

PLANNING OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2008

Although the AQU Catalunya activity plan for 2008 is essentially a continuation of most of the activities from 2007, it is highly subject to the following factors:

The implementation of Organic Law 4/2007, dated 12 April, amending Organic Law 6/2001, dated 21 December, on universities (LOMLOU) and the adaptation of Law 1/2003, dated 19 February, on universities in Catalonia (LUC) in line with the new legal system, which is expected to come into force before the end of the year. The LOMLOU currently affects the activities carried out by AQU Catalunya in the following areas:

- The incorporation of attached centres, which had hitherto been hindered by a loophole in the law, especially in terms of assessment and accreditation.
- The new national process for accreditation of officials, which may have an indirect bearing on processes for assessing hired university teaching staff conducted by AQU Catalunya, even though the agency is not directly involved in the national process itself.

Royal Decree 1393/2007, dated 29 October, determining the classification of official university degrees. On the basis of this new legal framework, AQU Catalunya will:

- Begin the process for monitoring new official degrees.
- Start preparing the methodology and procedure for accreditation of official masters and those pertaining to specific universities, which is already underway.
- Moreover, in the hope that negotiations between the Autonomous Government of Catalonia and the Spanish State will be successful in line with the spirit of Bologna, it is envisaged that AQU Catalunya will take on responsibility for assessing new masters and graduate degrees within the framework for cooperation between agencies which shall be set up by the General Board for University Policy.

The adaptation of universities to standards and guidelines aimed at assuring quality within the EHEA. This will entail:

- Continuing efforts to strengthen internal quality systems of Catalan universities by means of the AUDIT and SUPORT projects.
- Fostering student involvement in assessment processes.
- Furthering the process to improve the way results of assessments conducted by AQU Catalunya are made public.
- Incorporating AQU Catalunya into the forthcoming European register, possibly after the summer.

The results of external assessment conducted by AQU Catalunya in accordance with European standards and guidelines, and the recommendations set out therein. Some of these which may have a bearing on the working plan include:

- Improving the integration, coherence and cyclic activity for assessment conducted by AQU Catalunya, for which the preparation of a strategic plan for the agency has been put forward. Universities and the government of Catalonia are working in close conjunction with AQU Catalunya on this plan.
- Fostering assessment activities conducted at university institutions.
- Developing comprehensive concepts for the assessment, monitoring and accreditation of graduate courses and masters (which includes unofficial masters pertaining to specific universities).
- Enhancing technical activity carried out by AQU Catalunya in relation to quality assessment processes.
- Promoting the implementation of internal quality systems in universities (which is already taken into consideration in the AUDIT and SUPORT projects).
- Continuing to increase the number of assessors from outside the Catalan university system involved in all fields of assessment.
- Encouraging more studies to be produced on the university system.
- Boosting technological support offered in specific areas of AQU Catalunya which are currently overlooked or in need of improved coverage.

Moreover, a new aspect of this plan is that, following approval from the Commission for Universities and Research, AQU Catalunya has reached a consensus with private universities in order to implement a process for conducting assessment on the research merits of their lecturers using the same procedures currently employed for public universities.

Implementation of the activity plan will bring about a need to improve coherence in the internal operations of the organisation, which may entail reorganising the internal structure to a certain extent. However, it may also require strengthening the planning and monitoring of activities by means of projects, which began in 2007, and an improvement of technological support.

In short, although activity in relation to assessment of recruitment categories may decrease owing to national accreditation of officials, the remaining activities envisaged in this plan entail an increase in the overall activity carried out by AQU Catalunya. This will be difficult to conduct with the agency's current structure. As a result, full implementation of this plan is subject to internal reorganisation and the availability of resources.

Lastly, it is necessary to point out that AQU Catalunya may need to transfer its offices this year. If this is the case, regular progress of activities may be affected by both preparatory work and the transfer itself.