



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



Student Involvement in QA processes: *The Catalan experience*

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Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Facts and figures on HE in Catalonia and AQU Catalunya
- 1.2. AQU Catalunya and the students
- 1.3. State of the art and student participation in Catalan universities

2. The project: *Promoting student participation in programme evaluations*. Training courses

3. Conclusions & Future actions

1.1. Facts and figures on HE in Catalonia and AQU Catalunya

| Catalan HE system | AQU Catalunya |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 11 universities (7 public, 3 private, 1 Open) ▪ Students: 231,000 (Total population of Catalonia: approx. 7 million) ▪ Teaching staff: 15,233 ▪ Study programmes: 450 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 years involved in quality evaluation (programme level) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - as a consortium from 1996-2003 - legally established from 2003 onwards ▪ ENQA founder member ▪ Main activities: Evaluation, certification, accreditation ▪ Staff: 30 ▪ Budget: €2.5 million ▪ MAIN GOAL: To promote Quality working jointly |

1.2. AQU Catalunya and students

From 1996 to 2004:

- Admissions evaluation 1999
- Graduate surveys 2001-2005
- General frameworks: student complaints and claims, learning evaluation, etc.
- Presence of students on internal committees
- Presence of young graduates on external evaluation committees

From 2004 to the present time:

- Project to promote student participation: training courses
- Participation in external committees (programme/degree evaluation)

1.3.State of the art and student participation in Catalonia

Diagnose

Student participation in decision-making bodies is regulated by law
However, students DO NOT request it
Need to promote student participation

Low-level participation in HE:

- High level of abstention in elections
- Associations with few members (ESIB?)
- Sporadic protest actions
- Participation in NGOs

Why?

- Current trend in society towards individualism
- Students are just “passing through”
- The feeling that it is impossible to influence the running of the university
- Endogamy (close shop) between student associations
- Highly absorbing academic life

2. The project: Promoting student participation in programme evaluations: WHY? (1/6)

- SHIFT FROM “USERS” TO COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS
- Theoretical point of view:
 - Evaluation + Participation = Success
 - Need to promote the training of all stakeholders
 - Need for students and teaching staff to discuss the new culture
- European trends:
 - Berlin Communiqué (Sept.2003)
 - Bergen Communiqué (May 2005)
 - ENQA Standards
 - EUA reports
 - New Spanish and Catalan legislation on universities

2. Project: *Course to promote student participation: Goals (2/6)*

TRAINING COURSES

2 Envisaged outcomes:

- **Short-term:** Enrol students as external evaluators of AQU (programme/degree evaluations)
No professional body
- **Long-term:** Promote the active participation of students in the decision-making bodies

- **Institutional goals:**
 - Set up a group of experts to develop the content and methodology of these training courses
 - Collect, analyse and disseminate good practices for student participation in QA
 - Create awareness among all stakeholders
- **Budget:**
 - 2005: 20,000€
 - 2006: 12,000€
- **References:**
 - Nordic project in student involvement
 - ESIB reports

2. Project: *Course to promote student participation*: The role of the stakeholders (3/6)

| Students | Universities | AQU |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in training courses ▪ Participate in external evaluations ▪ Give feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approval of the project by the Vice-Rectors committee ▪ Selection of students/staff ▪ Boost the project ▪ Organise training courses for students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appoint a team of experts to design the project ▪ Collect international good practices ▪ Management of external evaluations ▪ Funding for the project |

5. Project: *Course to promote student participation* : Designing the course (4/6)

Issues:

- **Which student profile?**
 - Young people in the process of training are not permanent in the institution
 - Open / selected profile

- **What kind of training?**
 - Start from zero
 - Added value (attractiveness)

- **What kind of participation?**
 - As an instrument
 - Formal
 - External
 - Semi-professional

5. Project: *Course to promote student participation: Designing the course (5/6)*

Objectives:

- realistic (20-30 h), 1 week (cohesive)
- balance between students and institution interests

Content selection and sequence

- Cognitive: HE system, purpose of evaluations
- Attitudes: self-confidence, assertiveness
- Procedure: protocols

Training methodology

- Practical and participatory

Evaluation

- Formative

Team of trainers

- Dynamic and a facilitator profile
- Team of trainers working in the same direction

4. Project: *Course to promote student participation: Courses held (6/6)*

| Date | University | Students | Focus |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------|--|
| July 2005 (1 week, 20 h) | UAB | 35 | External evaluators Promoting participation The Finnish experience |
| July 2006 (1 week, 20 h) | UAB | 30 | Design of study programmes from the students' point of view ESIB representative |
| July 2006 (1 week, 20 h) | UdL | 18 | External evaluators Sharing of experience in QA between students and teachers |

- Recognition for students: 3 credits (-/+ 1 c ECTS)
- Inter-university: course open to all students (mobility grants)

3. Conclusions and future actions (1/2)

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shared experience ▪ Materials ▪ Credibility: of QA processes ▪ Expertise ▪ Accepted by the community ▪ New skills ▪ Reward | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low-level participation in HE ▪ Start-up experience ▪ Modest/small scale ▪ The high turnover of students + need of permanent training ▪ No unions involved (yet) |

3. Conclusions and future actions (2/2)

Creating a network to strengthen student participation:

