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**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 criteria, 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.       * **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 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 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 do 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.** |

**QR CRITERIA**

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

**TOP TIPS**

**for completing a high quality QR application form**

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

| * **It’s about learning-oriented pedagogies** |
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QR aims to highlight where learning-oriented pedagogies are used in planning education. We want 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 evidenced-examples are provided of how and where different learning-oriented pedagogies are being used.

| * **QR aims to disseminate showcase practices** |
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QR aims to disseminate ‘showcase practices’ to the wider AESOP community. Applicants should tell us about their practices in enough detail to enable wider dissemination.

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| **Name of the school** |  |
| **Name of the programme** |  |
| **Address** |  |
| **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 and email** |  |

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| 1. **PROGRAMME DISTINCTIVENESS** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion asks for evidence regarding the autonomy and identity of the planning programme. In general terms, it is quite simply about demonstrating that the programme is, in fact, a planning programme in line with AESOP’s Core Curriculum – and **not** a programme in either architecture, engineering, geography, public administration including some planning content. It can be helpful to say something about the national context for the programme, and how this influences the programme structure and content, where this is particularly distinctive within the European context.  **Applicants should clearly:**   * Evidence the extent of planning content within the programme and where it sits within its academic institutional environment and wider national context (i.e., how it distinguishes itself from other existing planning programmes in its country of origin). * Elaborate on 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.).   A 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 distinctiveness, e.g., a programme’s structure, its broader or specific contents, and/or its learning outcomes. A programme’s distinctiveness can emphasise its particular planning tradition, i.e., how planning is substantially embedded in the course modules, their learning outcomes, etc., so long as it is aligned with AESOP’s 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. **SPATIAL FOCI** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion asks for evidence concerning the programme’s spatial foci and 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 pertaining to inter alia sustainable land use patterns, mobility and transport, housing, the natural environment, etc. are understood and explored on a specific territorial/spatial scale(s) and types of geographical area(s) and concerning their specific temporal aspects.  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * Which specific territorial/spatial scale(s) (e.g., national, regional, subregional, metropolitan, neighbourhood)/types of geographical area(s) (e.g., rural, urban, coastal, marine) and/or temporal categories of spatial changes and interventions (e.g. time horizons, duration, tempo, rhythm, sequences, anticipation and reparation, the timing of planning efforts, etc.) is/are emphasised in the programme? * How do students gain knowledge and skills to anticipate future societal needs through scenario developments or future-casting for particular territorial/spatial scale(s) and geographical area(s)? * How do students learn to distinguish between episodes, gradual changes, path dependencies, moments of transition, critical junctures and/or deep cultural conditions as time-sensitive perspectives of different spatial changes and interventions?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Core planning courses (e.g., planning theory, planning law, policymaking, data collection) that incorporate cases with a specific spatial foci. * Courses focused on a specific territorial/spatial scale (e.g., regional planning) and the scalar implications of specific issues (e.g., climate change) in different temporal categories (e.g. duration, sequence, time of occurrence). * Courses focused on development of 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/trans disciplinary 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 programme and/or course and project module?   Examples of how this could be achieved include (but are not limited to):   * Course and project modules integrating work by, for example, architects, economists, and climate scientists drawing on trans-disciplinary concepts and/or methods such as resilience, sustainability, justice, etc. * Course and project 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.) * Course and project modules (e.g., studio courses, problem-based courses) using pedagogies (e.g., role-play scenarios and group exercises mixing students with different disciplinary/professional backgrounds) that encourage dialogue between different disciplines. * Course and project 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 (beyond Europe), (i.e., how students come to understand contemporary planning challenges in an interconnected world). Exposing students to the global context is also about increasing their awareness about global driving forces beyond national and European borders, and their relevance and implications.  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * How are students introduced to issues and processes operating at the global scale, e.g., neoliberalisation, climate change, migration, financialisation, inequality, geopolitics, urbanisation, digitalisation, pandemics, etc.? * How are different global perspectives embedded in the programme, e.g., climate change mitigation, financialisation, conflicts, etc.? * 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 curricular themes but in different geographical contexts (i.e., Global South and Global North), e.g., through international comparative studies or by participating in a joint programme delivery between planning schools. * Use of case study material from different geographical contexts, beyond the national context targeting the above questions. * In course 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. |
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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 competences 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):   * Course modules looking at 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). * Course 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). * Course modules and 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). |
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| 1. **PROFESSIONAL ETHICS** |
| **GUIDANCE:** This criterion first asks for evidence concerning the normative standards which 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 reasonings 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. |
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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 and critical thinking.  **Applicants should consider the following questions:**   * How are students encouraged to identify research problems and formulate research questions? * 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):   * Workshops encouraging students to identify real-world planning problems and define associated research questions. * Courses and project modules dealing 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 course 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 knowledges, 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. * Course and project modules 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 on practical decisions made 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, workshops, etc. * 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 context 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 on 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 an ad-hoc basis should not be included here. |
| (500 words max.) |

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| **PLACE, DATE, SIGNATURE** |
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