



Agència
per a la Qualitat
del Sistema Universitari
de **Catalunya**

ACTIVITIES REPORT 2008

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CONTENTS

1. INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES.....	3
A) ENQA	3
B) EQAR	3
C) Strategic plan	3
D) Cooperation	4
2. ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONS AND OF INSTITUTIONS	5
A) Quality of training programmes	5
B) Quality of institutions	7
C) AUDIT programme.....	8
3. ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING STAFF.....	9
A) Assessment preliminary to the process of selecting contracted teaching staff at the Catalan public universities	9
B) Assessment of teaching staff merits	11
C) Symposium on university teaching staff	13
4. OTHER STUDIES AND PROJECTS	15
A) Studies	15
B) Projects	16
5. FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANISATION	18
A) Communication and publications	18
B) Information and communication technologies.....	19
C) Internal quality.....	19
D) Human resources.....	19
E) Budget.....	20

1. INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES

A) ENQA

In 2008, AQU Catalunya has been an active participant in the working meetings of European scope devoted to discussing and developing aspects relating to external assurance of quality. Moreover, in September 2008 AQU Catalunya presented successfully its candidature to hold one of the 10 places on the Board of Directors of ENQA.

B) EQAR

The accession of AQU Catalunya to the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR¹) was formalised in December 2008, after an international external assessment which acknowledged its compliance with the European standards. In this way it has become one of the first three European agencies to form part of this register. Consequently, this new milestone is added to the fact that AQU Catalunya was the first quality agency to be certified according to standard ISO 9001 (2000) and to the fact that AQU Catalunya is a founding member (2000) and a full member (2007) of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

C) Strategic plan

The Agency has been working on the preparation of the AQU Catalunya Strategic Plan 2009-2012. The need which was detected internally to possess a strategic plan was strengthened by the recommendations of the ENQA external assessment, which suggested that a plan should be established which would vertebrate and lend continuity to our regular and cyclic activity. The preparation of this Plan is being carried out with the support and accompaniment of the UNESCO Chair on University Management of the Polytechnic University of Catalunya (UPC). The Plan defines eight strategic lines (management and organisation; assessment of teaching staff; assessment of institutions and degree standards; analysis of the university system; communication; persons; external relations and students) along which action should be taken, the mission of each of these lines, the strategic objectives and the operative objectives.

¹ EQAR is a register of quality agencies which operate in the EHEA, listing the agencies which are considered solvent, trustworthy and possessed of good credibility. Founded by the European associations which group universities and institutions of higher education, students and quality assurance agencies – EUA (European Universities Association), EURASHE (European Association of Institutions in Higher Education), ESU (European Students' Union) and ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) – its objective is the development of the EHEA through the increase of the degree of transparency in quality assurance.

D) Cooperation

AQU Catalunya holds periodical meetings with the Directorate-General of Universities, the vice-rectors and the members of the technical units of the Catalan universities in order to coordinate the common activities such as the assessment, monitoring and accreditation of official degree standards, the assessment of attached centres, the AUDIT programme, the accreditation of the teaching assessment manuals, the rules regulating the preliminary assessment for the exceptional contracting of collaborating lecturers, and the participation of students in the various quality assurance processes.

As a member of the Spanish Network of University Quality Agencies (REACU), AQU Catalunya has met to coordinate common matters and actions such as the assessment and training of assessors, the monitoring of official degree standards, and the role of the quality agencies in the assessment of degree standards, among others.

2. ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONS AND OF INSTITUTIONS

A) Quality of training programmes

Official post-graduate programmes

For the third consecutive year, AQU Catalunya has carried out the assessment *ex ante* of the academic dimension of the masters proposals to be put in place in the academic year 2008-2009.

Of the 79 proposals which were submitted, the academic commissions of AQU Catalunya assessed favourably 68, which represents 86% of the total. Of the proposals which were assessed unfavourably, the detected weaknesses were related to the training profile, the scientific-professional interest and significance of the proposal, the profile and criteria of access to the training programme and the teaching staff.

Table 1. Submitted masters proposals and assessment results, by fields of knowledge

Field	No. Prop.	% prop.	No. Fav.	% fav.	No. Unfav.	% unfav.
Experimental Sciences	12	15.2	10	14.7	2	18.2
Technology	11	13.9	10	14.7	1	9.1
Health Sciences	11	13.9	11	16.2	0	0
Social Sciences	30	38.0	25	36.8	5	45.5
Humanities	15	19.0	12	17.6	3	27.3
Total	79	-	68	86	11	14

Standing out in the assessment process of this call is the increase of assessors external to the Catalan university system, which represented 65% of the total, and the growing participation of international experts, which totalled 17%.

Table 2. Origin of the experts who participated in the assessment

	Number of experts	Percentage (%)
Catalunya	19	35.2
Rest of Spain	26	48.1
Other countries	9	16.7
Total	54	-
Total Catalunya	19	35%
Total outside Catalunya	35	65%

For the first time the assessment process of the official post-graduate programmes has included a phase of interaction with the persons in charge of the proposals in the cases in which the assessment result was *conditioned*, for the purpose of correcting and improving specific elements of these proposals.

Pilot plan for adaptation of degree standards to the EAHE

AQU Catalunya has begun the procedure for the certification of the degree standards implemented within the frame of the Pilot plan for adaptation to the EAHE. Aside from assuring the quality of these degree standards, the process was planned by AQU Catalunya for the purpose of generating recommendations which may be applied to the quality assurance of the official degree standards.

Nine Catalan universities participated, with 46 degree standards implemented in the academic year 2007-2008, of which 40 are of undergraduate character and 6 are masters. The result was a total of 43 certified degree standards.

Table 3. Degree standard certification results of the Pilot plan, by fields of knowledge

Field	No. Prop.	% prop.	No. Fav.	% fav.	No. Unfav.	% Unfav.
Experimental sciences	4	8.7	3	6.5	1	2.2
Technology	14	30.4	14	30.4	0	0.0
Health Sciences	3	6.5	2	4.3	1	2.2
Social Sciences	16	34.8	15	32.6	1	2.2
Humanities	9	19.6	9	19.6	0	0.0
Total	46	-	43	93.5	3	6.5

VIRTUAL programme

The VIRTUAL programme involves the assessment of virtual institutions and educations, taking as a model the teaching assessment system used up to now by AQU Catalunya, adapted to the peculiarities of virtual training and incorporating the international assessment specifications for this type of educations. This programme involves the assessment of online educations imparted in Catalunya and has two units of analysis:

- Institutional, in which the objectives, processes and centralised mechanisms of the university were assessed.
- Degree standards, in which the concretisation of objectives, the functioning of processes and the results in the field of the studies were assessed.

The Open University of Catalunya (UOC) is participating in the VIRTUAL programme. The degree standards of Management Computer Science Technical Engineering, Systems Computer Science Technical Engineering, the second cycle of Computer Science Engineering, Business Management Sciences, and Market Research and Techniques were assessed in 2008.

The following reports were published in August on the assessments which were completed:

- Institutional assessment of the Open University of Catalunya (UOC)
- Assessment of Law and Political Sciences Studies (UOC)
- Assessment of Psychology and Education Sciences Studies (UOC)

The experience of the assessment of the UOC was presented at the European Seminar on Quality Assurance in Higher Education at the Virtual Space, which took place in Madrid on 12th and 13th June and was organised by the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU), and at the 3rd European Quality Assurance Forum which was held at Budapest from 20 to 22 November 2008, organised by ENQA, EUA, EURASHE and ESU.

B) Quality of institutions

Libraries assessment programme

AQU Catalunya has closed the second assessment of the libraries of the Catalan universities with the publication of the report *Avaluació transversal dels serveis bibliotecaris* (Transverse Assessment of Library Services). All 7 public universities (UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdG, UdL and URV) and 3 of the private universities (UOC, UVic, UAO) of the Catalan university system participated in the assessment.

This second assessment – the first one took place in the year 2002 – was characterised by the need of adaptation of the centres to the EAHE; consequently, emphasis was placed on the new context and on the service and the research orientation of the library services. Likewise, the need was detected to update the indicators map and the information on the set of information resources which a university possesses, in order to obtain in this way a comprehensive view of the libraries in Catalunya.

The assessment of the library services was presented at the University Symposium on Quality and Libraries which, organised by the University Libraries Network (REBIUN), took place in Huesca from 16th to 19th June.

Attached centres assessment programme

AQU Catalunya carries out the institutional assessment of the attached centres which submit new proposals of degrees to be implemented in the next academic year 2009-2010. Accordingly, in the year 2008, through an *ad hoc* commission, AQU Catalunya has established the objectives, the scope and the criteria for this process, and it has worked on the preparation of the assessment protocols.

The documents *Programa d'avaluació de centres adscrits. Guia d'avaluació interna* (Attached centres assessment programme. Internal assessment guide) and *Programa d'avaluació de centres adscrits. Guia d'avaluació externa* (Attached centres assessment programme. External assessment guide) have been prepared and published.

The following centres are participating in the first assessment:

- Higher School of Cinema and Audiovisuals of Catalunya (UB)
- Higher School of Public Relations (UB)
- Design and Art School EINA (UAB)
- Massana School (UAB)
- Image and Multimedia Technology Centre (UPC)

- University School of Nursing Del Mar (UPF)
- University School of Physical Therapy Garbí (UdG)
- University School of Tourism CETA (UdG)
- University School of Tourism Euroaula (UdG)
- University School of Tourism of Sant Pol de Mar (UdG)
- University School of Labour Relations (UdL)
- Higher Aviation Studies Centre (URV)
- Higher School of Design ESDI (URL)

C) AUDIT programme

The AUDIT programme, which is unfolded jointly by ANECA, ACSUG and AQU Catalunya, has the objective of assessing, before their implementation, the adequacy of the internal quality assurance systems (SGIQ) of the university training centres. In later developments, the AUDIT programme plans to carry out the monitoring and certification of the implemented SGIQs, in accordance with the requirements of the European standards.

Twenty centres of eight Catalan universities participated in the first call.

Table 4. First call of the AUDIT programme: assessed centres

University	Centre	Result
UB	Faculty of Chemistry	Positive
	Faculty of Psychology	Positive
	Faculty of Library Science and Documentation	Positive
	Faculty of Communication Sciences Blanquerna	Positive
	Business Management and Administration School and Faculty of Law	Positive
UIC	Faculty of Social Sciences	Positive

AQU Catalunya has established the procedure and the times of the call for 2009. A novelty which stands out is that the participating universities, aside from presenting specific SGIQ models designed and adapted to the characteristics and peculiarities of each participating centre, may also “transport” the results of the assessment of general university models to the centres, both for general models assessed in the previous call and for new general models not yet assessed.

3. ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING STAFF

A) Assessment preliminary to the process of selecting contracted teaching staff at the Catalan public universities

In order to be admitted to the selection processes for access as contracted teachers to the Catalan public universities, the interested persons shall possess a favourable preliminary report (in the case of the categories of tenure-track lecturer and collaborating lecturer), and a research or advanced research accreditation for the categories of tenured assistant professor and full professor, respectively².

The new figure of collaborating lecturer

In 2008, AQU Catalunya ceased to make assessments for the issuance of preliminary reports for collaborating lecturers since the rules left the articles regulating this figure devoid of content³. Nevertheless, the Government has regulated the exceptional contracting of collaborating lecturers⁴ among diplomates, technical architects or technical engineers in order to cover isolated teaching needs which cannot be met through the rest of the employment contracting modalities. Likewise, the persons interested in this figure shall possess a favourable preliminary report issued by an external assessment body such as AQU Catalunya.

AQU Catalunya has prepared the procedure, set the criteria and published the resolution for issuing reports preliminary to selection for the contracting of collaborating lecturers at the public universities for the year 2009⁵.

Assessment of teaching and research personnel of the private universities and the attached centres

The Catalan private universities and AQU Catalunya have signed an agreement for the purpose of including the assessment of the teaching staff of these centres under the same terms as in the issuance processes of the preliminary reports for tenure-track lecturers, research accreditations and advanced research accreditations. The assessments made in accordance with the previous methodology, between the years 2003 and 2007, will have the same effects with respect to the recognition of the external assessment requirements as the assessments made from 2008.

² Act 1/2003, of 19th February, on universities of Catalunya.

³ Organic act 4/2007, of 12th April, modifying Organic act 6/2001, of 21st December, on universities.

⁴ Royal decree 989/2008, of 13th June, regulating the exceptional contracting of collaborating lecturers.

⁵ Resolution IUE/3972/2008, of 18th December, by which publicity is given to the procedure for the issuance of the reports preliminary to selection for the contracting of collaborating lecturers at the public universities for the year 2009.

Results of the assessments carried out⁶

Table 5. Results of tenure-track lecturer calls

Field of knowledge	TR	CWR	F	U	AA	DA	PA	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	100	2	69	25	0	0	4	69	29	70
Social Sciences	185	2	79	74	0	6	24	79	104	43
Sciences	84	1	70	12	0	0	1	70	13	84
Life Sciences	70	1	24	38	0	5	2	24	45	35
Medical Sciences	95	1	44	38	1	3	8	45	49	48
Engineering and Architecture	104	2	77	21	0	1	3	77	25	75
TOTAL	638	9	363	208	1	15	42	364	265	58

Table 6. Results of research accreditation calls

Field of knowledge	TR	CWR	F	U	AA	DA	PA	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	65	2	32	25	0	0	6	32	31	51
Social Sciences	74	2	25	40	0	0	7	25	47	35
Sciences	71	6	46	16	0	1	2	46	19	71
Life Sciences	41	0	20	18	0	1	2	20	21	49
Medical Sciences	85	9	28	44	0	0	4	28	48	37
Engineering and Architecture	79	3	36	32	0	0	8	36	40	47
TOTAL	415	22	187	175	0	2	29	187	206	48

Table 7. Results of advanced research accreditation calls

Field of knowledge	TR	CWR	F	U	AA	DA	PA	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	13	2	7	4	0	0	0	7	4	64
Social Sciences	17	0	13	4	0	0	0	13	4	76
Sciences	31	0	19	9	1	2	0	20	11	65
Life Sciences	9	0	7	2	0	0	0	7	2	78
Medical Sciences	24	1	11	9	0	0	3	11	12	48
Engineering and Architecture	22	2	7	11	1	0	1	8	12	40
TOTAL	116	5	64	39	2	2	4	66	45	59

⁶ TR: total requests; CWR: closed without resolution; F: favourable; U: unfavourable; AA: allowed appeals; DA: dismissed appeals; PA: pending appeals; TF: total favourable; TU: total unfavourable; %F: percentage favourable versus total.

B) Assessment of teaching staff merits

The assignment of remunerative complements to both the contracted and public-official teaching staff of the Catalan public universities is tied to the assessment of individual teaching, research and management merits⁷. AQU Catalunya has established the requirements which shall be met by the model for assessment of teaching and management merits and the procedure and criteria for assessment of research merits.

Certification of the assessment of teaching merits

The Catalan universities assess the individual teaching merits of their public-official and contracted teaching staff, applying the respective teaching assessment manuals. The manuals have been prepared according to the general criteria approved by the Interuniversity Council of Catalonia and the indications of AQU Catalunya and, subsequently, AQU Catalunya has certified them according to the procedure established for this purpose. Once the teaching staff has been assessed, the university submits to AQU Catalunya the assessment reports so that it may certify that the assessment has been carried out according to the manuals in force. This year the respective teaching assessment manuals of Pompeu Fabra University (UPF) and the Open University of Catalunya (UOC) have been certified.

Results

Table 8. Call 2007

Potential requests	Total requests	%	Positive	%	Negative	%	Favourable/potential
2217	1205	54.35	1166	96.76	39	3.24	52.59

Accreditation of teaching assessment manuals

The procedure has been established⁸ and the accreditation has been started of the assessment process contained in the teaching assessment manuals of the Catalan public universities, which will entail, in the case of a favourable assessment, the accreditation of the manuals for a period of five years. The universities which have requested the accreditation of their manuals are: University of Barcelona (UB), Autonomous University of Barcelona (AUB), Polytechnic University of Catalunya (UPC), Pompeu Fabra University (UPF), University of Girona (UdG), University of Lleida (UdL) and Rovira i Virgili University (URV).

⁷ Decree 405/2006, approving the regulations on the additional remunerations of the public-official and contracted teaching and research personnel of the public universities of Catalunya.

⁸ Resolution IUE/2436/2008, of 25th July, making public the instructions for accreditation of the teaching assessment manuals of the Catalan public universities.

Recognition of assessments in the ACADEMIA programme

The results of the teaching assessment at the Catalan public universities in the period 2003-2007 are recognised in the ACADEMIA programme of ANECA⁹, since the universities possess assessment mechanisms certified by AQU Catalunya.

Issuance of assessment certificates of teaching activity

The certification or assessment of the teaching activity of teaching staff, aside from being one of the requirements which, if appropriate, may be established by the universities in the competitions for access to the categories of tenured assistant professor and full professor, also allow participation in programmes for promotion of teaching staff at the public universities of Catalunya. 88 requests were received, 87 of which were resolved favourably.

Assessment of research merits

The Agency assesses directly individual research merits on the basis of the established procedure and criteria. The specific criteria for the assessment of the research activity of the teaching and research staff of the public universities of Catalunya¹⁰ have been revised and made public.

AQU Catalunya has an agreement signed with the National Commission for the Assessment of Research Activity (CNEAI) by which recognition is granted to all the assessments, positive or negative, which are made by this commission on the research activity of the university teaching staff who have requested it.

Results¹¹

Table 9. Public-official teaching and research personnel, call for year 2008

	TR	CWR	F	U	AA	PA	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	70	6	59	3	0	2	59	5	92
Social Sciences	117	8	100	8	0	1	100	9	92
Sciences	166	2	162	2	0	0	162	2	99
Life Sciences	48	1	47	0	0	0	47	0	100
Medical Sciences	135	8	124	3	0	0	124	3	98
Engineering and Architecture	129	9	115	5	0	0	115	5	96
Total	665	34	607	21	0	3	607	24	96

⁹ ACADEMIA: National accreditation programme of public-official university teaching staff which provides for the assessment of the quality of teaching activity (Point 2.B.1) and establishes that, in order to achieve the maximum score, consideration will be given to assessments made "according to reference models and methodologies".

¹⁰ Resolution 3750/2008, of 9th December, making public the specific criteria for the assessment of research activity of the teaching and research personnel of the public universities of Catalunya for the assignment of additional complements.

¹¹ In the assessment of research merits, the results refer to requested ranges and not to requesting persons. TR: total requests; CWR: closed without resolution; F: favourable; U: unfavourable; AA: allowed appeals; DA: dismissed appeals; PA: pending appeals; TF: total favourable; TU: total unfavourable; %F: percentage favourable versus total.

Table 10. Contracted teaching and research personnel, call for year 2008

	TR	CWR	F	U	AA	DA	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	44	5	25	6	2	6	27	12	69
Social Sciences	75	6	36	22	1	10	37	32	54
Sciences	88	7	73	4	0	4	73	8	90
Life Sciences	82	11	66	2	0	3	66	5	93
Medical Sciences	49	0	38	8	0	3	38	11	78
Engineering and Architecture	107	10	56	29	2	10	58	39	60
Total	445	39	294	71	5	36	299	107	74

Agreement with the University of Extremadura

AQU Catalunya has signed an agreement with the University of Extremadura (UEX) to assess the research activity of its indefinitely contracted teaching and research personnel. The assessment bodies and criteria are the same as those which AQU Catalunya applies in the assessment of the research merits of the teaching staff of the Catalan universities. A total of 115 requests have been assessed, 65% of which have proved favourable.

Certification of management merits

The Catalan universities assess the individual management merits of their public-official and contracted teaching staff, applying the instructions for this assessment which have been approved by AQU Catalunya and the Directorate-General of Universities. Once the teaching staff have been assessed, the university submits the assessment reports to the Agency so that it may certify that the assessment complies with the aforementioned instructions.

Results

Table 11. Call for year 2007

Block periods	Favourable	Unfavourable	1st block period	2nd block period	3rd block period	4th block period
327	327	0	153	88	51	35

C) Symposium on university teaching staff

On 16th and 17th October, the University of Girona was the site of the tenth holding of the AQU Catalunya symposium for reflection and discussion on university teaching staff in 2015: profile, attachment and assessment, which was attended by over 130 people from the Catalan universities and prominent figures from the university system and the Catalan and Spanish Administrations.

The symposium was structured in two main blocks: one presented the management experiences of teaching staff from the United Kingdom and Germany, while the other featured three round tables aimed to contribute visions of the future of the teaching staff from diverse standpoints – the assessment bodies, the teaching collective and the public sphere.

4. OTHER STUDIES AND PROJECTS

A) Studies

Access to the labour market of university graduates

Since the year 2001, AQU Catalunya, encouraged by the social councils, has been carrying out a cyclic study on university graduates. This year the third survey on access to the labour market of the graduates of the Catalan universities has been finished. The study has based its analysis on a sample of 53% of the graduates of the class of 2003-2004 of the seven Catalan public universities (UB, UAB, UPC, UPF, UdG, UdL, URV), UVic and UOC. A total of 12,553 graduates have been surveyed, which allows an analysis broken down according to the majority of the degree standards.

A notable novelty of this study is that it has been based on three surveys:

- **Graduates 2003-2004.** An analysis has been made of the quality of the access to the labour market of the graduates of the class 2003-2004 (except in the case of the Medicine degree standard, for which the graduates were from the class of 2000-2001), with the evaluation which the respective graduates make of the training which they received, three years later.
- **Ph.D. graduates 2003-2004.** An analysis has been made of the quality of the access to the labour market of the Ph.D. graduates who defended their theses in the years 2003 and 2004, with the evaluation which the respective doctors make of the training which they received, three years later.
- **Monitoring of Humanities 2000-2001.** An analysis has been made of the quality of the access to the labour market of the Humanities graduates who, in the second edition of the access to the labour market survey (year 2005) presented employment situations inappropriate to their training.

The results have allowed the development of two studies, both of which may be consulted at the website of AQU Catalunya:

- Third study on the labour market outcomes of graduates of the Catalan Universities, 2008
- Study on the access to the labour market of the Ph.D. graduates of the Catalan Universities, 2008

The results of the first of these studies were presented at a press conference.

Within the frame of access to the labour market, the “Symposium on Good practices in the management of employment transition: a reflection for the implantation of a common portal of graduates for the Catalan university system” was held at Pompeu Fabra University (UPF). Its purpose was to discuss the suitability of considering the building of a common web portal with

the updated CVs of the graduates of the Catalan university system in order to improve the available information on their transition to the labour market.

Guides for skills assessment within the frame of the EAHE

Taking as a starting point the implementation of accreditation processes of the official university degree standards of the Catalan university system, AQU Catalunya is coordinating the development of guides for the assessment of skills in diverse thematic fields:

Table 12. List of skills assessment guides

Guides	Status
For skills assessment in the Humanities area	Finalised
For skills assessment in the Social Sciences area	In process
For skills assessment in the Mathematics and Experimental Sciences area	Finalised
For skills assessment in the Life, Medicine and Health Sciences area	Finalised
For skills assessment in the Engineering and Architecture area	In process
For skills assessment in Sciences and Technology laboratories	In process
For skills assessment in Social Sciences field studies	Finalised
For skills assessment in Social Sciences graduation projects	In process
For skills assessment in Engineering and Architecture graduation projects	Finalised

With the aim to obtain a deeper knowledge and diagnosis of the Catalan university system and to generate precise contextualised frames of reference on points of special interest and social repercussion, AQU Catalunya has coordinated the development of the following studies:

Table 13. List of studies

Studies	Status
To analyse the quality of education from the students' standpoint	In process
To analyse the pertinent data and causes of university student dropouts	In process
On the academic performance of first-year university students	In process

B) Projects

European projects

AQU participates in the coordinating group of the ENQA project Quality Procedures in the European Higher Education Area and Beyond, addressed to identifying the quality assurance structures and procedures established by the agencies associated in ENQA, with respect to both their status and responsibilities, and the activities and resources which are used. The result of the project has materialised in the form of a document which is today a reference for a

knowledge of the European scene in matters of external assurance of quality in higher education.

AQU Catalunya participates in the Quality Assurance for the Higher Education Change Agenda project (QAHECA) coordinated by the European Universities Association (EUA), which has the support of the European Commission through the Lifelong Learning Programme. The objective of this project is to determine which processes of institutional quality for education and learning help to foster the existence of creative and innovative institutions of higher education, as well as to delimit the potential problematic effects of these processes.

AQU Catalunya is a member of the Internal Quality Agencies Systems group of ENQA, in which the internal quality systems implemented in the European quality agencies are analysed and studied. Within the frame of this project, the seminar “Internal QA-systems and the ESG” was held in Barcelona on 14th and 15th April, the objectives of which were to deepen the knowledge of the strong points and weak points of the internal quality systems implemented in the agencies (ISO, EFQM, a combination of the two, etc), to discuss the meaning of the European standard for the quality agencies with respect to accountability procedures, and to reflect on the possible improvement of the accountability standard in order to adapt it to the daily quality assurance practices of the agencies.

Other international projects

AQU Catalunya has finalised the assessment of six educations in the fields of Social Sciences and Technology offered by the University of Guadalajara (UDG), Mexico’s second-largest public university by number of enrolled students. The assessment methodology proper to a European university system, as is the Catalan system, has been applied, and the results of the assessment have been placed at the disposal of ENQA to be shared with the rest of the European agencies as one of the first transnational assessment experiences with the use of European standards and guidelines. A fruit of this project has been the publication of the report *Avaluant a Mèxic amb mètodes i criteris europeus* (Assessing Mexico with European methods and criteria) and six other reports with the respective assessment results for each degree standard.

5. FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANISATION

A) Communication and publications

AQU Catalunya has updated its web site with the aim to incorporate new technological features and usability and accessibility criteria, as well as to improve the design of this virtual space.

The activity of the web site in 2008 may be summarised with the following data:

- 30,760 visits.¹²
- 161,041 pages visited¹³, notably including the page for the issuance of preliminary reports for tenure-track lecturer (3,739) and the page for the issuance of research accreditations (2,767).
- 6,324 files downloaded¹⁴, mainly including the following files:

Table 14. Number of downloads per file

File	No. downloads
Request for assessment of research activity	32,865
Curriculum vitae. Standard form (LEC/COL)	6,611
Call for the procedure of selection of external provision of jobs, under the fixed employment system	5,882
Request for report for tenure-track lecturer	3,739
Criteria for the issuance of tenure-track lecturer reports	2,767

The quarterly bulletin and the monthly electronic bulletin have been merged in *elButlletí d'AQU Catalunya* (AQU Catalunya bulletin), which appears bimonthly in a trilingual edition (Catalan, Spanish, English) with the aim to provide a single more powerful and attractive instrument for the Catalan university community.

elButlletí is distributed by e-mail to some 3,500 persons of the Catalan university community and to the network of European agencies, experts in the field of quality assurance, and the communication media. 28 requests for subscription were received in the year 2008.

One of the most acknowledged activities of AQU Catalunya is the publication of studies and reports resulting from the activities and studies which it carries out. 25 publications and 9 assessment guides have been published and are available at the web site of AQU Catalunya. Annex 3 lists the publications which have been generated by AQU Catalunya in the year 2008.

¹² A visit is a series of actions which begins when a visitors views the home page of the server and which ends when visitors leave the web site or remain inactive beyond the inactivity time limit.

¹³ Any page which is visited.

¹⁴ The number of times which visitors have downloaded a specific file.

B) Information and communication technologies

In the management field, the new corporate web site of AQU Catalunya and the associated contents manager have been put in place. Additionally, an application has been developed for the management of digital documents (digital library). Likewise, a statistical platform of access to the labour market surveys has been developed and put in place, and the quality assessment module of the Agency's own application has been expanded in order to manage the verification assessments of the official degree standards proposed by the universities. Lastly, a monitoring has been carried out on the correct functioning of the implantation of the programme for public companies of the Catalan Government (Generalitat), based on the SAP R/3 program, and support has been provided for the implantation of the cash pooling system.

In the field of systems, the updating of the infrastructures of servers, communications, storage and backup copies of AQU Catalunya has been defined and contracted with the aim to adapt them to the new technologies, to assure the efficient management of technological resources and to define and put in place the systems policies in accordance with the measures established by the Organic Act on Data Protection¹⁵ and also those derived from the security audit. The requirements for the migration of the new exchange and terminals have also been defined and the actions required for their implantation have been carried out. Lastly, the voice and image recording systems based on cordless connectivity for AQU Catalunya as a whole have been acquired, together with systems for habilitating multimedia rooms.

C) Internal quality

The monitoring audit of the quality management system based on standard ISO 9001:2000 has been favourably passed. This milestone reflects the commitment, expressed by the Board of Directors through the quality policy, with respect to the quality of the activities and the functioning of AQU Catalunya.

Moreover, the programming of the activities by projects has been consolidated and the monitoring system of work loads has been incorporated into AQU Catalunya with the aim to evidence a better traceability, control and management of activities.

D) Human resources

Three calls (two for fixed contracts and one for interim contracts) have been carried out to cover and regularise jobs, in accordance with what has been approved by the Standing Committee¹⁶ of AQU Catalunya. Specifically, 2 vacancies have been filled and 12 jobs have been regularised.

The HR policy has continued to be developed, to which end the profiles, functions and skills of each of the jobs have been described.

¹⁵ Organic act 15/1999, dated 13th December, on protection of data of personal character.

¹⁶ Resolution of the Standing Committee of AQU Catalunya of 8 May 2008.

The calendar has been established for the negotiation of the employment system and terms of the employed personnel of AQU Catalunya, which has been denounced by the workers' representatives.

E) Budget

AQU Catalunya has been the first agency of the Catalan Government (Generalitat) to put in place the Kit for public companies of the Catalan Government, based on the program SAP R/3, which allows a significant improvement of the automation and control of economic and accounting management as well as the unification of the three accounting systems: financial, budgetary and project-based.

AQU Catalunya has adapted all its accounting management to the new General Accounting Plan and has put in place, in accordance with the directives of the Catalan Government, the new corporate cash pooling system, which optimises the Catalan Government's balances.

The definitive budget for 2008 has been the following:

Table 15. Definitive income

Definitive budget. Income	Amount in €
Charges, Assets and other services	43,034.90€
Current transfers	3,087,574.42€
Patrimonial income	51,000.00€
Variation of financial assets	625,255.07€
Total	3,806,864.39 €

Table 16. Definitive expenses

Definitive budget. Expenses	Amount in €
Remunerations of personnel	1,576,784.72€
Expenses of current assets and services	1,920,565.21€
Financial expenses	0.00€
Current transfers	110,959.40€
Real investments	198,555.06€
Total	3,806,864.39 €

The Deputy Directorate-General of Financial Control of the Department of Economy and Finance of the Catalan Government has carried out the financial audit for financial year 2007.