



**PUBLIC  
MANAGEMENT  
INSTITUTE**

## Education councils in Europe

Balancing expertise, societal input and political control in the production of policy advice

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EDUCATION COUNCIL MEMBERS  
AND STAFF

## > 1.1. Introduction to the questionnaire

The questionnaire can be used by the secretariat and members of councils to evaluate and improve their advisory process. The questions are based on normative insights from the literature on participation arrangements. They follow the threefold structure of the advisory process: input, throughput, and output phases. The results of the questionnaire can be used to discern strong and weak point of the operation of advisory councils and to determine action points for improvement. Recurrent questionnaires can also contribute to assessing developments over time.

### Input stage

- a. The first two concepts pertain to *inclusiveness* and representativeness. Inclusiveness points at the presence of all stakeholders; *representativeness* includes the notion of mandates from societal organisations.
- b. The *workload* of members is also addressed by the questionnaire

### Throughput stage

The questions pertain to 10 concepts:

- c. The first set of questions deal with features of interaction within the advisory process. These are important for assessing the actual participation of members in the advisory process. Questions pertain to *depth of content* of interaction between member; the extent to which interaction contributes to *consensus*; the degree of *knowledge and information* of members; the extent to which members *participate on equal grounds*; the degree of *commitment* to the advisory process.
- d. A second set comprises questions on more technical aspects of the advisory process: the way in which the process is *managed*; the degree of *transparency*; and the *progress* of the advisory process.
- e. A third set of questions under the throughput stage pertain to feedback following the conclusion of the advisory process: *feedback* to the rank and file; *after care and communication* to rank and file, society and media.

### Output stage

- f. As to the quality of advisory product, the questions pertain to *readability*; *understandability*; the quality of *argumentation*; *support*.
- g. Also included are questions on four types of utilisation of advisory products to get a broad picture of the types and extent of utilisation by policy-makers and societal actors, as perceived by members of the advisory councils.

### General context

The final part of the questionnaire focuses on features of the general policy context, which may impact both on the operation and outputs of advisory councils.

- h. The *response time* granted for the production of advice.
- i. Two features of commitment of policy-makers: *timing of the request* for advice; *susceptibility* of policy-makers.
- j. The degree of *feedback* and *accountability* of policy-makers after advisory products are transmitted.

**Part 1. INPUT STAGE**

**Q 1. Inclusion and representation:** Stakeholder involvement in the council.

Level of agreement	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat disagree	4 Neither agree nor disagree	5 Somewhat agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
a. All stakeholder groups are represented in our council.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Stakeholder representatives in our council have a clear mandate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Q 2. Council workload**

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat disagree	4 Neither agree nor disagree	5 Somewhat agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
a. The council receives too many requests for advice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. The council delivers too many advice on its own initiative.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. There are too many council meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*Remarks*

## PART 2. THROUGHPUT STAGE

### Q 3. The advisory process in the council.

Characteristics of the **interaction** during the advisory process.

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat disagree	4 Neither agree nor disagree	5 Somewhat agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
a. The interactions between council members are sufficiently substantive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. The interactions between council members supports development of consensus.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. I have sufficient information to participate in the advisory process.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. All council members equally contribute during the advisory process.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. I feel strongly involved in the advisory process.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The **organisation** of the advisory process.

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat disagree	4 Neither agree nor disagree	5 Somewhat agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree
f. The advisory process is well managed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g. The advisory process is transparent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h. The advisory process takes too much time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Q 4. “After care” and communication: council visibility**

	<b>1 Strongly disagree</b>	<b>2 Disagree</b>	<b>3 Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>4 Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>5 Somewhat agree</b>	<b>6 Agree</b>	<b>7 Strongly agree</b>
a. The members’ organisations are sufficiently informed about the advice developed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. The council is sufficiently visible for the members’ organisations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. The council is sufficiently visible in the media and in the field of education.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Remarks**

**Deel 3. OUTPUT STAGE**

**Q 5. Quality of the advice**

	<b>1 Strongly disagree</b>	<b>2 Disagree</b>	<b>3 Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>4 Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>5 Somewhat agree</b>	<b>6 Agree</b>	<b>7 Strongly agree</b>
a. Our advice is clear and well structured.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Our advice is well founded.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Our advice represents the diversity of perspectives and points of view.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Q 6. Impact: different types of impact (instrumental, conceptual, agenda setting and political-strategic)**

	<b>1 Strongly disagree</b>	<b>2 Disagree</b>	<b>3 Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>4 Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>5 Somewhat agree</b>	<b>6 Agree</b>	<b>7 Strongly agree</b>	<b>9 Don't know</b>
a. The advice results in changes in policy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9

	<b>1 Strongly disagree</b>	<b>2 Disagree</b>	<b>3 Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>4 Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>5 Somewhat agree</b>	<b>6 Agree</b>	<b>7 Strongly agree</b>	<b>9 Don't know</b>
b. The advice contributes to changes in policy perspectives and influences the policy makers' agenda.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9
c. The advice is picked up by the media.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9
d. The advice initiates political and societal debate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9
e. The advice is used by policy makers to legitimize policy decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	9

**Remarks**

**PART 4. GENERAL POLICY ENVIRONMENT**

**Q 7.** Characteristics of policy environment that the council itself has limited impact on, but deserves council attention.

	<b>1 Strongly disagree</b>	<b>2 Disagree</b>	<b>3 Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>4 Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>5 Somewhat agree</b>	<b>6 Agree</b>	<b>7 Strongly agree</b>
a. There is sufficient time to deliver advice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. The request for advice occurs at an appropriate time in the policy making process	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. The policy makers are receptive to the council's advice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. The policy makers provide sufficient feedback on the advice given.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Remarks**