

**Findings of evaluation of self-evaluation
procedures in upper secondary schools 2002-2003**

Overall findings

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Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
EVALUATIONS 2002-2003.....	5
1. STATUS OF SELF-EVALUATION IN THE SCHOOLS	6
2. SELF-EVALUATION PROCEDURES	7
3. SELF-EVALUATION PRACTICE	8
SUMMARY	9
ANNEXES	11
1. CRITERIA	10
2. EVALUATION TOOL	12
3. SCHOOLS EVALUATED 2002-2003	13
4. EVALUATORS	15

Introduction

This report contains the principal findings of the first evaluations of self-evaluation procedures in upper secondary schools in the period 2002–2003. The report is to be sent to upper secondary schools and their boards. The report may also be seen on the Ministry of Education website www.menntamalaraduneyti.is under Publications.

Art. 23 of the Upper Secondary Schools Act no. 80/1996 provides that each school shall introduce methods of evaluating the work of the school, including its teaching and administrative methods, communication within the school and relations with outside parties. The article also provides that every five years an evaluation shall be made, on the initiative of the Minister of Education, on the self-evaluation procedures used in schools. The provisions on evaluation of self-evaluation procedures in upper secondary schools were implemented in the spring of 2002. Evaluation of self-evaluation procedures in 29 upper secondary schools was completed in the spring of 2003.

The objective of the evaluation was to appraise the status of self-evaluation, self-evaluation procedures and the practice of self-evaluation in individual schools. The criteria laid down for evaluation of self-evaluation procedures are that the self-evaluation be formal, inclusive, reliable, collaborative, improvement-oriented, performance-oriented, institution-oriented, individual-oriented, descriptive and analytical, and be made public (see Annex 1).

The criteria on which evaluation of self-evaluation procedures in schools are based were explained to schools by a letter sent to upper secondary schools in June 2000.

In order to provide guidance for schools in their self-evaluation work, the Ministry of Education pushed a booklet, *Sjálfsmat skóla* (Schools' Self-Evaluation) in the spring of 1997. This deals with the purpose and objectives of self-evaluation, states criteria for self-evaluation of schools, and contains a checklist and guidelines for the form of the self-evaluation report. The Ministry also arranged courses on evaluation of the work of schools for teachers and school administrators. Two Icelandic upper secondary schools also participated, on the initiative of the Ministry of Education, in a European pilot project on self-evaluation in 1997-98.

Evaluations 2002 - 2003

During the evaluation period 2002-2003 evaluations were made of the self-evaluation procedures of 29 upper secondary schools. In accord with legal provisions, the Ministry of Education advertised, and then appointed outside parties to carry out the evaluations (see further details on schools and evaluators in Annexes 3 and 4).

Evaluation of schools' self-evaluation procedures was based on, among other things, data from the relevant school, site visits to the school and interviews with administrators, teachers and representatives of other staff and students, as applicable.

In carrying out evaluations for each school, the evaluators recorded their findings on computerised questionnaires designed by the Ministry. Essentially, there was a single questionnaire or tool, which covered the status of self-evaluation in each school. Thus three versions of the questionnaire were prepared, taking account of how far the school had progressed in its self-evaluation work.

The questionnaire for schools which had carried out a systematic self-evaluation comprised 42 questions, with two or more possible answers. The content was based upon the ten criteria (see Annex 1), and the questionnaire was made up of four main sections: 1. The status of self-evaluation in the school, 2. The school's self-evaluation procedures, 3. Self-evaluation practice, and 4. Overall findings.

Where a school had tried out self-evaluation of certain aspects of the school's work, a shorter questionnaire was used, comprising seven questions. This was made up of two parts: 1. The status of self-evaluation in the school, and 2. Overall findings.

Where a school had not done any work on self-evaluation or had only begun preparation of systematic self-evaluation, the evaluators recorded their findings on the third, and shortest, questionnaire, comprising four questions in two parts: 1. The status of self-evaluation in the school, and 2. Overall findings.

In all cases the evaluators notified the principal of the relevant school of the findings of the evaluation before they were submitted to the Ministry, so that the principals had the opportunity to comment on the content. At the end of each evaluation period, the Ministry published an interim report on the status of self-evaluation in the schools where evaluations had been made. This was sent, along with the Ministry's comments, to the boards of the relevant schools. Copies were sent to the schools.

1. Status of self-evaluation in the schools

Fifteen of the 29 upper secondary schools where evaluations were carried out in 2002–2003 had an official plan in writing for self-evaluation; this represents 52% of the schools.

A systematic self-evaluation has been carried out in 14 of the schools where an evaluation was made.

Systematic self-evaluation means an evaluation carried out in an organised fashion in accord with an action plan, and with procedures determined in advance. The procedures used may be based upon a criteriaised self-evaluation system, or upon composite or adapted system. The intention was that the systematic self-evaluation be in progress when the evaluation was carried out.

Status of self-evaluation	No. of schools	%
Systematic self-evalutaion of all main factors	4	14%
Systematic self-evalutaion of some factors	10	35%
Some experiments in self-evaluation	12	41%
Preparation of systematic self-evaluation begun	2	7%
No work on self-evaluation	0	0%
Other	1	3%
Total	29	100%

The status of self-evaluation in the schools proved to be as follows:

Of the 14 schools which had carried out a systematic self-evaluation, five had published a self-evaluation report. The reports cover either all principal aspects of the school's work, or specified aspects. A self-evaluation report was in preparation in four of the 14 schools when the evaluations were carried out.

Of the 12 schools which had made some experiments in self-evaluation, seven had published self-evaluation reports. Five had not published such reports.

Thus a total of 12 of the 29 schools had published a self-evaluation report; this represents 41% of the schools.

As self-evaluation procedures and practice were under evaluation, those schools which had done no work on self-evaluation, had only made some experiments in self-evaluation, or had commenced preparation of systematic self-evaluation, were automatically deemed to have an unsatisfactory performance; these schools numbered 15. Hence the following two sections of the report deal only with those 14 schools which had carried out a systematic self-evaluation of all or some aspects of the school's work.

2. Self-evaluation procedures

Of the fourteen schools, ten based their self-evaluation procedures on a composite, adapted system. The self-evaluation procedures of four schools were build upon a criteria based system.

With regard to whether schools' self-evaluation systems met the criteria laid down by the Ministry of Education for self-evaluation systems (see Annex 1), findings were as follows:

The self-evaluation system is deemed:	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Formal	12	86%	2	14%	14
Inclusive	8	57%	6	43%	14
Reliable	13*	93%	1	7%	14
Collaborative	12	86%	2	14%	14
Improvement-oriented	13	93%	1	7%	14
Performance-oriented	6	43%	8	57%	14
Institution-oriented	9	64%	5	36%	14
Individual-oriented	14	100%	0	0%	14
Descriptive	3	21%	11	79%	14
Analytical	11	79%	3	21%	14
Made public	5	36%	9	64%	14

* Yes or partly yes

The Ministry found seven of the fourteen schools to have satisfactory self-evaluation procedures, and seven to have partially satisfactory self-evaluation procedures.

3. Self-evaluation practice

Preparation and publicity were found to be satisfactory in almost all the schools which had carried out a systematic self-evaluation, or 13 of them. In one school it was partially satisfactory.

In nine of the 14 schools which had carried out a systematic self-evaluation, the implementation of improvements was in accord with the action and development plan made after the self-evaluation. Only one school had evaluated whether the objectives of the action and development plan had been achieved.

Only four of the 14 schools had drawn up criteria for what improved performance in individual fields entailed. In almost all cases, individual-oriented self-evaluation was utilised in human resources administration, i.e. in 13 schools.

The practice of self-evaluation overall was deemed satisfactory in five schools, and partially satisfactory in nine schools.

Summary

The principal findings of evaluations of self-evaluation procedures in 29 upper secondary schools in the period 2002-2003 are that 14 schools have systematically worked on self-evaluation, and of them four have carried out a systematic self-evaluation of all principal factors in the school's work. One school had worked on self-evaluation some years prior to the evaluation.

The following table summarises the findings on evaluation of self-evaluation procedures in upper secondary schools 2002-2003:

The school's self-evaluation procedures are deemed:	No. of schools	%
Satisfactory	7	24%
Partially satisfactory	7	24%
Unsatisfactory	15	52%
Total	29	100%

Just under half the schools are thus deemed to have self-evaluation procedures which are satisfactory or partially satisfactory, while the remainder are deemed to have unsatisfactory self-evaluation procedures.

When the practice of self-evaluation was evaluated for the 14 schools which had carried out a systematic self-evaluation, the findings were as follows:

The practice of self-evaluation is deemed:	No. of schools	%
Satisfactory	2	14%
Partially satisfactory	12	86%
Unsatisfactory	0	0%
Total	14	100%

Two upper secondary schools of the 29 of which an evaluation was made in the period 2002-2003 fulfilled in every way the Ministry's criteria both for self-evaluation procedures, and for practice of self-evaluation.

Following evaluations of self-evaluation procedures in 29 upper secondary schools in the period 2002-2003, it is clear that the vast majority of the schools have done work on self-evaluation; at the time of the evaluation, some schools had made more progress than others.

Annexes

1. Criteria

The Ministry's criteria which form the basis for evaluation of self-evaluation procedures in schools are that the self-evaluation be:

1. Formal

A description of the procedures for self-evaluation must exist in the self-evaluation report, in the school's syllabus, and possibly in other written documents from the school. This should specify whether a recognised self-evaluation system, or a composite adapted system. The manner in which the self-evaluation is carried out overall must be explained. The description must state who is in charge of the task, who carries it out at any time, and who is included in it.

2. Inclusive

The self-evaluation shall cover all the principal aspects of the school's work, i.e. objectives, administration, study, tuition, study evaluation, students, staff, facilities and outside relations. The schools are not, however, expected to be able to evaluate every aspect in equal detail every year.

3. Reliable

It is important that the self-evaluation be based upon dependable data and reliable measurements. Data from the school's records, such as students' academic records and records of absences, must be available. Schools cannot, however, base the evaluation solely on statistical data. They must also evaluate their work by other means, such as opinion surveys among various groups, such as students, staff, parents, schools to which students have transferred, the public, employers and graduates of the school.

4. Collaborative

All staff must be involved, in one way or another, with the self-evaluation. In the planning and preparation of the self-evaluation, the scope of the project must be explained to all staff. General accord must also be achieved with regard to the practice of the evaluation. Division of tasks must be clear, as must management and responsibility. At this stage, participation in the self-evaluation by students, parents and other stake-holders must be borne in mind.

5. Improvement-oriented

The self-evaluation report must include an action and work plan for the improvements in the school's work which are to be implemented following the self-evaluation. Information must also be provided on how the objectives of the improvement plan are to be achieved. Criteria of what is entailed by improved results must be defined.

6. Performance-oriented

The school shall work on evaluating whether the school's objectives have been achieved, and what the school's work has achieved on the basis of the criteria it has drawn up for itself. These criteria may refer, for instance, to such factors as academic performance, well-being, good conduct, absences and drop-out rate.

7. Institution- and individual-oriented

The self-evaluation must focus both on the institution itself and on the individuals within it. For example, evaluations may be made of the school's performance in comparison with other schools, e.g. in national criteria examinations, and in evaluation of administration and tuition.

8. Descriptive

The self-evaluation report must include a concise description (text, figures, tables) of the school's work. The description must relate to the establishment of objectives.

9. Analytical

The self-evaluation report must include an analysis of strengths and weaknesses, applied systematically to each aspect of the evaluation, and then in the final summary.

10. Made public

It must be determined in advance who is to have access to specified aspects of the self-evaluation, while a self-evaluation report must be published. It must be ensured in this context that legal provisions are honoured, for instance with regard to the handling of personal data.

2. Evaluation tool

The Ministry of Education has designed a computerised questionnaire on which evaluators record their findings. The questionnaire has been prepared in three versions, according to the status of self-evaluation in each school. The main questionnaire comprises 42 questions, to be answered by the evaluators of the school has worked on a systematic self-evaluation. The questionnaire comprises five main sections:

I. Status of self-evaluation – the objective is to elicit information on the status of work on self-evaluation in the school.

II. Self-evaluation procedures – the objective is to elicit information on the system used by the school. The criteria are that the evaluation be formal, inclusive, reliable, collaborative, improvement-oriented, performance-oriented, institution-oriented, individual-oriented, descriptive and analytical, and be made public. Questions are posed on each of these factors.

III. Practice of self-evaluation – the objective is to elicit information on how successful the self-evaluation has been in practice.

IV. Overall findings – the objective is to elicit the final findings of the evaluators, on the one hand with regard to self-evaluation procedures, and on the other with regard to the practice of the self-evaluation. In order to answer this section, the evaluators base their answers on parts II and III respectively (see above).

V. Report – The objective is that a brief summary (not more than one A4 page) be made of the findings, together with comments and other information from the evaluators.

If the school has only made isolated experiments with self-evaluation of certain aspects of the school's work, the evaluators fill out a questionnaire which comprises seven questions. If no work has been done on self-evaluation, or if preparation of self-evaluation has commenced, a shorter questionnaire is used. In all cases the evaluators submit a brief report with the questionnaire.

3. Schools evaluated 2002-2003

Reykjavík

1. Borgarholtsskóli
2. Fjölbrautaskólinn í Breiðholti
3. Fjölbrautaskólinn við Ármúla
4. Iðnskólinn í Reykjavík
5. Kvennaskólinn í Reykjavík
6. Menntaskólinn í Reykjavík
7. Menntaskólinn við Hamrahlíð
8. Menntaskólinn við Sund
9. Stýrimannaskólinn í Reykjavík
10. Vélaskóli Íslands
11. Verzlunarskóli Íslands

Capital area, outside Reykjavík

12. Fjölbrautaskólinn í Garðabæ
13. Flensborgarskólinn í Hafnarfirði
14. Iðnskólinn í Hafnarfirði
15. Menntaskólinn í Kópavogi

Suðurnes (southwest)

16. Fjölbrautaskóli Suðurnesja

West Iceland

17. Fjölbrautaskóli Vesturlands

West Fjords

18. Menntaskólinn á Ísafirði

Northwest Iceland

19. Fjölbrautaskóli Norðurlands vestra

Northeast Iceland

20. Framhaldsskólinn á Húsavík
21. Framhaldsskólinn á Laugum
22. Menntaskólinn á Akureyri
23. Verkmenntaskólinn á Akureyri

East Iceland

24. Framhaldsskólinn í Austur-Skaftafellssýslu
25. Menntaskólinn á Egilsstöðum
26. Verkmenntaskóli Austurlands

South Iceland

27. Fjölbrautaskóli Suðurlands
28. Framhaldsskólinn í Vestmannaeyjum
29. Menntaskólinn að Laugarvatni

4. Evaluators

Evaluations of self-evaluation procedures in each school were carried out by two to three people, who together had experience in self-evaluation, the work of upper secondary schools, and quality control. Evaluations made in the spring of 2002 were carried out by KPMG Ráðgjöf together with the University of Akureyri Schools Development Division, while those made in the autumn of 2002 and spring of 2003 were carried out by KPMG Ráðgjöf.