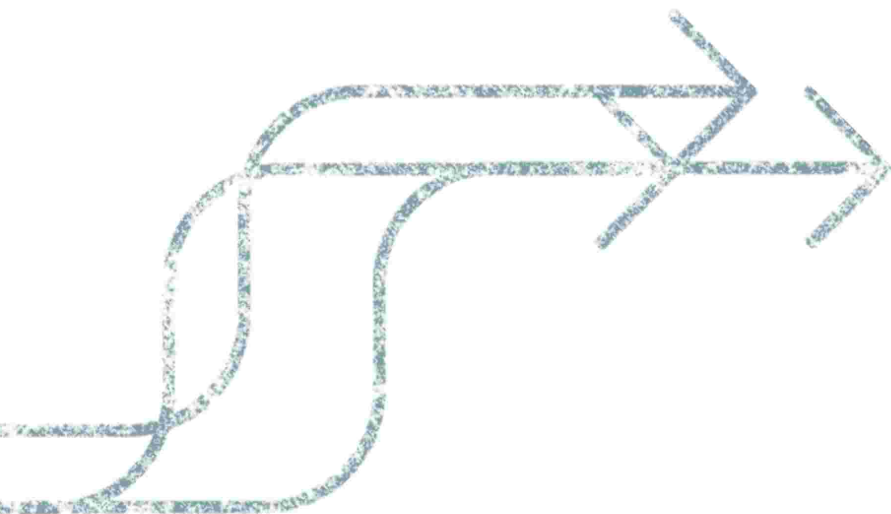


STRATEGIC PLAN



AQU CATALUNYA 2009 - 2012

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MISSION

The Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya) is a public entity with an internationally recognised status. Its mission is to assure the quality of higher education through compliance with the European standards of quality and to safeguard of the interests of society in the quality of higher education.

Its activity is developed through:

- Analytical external quality assurance processes (review and accreditation)
- International benchmarks and an innovation-based perspective
- Transparency and publicity mechanisms
- The involvement of the educational community and social stakeholders
- Competent people who are motivated and satisfied with the work carried out by AQU Catalunya
- Respect for the values defined below

VALUES

Fostering of cooperation

AQU Catalunya jointly promotes actions with higher education institutions, the Administration and other national and international agencies and bodies with similar interests.

Respect for the diversity and autonomy of the universities

AQU Catalunya is attentive to the plural nature of higher education institutions and their self-governing capability status.

User orientation

AQU Catalunya offers an efficient and personalised service that is sensitive to user requirements, and it ensures compliance with the rights' of higher education institutions by informing them of the quality assurance mechanisms.

Proactivity

AQU Catalunya takes the initiative in developing its actions, it anticipates the necessary requirements in order to develop them and it provides solutions that are in the public interest.

Quality assurance

AQU Catalunya assures the quality of its activity through the periodic internal and external review of its processes in accordance with European and international standards.

Integrity and independence

AQU Catalunya demonstrates independence and impartiality in its activity, and its judgments are evidence-based.

Efficiency and efficacy

AQU Catalunya seeks to achieve its objectives through the optimisation of its available resources.

Accountability

AQU Catalunya acts with transparency and has an information system that provides accessible, comprehensible and useful data on its activities and methodology.

STRATEGIC THEMES - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES - OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

THEME 1: MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

VISION: AQU CATALUNYA IN 2012

We are an efficient, participative and fitness-for-purpose-oriented organisation that makes appropriate use of technological resources, whose activities are well planned out, and which has a nationally and internationally accredited internal quality assurance system.

The Agency's legal structure guarantees its independence and transparency and ensures that it has adequate resources.

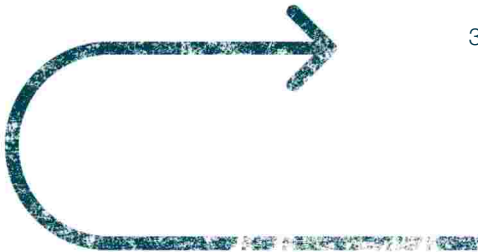
AQU Catalunya generates confidence in and jointly carries out its activities with the universities and the Administration.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To achieve a high degree of satisfaction in the users of the Agency by responding to their needs and, where possible, exceeding their expectations.
2. To maintain the recognised national and international standing of AQU Catalunya on a level similar to that of European agencies of high standing.
3. To help bring up to date the legal framework to ensure adaptation of the Agency's activity in line with recent European developments, in accordance with its objectives and values.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To have mechanisms that provide information on and for enhancing user satisfaction.
- 2.1. To establish a good system for internal planning, communication and monitoring that takes into account the enhancement of efficacy and efficiency in procedures.
- 2.2. To maintain current accreditations.
3. To promote the necessary changes in the regulations to allow for the Agency to continue to fully assume its jurisdiction while guaranteeing its level of independence and the achievement of its strategic objectives.



STRATEGIC THEMES - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES - OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

THEME 2: ACADEMIC STAFF ASSESSMENT**VISION: AQU CATALUNYA IN 2012**

The Agency works with innovative methodologies whereby assessment processes result in a higher level of quality in academic staff.

We collaborate with the main stakeholders to ensure that the assessment of academic staff is integrated into the overall process of quality enhancement in the higher education system and the universities are more involved in this process.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To have a permanently updated review methodology for the quality enhancement of academic staff.
2. To bring about greater integration of the assessment of academic staff into the overall process of quality enhancement.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. To reinforce R+D and innovation in methodologies for academic staff evaluation.
- 1.2. To establish evaluation benchmarks in consensus with the different stakeholders in areas where these are required.
2. To establish the frame of reference and promote reflexion in higher education institutions for the comprehensive assessment of academic staff activity and the inclusion of such assessment in university quality policies.



STRATEGIC THEMES - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES - OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

THEME 3: INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAMME REVIEW

VISION: AQU CATALUNYA IN 2012

We have a programme for the cyclical review, follow up and accreditation of higher education institutions and the degrees they offer, which is used for enhancement purposes and to demonstrate the quality of Catalan higher education institutions and programmes at the European and international level.

The Agency applies international standards and impetus is given to methodological advances and studies in this sphere.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To foster institutional review of a cyclical nature using a recognised methodology, with the emphasis on the institution's internal quality assurance systems so that the results have a visible impact in the form of greater transparency of information on the quality of the institutions themselves and their progressive enhancement.
2. To have an integrated model for the evaluation, follow up and accreditation of degrees, in accordance with international benchmarks and a recognised methodology that demonstrates the quality of degree programmes to the different stakeholders and promotes their continuous enhancement.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. To develop an efficient and usable model for institutional review, which provides precise information for decision-making.
- 1.2. To promote the consolidation of internal quality assurance units in the universities.
- 1.3. To reinforce R+D and innovation in methodologies for institutional review.
- 2.1. To reinforce R+D and innovation in methodologies for degree programme review processes.
- 2.2. To carry out the evaluation, follow-up and accreditation of degree programmes in accordance with international benchmarks.

STRATEGIC THEMES - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES - OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

THEME 4: ANALYSIS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM**VISION: AQU CATALUNYA IN 2012**

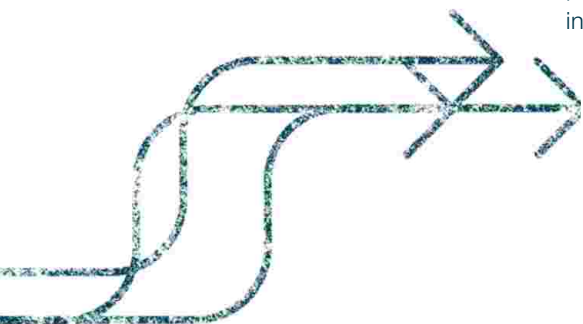
The stakeholders make appraisals and decisions on the basis of studies and reports on the higher education system produced by the Agency from an international perspective, with the use of indicators that include the analysis of efficiency and efficacy and the collaboration of qualified experts.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To have a recognised system of relevant and meaningful indicators for quality in higher education with international benchmarks that can be referred to for decision-making purposes.
2. To have comprehensive as well as sectoral studies available that can incorporate data and figures from institutional and programme reviews, in line with international approaches.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. To formalise a frame of reference based on connections and collaborations established with experts and institutions.
- 1.2. To establish a system of indicators with an international equivalent and the participation of the different stakeholders.
- 2.1. To have a range of studies on university quality assurance that satisfy the needs of the stakeholders.
- 2.2. To have established guidelines for the structure and planning of quality assurance and system-wide analysis studies



STRATEGIC THEMES - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES - OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES**THEME 5: COMMUNICATION****VISION: AQU CATALUNYA IN 2012**

We contribute to society's understanding of quality in the higher education system and of the objectives, content and results of our activities through information that is accessible, clear, complete and up-to-date.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To achieve the writing up of reports and studies on the Agency's activity in a style that is clear and appropriate for and easily accessible to those concerned.
2. To achieve a better understanding by society of quality in the higher education system and the work of AQU Catalunya, whereby the importance of university quality and the Agency's commitment to its enhancement are made manifest.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure the adequacy of the content, style, format and consistency of information aimed at for different recipients.
2. To define and consistently apply the Agency's positioning statements aimed at each stakeholder group.

STRATEGIC THEMES - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES - OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

THEME 6: PEOPLE

VISION: AQU CATALUNYA IN 2012

We are an organisation with staff that is competent, motivated, satisfied and committed to carrying out their functions in a proactive way and in accordance with the AQU Catalunya code of ethics.

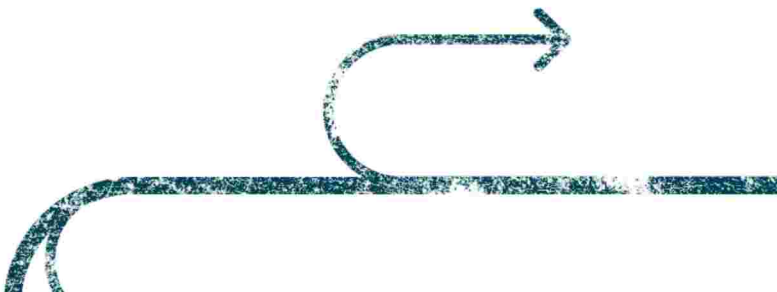
We have a team of recognised collaborators, including international experts, who receive appropriate briefing sessions according to the projects they are involved in and in accordance with the AQU Catalunya code of ethics.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To maintain and increase the level of technical and operational competency of AQU staff and their level of motivation, satisfaction and commitment.
2. To achieve an integrated management system for external collaborators and experts in order to increase the efficiency and quality of review processes.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. To redesign the selection and training processes, together with establishing mechanisms to assess AQU staff motivation and satisfaction.
- 1.2. To optimise the internal management of staff.
- 2.1. To develop the comprehensive plan for reviewers, which includes briefing sessions that deal with the quality assurance of the actual reviews themselves.



STRATEGIC THEMES - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES - OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

THEME 7: EXTERNAL RELATIONS

VISION: AQU CATALUNYA IN 2012

The Agency's presence in the sector of quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education stands out at both the national and international level and serves to reinforce the dissemination of the quality culture in the universities, as well as demonstrating the reliability of the external quality assurance system that is applied in Catalonia.

We promote an active policy of cooperation and alliances with the universities, quality assurance agencies and other institutions, which enhances the understanding of, and generates a climate of trust in, the actions carried out by AQU Catalunya.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To promote the internationalisation of the Agency's activity for the purposes of benchmarking, to demonstrate the Agency's technical capacity and to increase it with new knowledge.
2. To stimulate debate and the exchange of experience in order to reinforce the dissemination of the quality culture and increase the channels used by AQU to obtain benchmarks and other stakeholders in the higher education system involved in quality assurance and enhancement.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. To give impetus to joint review processes with other international agencies for establishing benchmarks.
- 1.2. To demonstrate the reliability of the techniques and methodologies used by AQU outside of the higher education system in Catalonia.
- 2.1. To be present in discussion forums and international organisations so as to maintain the technical competency of AQU staff and to take part in formulating new methodologies at the international scale.
- 2.2. To promote the organisation of seminars and congresses with the presence of universities and institutions in support of a wider dissemination of the elements that make up quality assurance systems.

STRATEGIC THEMES - STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES - OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

THEME 8: STUDENTS**VISION: AQU CATALUNYA IN 2012**

We are a referent for students with regard to the quality of degrees, qualifications and institutions of higher education.

We guarantee the participation of students in the Agency's activities, and we collaborate with the universities to encourage the involvement of students in enhancing higher education.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To collaborate with the universities in involving students as active stakeholders in the quality of university degree programmes.
2. To extend and systemise the participation of students in AQU Catalunya's review activities.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. To have available a plan for collaboration with universities to encourage students to become involved in enhancing the quality of degree programmes.
- 1.2. To improve the training and information for students on their active role in quality assurance processes.
- 1.3. To promote the networking of Catalan students with other European students.
- 2.1. To have available a programme on the participation of students in the activities of AQU Catalunya.
- 2.2. To establish a network of connections with different groups of students to promote participation in the activities of AQU Catalunya.

