**CORE PRINCIPLES FOR COMPLETING A HIGH QUALITY AESOP QUALITY RECOGNITION (QR) APPLICATION FORM**

| * **AESOP** **QR is a collective process** |
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QR is an opportunity for collective reflection and visibility on the quality of the programme (not an accreditation process). Applications should be developed through the collective effort of the programme team.

| * **AESOP** **QR is about learning-oriented pedagogies** |
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QR aims to highlight where learning-oriented pedagogies -rather than exclusively teaching-oriented ones - are used in planning education. QR criteria (listed below) focus on pedagogical approaches that prioritize students and their learning processes, rather than emphasizing the delivery of academic content. These pedagogies aim to promote how students actively engage in continuous learning, construct knowledge, and develop skills and competencies, while also building the capacity and motivation for lifelong personal and professional growth. We encourage applicants to focus on how and where learning-oriented pedagogies are embedded in their programmes.

| * **Illustrative Examples are crucial** |
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* Following from above, it is essential that evidence-based examples are provided of how and where different learning-oriented pedagogies are being used.

| * **AESOP QR aims to disseminate showcase practices** |
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QR aims to disseminate ‘showcase practices’ to the wider AESOP community. Applicants should describe their practices in sufficient detail to enable wider dissemination.

**AESOP QR CRITERIA**

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| **Planning perspectives** | 1. Programme distinctiveness |
| 2. Spatial foci |
| 3. Cross-disciplinarity |
| **Themes / contents** | 4. Global context |
| 5. Contemporary socio-spatial challenges and opportunities |
| 6. Professional ethics |
| **Skills development** | 7. Research and inquiry |
| 8. Independent learning and group learning |
| 9. Practical reasoning and judgement |
| 10. Reflexive praxis |
| **Institutional /programme settings** | 11. Student diversity |
| 12. Recognition and promotion of excellence |
| 13. Engagement in the development of the programme curriculum |
| **14. Showcase practices** | |

**HOW TO FILL IN THE FORM?**

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| * + - * **The Excellence in Education Board (EEB) advises the applicants to complete the AESOP Quality Recognition (QR) application form through a collective group programme meeting.**       * **QR Criteria:** The application form comprises a total of 13 QR criteria and a final item (14) to nominate showcase practices. You can find the full list of QR criteria below.       * **Guidance text:** Applicants must refer to the guidance given for each QR criterion, which outlines the rationale behind these, poses questions to prompt reflection, and provides possible examples to consider.       * **Examples:** When responding to each criterion, applicants are encouraged to make a claim followed by examples that support/illustrate the claim. At most, two examples should be provided in sufficient detail to evidence each claim. The detail is required for: (i) reviewing the application, (ii) engaging in dialogue with the EEB, and (iii) showcasing exemplary practices within the AESOP community. Examples of programme structures, pedagogies and quality assurance mechanisms that may appear routine internally can sometimes hold examples of innovation for the international planning education community. To help assessors identify these, please ensure that all practices mentioned in the application are described clearly in their structure, operation and scope.       * **Use of Pedagogies (& Assessment Types):** Please describe clearly how different pedagogies are used within the programme, including making clear which specific courses these are used within, as well as any evidence of their impact on student learning and engagement. Where assessment types are an integral part of the pedagogy, please include details of these (However, a comprehensive list of assessment types is **not** required).       * **Structure:** Please feel free to use sub-titles, bullet-points and diagrams. Please review the final application to ensure that all the practices discussed are assigned to the most appropriate criterion. Where practices apply to more than one criterion, please refer back to the first place this is mentioned, rather than repeating text.       * **Use of Supplementary Material**. Where possible and practical, we ask that smaller diagrams be embedded in the form itself. Where separate appendices are attached, please ensure these are clearly referred to within the main body of the application.       * **Quality Assurance Mechanisms**: For assessors coming from outside your university, it can be difficult to understand at which institutional level quality assurance mechanisms operate and the scope that they have. It can be helpful to include an organisational chart as part of the application, showing the different organisational levels of the institution.       * **Applicability**: Please ensure it is clear how widely a practice or policy is applicable: is it part of a core or optional course? Does it just apply to a small number of students or is it fully embedded throughout a programme? Is it ad-hoc or fully integrated into the structure of the programme? Where programmes have multiple ‘tracks’ or ‘branches’ ensure it is clear where practices apply to the whole programme and where they only apply to a particular branch or track.       * **Word Counts**: Applicants should adhere to the specified word limits of 500 words and consider the use of attachments to set out additional information. The use of embedded tables/diagrams to provide supplementary information within the application form does not count towards the specified word count for each criterion**.**   [**AESOP Quality Recognition webpage**](https://aesop-planning.eu/activities/quality-recognition/the-path-towards-qr) **gives further information regarding the QR process.**  **PLEASE, START THE APPLICATION PROCESS USING THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS.** |

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| **Name of the school** |  |
| **Name of the programme** |  |
| **Programme level, duration, ECTS, start year** |  |
| **Average number of students per year** (refer to the last 3 years) |  |
| **Language(s) in which the programme is taught** |  |
| **Websites** (Please include links to the programme’s:   * General website * Curriculum grid *(break-up of core subjects and elective subjects by semester, including ECTS; attach as an appendix)* * Learning outcomes *(profile of the graduates from the students’ perspective; what do the students learn?)*   The programme’s curriculum grid and learning outcomes can be alternatively appended to the application). |  |
| **Official representative of the school and e-mail** |  |
| **Contact person for the QR process and email** |  |
| **Address** |  |

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| **KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLANNING PROGRAMME** |
| Please introduce the planning programme, including the planning education mission, key knowledge areas covered, dominant pedagogical approaches used, as well as any other important characteristics that the assessors should be aware of. This section should demonstrate that the programme is, in fact, **a planning programme in line with AESOP’s 2024 Core Curriculum\*** (i.e. how planning is substantially embedded in the courses/modules and their learning outcomes, etc.), and it will set the context for the subsequent sections elaborating on the compliance with the QR criteria.  *\*Where the assessors have questions about the extent to which the programme is a* ***spatial planning*** *programme, they will request further justification from the applicant on how the programme addresses the requirements of the AESOP Core Curriculum. Please, note that in 2024 the Council of Representatives adopted the* [*new AESOP Core Curriculum*](https://aesop-planning.eu/activities/core-curriculum/core-curriculum-review)*.* |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **PROGRAMME DISTINCTIVENESS** |
| GUIDANCE: Following from the general introduction to the programme requested above, this first criterion asks for evidence regarding the distinctive characteristics of the planning programme, both in terms of its content and its wider context. Namely, the programme’s distinctiveness can emphasise its particular planning tradition, and/or it can be chosen to address changing demands and aspirations in planning education in the national or even European context. As a result, the planning programme can focus on imparting broader planning knowledge or be more specialised in a particular planning subfield. Both situations may elicit cases of programme’s distinctiveness, e.g., a programme’s structure, its broader or specific contents, learning outcomes, and its pedagogical approaches.  Applicants should clearly:  • Explain whether the planning programme specialises in any key subfield(s) of the planning discipline e.g., community planning; spatial planning; urban planning; regional planning; environmental planning; development planning; urban design; urbanism, etc.  • Describe where it sits within its academic institutional environment and wider national context (i.e. to what extent does the national/institutional context influence the structure and content of the programme?).  • Elaborate on the underlying motivation for programme’s distinctiveness (i.e., how it distinguishes itself from other existing planning programmes in its country of origin, or even at the European level). |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **SPATIAL FOCI** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion asks for evidence concerning the programme’s spatial foci and, if applicable, the temporal implications linked to these. It refers to the territorial/spatial scale(s) and types of geographical area(s) on which the programme focuses and builds its identity, as well as considerations of ways in which relevant spatial changes and interventions occur over time. It asks for evidence illustrating how relevant processes, contents, or problems related to sustainable land use patterns, mobility and transport, housing, the natural environment, etc., are understood and explored from different spatial foci and, if applicable, different temporalities.  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * Which specific territorial/spatial scale(s) (e.g., national, regional, subregional, metropolitan, neighbourhood) and/or types of geographical area(s) (e.g., rural, urban, coastal, marine, mountainous, river watersheds) is/are emphasised in the programme? * If applicable, which temporal categories of spatial processes, changes, and interventions (e.g. time horizons, duration, sequences, episodes, gradual changes, rhythms, moments of transitions, etc.) is/are emphasised in the programme and how students learn to recognise and employ them? * How do students gain knowledge and skills to anticipate future needs through scenario development or future-casting for particular territorial/spatial scale(s) and/or geographical area(s)?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Core planning courses/modules (e.g., planning theory, planning law, policymaking, data collection) that incorporate cases with a specific spatial focus. * How pedagogies are used to focus students on a specific territorial/spatial scale, geographical and/or temporal implications of specific issues (e.g., housing, ecosystem services, flooding, droughts, phasing out fossil fuel power plants).   Examples of where students develop technical skills to work with spatial foci (e.g., mapping, surveying, GIS, 3D visualisation). If students are learning to use AI to make visions and scenarios, please explain how this is framed in the class. |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **CROSS-DISCIPLINARITY** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion asks for evidence of different disciplinary knowledges, methods, and orientations embedded in the programme and/or course and project modules, i.e., how the students become exposed to different disciplinary cultures and learn to integrate and critically assess the contribution of various disciplinary knowledge bases which are relevant to addressing planning issues. Cross-disciplinarity can include multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary approaches achieved through cross-disciplinary enquiries and tasks (NB: The disciplinary diversity in teaching staff and student recruitment can only be a starting point).  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * What disciplinary knowledge, methods, and action orientations are embedded within the programme and/or course and project modules? * What pedagogic practices encourage students to integrate cross-disciplinary approaches into their thinking, problem-framing, and action orientations? * How are different cross-disciplinary approaches brought into a relevant course/module?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Learning pedagogies that integrate, for example, architects, economists, and climate scientists and/or draw on trans-disciplinary concepts, knowledges, and/or methods such as resilience, sustainability, justice, etc. * Courses/modules exposing students to integration of different sectors and policies that draw on different disciplines/professions (e.g., engineering, geography, architecture, urban design, economics, policy sciences, environmental sciences, sociology, law, etc.) * Where pedagogies are embedded (e.g., role-play scenarios and group exercises mixing students with different disciplinary/professional backgrounds) that encourage dialogue between different disciplines. * Courses/modules encouraging students to reflect on different disciplinary biases, strengths, and weaknesses of various disciplinary bodies of knowledge in planning (e.g., debate, group negotiation, simulation). |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **GLOBAL CONTEXT** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion asks for evidence concerning how planning students get exposed to the global context i.e. issues and processes operating at the global scale, e.g., neoliberalisation, climate change, migration, financialisation, inequality, geopolitics, urbanisation, digitalisation, pandemics etc. Exposing students to the global context is also about increasing their awareness about global driving forces and safeguarding global commons and their relevance and implications for planning in an interconnected world.  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * How are different global perspectives embedded in the programme, e.g., climate change, financialisation, conflicts, etc.? * Which and how pedagogical approaches in different courses/modules are used to introduce students to issues and processes operating at the global scale? * How are students encouraged to see themselves as global citizens?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Students covering similar global themes, but in different contexts i.e. Global South and Global North through e.g. international comparative studies or by participating in a joint programme delivery between planning schools. * Use of case study material from different contexts, beyond the national context addressing the above questions. * In courses, modules, workshops, studios, etc. * International field trips. * Virtual contact with other contexts (e.g. virtual field trips). * Student direct interaction with international teaching staff and practitioners. |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **CONTEMPORARY SOCIO-SPATIAL CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion asks for evidence concerning how programme addresses contemporary socio- spatial challenges and opportunities driven by interdependent multi-scalar and multi-temporal processes (e.g. climate change, environmental degradation, uneven development, inequalities, exclusion, access to resources and facilities, financialization, property and real estate markets, cultural changes etc). It asks for evidence on how students: (i) develop competencies to address these challenges and opportunities at a specific territorial/spatial scale and its temporalities, (ii) acquire skills and competencies to understand and influence the socio-cultural and institutional spaces in which planning operates, and (iii) develop awareness and attitudes to work collaboratively with different societal actors.  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * How do students acquire skills to understand the multi-scalar processes driving socio- spatial challenges and opportunities in a geographical area and/or at a specific territorial/spatial scale and temporal frame? * How do students engage with the implications of contemporary socio-spatial challenges and opportunities in a geographical area and/or at a specific territorial/spatial scale? * How do students acquire skills to identify and address different types of socio-spatial conflicts and types of injustice (e.g. distributional, procedural, recognitional, and restorative)?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Instances of how and where students learn about one or more contemporary socio-spatial challenges and opportunities, exploring how they influence planning policies and practices at a specific territorial/spatial scale(s) and temporal frame and vice versa (e.g., students understanding how climate change is implicated in local flooding; how neoliberalisation is implicated in the gentrification of a neighbourhood, what different types of socio-spatial conflicts and injustices exist and how are they produced or influenced by planning policies and practices). * Learning pedagogies enabling knowledge, skill and attitude acquisition towards understanding and addressing different types of socio-spatial conflicts and justice and positioning them into specific contexts (e.g. theoretical exploration of justice, studios dedicated to simulation of practical implications and effects of planning practices). * Courses/modules looking at a specific territorial/spatial scale(s) and positioning them in a wider socio-spatial context, to build more robust approaches to meet specific development challenges (e.g., students working on flooding issues connecting this to climate change; students working on gentrification and understanding how it is shaped by neoliberalisation). |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **PROFESSIONAL ETHICS** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion first asks for evidence concerning the normative standards that planners should adhere to in their professional practice, i.e., the aspirational principles that planners should commit to in their everyday work. The ethical framework of reference pertaining to planning programmes may include (but is not limited to) the following principles: (i) serving the public interest; (ii) independent professional judgement; (iii) protection of the profession’s integrity; and (iv) facilitating the public understanding of planning activities.  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * How are different ethical reasoning(s) embedded in the teaching? * How are ethical attitudes promoted within the programme? * How are ethical dilemmas discussed in the programme?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Reference to some of the global and/or local codes of ethical practice (RTPI, AICP, national chambers of planners, etc.). * Implementing the normative standards in practice-oriented courses (e.g., studios, labs, etc.). * Acknowledgement of professional ethics through different topics relevant to the general field covered by the academic programme. * Discussion of ethical issues raised by AI in spatial planning. |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **RESEARCH AND INQUIRY** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion asks for evidence concerning how research and inquiry are embedded in the programme. The embedding of research and inquiry fosters a spirit of curiosity, critical thinking, and indication for action.  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * How are students encouraged and trained to identify the real-world planning problems and define associated research questions in courses/modules and workshops? * How do students learn to design research and choose appropriate research methods? * How does the programme provide opportunities for students to develop analytical and critical research skills? * How do students learn to articulate evidence-based arguments to different audiences? * How do students learn to link research to societal impact? * How do students develop AI literacy to be able to use digital and AI tools effectively and ethically in writing and research, and how are these tools approached in the programme to maintain academic integrity?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Courses/modules, workshops encouraging students to identify real-world planning problems and define associated research questions. * Learning pedagogies that require students to engage with different methods of data collection and analysis (e.g., project-oriented, problem-based learning). * Research-based teaching to demonstrate analytical and critical research and inquiry skills leading to evidence-based arguments. * Student-led exhibitions, blogs, social media posts, newsletters, publications, etc. * Student involvement in action research, intervention projects, living labs, etc. * Guidance for students on AI literacy to support research and enquiry. |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **INDEPENDENT LEARNING AND GROUP LEARNING** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion asks for evidence concerning how students actively take responsibility and initiative to manage their own learning. It asks for evidence showing how the programme enables students to become resourceful, lifelong learning professionals who can keep their knowledge constantly updated. This criterion also asks for evidence on how planning programmes enable the necessary conditions for group learning, where planning students improve their capacity to interact, collaborate and contribute to peer learning.  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * How do students set their own goals? * What opportunities are given to students to develop their skills as independent learners? * How is group work embedded in courses and project modules? * What opportunities are given to students to reflect on the quality of their independent or group work?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Opportunities that allow students to define and explore their own areas of interest and/or their role in a team (e.g., dissertations, problem-based learning, project work, electives, living labs). * Self-evaluation and peer-evaluation exercises that demonstrate independent and/or group learning. * The use of digital and AI tools for supporting independent and group learning. |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **PRACTICAL REASONING AND JUDGEMENT** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion asks for evidence illustrating how students develop practical reasoning by drawing on a range of knowledge(s), skills, and ethical principles. Practical reasoning is about the capacity to make an informed, judicious evaluation/decision that can be implemented.  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * How are practical reasoning and judgement promoted through the course and project modules? * How are students given opportunities to test their practical reasoning and judgement? * How do students learn to synthesise multiple knowledges and ethical principles as a basis for practical reasoning?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Group project work promoting practical reasoning (e.g., problem-based learning modules, simulations, etc.). * Internships relevant to professional development where students develop their capacity for practical reasoning. * Courses/modules, workshops that combine theory and practice, enabling students to learn with other stakeholders (e.g., citizens, planning practitioners, elected officials, consultants, developers, etc) involved in the modules. * Initiatives that promote students’ understanding of AI technologies, and their implications for making informed decisions in spatial planning. |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **REFLEXIVE PRAXIS** |
| **GUIDANCE:** The criterion asks for evidence regarding how the programme curriculum stimulates reflection and self-evaluation within the complexity of a given situation. This is particularly relevant for practice-oriented courses (e.g., studio courses, living labs, simulation exercises or internships).  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * How are students equipped to make decisions within a practical situation and reflect on it? * How is self-reflection encouraged in practical decision-making in a particular situation? * How are students given opportunities to zoom out to the ‘big picture' and debate the dilemmas and ethical implications of planning decisions made?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Internships, project work, and workshops that result in practical work and include modes of reflection, including self-reflection, peer assessment, reflective learning logs, group discussions, etc. |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **STUDENT DIVERSITY** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion asks for evidence illustrating how the programme recognises the benefits and addresses the challenges of student diversity (e.g., cultural background, academic background, knowledge and skills, gender, etc.).  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * What safeguards and mechanisms exist to address the challenges of student diversity? * How are students provided with environments where they can discover and confidently draw on their identities, abilities, and experiences?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Disability resource centres, counselling services, accessibility guidelines for teaching materials. * Instances creating exposure to and awareness about cultural diversity (e.g., student exchanges, international internships, international comparative planning courses, group discussions). * Assessment regimes that are inclusive of a diversity of learners. * Digital and AI tools to integrate students from different disciplinary backgrounds. |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **RECOGNITION AND PROMOTION OF EXCELLENCE** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion asks applicants to identify and explain established institutional mechanisms, policies, or initiatives (at university, faculty, department, or programme level) aimed at promoting excellence in staff teaching practices and students’ achievements to encourage and sustain quality in the programme. It is important to stress that this criterion asks for evidence aiding the promotion of excellence rather than examples of excellence themselves.  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * How is pedagogic innovation within the programme identified and promoted? * How are exemplary teaching practices identified and shared within the school? * How is excellence in students recognised and rewarded?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Institutional mechanisms for identifying and evaluating an initiative (e.g., student involvement in assessments, using social media, online tools, etc.). * Institutional mechanisms for recognising and disseminating an exemplary initiative (e.g., financial support, high-quality documentation of teaching case studies for publication, internal newsletters or seminars, teaching-oriented events to promote excellence in education, etc.). * Competitions and rewards for encouraging solutions to particular issues in pedagogic practice (e.g., improving ways of student peer assessment or student group working). |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **STUDENT/ALUMNI/EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAMME CURRICULUM** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion asks for evidence detailing student/alumni/employer engagement in curriculum development at the programme level. The challenges involved in keeping planning education relevant demand a constant review of curriculum formats and content, as well as continuous development of innovative and suitable pedagogies.  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * How is feedback from students/alumni/employers sourced and embedded in the development of the programme curriculum? * How are dialogue and debate between planning education and practice facilitated and conducted in developing the programme curriculum?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Regular student assessments, surveys, and evaluations of programme, course, and project modules. * Institutional forums such as study boards and programme committees comprised of teaching staff, students, professional bodies, and practitioners. |
| (500 words max.) |

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| 1. **SHOWCASE PRACTICES** |
| **GUIDANCE:** Which particular practice(s) would you consider best to showcase the quality of the programme and is/are worth disseminating within the AESOP community?   * Please provide no more than two examples of the novel teaching/learning methods, innovative collaborations/practices, use of digital tools/AI in certain contexts etc. * Each nominated showcase practice should be able to relate to at least three QR criteria. * Please explain why you selected the showcase practice with reference to the contents, pedagogies used and the criteria that it relates to. * Showcase practices should be chosen for their applicability to all students in a programme, over a number of years. Except in exceptional circumstances, examples of best practice that are only available to a small number of students or on an ad-hoc basis should not be included here. |
| (500 words max.) |

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| **PLACE, DATE, SIGNATURE** |
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