

In this chapter we will try to shed some light on the relevance of the IEP Reports and their recommendations to the quality improvement of the universities under evaluation. In our view, although the reports are not the only outcome of the institutional evaluation, they are indeed its most physical and visible face and it should be based on them that universities would start, or continue, to work after the external evaluation is complete. Therefore, particular attention has to be drawn to the way they are structured and written to ensure they will be able to adequately fulfil their role on the whole evaluation programme.

We will start by referring to feedback mechanisms, discussing if and how they can lead to the quality improvement of higher education institutions. Assuming that external evaluation reports are a feedback mechanism, we will then refer to the characteristics they must have in order to be fruitful for the evaluated universities.

Finally, we will concentrate on a sample of reports already produced under the IEP, trying to identify its strong and weak points *vis-à-vis* the characteristics identified as essential to promote quality improvement.