

AQU Catalunya included in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)

Admission to the register, after an international external assessment which has verified the Agency's compliance with the European standards, opens new possibilities for the whole of Catalunya's university system within the European context.

Promoted by the European ministers of higher education at Bergen 2005, the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) lists the quality agencies operating in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) which are considered to be solvent and trustworthy and to possess a good credibility.

A consolidated trajectory

AQU Catalunya was the first university quality agency to be created in Spain and it became a founding partner of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in the year 2000. The Agency is backed by eleven years of experience and tradition in the design of assessment methodologies and in the management of assessments, above all in the field of degree standards. Its inclusion in the EQAR, based on an international external assessment conducted in 2007 which certified its compliance with the European standards, strengthens the solvency and credibility of the Agency's activity, aimed to assure and improve the quality of higher education in Catalunya.

Transparency and recognition

The register will allow students and employers across Europe to learn which institutions of higher education and which curricula have been submitted to an external quality assessment by an independent agency, and what the results have been. Additionally, the register will promote academic mobility within the EHEA and it will consolidate the processes of mutual recognition of the results of the quality assessments among all the agencies which form part of it.

The president of AQU Catalunya, Joaquim Prats, has stated that the Agency's admission to the EQAR is "an honour and a new responsibility, which is the result of an intense endeavour which has unfolded over the last three years" and which represents "another step forward in the consolidation of AQU Catalunya, setting us among the leading European quality agencies".

AQU Catalunya, ANECA and NVAO (of the Netherlands and Flanders) are the first three agencies to enter the European Quality Assurance Register, and 18 more agencies are currently in the process of seeking admission.

The register was founded by the European associations bringing together universities and institutions of higher education, students and quality assurance agencies – EUA (European University Association), EURASHE (European Association of Institutions in Higher Education), ESU (European Students Union) and ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) – and its purpose is to foster the development of the EHEA by raising the level of transparency in quality assurance.

Conferences of European ministers with competence in higher education

<p>1999 Bologna</p>	<p>European cooperation begins in the field of quality</p>
<p>2001 Prague</p>	<p>The cooperation of quality agencies and institutions of higher education is fostered</p>
<p>2003 Berlin</p>	<p>Establishment of Group E4, formed by EUA, EURASHE, ESU and ENQA</p>
<p>2003 Berlin</p>	<p>It is resolved that the institutions of higher education hold the primary responsibility for quality assurance</p>
<p>2003 Berlin</p>	<p>Group E4 is commissioned to draft the European standards and guidelines</p>
<p>2005 Bergen</p>	<p>The creation of a register of quality agencies operating in Europe is promoted</p>
<p>2007 London</p>	<p>Confirmation of the creation of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)</p>
<p>2008</p>	<p>EQAR is founded. AQU Catalunya and two other agencies are the first to be admitted to the Register</p>