



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

GUIDE TO UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ASSESSMENT AT DEPARTMENT LEVEL

July 2019



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aims of the guide

The aim of this guide is to set out a procedure and criteria for assessing the research activity at department level or in relation to comparable organisational structures of research. This should make it possible to perform a full assessment of a university's research activity by pooling the individual assessments of its departments. The long-term goal of these assessments, which should be performed regularly, is to strengthen the university as a top-level international research institution.

The specific **objectives** of university research assessment are:

- That it serves as an instrument for improving a university's research policy, and to potentially contribute to its planning strategy and activities.
- To shed light on the type of research being carried out at a university and the challenges being faced, and to assess research quality and potential.
- To identify and distinguish between research areas and environments:
 - **Where top-level international research is being carried out**, and help define the conditions for its continuous development.
 - **With the potential to develop top-level international research**, and help determine what is necessary to bring about this development.
 - **That are less competitive at both international and national level** and where there is a lack of evident development potential.
- **To promote processes and change** towards the university's objectives in the field of research.
- **To identify potential synergies** between research being carried out in different departments in the same university.

The basic material used in assessment is a self-assessment report by the university department. More detailed information may however be requested by the external research review panel.

It is important for the diverse nature of research to be taken into consideration in the assessment, which includes:

- **Discovery:** which refers to research in the traditional sense. This includes the advancement and discovery of knowledge through original research.
- **Integration:** which refers to serious disciplined work that seeks to interpret, draw together, and bring new insight to bear on original research. Integration also involves making connections between disciplines by placing specialisations in a broader context, drawing attention to data in a meaningful way, and also by forming non-specialist connections.

- **Application:** which refers to the use of professional knowledge that serves the interests of a wider community. This type of research is seen in activities where theory and practise interact intensely, with feedback and synergy occurring between the two.
- **Researcher training:** which refers to the department's involvement through its obligations to undergraduate and postgraduate training.

1.2. Regulatory framework

Act 15/2015, on Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya, stipulates that the purpose of AQU Catalunya is to promote and assure the quality of higher education. Among other objectives, the act mentions external quality assurance of research.

Contrary to the case with degree programmes, there is no specific regulation calling for or setting guidelines when it comes to assessing the activity of university departments. Consequently, this assessment is voluntary and the only consequences arising shall be those determined by the applicant, beyond any suggestions for improvement thus obtained.

2. ORGANISATION AND PLANNING OF THE ASSESSMENT

2.1. Assessment committees

In order to conduct the assessment, the following committees are involved:

2.1.1. The Internal Assessment Committee (CAI)

The competent body from the unit under assessment shall set up an internal assessment committee (CAI, from the Catalan) in charge of preparing the self-assessment report and the remaining documentation needed for the visit by the external committee. It is advisable for a representative number of members from the department who are actively engaged in research to be on the internal committee.

The university is recommended to appoint a contact for technical issues in liaison with AQU Catalunya throughout the full process.

After receiving the external report, the internal committee may add its own remarks if it contains material errors and, subsequently, may lodge an appeal if it deems it necessary pursuant to the provisions of section 2.3 of this guide.

2.1.2. The External Research Assessment Committees (CAERs)

The competent committee from AQU Catalunya shall select, train and appoint an external research assessment committee (CAER, from the Catalan) for each department.

The CAER is responsible for examining the self-assessment report and drawing up a preliminary assessment report. It then undertakes the visit and issues a visit report that it will submit to the competent committee from AQU Catalunya.

All CAER members must sign the terms of reference, as shown in Annex 1 hereto, along with the impartiality and confidentiality statement, in accordance with the AQU Catalunya code of ethics.

Generally speaking, each CAER is formed by five members as follows:

- **Chairperson:** highest academic rank and from the academic field of the department to be assessed; active member of a prestigious international research institution or university (or similar); international research experience (an international project director, coordinator or similar); research assessment experience (preferably at institutional level).
- **Member 1:** highest academic rank and from the academic field of the department to be assessed (academic subfield complementary to the chair); active member of a prestigious national or international research institution or university; international research experience (international projects); research assessment experience (preferably at institutional level or in relation to projects).

- **Members 2 and 3 (complementary profile):** high research rank in the academic field of the department to be assessed; active member of a prestigious international research institution; extensive knowledge transfer experience; international research management experience; familiarity with international research policies; experience in assessment and consultancy in relation to research policies and plans.
- **Technical secretary:** expert in institutional assessment, particularly in the research realm; member of AQU Catalunya's technical staff or contributing member on the Agency's assessment committees.

It is necessary to ensure experts cover the department's research areas to the greatest extent possible.

To ensure the necessary transparency, the composition of the CAER and the background of its members will be published on the AQU Catalunya website.

2.1.2. The Institutional and Programme Assessment Committee (CAIP)

Among other functions, it is incumbent on the Institutional and Programme Assessment Committee (CAIP, from the Catalan) to select and appoint members of the CAERs who will conduct external visits, assuring independence, objectivity, absence of conflicts of interests, ethical commitment and confidentiality. It will also be this committee's responsibility to issue a final assessment report upon receipt of the visit report from each CAER.

The CAIP shall be formed by the following members:

1. A chairperson.
2. No more than six people of acknowledged academic or professional standing from the university community of Catalonia.
3. No more than six people of acknowledged academic or professional standing from the international university community.
4. A secretary, who must be an individual employed by AQU Catalunya, appointed by the committee's chairperson.

To ensure the necessary transparency, the composition of the CAIP and the background of its members will be published on the AQU Catalunya website.

2.2. The assessment procedure

2.2.1. Description of the assessment procedure

With regard to the scope of the assessment, the structural unit under assessment shall be a university department. The department shall be construed as the group of people who form part of said body.

The assessment – which shall cover an analysis period consisting of the last five years – shall use the international context of the academic field assessed as a point of reference.

The assessment procedure encompasses both an internal and an external component. It is managed according to the following framework in terms of times and responsibilities:

- 1) **Preparation of the assessment commitment.** AQU Catalunya and the department under assessment shall agree on the terms governing the assessment. A document must be signed which formalises the assessment. The commitment shall be formally undertaken one year prior to the visit.
- 2) **Submission of methodology and data for the assessment.** AQU Catalunya shall convey the methodology and the indicators needed in order to conduct the assessment to the unit under assessment. It shall do this one year prior to the visit.
- 3) **Selection, training and appointment of the external assessors.** AQU Catalunya shall select, train and appoint the members of the external committee and agree on the terms of the assessment using the terms of reference set out in Annex 1 hereto. Nevertheless, the final decision shall depend on AQU Catalunya. The external committee shall be appointed six months prior to the visit.
- 4) **Preparation of the self-assessment report.** The competent body from the unit under assessment shall set up an Internal Assessment Committee (CAI) in charge of preparing the self-assessment report and the remaining documentation needed for the visit by the external committee. It is advisable for a representative number of members from the department who are actively engaged in research to be on the internal committee. The self-assessment report must be based on the format specified in Annex 2 of this guide, and it must include the indicators detailed in Annex 3. The unit under assessment shall submit the self-assessment report to AQU Catalunya for review. This review, which is generally envisaged in all assessment procedures, seeks to guarantee the quality of the document in line with the instructions given in the guide. On the basis of this review, AQU Catalunya will decide whether the unit under assessment needs to complete or develop the information provided and will scrutinise whether it is appropriate for the procedure to continue. The self-assessment report must be ready six months prior to the visit.
- 5) **Submission of documentation to the external committee and planning for the visit.** AQU Catalunya must send all documentation needed for the external assessment (self-assessment report, evidence, data, etc.) to the members of the external committee. Likewise, in conjunction with the unit under assessment the Agency shall plan the dates on which the external assessment will be conducted. Moreover, logistics and other

practical aspects shall be organised. Planning must be finalised two months prior to the visit.

- 6) **Assessment and visit.** The assessment entails an analysis by the external committee of all documentation submitted. Assessors will use the rubrics of this guide, which are duly exemplified. The primary goal of the visit is to gain an acquaintance *in situ* of the realities of the department's research activities. It is necessary to compare or validate the evidence provided, identify discrepancies or conflicts and, if applicable, obtain further evidence in order to review areas not envisaged in the documentation. The visit programme may follow the proposal set out in Annex 4.
- 7) **Preliminary external assessment reports.** Two months after the visit, on the basis of Annex 5 of this guide, the external committee shall submit its draft external report to the director of the unit under assessment so that any material errors in the report may be identified. If necessary, the external committee shall rectify them and submit its definitive version of the external report to AQU Catalunya. The deadline for receipt of the final report is three months after the visit.
- 8) **Issue of report, statements.** The CAIP will issue its assessment report. The institution will have a period of 20 days to lodge an appeal to AQU Catalunya's Appeals Committee.
- 9) **Disclosure and hallmarks.** AQU Catalunya shall publish the final assessment report on its review reports portal and, if the overall result was "excellent" or "very good", the unit under assessment will be given a quality hallmark along with the respective certificate. The hallmark will be valid for a maximum period of five years.
- 10) **Follow-up and continual improvement.** AQU Catalunya must ensure follow-up and continual improvement measures are adopted by the unit under assessment.

The procedure is resumed in the following table. The time of the visit is taken as the moment "zero".

Table 1. Assessment schedule

AQU

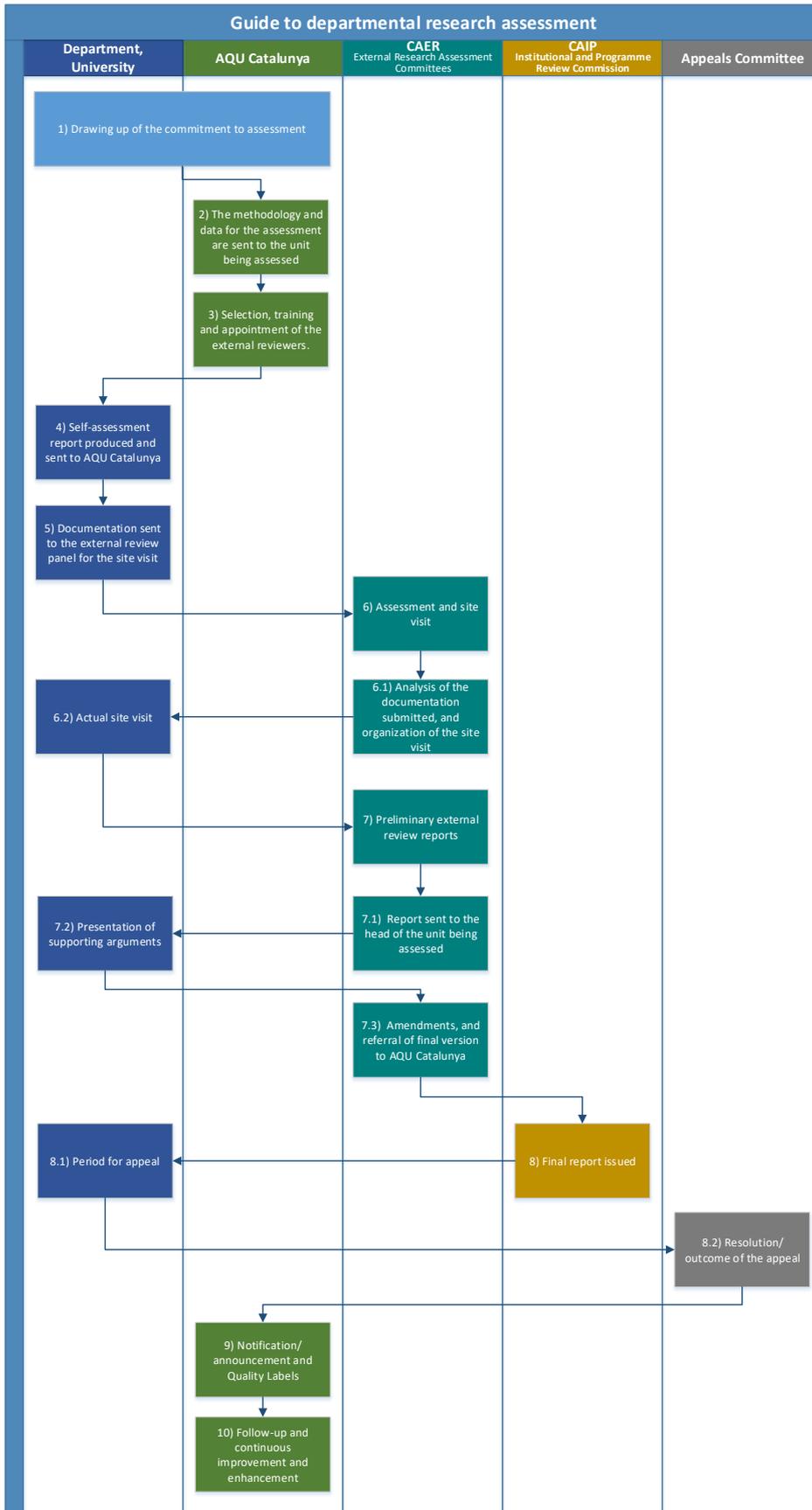
Task	Period
Preparation of the assessment commitment with the unit	1 year before visit
Forwarding of the assessment guide and submission of indicators	1 year before visit
Selection, training and appointment of the CAER and agreement on terms of reference with it	6 months before visit
Planning of the external visit by agreement with the unit	2 months before visit
Logistical organisation and other practical aspects	
Conveyance of all the necessary documentation to the CAER	
Organisation of the agenda of the visit by agreement with the unit to be assessed and the CAER	
Establishment of a mechanism for resolving possible appeals and determination of the final assessment	4 months after visit
Publication of the assessment report	
Follow-up of the assessment process and of improvements	

Department

Task	Period
Preparation of the assessment commitment with AQU	1 year before visit
Drafting of the self-assessment report and of the rest of the documentation	6 months before visit
Submission of the self-assessment report and of the rest of the documentation to AQU	2 months before visit
Planning of the external visit by agreement with AQU	
Organisation of the agenda of the visit by agreement with AQU and the CAER	
Optionally, submission of remarks on the external report if it contains material errors	
Optionally, lodging of appeals, as appropriate	

External Research Assessment Committee (CAER)

Task	Period
Analysis of the self-assessment report and of the rest of the documents	2 months before visit
Coordination of the external visit	0
Drafting of the external report	2 months after visit
Submission of the external report to the head of the assessed unit in order to detect possible material errors	
Correction of possible material errors	
Submission of the external report to AQU	3 months after visit



2.2.2. The self-assessment report

During the procedure, the departments shall draw up a self-assessment report as a vital component for the assessment. The self-assessment report – to be drafted by the CAI – must be disclosed to all members of the department and approved by its most senior body.

To assure the quality of the procedure, the self-assessment report must be based on the format specified in Annex 2 of this guide, it must include the indicators detailed in Annex 3 and it must be:

- Comprehensive, accurate and specific. It must examine and value elements deemed as key to the reality that is to be analysed and improved.
- Evidence-based.
- Systematic and in-depth in terms of analysing the causes and, accordingly, what is needed to bring about improvements.
- Balanced: in terms of positive aspects and areas for improvement.
- Shared and approved by the university community, thus ensuring its analysis is representative.

2.2.3. The external visit

An essential component of the assessment is the visit undertaken by the CAER at the department. The visit shall include hearings, although the precise number will depend on the specific nature of the department and is established as the CAER deems pertinent on the basis of the department's research structure and the self-assessment report. In any event, generally speaking, the visit should follow the format detailed in Annex 4. It should preferably be a day in length.

During the procedure, and specifically on the context of the visit, the members of the External Research Assessment Committee (CAER) may call on the contacts from the department to provide more in-depth information if required.

The CAER shall submit a preliminary version of the visit report to the unit under assessment so that possible material errors may be corrected, if applicable. Then the CAER shall submit its report to the CAIP, which is responsible for issuing the final assessment report.

2.3. Appeal procedure

Once the CAIP has issued its final report, the institution will have a period of 20 days to lodge an appeal to AQU Catalunya's Appeals Committee.

The Appeals Committee must issue a resolution within a period of no more than 3 months.



Upon completion of this procedure – either due to no statement being lodged or due to the statement being resolved – the assessment will be deemed as terminated and, to this end, the result will be disclosed as specified in section 4 of this guide.

3. DIMENSIONS AND STANDARDS OF THE ASSESSMENT

3.1. Dimensions

The assessment will be centred around a self-assessment report of the department, structured in seven dimensions, with the important support of indicators which AQU Catalunya may provide. The self-assessment report has to include the strengths and weaknesses of the assessed dimensions. Whenever possible and applicable, three types of information are to be included for each dimension:

- A **description** of the work carried out, covering each specific dimension.
- **Indicators** on the department, together with a comparison with other departments in the same field or subject in the university system in Catalonia. These data will be provided by AQU when available from UNEIX, as defined according to discipline and subject.
- Bibliometric **indicators** on the department, together with a comparison where appropriate with other global systems as determined by the university.¹ The indicator data will be provided by AQU using available resources. In general, use is to be made of the following indicators:
 - Total number of journal publications
 - Citations according to journal
 - Impact index weighted according to field of knowledge
 - Collaboration in journal publications (international/national)
 - Collaboration in journal publications (academia/industry/institutions)
 - Articles in the top percentile (10%)
 - h-index
- **Indicators and a description of the evidence** not given in the abovementioned indicators and which the department considers should be provided: most important articles, theses directed, competitive projects, etc.

As the university will have the indicators prior to it drawing up the self-assessment report, the department can explain in the report the rationale for any correction of aspects that may give rise to interpretation or error.

The seven specific dimensions for assessment are detailed below. In the cases in which it is so established, and by agreement with the institution involved (for example to differentiate research groups within one same department), the self-assessment reports may include other dimensions or a differentiated breakdown of the established information.

¹ For example: ISI, Scopus, Google Scholar.

a) Context and structure of the department

- The department's development record (data synthesis)
 - The department's teaching environment: courses/students/graduates (see table 1, Annex 3)
 - Teaching staff and researchers (see table 2, Annex 3)
 - Technical, administration and services staff (see table 3, Annex 3)
 - Physical resources/infrastructure
- **Structure**
 - Description of the internal organisation/structure (groups, research lines, principal investigators, etc.).
- The department in the **context of the university**
 - Perception of the institution's importance and/or influence

b) Research policy: the opportunity context for research

- **Institutional research policy** (university level versus department level): the department and research policy at European, Spanish and Catalan level.
- Measures to **attract new researchers** (senior/junior)
- Policy to **promote/stabilise** the situation of researchers in departments.
- Policy to attract PhD students.
- **The department's internal and management structure** for research
 - The organisation of groups and lines of research (see table 4, Annex 3)
 - Goals and objectives
 - Research management

c) Research activity

- **Match** between the potential and opportunity for research
- Funded projects and financing agreements (see table 5, Annex 3)
- Non-consolidated research activities in funded projects

d) Research productivity (see table 6, Annex 3)

- Scientific output: articles, books, book chapters, patents, etc.

e) Research-teaching interaction

- Linked Master's and doctoral studies (see table 7, Annex 3)
- Dedication of academic staff to teaching (ratio student/full-time teaching staff) as aggregate data for the department.

- Involvement of students in research activities.
- Connection between research and curriculum design (undergraduate, Master's, PhD)

f) Internationalisation

- Research with an international impact
- International networks and alliances
- International congresses/seminars organised
- Internationalised nature of staff in the department

g) The department's prospects for the future

- Future plans regarding research policy and opportunities
- Human resources
- Networks and alliances
- The department's present/future potential as a structural unit within the university

3.2. Standards

The main assessment criteria are as follows:

Productivity

This refers to the total volume of scientific output. The quantification of the output will be based on the most appropriate bibliometric tools in each field, allowing the calculation of the frequency of citation and of the impact or other terms of significance for the community. The output and its impact will be assessed in relation to the number of professors and researchers in the department or unit.

Quality (international equivalence and innovative capacity)

This is a measure of excellence that is founded on the reputation and position of the unit within the international community of researchers. Quality is assessed on the basis of the unit's ability to achieve and present clear-cut scientific analyses and findings. It refers to the quality of scientific production and is measured by the relative position of journal publications in each subject area that have originated in the department.

Significance (scientific, social and socio-economic importance)

This includes the scientific, technological, clinical, social, cultural and socio-economic importance of the research activity, and also the implementation of research findings in society.

Vitality and organisational capability

The ability to manage and lead research. This criterion deals with the department's contacts with the rest of the world, its prospects for the future, the unit's capacity to successfully implement the planned work, etc. This may include possible changes in the orientation and/or focus of research in the department, as well as the flexibility and ability to allow the formation of and to sustain research-intensive environments.

3.3. Grading scale

The assessors will classify the departments on the basis of a nuanced four-level scale with a numeric score from 0 to 10, for each of the aforementioned criteria, and also comprehensively.

The levels are as follows:

- **Excellent (10-9):** Research of an excellent quality that has been published and has an important impact, including at international level. Research at this level clearly demonstrates originality, significance and rigour comparable to the very best research work in the field and/or subject and makes a significant or substantial contribution to knowledge, theory, the principles and/or practice in its field and/or subject.
- **Very good (8-7):** Research of a high quality that attracts both national and international attention. It has, or probably will, contribute/d to the advancement of knowledge, theory, the principles and/or practice in its field and/or subject.
- **Good (6-5):** Research that is mainly recognised at national level, but possibly with international potential, and which is already being developed on an ad hoc basis.
- **Insufficient (under 5):** The research is considered to be insufficient and its findings have neither gained wide circulation nor receive national and international attention. Its contribution to knowledge, theory, the principles and/or practice has been very limited. Research activities should be revised.

The grading scale is as follows:

Level	Productivity	Quality	Significance	Vitality and organisational capability
Excellent	The department's volume of scientific output is exceptional.	The department stands as one of the most influential worldwide in its field.	The research conducted by the unit makes an exceptional contribution to society.	The department is excellently equipped, linked to international groups and organised for future research.
Very good	The department's volume of scientific output is very high.	The department conducts very good internationally acknowledged research.	The research conducted by the unit makes a very good contribution to society.	The department is very well equipped, linked to international groups and organised for future research.
Good	The department's volume of scientific output is suitable.	The department conducts good research.	The research conducted by the unit makes a good contribution to society.	The department makes responsible strategic decisions and it is suitably prepared for future research.
Insufficient	The department's volume of scientific output is low.	The department does not achieve satisfactory research results in its field.	The research conducted by the unit does not make any significant contribution to society.	The department is not suitably prepared for future research.

4. ASSESSMENT RESULT

4.1. Final report

The final result of the assessment issued by the CAIP based on the format detailed in Annex 5 here to must include an overall valuation of the department as a whole and a partial valuation on each of the dimensions assessed, specifying the level attained on the following four-point scale:

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Insufficient

On the basis of the assessment of the dimensions reviewed, the final report issued by the CAIP must include at least the following:

1. Description of the context of the department.
2. Description of the procedure used, including the experts involved.
3. Results of the assessment for each of the standards.
4. Final assessment result.
5. Best practices identified.
6. Proposals for improvement (recommendations for follow-up measures).

AQU Catalunya shall publish the final report on the unit under assessment on its review reports portal. The report will be disclosed upon completion of the entire procedure by AQU Catalunya, including resolving on the appeal, if any.

4.2. Hallmarks and certificates

If the report assesses the department's research activity as "excellent" or "very good", it will be rewarded with a quality hallmark and the respective certificate. The hallmark will be valid for a maximum period of five years, and it may be renewed for periods of equal length subject to successful completion of a new external assessment procedure.



The terms of use are specified in the *AQU Catalunya quality hallmarks and terms of use thereof* (*Segells de qualitat d'AQU Catalunya i condicions per al seu ús*) document.

These hallmarks shall be published on the Agency's website.

4.3. Effects of the assessment

An overall assessment of “excellent” or “very good” constitutes a guarantee that the department is conducting high quality research activity. An assessment of “excellent” means that the quality of research conducted is exceptional.

An overall assessment of “good” suggests that the department is conducting satisfactory research activity, although the quality is below that of previous classifications.

On the other hand, a report with a research assessment of “insufficient” means that the department will have to wait another five years in order to be able to re-apply for another assessment.

Given that this assessment is voluntary, the effects of the assessment shall be as determined by the university or applicant body.

5. FOLLOW-UP AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

As clearly detailed in the pertinent guidelines relating to the standard for implementing assessment processes (ESG 2.3) (ENQA, 2015):

“External quality assurance does not end with the report by the experts. The report provides clear guidance for institutional action. Agencies have a consistent follow-up process for considering the action taken by the institution. The nature of the follow-up will depend on the design of the external quality assurance.”

In keeping with this assumption, and taking into consideration the outcome of the assessment of the department’s research activity, the goal of AQU Catalunya should be to ensure that the institution swiftly addresses areas with scope for improvement and that a spirit of achievement is encouraged.

The assessment issued in relation to the department’s research shall be valid for 5 years. Nevertheless, the external committee may propose to adjust the validity period according to the quality level achieved by the unit under assessment. Accordingly, it is deemed that the higher the quality, the more a subsequent follow-up or new assessment procedure may be put back.

Based on the proposal from the CAER, the CAIP will make a final decision concerning the effective period of the hallmark and the need for a follow-up process.

Along these lines, wherever possible on subsequent external follow-up assessment committees or subsequent assessments, one or more external assessors who have taken part in previous assessments shall continue to intervene to ensure the assessment criteria applied remain in effect.

If the institution makes any change to the nature of the department that could affect the scope or validity of the assessment, it should notify AQU Catalunya so that it may assess the continued validity of the assessment issued.

The CAIP reserves the right to change the scope of the assessment, cancel it or revoke it if:

- Changes take place that bring about an irreversible, detrimental effect on the conditions under which the department’s research activity was assessed.
- The certificate is used for improper purposes.

6. REFERENCES

- Association of Universities in the Netherlands, *et al.* (2014). *Standard Evaluation Protocol 2015-2021: Protocol for Research Assessments in the Netherlands* [online]. Voorburg: VSNU, KNAW & NOW. [Retrieved: 27 September 2016]. Link: <<http://www.vsnu.nl/files/documenten/Domeinen/Onderzoek/SEP2015-2021.pdf>>.
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- Uppsala University (2011). *Quality and Renewal 2011. An overall evaluation of research at Uppsala University* [online]. Uppsala (Sweden): UU. [Retrieved: 27 September 2016]. Link: <<http://uu.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:461235/FULLTEXT01.pdf>>.

7. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

AQU Catalunya hereby issue the following terms of reference to the assessment panel of [research unit] , chaired by [name of chairperson]

Assessment

You are being asked to assess the quality and relevance to society of the research conducted by [research unit] as well as its strategic targets and the extent to which it is equipped to achieve them. You should do so by judging the unit's performance on four assessment criteria. Be sure to take into account current international trends and developments in science and society in your analysis.

- a. Productivity
- b. Quality (international equivalence and innovative capacity)
- c. Significance (scientific, social and socio-economic importance)
- d. Vitality and organisational capability

For a description of these criteria, see section 2.3. of the *Guide to university research assessment at department level*.

Please provide a written assessment on each of the criteria and assign the research unit to a particular category (excellent, very good, good, insufficient) in each case, in accordance with the guide guidelines. Please also provide recommendations for improvement. Please use the Annex 3 of the guide.

Documentation

The necessary documentation will be available on the secure website XX no less than 4 weeks prior to the site visit. The documents will include at least the following:

- Self-assessment report with appendices

Site visit

The site visit at [research unit] will take place on [date]. The provisional programme for the site visit is enclosed with this letter. Personnel in charge of all matters of protocol will contact you for travel and accommodation arrangements.

Statement of impartiality

Before embarking on your assessment work, you will be asked to sign a statement of impartiality. In this statement you declare that you have no direct economic relationship with [research unit]

Assessment report

We ask you to report your findings in an assessment report. You must send the draft report to [research unit] no more than 8 weeks after the site visit. [Research unit] will check the report for factual inaccuracies; if such inaccuracies are detected you will see that they are corrected. You will then send (the corrected version of) the assessment report to the president of AQU Catalunya Institutional and Programme Review Committee (CAIP).

ANNEX 2. FORMAT OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

Research self-assessment report

Department:

University:

Composition of the internal committee:

Date of approval and authorising body for the self-assessment report:

1. Context and structure of the department

Describe the department's current position within the context of the university, together with its course of development (teaching environment, teaching staff, researchers, technical, administration and services staff, resources). A clear description of the structure should be included (research lines, research groups, principal investigators, etc.) so the CAER will have a clear knowledge of "who is who" in the department. [Approx. 3 pages]

State the department's strong and weak points, together with any enhancement proposals.

Rationale:

2. Research policy: the context and opportunities for research

Describe the department's research policy (with regard to policy at European level, university-level, etc.), and also the internal structure and its management. Policy and measures to attract, promote and stabilise the situation of new researchers (senior/junior) and to attract PhD students (3 pages approx.).

State the department's strong and weak points, together with any enhancement proposals.

Rationale:

3. Research activities

Describe the research activities going on in the department in relation to the potential and opportunities for research and the international context. Describe the research projects and agreements that have received funding, as well as non-consolidated research activities in funded projects (3 pages approx.).

State the department's strong and weak points, together with any enhancement proposals.

Rationale:

4. Research productivity

Describe the department's research productivity (articles, books, patents, etc.) in terms of its scientific output within the scope of the corresponding field of knowledge (3 pages approx.).

State the department's strong and weak points, together with any enhancement proposals.

Rationale:

5. Interaction between research and teaching

Describe the interaction between research and teaching in Master's and doctoral programmes linked with the department. Student involvement, in particular at postgraduate level, in research activities, and also the connection between research and curriculum design at undergraduate, Master's and doctorate levels. Teaching staff dedication (assignment and the ratio of student/full-time teaching staff) in aggregate terms and, if needed the student's satisfaction with the teaching activities (2 pages approx.).

State the department's strong and weak points, together with any enhancement proposals.

Rationale:

6. Internationalisation

Describe research activity in the department that has an international impact. International networks and alliances. International congresses and seminars organised. The internationalisation of departmental staff. (2 pages approx.)

State the department's strong and weak points, together with any enhancement proposals.

Rationale:

7. The department's prospects for the future

Describe the department's plans for the future as regards research policy, human resources and future objectives: research opportunities, networks and alliances, etc. (2 pages approx.)

State the department's strong and weak points, together with any enhancement proposals.

Rationale:

ANNEX 3. INDICATORS TO BE PROVIDED TO THE EXTERNAL RESEARCH REVIEW PANEL

AQU Catalunya will provide all indicators that are available from UNEIX.² Other indicators will need to be provided by the department being reviewed.

Data must be presented according to the format of the reports produced by the UNEIX system

Table 1. Context of the department (last five years). The number of students enrolled in and who graduated from recognised courses that the department has participated in

	Period of assessment	
	Enrolled	Graduated
Undergraduate		
-		
-		
Master's		
-		
-		
Doctorate/PhD		
-		
-		

Table 2. Context of the department (last five years). Professors and researchers

	Year 1	Year 5
Full professor		
Associate professor		
Visiting fellow		

² UNEIX: the Secretariat for Universities and Research's system of university indicators.

Other types of professors		
Post-docs		
Doctoral students		

NB: The information included in this table may be expanded to include information on gender and age.

Table 3. Context of the department (last five years). Technical, administration and service staff

	Year 1	Year 5
Technical/support staff for research		
Administration and service staff		

NB: Additional information may be added to this table to include information on gender and age.

Table 4. Data on the department's internal research structure (last year)

	PhD staff	Visiting PhD staff	Main research investigators	Researchers in training	Others
Departmental areas/units/sections					
-					
Research groups					
-					
Consolidated research groups					
-					
Functional programmes/units					
-					

NB: Any of the proposed classifications (areas, units, research groups, functional units, etc.) can be used.

Table 5. Projects, agreements and other research activities (during the last five years)

Department		
	Number	Funded by
Competitive projects		
- National		
- International		
Non-competitive projects		
- National		
- International		
Agreements		
Networks		
Others		

NB: The information included in this table can be structured according to either areas and/or lines of research.

Table 6. Data on the productivity of research in the department (last five years)

	Assessment period
Scientific journals: bibliometric indicators	
- Total number of journal publications	
- Citations per journal publication	
- Weighted impact index according to field of knowledge	
- Collaboration in publications (international/national)	
- Collaboration in publications (academia/industry/institutions)	
- Articles in the top percentile	
- h-index	
Scientific journals: other indicators	
- Books and monographs	
- Book chapters	
- Articles in popular science magazines	
- Relevant contributions congresses at national level	
- Relevant contributions congresses at international level	
- Others ³	
Findings and activities of a technological, service and/or artistic nature	
- Spin-off initiatives	
- Licences (patents, utility models, trade secret protection procedures, software, etc.)	
- Knowledge transfer to the productive sector (services)	

³ Add additional lines for any relevant research output in the discipline that is not included in the previous sections (literary translations, critical editions of texts, professional reports, etc.).

- Others ⁴	
Other results stemming from the department's activity	
- Awards and recognition	
- Participation of the members of the department in scientific management committees and/or programme review panels at national level	
- Participation of the members of the department in scientific management committees and/or programme review panels at international level	

NB: The information included in this table may be structured according to either areas and/or lines of research.

Taula 7. Department's contribution (last five years)

State the ten most significant scientific contributions in the assessed period.

Contributions	Description
Contribution 1	
Contribution 2	
...	

⁴ Add additional lines for any other relevant findings, results and/or activities in the discipline that are not included in the previous sections (organised exhibitions, artistic works, etc.).

Table 7. Doctoral studies (last five years)

	Theses defended	Different teaching and research directors	Doctoral students from Spanish universities	Doctoral students from international universities
Department ¹				

¹ This information can be broken down according to different units (lines of research, research groups, department units, etc.).

ANNEX 4. PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF VISIT

Timetable		Activity
MORNING	9:00-9:30 h	Reception of the CAER by the departmental management team
	9:30-10:30 h	CAER committee work; evaluation of the department
		Break
	11:00-12:30 h	Interview with the departmental management team
		If needed, interviews with the main group leaders (2/3 persons per group)
		If needed, interview with a number of staff members (tenured and non-tenured)
		Work of the CAER/Review of evidence
LUNCH		CAER working lunch
		CAER work in committee
AFTERNOON	15:00-16:00 h	If needed, interview with department stakeholders
		If needed, interview with the head of the department's finances
		Drafting of Conclusions of Department Evaluation

ANNEX 5. FORMAT OF THE EXTERNAL REPORT

External review report on research activities in the department

Department:

University:

Composition of the external review panel:

Date:

1. Presentation

Set out the purpose of the report, the timetable and deadlines, etc.

2. Overall assessment

Make an overall assessment of the management, results and findings of research carried out in the department.

Excellent

Very good

Good

Insufficient

10 9

8 7

6 5

<5

Rationale:

3. Research productivity

Make an assessment of the total volume of scientific production, in relation to the number of researchers in the department and the field of knowledge.

Excellent

Very good

Good

Insufficient

10 9

8 7

6 5

<5

Rationale:

4. The quality of research in the department

Make an assessment of the department's reputation, position and impact in the international context.

<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> <5

Rationale:

5. The significance of research in the department

Make an assessment of the scientific, technological, clinical, social, cultural and socio-economic importance of the research being carried out in the department, as well as the implementation and application of its research results and findings in society.

<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> <5

Rationale:

6. Vitality and organisational capability

Make an assessment of the department's ability to manage and lead research.

<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> <5

Rationale:

7. Future plans

Make an assessment of the department's anticipated plans for the future, its possible potential, and recommendations as regards the directions that research in the department should take. Comment any unused potential and/or unique opportunities. In addition, note any activities with little potential for the future and/or restricted possibilities

<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Very good	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 9	<input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> <5

Rationale:

ANNEX 6. GUIDE APPROVAL PROCESS

- The first edition of the *Guide to university research assessment at department level* (pilot plan) was approved by the Quality Assessment Committee in the meeting held on 22 December 2014.
- The guide was submitted to the Vice-rectors Committee for Quality in the meeting held on 15 April 2015.
- The second edition of the *Guide to university research assessment at department level* was approved by the Quality Assessment Committee in the meeting held on 3 November 2015.
- The third edition of the *Guide to university research assessment at department level* was approved by the Institutional and Programme Assessment Committee in the meeting held on 10 October 2016.
- The third edition of the *Guide to university research assessment at department level* was approved by the Institutional and Programme Assessment Committee in the meeting held on 15 July 2019.



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per a la Qualitat
del Sistema Universitari
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