



Agència  
per a la Qualitat  
del Sistema Universitari  
de Catalunya

# AQU CATALUNYA QUALITY LABELS AND THE CONDITIONS OF USE

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## 1. CONTEXT

With its mission to reinforce and underpin the Catalan university model and its international projection, and to contribute to its quality assurance and enhancement, AQU Catalunya is a key channel for university policy in Catalonia.

With the European Union facing the strategic challenges of quality enhancement, attracting a broader cross-section of society into higher education and learning and meeting labour market needs<sup>1</sup>, one of the instruments available to it for dealing with these challenges is external quality assurance agencies like AQU Catalunya.

The fact that AQU Catalunya is listed with the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) means that all programme reviews undertaken by the Agency in Catalonia, Spain and abroad are recognised by international authorities, which facilitates mobility and academic cooperation in Catalan universities, as laid down in the EU's 2020 strategy.


AQU Catalunya is committed to disseminating the results and outcomes of programme and institutional review to society, as it already does through the [EUC](#) and [EUC Reports](#) web portals, and quality labels and seals are an element that serves to easily identify programmes of study and institutions that have successfully undergone external review by AQU Catalunya.

## 2. OBJECTIVE








On 8 July 2014 the Agency's then Board of Management endorsed the creation of AQU Catalunya's first quality labels. AQU Catalunya quality labels, together with the conditions for their use, are an instrument that helps programmes and institutions that successfully undergo the corresponding review and evaluation procedure to stand out and be distinctive.

## 3. ESTABLISHED QUALITY LABELS

The following AQU Catalunya quality labels have so far been established:

| Certification of:               | Languages   | Labels established  |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---|
| Programme ex-ante accreditation | CAT, SP, EN |  |

<sup>1</sup> *Report on Progress in Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Council and the Committee of the Regions, 28.01.2014).

| Certification of:   | Languages   | Labels established  |
|---|-------------|---|
| <b>Programme accreditation</b>  | CAT, SP, EN | <br><br> |
| <b>Certification of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)</b>                                | CAT, SP, EN |    |
| <b>Quality assurance of research at department level</b>  | CAT, SP, EN | <br>  |
| <b>Accreditation of an International Educational Facility for Cooperation and Academic Mobility</b> | SP, EN      |    |

Each AQU Catalunya quality label includes a registration number and comes with the corresponding certificate<sup>2</sup>.

Programmes of study that receive an unfavourable report following evaluation by AQU Catalunya, but that have been validated (ex-ante accreditation) or accredited by the Spanish Universities Council (Consejo de Universidades), will not be associated with an ex-ante accreditation or accreditation quality label. In such cases, an unfavourable report is posted on

<sup>2</sup> A certificate is not issued in the case of programme ex-ante accreditation (programme validation).

the [EUC Reports](#) web portal, with the following text appearing on the [EUC](#) portal: Validation (ex-ante accreditation) or Accreditation issued by the Spanish Universities Council (Consejo de Universidades).

## 4. SCOPE

Quality labels and certificates are non-transferable to any other programme or institution other than the programme or institution that has successfully undergone evaluation and review by AQU Catalunya, nor can they be extended or transferred to cover units or fields of study outside of the scope of the review.

Use of a quality label is not permitted in the following cases:

- an accreditation procedure is in the process of being processed, with the exception of the renewal of accreditation<sup>3</sup>.
- the outcome of the review procedure is unfavourable.
- in the case of programmes, where there has been a substantial modification that calls for a new ex-ante accreditation (validation).
- accreditation and/or certification has/have been either temporarily or definitively suspended or withdrawn.
- where the period of validity has expired.
- where it is used for something other than its intended purpose.

In no case shall the obtaining of a quality label discharge a programme or institution that has successfully undergone review from the corresponding guarantees and responsibilities in accordance with current legislation, regardless of the type of quality label. Furthermore, AQU Catalunya shall not be responsible for non-compliance with legislation affecting quality labels.

## 5. PERIOD OF VALIDITY

Use of quality labels and certificates is allowed during the period of validity, in accordance with the stipulations of the corresponding review guide. In cases where a quality label has not been renewed, or where it has been withdrawn on justified grounds, it can no longer be used and it is the responsibility of the programme or institution to remove the label immediately from all communication media and platforms where it has been applied.

It is the responsibility of the programme or institution to carry out all necessary actions to ensure that the conditions for maintaining the validity of a quality label and certificate are fulfilled.

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<sup>3</sup> This is only applicable subsequent to a first renewal of accreditation (reaccreditation).

## 6. USE

Quality labels are the property of AQU Catalunya and are registered at both national and European level. They are therefore legally protected by legislation relating to trade marks. The EUIPO registered trademark is 013316153.

### General criteria

Those responsible for programmes and institutions that have successfully undergone evaluation and review may use a quality label that has been awarded by AQU Catalunya for distinction or other purposes, such as promotion.

As regards usage, the quality label should appear on the programme or institution's website with a link to the review report that shows eligibility to use the label. In the case of recognised programmes of study from Catalan higher education institutions, the quality label should be linked to the corresponding page of the [estudis.aqu.cat](http://estudis.aqu.cat) portal.

The application of a quality label must be clear and honest and should avoid the risk of any confusion.

Quality labels may be used in graphic and audio-visual material and products that promote a programme or institution that has been favourably reviewed.

Quality labels must be reproduced according to the specified size, colours, typography and shapes, and the content must be legible. The adaptation, versions or the ambiguous application of a quality label are not permitted, and when a quality award is used together with other logos and/or distinctions it should be positioned with sufficient clear space and in such a way as to ensure its clear visibility.

In the case where a quality label is used together with the AQU Catalunya logo, the guidelines given in the [Guide to the AQU Catalunya logo](#) are to be followed.

### Communication media and platforms

Provided they are used in a way that is consistent with the scope of the corresponding evaluation and review, quality labels may be used in:

- Reports, posters, brochures and pamphlets, presentations, correspondence
- Corporate advertising, websites, e-mails, social networks
- Signs, flags, corporate banners
- Exhibitions and other dissemination materials

## 7. OVERSIGHT

It is the duty of AQU Catalunya to ensure that quality labels are used correctly and in the case of improper use<sup>4</sup> the Agency will begin informative proceedings, which will be referred to the corresponding programme coordinator or institutional authority for any supporting arguments or representations to be submitted (either in person or in writing).

The outcome of the hearing process may lead to a written warning saying that the conditions for use of the quality label must be respected. In more serious cases or where a warning goes unheeded, AQU Catalunya will initiate the corresponding legal proceedings and, where applicable, inform other bodies, institutions and, where appropriate, the media of the facts.

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<sup>4</sup> Improper use refers to non-compliance with the terms and conditions laid down here, together with any others that may alter the meaning and/or value of the quality label and/or negatively affect the reputation of AQU Catalunya.

## ANNEX 1. CERTIFICATES

### CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION CERTIFICATE (NO ADDITIONAL DIMENSION)

### CERTIFICATE NUMBER: XX-XXXXX-201X

The Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency/AQU Catalunya certifies that the recognised study programme:

#### **Type (BACHELOR/MASTER'S/DOCTORATE)/Name of the degree/Faculty/University**

has passed the evaluation and review laid down in the Guide to the Accreditation of Recognised Bachelor and Master's Degree Programmes, endorsed by AQU Catalunya's Institutional and Programme Review Commission, with the following outcome:

#### **Accreditation with excellence**

#### **Accreditation**

#### **Accreditation with conditions**

This certificate is valid for six years for Bachelor and doctorate degrees, and four years for Master's degrees.

Barcelona, XX XXXX, XXXX

[signature]

Martí Casadesús Fa

Chairman, Institutional and Programme Review Commission

This certificate does not discharge the institution running the programme of its legal obligations and assurances as regards quality.



## CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION CERTIFICATE (ADDITIONAL DIMENSION/S)

### CERTIFICATE NUMBER: XX-XXXXX-201X

The Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency/AQU Catalunya certifies that the recognised study programme

#### **Type (BACHELOR/MASTER'S/DOCTORATE)/Name of the degree/Faculty/University**

has passed the evaluation and review laid down in the Guide to the Accreditation of Recognised Bachelor and Master's Degree Programmes, endorsed by AQU Catalunya's Institutional and Programme Review Commission, with the following outcome:

#### **Accreditation with excellence**

#### **Accreditation**

#### **Accreditation with conditions**

which, in the evaluation and review procedure, included the following dimension:

**Entry into work and employment outcomes/research-teaching linkages/Internationalisation**

This certificate is valid for six years for Bachelor and doctorate degrees, and four years for Master's degrees.

Barcelona, XX XXXX, XXXX

[signature]

Martí Casadesús Fa

Chairman, Institutional and Programme Review Commission

This certificate does not discharge the institution running the programme of its legal obligations and assurances as regards quality.

## CONTENT OF THE FACULTY IQAS CERTIFICATE (INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM)

### CERTIFICATE NUMBER: XX-XXXXX-201X

The Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency/AQU Catalunya certifies that the internal quality assurance system used by the:

#### Name of the Faculty/University

has successfully passed the procedure for certification laid down in the Guide to the Certification of Internal Quality Assurance Systems (20XX), endorsed by AQU Catalunya's Institutional and Programme Review Commission.

This certificate is valid until XX XX, XXXX.

Barcelona, XX XXXX, XXXX

[signature]

Martí Casadesús Fa

Chairman, Institutional and Programme Review Commission

This certificate does not discharge the institution of its legal obligations and assurances as regards quality.

## PROPOSED CONTENT OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF RESEARCH AT DEPARTMENT LEVEL CERTIFICATE

### CERTIFICATE NUMBER: XX-XXXXX-201X

The Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency/AQU Catalunya certifies that the:

#### **Name of the Department/University**

has passed the procedure for the quality assurance of research at department level laid down in the Guide to Departmental Assessment, endorsed by AQU Catalunya's Institutional and Programme Review Commission, with the following outcome:

**Excellent assessment rating**

**Favourable assessment rating**

This certificate is valid until XX XX, XXXX.

Barcelona, XX XXXX, XXXX

[signature]

Martí Casadesús Fa

Chairman, Institutional and Programme Review Commission

This certificate does not discharge the institution of its legal obligations and assurances as regards quality.

## CONTENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL FACILITY FOR COOPERATION AND ACADEMIC MOBILITY ACCREDITATION CERTIFICATE

### CERTIFICATE NUMBER: XX-XXXXX-201X

The *Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency/AQU Catalunya* certifies that the:

#### **Name of the Faculty/University/Country**

has successfully passed the procedure laid down in the Guide to the Accreditation of International Educational Facilities for Cooperation and Academic Mobility (20XX), endorsed by AQU Catalunya's Institutional and Programme Review Commission, with the following outcome:

### **Accreditation**

#### **Accreditation with conditions**

This certificate is valid until XX XX, XXXX.

Barcelona, XX XXXX, XXXX

[signature]

Martí Casadesús Fa

Chairman, Institutional and Programme Review Commission

This certificate does not discharge the institution of its legal obligations and assurances as regards quality.