



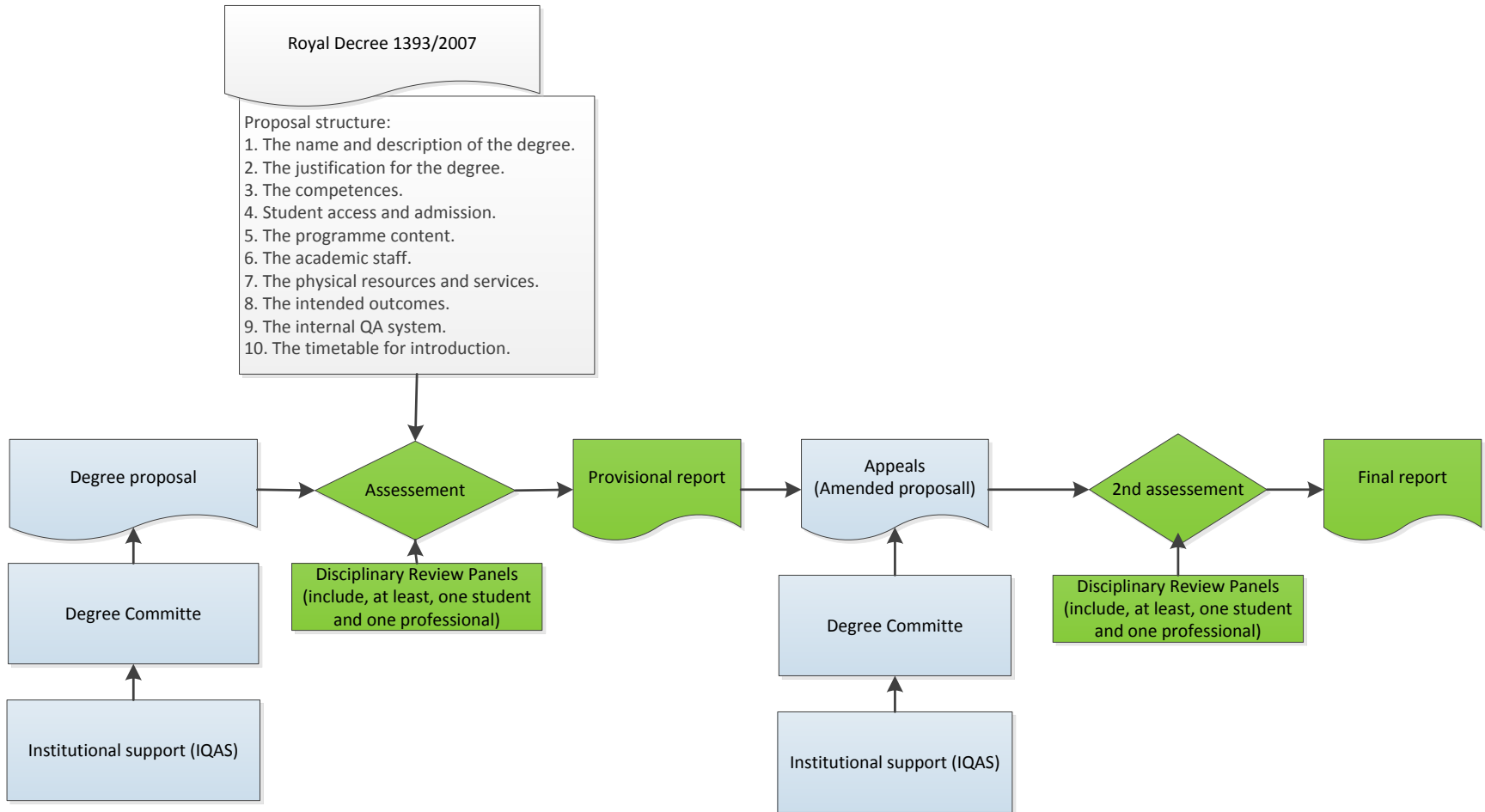
Agència
per a la Qualitat
del Sistema Universitari
de Catalunya



Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Yes, there is impact. But is it positive, negative or “none of the above”?

The case of Faculty of Sciences and Faculty of Biosciences
of the University Autònoma de Barcelona



Standard 5.1 The set of modules or subjects that make up the curriculum are consistent with the competency profile title.

Provisional Report	Final Report
<p>The Master is structured in 6 ECTS compulsory, 24 elective (choice of 36), 15 for internships and 15 Final Master Thesis. The Commission appreciates 6 ECTS as insufficient to ensure a common basis for all graduates of the master. In addition, this subject is structured as a series of sessions on various aspects of genetics (2-3 hours) that are neither advanced nor offer the possibility of a common academic body to master. Ultimately these 6 ECTS, taught in this way, can not be the body of doctrine of the master.</p>	<p>The Master is organized into 18 ECTS mandatory, 12 optional (choice of 36), 15 and 15 internships Final Master Work. The set of modules is consistent with the profile of training.</p>



AQU (Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency)

- **Specific committee for Sciences**
- **5 academics:**
 - Prof. Francisco Marques (president, UPC)
 - Prof. Carmen Cámara (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)
 - Prof. Joan Fibla (Universitat de Lleida)
 - Prof. Juan J. Nuño (Universitat de València)
 - Manuel Sánchez (Universidad de Granada)
- **1 professional:**
 - Dr. Lluís Bellsollell
- **1 student:**
 - Ms. Rosa del Hoyo (UAB)
- **1 secretary of AQU**



In 2012 and 2013, the Specific committee, in the individual assessment phase, involved 23 academics outside the Catalan University System (Oceanography, Advanced genetics, Photonics...).

Faculties



Biosciences

Sciences



Teaching Quality Office



Susana Segura



Núria Marzo



- ✓ **Provisional reports** about 12 proposals for master's programmes assessed by the Commission of Sciences of AQU Catalonia
- ✓ **Questionnaires** for academics, deans and technical unit (UTQ)

List of the master's programmes analysed

	2012	2013	
Faculty of Science	Generation and Applications of Synchrotron Radiation Industrial Chemistry and Introduction to Chemical Research	High Energy Physics, Astrofisics and Cosmology Interdisciplinary Studies in Sustainability Palaeontology	5
Faculty of Biosciences	Bioinformatics	Citogenetics and Reproductive Biology Plant Biology and Biotechnology Terrestrial Ecology and Biodiversity Management Advanced Genetics Applied Microbiology Advanced Biotechnology	7
	3	9	12

A) ASSESSMENT OF MODIFICATIONS REQUIRED

Rate how much the modifications required in the interim report are required and have helped to improve the proposal. We have classified these improvements in terms of how they affect the design of the training profile , access , resources or other aspects of the proposal. Required a modification involves a change that can positively or negatively . This modification may be relevant (appropriate) or not.

Modifications relating to design profile

- ✓ Review the name of the title (B2)
- ✓ Add competencies to specify the main type technology tools that use titled know (x programming , managing and bases , etc.). (B2)
- ✓ Correct CE1 writing, eliminating the term " demonstrate " (B1)
- ✓ Define the skills and / or learning outcomes resulting from content related to programming in the module "Programming in Bioinformatics" (B3)
- ✓ Provide a model agreement placements (A1)
- ✓ Add the information requested on the Final Master (A4)

1. Rate the relevance and the extent to which these changes improve or not the proposal:

2. Overall, rate the extent to which these changes improve or not the proposal:

Not applicable

No improvement

1

2

3

4

Improvement



Table 2. Number of reports, number of requirements and number of recommendations per year.

	Total number of requirements and recommendations		Average number of requirements and recommendations per report		Increase (2013-2012)/2012
	2012	2013	2012/3	2013/9	
Total reports	3	9			
Number of modifications required	53	93	18	10	-44.44
Number of recommendations	23	52	8	6	-25.00

The institution "has learnt" from errors or omissions made

Type of modifications and recommendations

TYPE A ➔ **Technical-administrative aspects:** *regulations, credits, access, justification of the proposal and requests for further information*

TYPE B ➔ **Academic aspects:** *skills, proposal's approach, the coherence of the academic planning in relation to the educational profile and methodologies and evaluation systems*

Table 3. Type of modifications required and recommendations per year: number of quotes and increase

Modifications and recommendations	2012	2013	Nº by report (x/3) 2012	Nº by report (x/9) 2013	Increase: $[(2013-2012)/2012]*100$
Total codes Type A	43	58	14	6	-55.04
Total codes Type B	24	81	8	9	12.50
Total codes A + B.	67	139	22	15	-30.85
Total reports	3	9			

Table 4. Summary of overall assessments of the proposal by coordinators

Required modifications	Applicable cases	Improves proposal	Does not improve it
Design aspects	10	7	3
Access to the master's degree	9	4	5
Resources	10	3	7
Other aspects	7	6	1
Recommendations			
Design aspects	10	9	1
Access to the master's degree	6	3	3
Resources	2	0	2
Other aspects	5	4	1

7 out of 10 academics say the provisional report requirements have improved the proposal













But, there is a wide range of opinions...

My assessment is positive. This report leads to the conclusion that the commission analysed the proposal in detail and "detected" both specific technical-type deficiencies and more important defects **whose correction substantially improved the final proposal**. The suggestions and requests were very well-expressed and therefore have proved to be useful. (Respondent 1)

It is an **opaque, very bureaucratic process**. The emphasis was always on formal aspects **with no practical importance**, instead of aspects that (at least in my opinion) have a real effect on teaching quality. (Respondent 2)

Qualitative results

	<i>ACCES</i>	<i>TEACHING DESIGN</i>	<i>ACADEMIC RESOURCES</i>	<i>GLOBAL PROCESS</i>
AQU				
OQD				
ACADEMICS				



Disagreements: 1st example

Specific committee for Sciences: in 9 cases the Committee ask for changes in the student profile specifications for the master in order to guarantee the attainment of the programme profile.

Academics: 5 of 9 consider that they do not improve the proposal. One believes that creating a committee for assessing student entrance profile will be bureaucratic.

Teaching quality office: considers that having a collegiate body analysing the students previous studies will give more guarantees to students.

A contextual remark: In Catalunya, in 2013 there are a total of 485 masters degrees, and they must have at least 20 students enrolled per year. Competition is fierce.

Specific committee for Sciences: in 10 cases the Committee requires further information regarding the institution resources.

Academics: 7 of 9 consider that this does not improve the proposal. It's unrealistic and difficult to know in advance the individual lecturers that will be involved.

Teaching quality office: it does not improve the proposal, only adds more information.

A contextual remark: The standards apply to all institutions (public and private). This point is of doubtful necessity in large centres with a long tradition, where teaching staff are appointed through externally-regulated mechanisms.

- **Programme approval has impact over the design of the degrees.**
- Both administrative and technical requirements and recommendations have diminished from one year to another -> TQO good practice .
- Different stakeholders -> Different viewpoints!!!
Not unanimity among the different stakeholders neither about the “goodnes” nor about the “wrongness” of the process
- Areas of improvement detected: foster interaction between external assessors and coordinators, enhancing communication about the assessment aims and objectives, etc.
- **On the whole....**
 - success in bringing degrees close to the EHEA
 - But not all the objectives of the reform have been achieved (e.g. benchmarking of syllabuses)

- Impact and typologies of external assessments (audit, institutional assessment, program approval): which are the ones that have more impact, which are the most useful, and why.
- Educative reforms and the role of external assessment: it is enough with “external controls” or should other mechanism be in place to steer change?
- When the change is mandatory: risks, benefits and precautions
- Different views between different stakeholders: which should prevail?

Thank you for your attention

Anna Prades

aprades@aqu.cat

Núria Marzo

nuria.marzo@uab.cat

