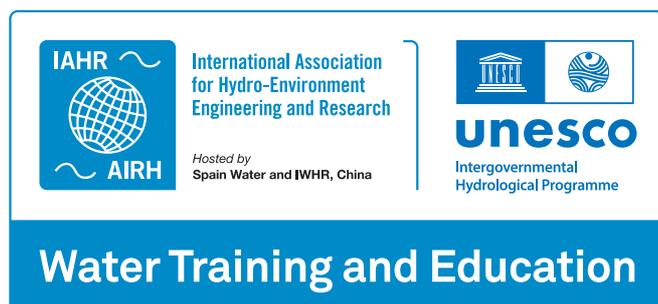


IAHR & UNESCO-IHP



IAHR Label for Water Training and Education

A Flagship Initiative of UNESCO-IHP

1 | Rationale and Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership.

Among the SDGs, the SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation for all – is the only one to be directly connected to 8 SDGs and indirectly to 8 other SDGs. The UN Water conference held in 2023 made it clear that now is the time for action. Achieving the SDG 6 in 2030 requires a fourfold acceleration of the current pace. Specifically, the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework calls for urgent and unifying action on capacity development. Education and training of water professionals is an absolute priority that will not only benefit the SDG 6 but also help to tackle climate change impacts, food security, biodiversity preservation, energy transition, and social development.

IAHR specifically identifies that in order to meet these challenges, many countries have an urgent need to ensure a critical mass of water professionals trained with relevant competences and skills.

In response to this challenge, IAHR has proactively worked in introducing a labelling system aimed at acknowledging the quality of education and training programs tailored for the water sector. This unique label is conferred by IAHR to specific programs, serving as a recognition of their dedication in providing education aligned with the requirements of water professionals. The IAHR Label aims to enhance the international acceptance of the excellence inherent in these educational and training initiatives. IAHR expects that the uptake of this system will inherently and immediately deliver results towards better-skilled national workforces, at increased scales across the globe.

For the reasons mentioned UNESCO has honoured this as a Flagship Initiative within its Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP).

Objectives

The main objectives of this IAHR initiative are to:

- Support and promote a holistic approach for water engineering.
- Promote key competences and skills in the water sector according to job profiles.
- Recognize good practices in pedagogic activities especially for countries where capacity building is a priority.
- Develop a student-centred teaching approach.
- Promote a problem-based approach to water engineering.
- Integrate digitalization (in the whole field) of water engineering including the (societal and) business.

Open to whom?

The IAHR Label is awarded to vocational training programs, BSc, MSc and PhD programs focusing on water-related education and training.

Procedure

The label is conferred by IAHR following a thorough review of the candidate's self-assessment report, which is submitted voluntarily. The evaluation process follows the international standards commonly employed by higher education accreditation agencies, ensuring fairness and transparency.

Validity (Duration)

The label is granted for a maximum duration of five years and is eligible for renewal. Its validity cannot surpass the national accreditation period of the degree, in the country where the education takes place. It is automatically revoked upon the expiration of the national accreditation.

The directory of the courses awarded with the IAHR Label, along with details on when the label was awarded, and the duration of its validity are available on: label.iahr.org



2 | IAHR Label awarding procedure

Below are the steps in the process of granting the IAHR Label for good practice in education:

- 1 | Submission of the self-assessment report by the candidate university to the labelling secretariat. The report must be submitted by email to: label@iahr.org (An example of a self-assessment template is provided for download at: label.iahr.org, and detailed in the following section).
- 2 | The candidacy is reported by the secretariat to the Label Committee.
- 3 | The Label Committee designates 2 reviewers who will assess the submitted request (a self-assessment report and a cover page explaining for which program this request is submitted). A third representative will act as moderator, and will oversee the synthesis report of the two reviewers.
- 4 | The moderator collects the reviews and produces the synthesis report with a recommendation regarding the label awarding and comments to return to the candidate, for immediate improvement or for the long term.
- 5 | The moderator together with the 2 reviewers present the synthesis report and the recommendation to the Label Committee. Representatives from associated national associations willing to jointly award the label are invited to join the meeting and participate in the decision.
- 6 | The Label Committee decides on the request and produces a recommendation to the IAHR Executive Committee.
- 7 | The IAHR Executive Committee decides on the request.
- 8 | The result and comments are provided to the candidate based on the IAHR Executive Committee decision. If the candidate is not satisfied with the decision, he/she can appeal by email to: label@iahr.org
- 9 | If the label is awarded, the education program is registered within the directory of labelled programs.

Before any evaluation is carried out the level and orientation of the program seeking the IAHR Label must be clearly stated. The criteria, which should be outlined in the self-assessment report are the ones based on which IAHR will evaluate best practices in water education, i.e.:

- Intended learning outcomes
- Teaching-learning environment
- Student assessment
- Internal quality assurance system



3 | Structure of the self-assessment report

The self-assessment report is the primary document your program uses to demonstrate its compliance with the IAHR criteria for a good practice in water education. The report is the basis for the review team's judgment of whether the program meets our criteria for conferring an IAHR Label.

The self-assessment report is a self-contained document comprising a maximum of 50 pages (excluding appendices). The educational program (candidate) applying for the IAHR Label selects other documents that will be made available for perusal by the reviewers and add them as annexes to the report, for example if the degree is already accredited (by whom, for how long, etc.).

The contents and format of such documents are not subject to any prior requirements. The reviewers may request additional information but will exercise restraint in this respect. The point of departure is that the candidate provides the documents and information that the reviewers require in order to carry out the evaluation.

The main content of the self-assessment needs to include the name of the program seeking IAHR Label followed by the following sections on:

1 | Intended learning outcomes: should detail how such outcomes are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

2 | The teaching-learning environment: should detail the curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and who is lecturing on the topics, in terms of background and expertise.

3 | Student assessment: should show that there is a viable student assessment system.

Self-assessment report should fulfil the following:

- The report must be comprehensive, thorough, and tailored to the specific context of the evaluation. It should have a detailed analysis and evaluation of the essential components that are evaluated, as well as recommendations for improvement.
- The report must be based on evidence produced in the monitoring process and new evidence from the study programs (e.g. student achievements).
- The report needs to append evidence for the stated achievements, as well as additional findings, such as student achievements.
- The assessment should maintain balance by acknowledging both the positive aspects and areas for improvement.



4 | Advantages of an IAHR Label

What can you expect?

The cyclical label review will take place every five years, using a flexible, proportionate, and tailored approach. You can expect the following from the IAHR Label:

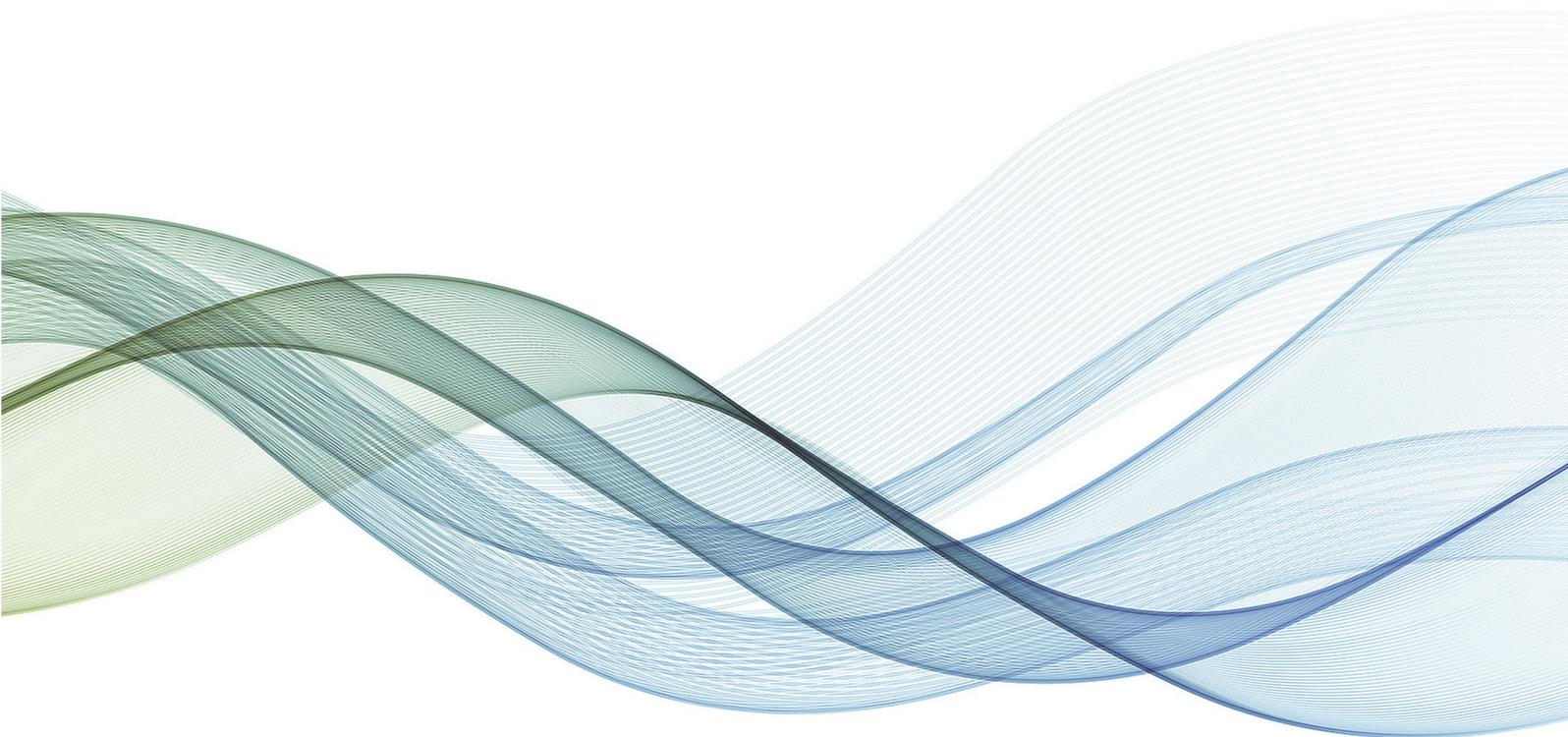
- A comprehensive written report.
- Analysis of your education approach for maintaining quality and standards by experts in the field of higher education review.
- Advice based on producing a self-assessment report.
- Advice on creating an action plan to address report outcomes.

The IAHR approach is inspired by Global Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance such as the European Higher Education Area and many international accreditation bodies.

Benefits of a successful review include:

- A public statement of confidence provided by an independent international organisation federating the water sector.
- Greater institutional control over how and when you engage in external quality assurance.
- Demonstration of commitment to external scrutiny of quality assurance and the enhancement of quality.
- Assurances that the standards of your academic awards and quality of the learning experience are in line with international standards.
- Exploration of enhancement initiatives, selected by you, which can lead to verified statements of good practice in the report.
- Independent evidence to support approval of new international partnership agreements including transnational education.
- Professional advice on enhancement and tailored follow-up activity.
- Eligibility to use the IAHR Label on your website and marketing materials.





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