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

Final report assessing the design of the internal quality assurance system

Law and Political Science Studies
Open University of Catalonia

7 May 2009

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I. DETAILS CONCERNING THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM (IQAS) UNDER ASSESSMENT

University	Open University of Catalonia
Centre	Law and Political Science Studies
IQAS scope	Degrees taught in Law and Political Science Studies
Call	2007 – 2nd stage

II. ASSESSMENT OF THE DESIGN OF THE IQAS

Having examined the report drawn up by the Assessment Committee, the AQU Catalunya Specific Committee for the Quality Assessment of University Centres and Activities issued an overall POSITIVE assessment relating to the design of the IQAS for Law and Political Science Studies.

The final assessment given for each of the guidelines is as follows:

1.0 Quality goals and policy	Good
1.1 Quality assurance of training programmes	Good
1.2 Extent to which teaching is student-oriented	Satisfactory
1.3 Quality improvement and assurance of academic and teaching support staff	Satisfactory
1.4.a Management and improvement of services and material resources	Satisfactory
1.4.b Management and improvement of the quality of services and administration staff	Satisfactory
1.5 Analysis and use of results	Good
1.6 Publication of information on degrees	Good

The overall **POSITIVE** assessment given to the IQAS is based on the **good** or **satisfactory** assessment given to the guidelines set out in the AUDIT programme, and it is likewise founded on the identification of specific, cross-disciplinary positive aspects that lend the design of the IQAS its robust nature.

With respect to the design of the IQAS and the assessment prior to its implementation, **positive aspects** refer to elements described in sufficient detail making it possible to assume they will be successfully implemented with a certain degree of assurance. Even so, Law and Political Science Studies should take these aspects into consideration within an ongoing improvement process.

Overall, the IQAS assessed is a realistic project highly tailored to the operation of the Open University of Catalonia. The proposal put forward reflects and describes an institutional model serving as a framework for Law and Political Science Studies. It is considered that the IQAS model may be a benchmark for other studies at the UOC, provided that the particular characteristics of the studies wishing to implement it are taken into consideration.

As far as **cross-disciplinary aspects** are concerned, a good assessment is given to the alignment of the quality goals and the strategic plan of the centre, on the one hand, and the documents drafted which make it easier to understand the proposal put forward, on the other. Similarly, it is worth highlighting that the organisation and structure of the process description is standard and homogenous, making it easier to interpret while showing that there is extensive experience in the application of some of said processes.

The IQAS design is robust and coherent, facilitating implementation of actions included within strategic planning which will make it easier to close the continual improvement cycle effectively. In line with the university's interests, the IQAS will make it possible to bring together all activities the institution is carrying out or wishes to carry out to ensure the quality of teaching. The standardisation and clarity in representing each process map is particularly noteworthy as it makes it easier to understand the proposal and its subsequent practical application. Furthermore, the manual includes a list of processes, correspondences between them and guidelines.

Additionally, and **specifically for each guideline**, it must be pointed out that a good level of development has been achieved for guidelines concerning the **quality goals and policy** (guideline 1.0), the **quality assurance of training programmes** (guideline 1.1), the **analysis and use of results** (guideline 1.5) and the **publication of information on degrees** (guideline 1.6).

In relation to the remaining guidelines, with respect to the **extent to which teaching is student-oriented** (guideline 1.2) the following aspects must be held in high regard:

- In line with a distance learning model, the university applies measures aimed at meeting the expectations of students and ensuring that its degrees carry social value compensating for the aspects provided by classroom universities, since it is deemed vital to success. To do so, the system developed by the university for attracting, attending to, guiding and qualifying students as well as ensuring their loyalty, is vital. Generally speaking, all processes relating to the admission and monitoring of students are developed and appear to be the result of several reviews including adjustments for improvement following the actual application.

- The system for monitoring new student profiles by the marketing division in order to assess how suitable they are for training programmes, as well as the student questionnaire on the registration process as a mechanism for monitoring and review.

- The tutoring model, its implementation in the tutorial plan by means of actions and goals, as well as the existence of a tutor assigned to each student making guidance tasks easier.

- The management of student mobility and, in particular, the setting up of the mobility office.

III. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE DESIGN OF THE IQAS PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION

The assessment conducted on the design of the IQAS has led to the identification of a number of opportunities for improvement in certain areas. As a result, Law and Political Science Studies should carry out an overhaul on these aspects in the short- or medium-term to ensure that the IQAS is smoothly implemented.

The following various **cross-disciplinary** suggestions are made:

- Although the distribution of responsibilities among the various individuals involved in the IQAS is noteworthy, it is advisable to institutionalise the role of the process leader (the general party in charge of performing each process from start to finish).

- It is suggested that documentation on procedures be structured into modules in order to make it easier to maintain reviews. With regard to the document structure or organisation, it is recommendable to set up a general framework for the IQAS and a separately documented process system. This structure will make it easier to update reviews on each process. However, it must be pointed out that by maintaining one sole document, it may become more difficult to effectively maintain reviews for each process.

- It is advisable to include a process map for the centre linking the various IQAS processes. This will provide a general overview of the IQAS and of the interdependence between processes which would be highly useful for provide future coordinated improvements for the IQAS.

- The university is encouraged to go further with the definition and implementation of a document management system (Documenta), which will make it easier to handle and conserve documents.

- The recommendations that are applied should be set out in the definition of processes and lead to the respective amendments in the documentation on said processes.

IV. ANNEX: MEMBERS OF THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Chair	Ms Flor Sánchez Fernández Vice-rector for Planning and Quality at the Autonomous University of Madrid
Academic member	Mr Alfonso Carlos Davalillo Full professor at the University of the Basque Country and member of the Chair on Quality
Academic member	Ms Carmen Martínez del Valle Director of the Accreditation and Assessment Division at the University of Alcalá
Professional member	Mr Roberto Corral González Quality director for Hewlett-Packard, SA
Clerk	Ms Caterina Cazalla Lorite AQU Catalunya project manager