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# **The ACA Internationalisation Monitor (AIM)**

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ACA Internationalisation Monitor  
SAIA Day of Academic Mobility and Internationalisation III

Bratislava, 20 November 2012

# On ACA

- A (mainly) *European association* of national organisations supporting internationalisation
- Promoting *innovation* and *internationalisation*
- *Studies and expert opinion* on (international) HE developments, for example
  - Student mobility in Europe and beyond
  - English-taught programmes in Europe
  - Perceptions of European HE worldwide
  - Student services
- *Seminars and conferences* (2013: 20th-Anniversary Annual Conference in The Hague on mobility and internationalisation)
- Electronic news service: *ACA Newsletter-Education Europe*



# Audit society

- We live in an ‘audit society’.
- Quality assurance is all ‘over the place’ (is quality too?)
- Internationalisation is no exception to this rule.
- A good sign, in a way: internationalisation has ‘come of age’.
- In earlier decades, it was seen as a ‘good thing in itself’ (no need for justification). Today, it must demonstrate that it is useful, efficient and effective, and of high quality.



# Arsenal of audit and assessment tools (1)

- **Very few instruments for the assessment of internationalisation efforts 15 years ago. Among them: Institutional Quality Review/IQR (OECD, CRE, ACA).**
- **Today, many instruments to choose from. Examples:**
  - **Internationalisation Strategies Advisory Service (ISAS) of IAU/Paris**
  - **Mapping Internationalisation Service of NUFFIC, The Hague**
  - **'Internationalisation of Universities Audit' of the German Rectors' Conference/HRK)**



## Arsenal of audit and assessment tools (2)

- **Indicators Mapping and Profiling Internationalisation (IMPI), of the CHE (Germany) and others**
- **MAUNIMO: institutional self-assessment in the area of international mobility (EUA, Brussels)**
- **The International Student Barometer (ISB), of i-graduate, UK**
- **The ACA Internationalisation Monitor (AIM)**



## Arsenal of audit and assessment tools (3)

- All instruments focus on HE *institutions*
- Some were developed for international use (AIM, ISAS, MAUNIMO), others in a national context (HRK and NUFFIC audits, ISB)
- Most address internationalisation in its breadth, some focus on a particular aspect, like student mobility (ISB, MAUNIMO)
- Some are intended for comparative use (mutual benchmarking), such as ISB or IMPI
- others measure an institution against its own stated objectives (AIM) and are intended to help improve
- Most are 'heavy' (duration, resource-intensity), some are light (AIM)



# The challenges for international audits

- No such thing as internationalisation as such. Many forms of internationalisation (rationales, activity priorities, organisation, etc).
- Universities differ in size, mission, overall strategy, etc.
- Danger of a 'normative trap'. Comparative approaches (benchmarking) doubtful (compare the incomparable).
- This is why the AIM intentionally *avoids benchmarking*.
- Most audit instruments are 'heavy': they put a strong burden in terms of work, time (and often: money) on a university.
- Given the present 'evaluation fatigue', this seems not advisable: this is why the AIM was devised as a *light tool*.



# The AIM – key traits

## The AIM is

- ***Non-normative***: measures success of internationalisation strategy against university's own aims and targets
- ***Light and fast***: puts minimum stress on university's resources and will be delivered in 3 months (no self-assessment report)
- ***Made-to-measure***: the standard methodology is adapted to the particular university's needs (paying attention to mission, profile and priorities of institution)
- ***High quality***: delivered by key international experts, with rich experience in internationalisation.
- ***Focused only on teaching and learning***: unless otherwise agreed



# The AIM – coverage

The standard AIM would address the following areas

- **Mobility:** attracting and recruiting international students and staff; student and staff exchanges;
- **Curricula:** English-medium programmes; double/joint degrees and other ‘mobility windows’; area studies and comparative studies; teaching of foreign languages
- **Export of education/TNE:** branch campuses, collaborative delivery; distance/online education
- **Other:** partnerships and networks; student services; information, communication and marketing;
- **Organisation and governance:** structures, bodies and actors; decision-making processes.
- **Limitation to teaching and learning:** the standard AIM does not include internationalisation of research (though possible on demand).



# The AIM – steps and stages (1)

- **Step 1:** identification of key aims of university's internationalisation strategy (provision of (internationalisation) mission statement, one page-questionnaire)
- **Step 2:** 1-day start-up visit (one person). Talks with central-level decision makers (rector, vice-rector, board members, international office head). Agreement on persons to be interviewed and documents/information to be provided.
- **Step 3:** two or three-day visit (two persons) for interviews with representative sample of staff (central and faculty level), students and administrators. First preliminary oral feedback at end of visit.



## The AIM – steps and stages (2)

- **Step 4:** +/-15-page report, inclusive of conclusions and recommendations for future internationalisation of university. Draft for comment before delivery in final form.

Report will focus on those areas of internationalisation the university has set as a priority. To cover, amongst others, the following

- assessment of strategic aims and consistency with overall institutional aims
- Assessment of implementation strategy and its adequacy to reach set aims
- Assessment of structures and processes in place
- Recommendations for future development



## The AIM – steps and stages (3)

- **Step 5 (optional): internationalisation workshop with key staff.**



## The AIM – other aspects

- **Language:** The report will be provided in English. However, the knowledge of the local language and its higher education of the university is an important selection criterion for the experts.
- **Price:** the price of the standard AIM is 8,800 Euro plus travel and accommodation cost and, if applicable, VAT. The price of an AIM additionally including research is a matter for negotiation (though will be in any event higher than that of the standard AIM).



# Thanks

So much more to say ...

...but you have probably had enough of me.

**Thank you for your attention.**

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