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

Final report assessing the design of the internal quality assurance system

Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences

Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (The International University of Catalonia, UIC)

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Contents

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

University	The International University of Catalonia (UIC)
Centre	Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences
IQAS scope	Degrees taught at the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences
Call	2007 – Stage I

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 the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences at the International University of Catalonia.

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

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

The overall **POSITIVE** assessment given to the IQAS is based on the **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 systematically designed elements described in sufficient detail making it possible to assume they will be successfully implemented with a certain degree of assurance. Even so, the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences of the International University of

Catalonia is advised to take these aspects into consideration within the framework of an ongoing improvement process.

The design of the IQAS and, in particular, the IQAS manual show that all the guidelines in the AUDIT programme as a whole have been met to a satisfactory degree. This is a user-friendly, agile document that will make it easier to implement the quality system and carry out subsequent management.

Particularly noteworthy is the inclusion of general tables in annexes, which serve as an efficient tool for implementing the IQAS. Indeed, given their significance, they could form part of the manual itself.

As far as **cross-disciplinary aspects** are concerned, elements strengthening the design of the IQAS include a systematic definition of the bodies in charge of the guidelines as a whole. In addition, the annexed document TG-UIC-006 (table of IQAS indicators) is positive as it sets out the series of indicators that will make it possible to monitor the system and examine the results. Moreover, the RACI matrix is deemed an appropriate tool since it specifies the relationship between the main activities in relation to the IQAS and also defines the individuals in charge of executing them.

Additionally, and **specifically for each guideline**, different aspects are identified which ensure successful implementation of the IQAS.

With regard to the **quality goals and policy** (guideline 1.0), a positive assessment is given to the definition of the body in charge of managing the IQAS and of defining and approving the quality goals and policy. Furthermore, a system for publicly disseminating the quality goals and policy and laying them down in written format is acknowledged as another suitable element in relation to the IQAS.

Two positive aspects have been identified in relation to the **quality assurance of training programmes** (guideline 1.1). Firstly, the mechanisms governing the decision making process for training on offer, the design of degrees and their goals. Secondly, the list of reports that will make it possible to render accounts to stakeholders and to determine proposals for improvement following an analysis and assessment.

In relation to the extent to which **teaching is student-oriented** (guideline 1.2), particular note is made of the suitability of mechanisms governing and assuring the decision making process, which relate to the definition of admission and graduation profiles, entrance criteria and enrolment.

The **analysis and use of results** (guideline 1.5) encompasses mechanisms governing and assuring the decision making process in relation to learning outcomes, an aspect that lends the quality system added value.

The **publication of information on degrees** (guideline 1.6) includes a number of positive aspects. Specifically, areas are taken into consideration which strengthen the IQAS: mechanisms governing and assuring the decision making process on the publication of up-to-date information on degrees; the approach given to the guideline, based on distinguished handling when it comes to management of public information and to information for rendering accounts to stakeholders; and the annexed documents TG-UIC-004 (rendering of accounts management table) and TG-UIC-005 (public information management table), which set out the main information inputs, the bodies in charge of compiling data, the channels for information/rendering of accounts and the stakeholders to whom the information/rendering of accounts is addressed.

III. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE IQAS

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, the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences is advised to carry out an overhaul on these aspects in the short- or medium-term to ensure that the IQAS is smoothly implemented.

The design of the IQAS must consider basic aspects within the improvement cycle, ranging from the establishment of a competent body with clearly defined duties, to the rendering of accounts in order to provide feedback on planning and to supplement the improvement cycle in a manner that takes into consideration the following vital aspects:

a. **Strategic planning**, which sets out the reality of the centre and the (training) goals that are hoped to be reached within a determined timeframe. For instance, since they constitute strengths in the assessment, the quality goals and policy of Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences must stem from the faculty's strategic plan, in line with that of the International University of Catalonia.

b. **Process-based organisation/management of the centre's activities (process map)**, defining the everyday activities of the centre, whereby specific procedures are implemented in association with each process. Along these lines, during the implementation stage it is advisable to clarify the links and common ground between the general processes managed by the International University of Catalonia and the specific procedures pertaining to the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences because some redundancies have been identified in certain cases.

c. **A table of indicators.** In order to ensure smooth implementation of the IQAS, as well as the implementation of a genuine cycle for improvement, the centre must set out a

table of indicators in relation to all processes that meet the programme guidelines and one that will make it possible to gauge the results of the activities.

d. **A review of the centre's IQAS**, whereby, on the basis of the results achieved in comparison to those envisaged, and following an analysis of said results, actions for improvement are defined and implemented.

Specifically for each guideline the following aspects are recommended for improvement.

With regard to the extent to which **teaching is student-oriented** (guideline 1.2), the procedures relating to professional guidance for students should be expanded on and heightened, especially the systems for compiling and examining information which will make it possible to gain an acquaintance of and assess students' needs, the involvement of stakeholders and the mechanisms for monitoring, reviewing and improving these systems. Moreover, for the areas addressed by the guideline as a whole, it is advisable to endeavour further when it comes to getting stakeholders involved.

As far as the **management and improvement of services and material resources** is concerned (guideline 1.4a), it is pointed out that the mechanisms must be defined within the process even though mention is made of the information channels and the stakeholders to whom the information in the annex TG-UIC-004 (rendering of accounts management table) is addressed. Moreover, it is recommended to further endeavour with mechanisms for ensuring involvement on the part of stakeholders. Lastly, it is suggested that the mechanisms for monitoring, reviewing and improving services and material resources be strengthened. The manual states that the proposals for improvement set out in the "annual syllabus report" will be incorporated, though it is advisable to set out a more in-depth definition of the mechanisms for implementing these improvements and to consider the extent to which carrying out a review on a yearly basis is pertinent.

The **management and improvement of the quality of services and administration staff** (guideline 1.4b) includes a couple of opportunities for improvement. The first relates to procedures for compiling and analysing information, as it is recommended that greater impetus be given principally to those procedures relating to the training needs of services and administration staff. Secondly, in order to ensure the robust nature of monitoring, review and improvement procedures, it is suggested that indicators be defined for monitoring training and assessment, in a similar manner to the proposal made for teaching and research staff.

The **analysis and use of results** (guideline 1.5) includes the procedure "7.7.1 Analysis of learning outcomes", which sets out the various possibilities for grouping the analysis in order to carry it out (individual or overall analysis). Nonetheless, no specification is given as to the subjects, courses, modules, etc., that are included in the analysis. It is pertinent to specify these aspects when implementing the IQAS. It would also be advisable to review the differences observed between the procedure "7.7.2 Analysis of the extent to which the various stakeholders are satisfied" and the respective flowchart ("Procedure for managing stakeholder satisfaction").

IV. ANNEX: MEMBERS OF THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Chair	Mr Ángel Ríos Castro Full professor at the University of Castilla-La Mancha
Academic member	Mr Alfonso Carlos Davalillo Aurrecoechea Head professor at the University of the Basque Country and member of the Chair on Quality
Academic member	Mr Celso Rodríguez Fernández Head professor at the University of Santiago de Compostela
Professional member	Mr Enric Guasch Llorens Internal quality consultant for Hewlett-Packard, S.A.
Clerk	Ms Núria Comet Señal Coordinator of projects and internal quality for AQU Catalunya
Observer	Ms Caterina Cazalla Lorite Project manager for AQU Catalunya