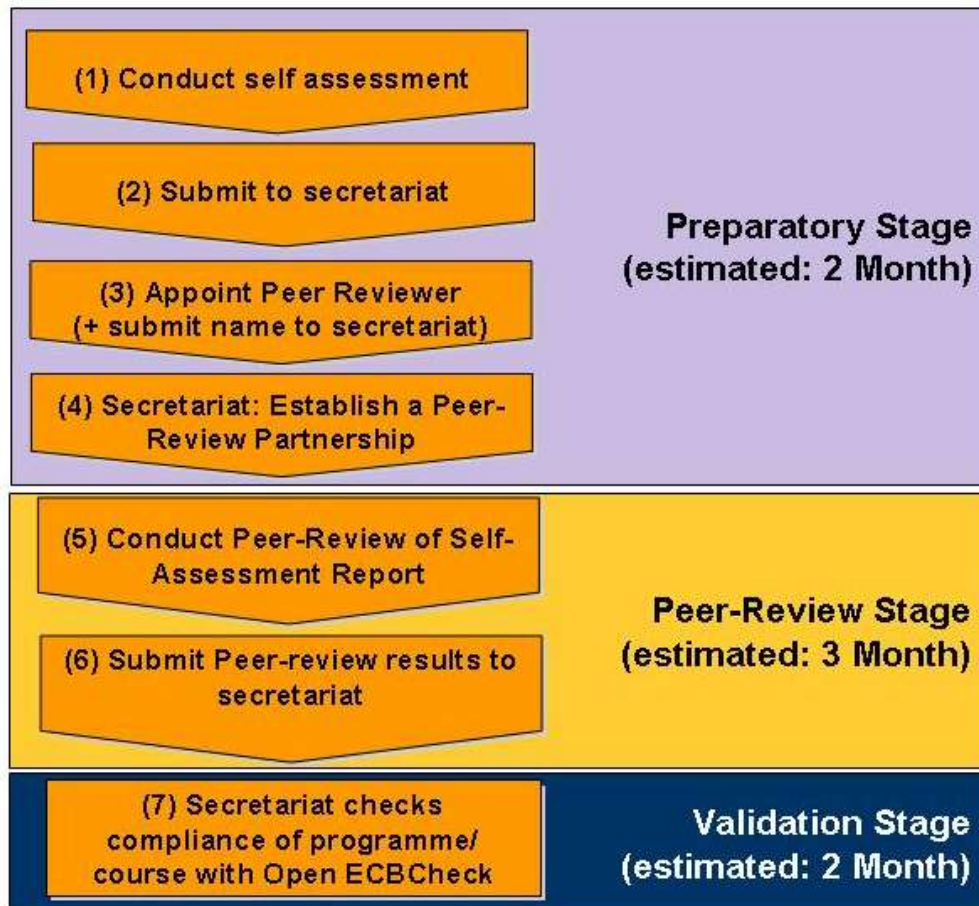
The peer-review of the self-assessment (incl. the provided evidence) is of **central significance** within the Open ECBCheck certification process. Hence, it is important that the peer-review is conducted thorough, fair and valuing the achievements of an organization. Furthermore, it should lead to clear recommendations and show areas of improvement together with suggestions for future improvements. In order to conduct a peer-review you have to make sure that you meet the following requirements.

1. Before you can start the peer review processes make sure that your organization is known by name and function to the Open ECBCheck secretariat! If not it needs to apply for membership in the Open ECBCheck community, and requesting information about eligibility of courses and programmes to be certified with OpenECBCheck (<http://www.ecb-check.org>)
2. Make sure that your organization is part of a peer-review partnership, which has been suggested by the secretariat.
3. Please register yourself at www.ecb-check.org "My ECBCheck" for a peer-review account!
4. Make yourself familiar with the Open ECBCheck quality criteria framework in detail. If you are not yet familiar with the concept, we suggest you go through the description first and become familiar with the process as well as the criteria.
5. For every peer-reviewer it is mandatory to have conducted a self-assessment beforehand on one's own.

5. How to do Peer-Review with Open ECBCheck?

The process of peer-review within the Open ECBCheck framework has seven distinct steps in three stages. They are outlined below. Peer-review is conducted within the online tool which is available for Open ECBCheck.

The online tool is for self-registration only, and can be used for self-assessment and for peer-review. If you intend to conduct a peer-review for Open ECBCheck, make sure that you have a peer-review access to the tool.



In the following the 7 (seven) steps are described in detail. Steps 5-6 consist again of a sequence of steps in the Open ECBCheck Online tool.

1. Preparatory Stage

Step 1-3: The preparatory stage foresees that an organization makes sure to have a valid self-assessment in place. The self-assessment is submitted to the Open ECBCheck secretariat. The organization also has appointed one peer-reviewer and submits the name to the secretariat.


Step 4: The secretariat suggests and established a partnership between two organisations which commit to conduct a mutual peer-review. This process will not be anonymous but will be monitored through the Open ECBCheck secretariat.


2. Peer- Review Stage

Step 5-6: After the materials have been received, the peer-review itself is conducted. As a peer-reviewer you now have to follow the 6 (six) steps described below. This involves having an internet connection available and going online.

1. Go to <http://www.ecb-check.org>

- ☐ Select „My ECBCheck“ from the Navigation Menu
- ☐ Register yourself with a **new LogIn** in order to obtain an account as a reviewer.
- ☐ **Please note:** Do not use the same username which you have already chosen for your evaluator account!!





1

- Home
- Login
- Register

You are logged out.

Register

Welcome to the Open ECBCheck assessment and peer-review tool suite. If you are a registered user you have access to the following tools:

1. Online Quickcheck - a tool which contains all MUST criteria which you can use to walk through all requirements and quickly assess if your course, programme or institutions is fit to take the certification.
2. ECBCheck Self assessment: The online tool for self-assessment of your programme or course. You can start your individual self assessment, save it and return to it at a later stage, should you need more information or wish to pause. In the end you press the final submission button and the self assessment can not be changed by you anymore. It will be stored in the database and awaits assignment for peer-review. Two independent peer-reviewers will then review your self-assessment.
3. ECBCheck Review Tool: Should you be a reviewer for Open ECBCheck you can access your personal review space from here. It will show you a list of the reviews you have been assigned to. You can save the review status if you wish to pause and return to the assignment later.

After the free registration, you will have to wait for the administrator to activate your account. Once this is done, you will be informed via email and can then login to the web site and use the tools. If you want to become a peer-reviewer please contact us.

*Fields marked with * are mandatory*

First name*

Last name*

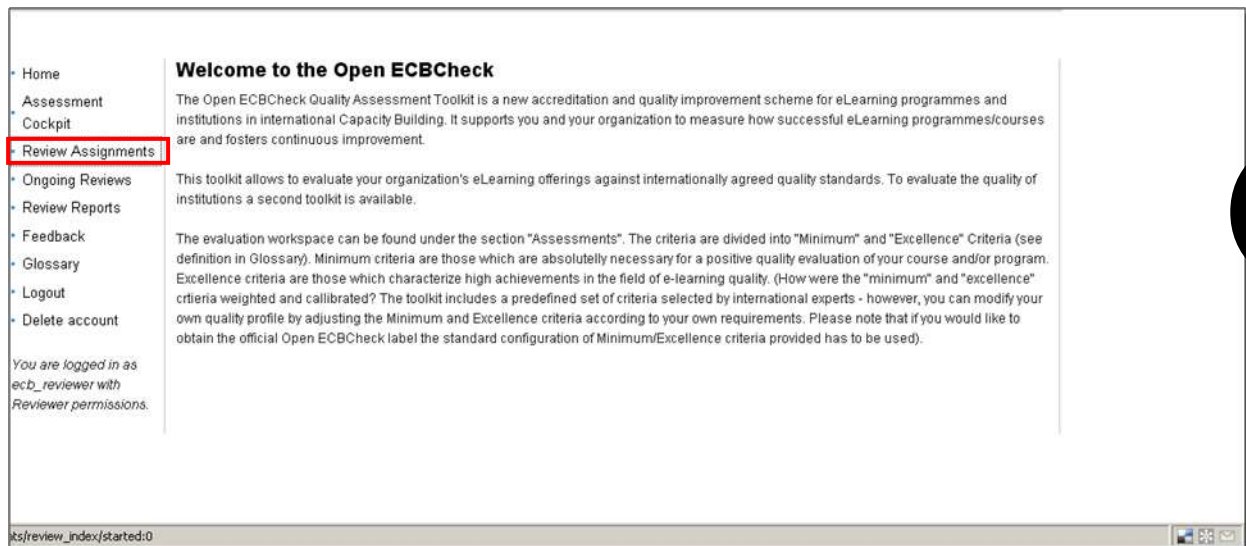
Username*

Password*

Confirm password*

2. Select “Review Assignments” from the Navigation Menu

- ❑ To find the review which has been assigned to you, you have to choose “Review Assignment” from the Menu



3. Select the self-assessment for peer-review

- ❑ In the list of self-assessments which have been assigned to you, find the one you wish to review
- ❑ Click on the icon which is indicated as “Edit review” to start the review (Tip: Point your Mouse over the Icons to see the indications)

- Home
- Assessment Cockpit
- Review Assignments
- Ongoing Reviews
- Review Reports
- Feedback
- Glossary
- Logout
- Delete account

You are logged in as **ecb_reviewer** with Reviewer permissions.

List of assigned Peer-Reviews

Title of Program/Course	Program/Course URL	Organisation	Reviewers	Review finished	Actions
Instructional design	http://www.inwent.org	InWent - EDUC@L	Example Reviewer	No / Yes	2  
testprogramm ulf	http://www.test.de	Universitaet test	Ulrich Ehlers Example Reviewer	Yes / No	2  

Page 1 of 1 showing records 1 to 2 out of 2 total.



Edit Review 2

3

4. State Date & Time of peer-review visit and give overall impression

- ☐ In the first question we ask for the date and time of your peer-review visit and the overall impression you had from the peer-review visit: Did everything work out? Were there problems?
- ☐ Be brief and concise

- Home
- Assessment Cockpit
- Review Assignments
- Ongoing Reviews
- Review Reports
- Feedback
- Glossary
- Logout
- Delete account

You are logged in as **ecb_reviewer** with Reviewer permissions.

Review

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

A Information about the organisation of the eLearning program

Visit/ Review of the programme/ course

Please give us information about the visit/ review of the actual programme/ course environment

Date of programme/ course visit

Comments on programme/ course visit

Please describe your overall impression. Did everything work technically? Did you have the feeling to get sufficient information? Further comments.

4

5. Detailed Peer-Review

- ❑ Go through the peer-review criteria by criteria
- ❑ Judge the criteria by using the dropdown menu in the upper right hand corner
- ❑ Use the submitted documents to find further evidence and background information in case you are insecure about a judgment.
- ❑ Can you verify the judgment which has been given by the self-assessor before? Then select the same judgment s/he has done!
- ❑ Do you deviate from the self-assessors judgment? Then select a different judgment from the Menu to indicate your evaluation!
- ❑ In case you deviate from the self-assessors judgment please give detailed information in the comment field, as described below.



The screenshot shows the ECB CHECK interface for a peer-review. It includes a table with columns for 'Criterion', 'Rating', and 'Reviewer Rating'. The 'Criterion' column lists 'A.1.1. All relevant information on the program is available to potential learners'. The 'Rating' column shows 'criterion met'. The 'Reviewer Rating' column has a dropdown menu with options: '(not rated)', '(not rated)', 'criterion met', and 'criterion not met'. The 'criterion not met' option is highlighted. Below the table, there is a 'Description' section, a 'Guiding Questions' section, and a 'Documents' section. The 'Guiding Questions' section asks: 'Does the description of the programme/course (brochure/flyer/website etc.) provide all relevant information for potential learners?'. The 'Documents' section lists: 'The following documents should exist: Programme/course description (printed or digital)'. The 'Documents' section also shows a list of documents: 'invitation.pdf', 'tel_arche.jpg', and 'tel_arche.jpg'.

5

Important: Giving Feedback in case of deviation

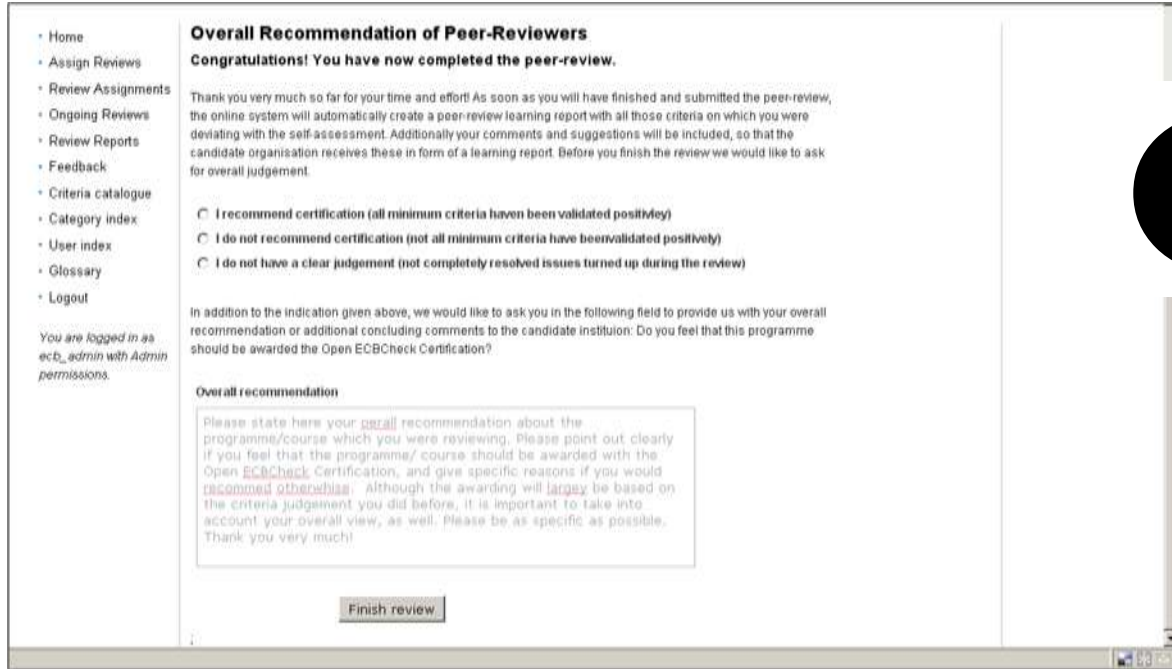
In case you, as a peer-reviewer, feel that the criteria have not been properly evaluated during the self-assessment phase, it is necessary to provide clear reasons and recommendations for improvement – which later are automatically composed into a learning report and fed back to the review candidate. This is the only possibility for the candidate organization to benefit from the review and learn from your recommendations for improvement. A peer-review is thus not only a formal exercise but it becomes a learning occasion.

Therefore: In case you deviate from the self-assessment please a) identify the reason why and b) try to give recommendation(s) how to improve the course/programme in this specific aspect.

Some examples for identified reasons for deviation and recommendations are given below.

Criteria Example	Identified Reason	Recommendations
A.1.1. All relevant information on the program is available to potential learners	In the information leaflet provided to the learners for the course, there is no indication of technical requirements which are necessary to participate in the course.	Please give technical requirements to participate in the course in your information leaflet.
C.1 The contents are aligned with the learning objectives and are presented in a clear and logic sequence.	There is no clear structuring of the overall course into modules, units or lessons. All seems to be one and learners cannot orient themselves as to where they are currently.	Please structure your course into clear modules, units and/ or lessons.
D.1.2 The learning design facilitates the learning process and supports learners' development of the skills and competencies, as described in the learning objectives.	Although the course objectives state that learners should develop an intercultural awareness and competence for intercultural dialogue there is only one single information text in which the topic is shortly brushed. No experience driven possibility to make experience with intercultural dialogue. Too theoretical to develop a true competence	Please include into the course an assignment in which learners have to interact about intercultural differences. Afterwards they should reflect on their experiences and perceived difficulties and differences.

- ☐ To finish the peer-review you are asked to give your recommendation as a reviewer
- ☐ Please state your overall recommendation about the program/ course you are reviewing.
- ☐ Your judgment and overall recommendation will now be submitted to the Open ECBCheck secretariat



Overall Recommendation of Peer-Reviewers

Congratulations! You have now completed the peer-review.

Thank you very much so far for your time and effort! As soon as you will have finished and submitted the peer-review, the online system will automatically create a peer-review learning report with all those criteria on which you were deviating with the self-assessment. Additionally your comments and suggestions will be included, so that the candidate organisation receives these in form of a learning report. Before you finish the review we would like to ask for overall judgement.

☐ I recommend certification (all minimum criteria have been validated positively)
☐ I do not recommend certification (not all minimum criteria have been validated positively)
☐ I do not have a clear judgement (not completely resolved issues turned up during the review)

In addition to the indication given above, we would like to ask you in the following field to provide us with your overall recommendation or additional concluding comments to the candidate institution: Do you feel that this programme should be awarded the Open ECBCheck Certification?

Overall recommendation

Please state here your overall recommendation about the programme/course which you were reviewing. Please point out clearly if you feel that the programme/ course should be awarded with the Open ECBCheck Certification, and give specific reasons if you would recommend otherwise. Although the awarding will largely be based on the criteria judgement you did before, it is important to take into account your overall view, as well. Please be as specific as possible. Thank you very much!

Finish review

3. Validation stage

Step 7: Once a peer-reviewer has submitted the peer-review, it is transferred to the Open ECBCheck secretariat. When it arrives the peer-reviewers judgment is evaluated and checked for plausibility. In case the peer-review suggests giving the label to the respective program or course the secretariat would normally follow this recommendation. In case the program or course deviates from the required criteria, the Open ECBCheck secretariat will inform the candidate organization about failure to receive the label. However, a detailed learning report with explanations will be handed over to the organization in order to allow for improvement and give advice.

As a peer-reviewer: What else to consider in the process?

You as peer reviewer assess the self-assessment which is provided by the organization. Be aware that three criteria need to be satisfied for a positive result of your peer-reviewing: clarity of

provided information, comprehensiveness of provided information and validity. This means in detail:

- **Clarity of information** relates to the question, if the provided information on a criterion is clearly understandable.
- **Comprehensiveness** relates to the question if all necessary information has been included to back up the rating of a criterion within the self-assessment.
- And finally, **validity** is related to the question, if the rating of a criterion is appropriate in light of the provided proof in form of documents.