



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

GUIDE TO THE ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONS OFFERING FOREIGN DEGREES IN CATALONIA

October de 2016



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© Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aims of the guide

The realities of the internationalisation of higher education are becoming increasingly consolidated while at the same time it takes on numerous forms, from programmes aimed at attracting students from other countries, joint degree programmes, academic mobility programmes and franchising. The development of measures for the quality assurance of this internationalisation is becoming an important issue, not just for safeguarding the rights of the different users, but also for developing new structures that make best use of its potentialities.

Transnational degree programmes represent one of the variants in which the internationalisation of higher education is apparent, and it is one of the areas in which AQU Catalunya, in its capacity as a university quality assurance agency, is actively involved. In accordance with the Catalan Act on Universities, education institutions wishing to offer a programme leading to a degree awarded by institutions from other countries that has no equivalent to a recognised degree in Catalonia, must be evaluated by AQU prior to authorisation by the Catalan Government.

The aim of this guide is to set out a methodology for assessing these cases, incorporating the quality assurance standards and guidelines implemented in the European Higher Education Area; namely, the ESG (ENQA, 2015). Accordingly, the aim is to determine both the potential of the teaching institution established in Catalonia to properly run study programmes and its internal and external quality assurance mechanisms.

In this respect, this guide also has the following goals:

- To enable institutions to be well-acquainted with the procedure for assessing institutions that offer degree programmes from other countries in Catalonia to allow them to act accordingly and strengthen the specific areas viewed as particularly significant in the review.
- To guarantee that the individuals in charge of offering degree programmes from other countries and indeed the people assessing their proposal have the same points of reference.

From the perspective of the functions of review, certification and accreditation granted to it by the legal framework, one of the missions of AQU Catalunya is to play an instrumental role in the correct implementation of the ESG standards and the principles stemming from the abovementioned code by university institutions and programmes established in Catalonia.

1.2. Regulatory framework

Aside from the international requirements, the methodology also incorporates the conditions laid down in current regulations; namely, the following:

Article 86.1 of **Organic Act 6/2001, of 21 December, on Universities** on institutions teaching degree programmes corresponding to foreign education systems:

1. El Gobierno, previo informe del Consejo de Coordinación Universitaria, regulará el marco general en el que habrán de impartirse en España enseñanzas conducentes a la obtención de títulos extranjeros de educación superior universitaria, así como las condiciones que habrán de reunir los centros que pretendan impartir tales enseñanzas.

El establecimiento en España de centros que, bajo cualquier modalidad, impartan las enseñanzas a que se refiere el párrafo anterior, requerirá la autorización del órgano competente de la Comunidad Autónoma en cuyo territorio se pretenda el establecimiento, previo informe del Consejo de Coordinación Universitaria.

Article 113 of **Act 1/2003, of 19 February, on Universities in Catalonia** on teaching institutions issuing foreign qualifications:

1. Correspon al departament competent en matèria d'universitats autoritzar els centres docents que es vulguin establir a Catalunya per a impartir, sota qualsevol modalitat, ensenyaments conduents a l'obtenció de títols d'educació superior universitària no homologats als títols universitaris oficials, i també revocar-ne l'autorització.

2. L'autorització a què es refereix l'apartat 1 requereix l'informe previ favorable de l'Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya (AQU Catalunya), d'acord amb els estàndards de qualitat que l'Agència hagi elaborat per a aquests tipus de centres.

Article 114. Funcions inspectores i comprovació dels requisits

El departament competent en matèria d'universitats ha d'exercir la funció inspectora per a garantir que les universitats i els centres universitaris compleixen els requisits establerts per la normativa vigent en relació amb les actuacions regulades per aquest capítol i, si escau, els compromisos adquirits pels titulars de les universitats i els centres universitaris privats.

Article 140. Objectiu i funcions

1. L'Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya té com a objectiu l'avaluació, l'acreditació i la certificació de la qualitat en l'àmbit de les universitats i dels centres d'ensenyament superior de Catalunya.

2. Corresponen a l'Agència les funcions següents:

d) L'avaluació dels centres docents establerts a Catalunya que imparteixen ensenyaments conduents a l'obtenció de títols estrangers d'educació superior universitària.

Act 15/2015, of 21 July, on Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya, stipulating that AQU Catalunya's objectives include the provision of external quality assurance of teaching, research and innovation in the Catalan university system and higher education centres.

Royal Decree 420/2015, of 29 May:

Artículo 15

1. De acuerdo con lo establecido en el artículo 86 de la Ley Orgánica 6/2001, de 21 de diciembre, la impartición en España de enseñanzas conducentes a la obtención de títulos, certificados o diplomas de educación superior universitaria, con arreglo a sistemas educativos extranjeros, requiere autorización del órgano competente de la comunidad autónoma.

2. El otorgamiento de la autorización administrativa se producirá en los siguientes supuestos:

- a) Que las enseñanzas sean impartidas por un centro docente integrado o adscrito a una universidad creada o reconocida de conformidad con la legislación española.
- b) Que las enseñanzas sean impartidas por un centro extranjero que deberá estar debidamente constituido con arreglo a la legislación del país conforme a cuyo sistema educativo pretenda impartir enseñanzas.

3. En todo caso, deberán cumplirse los requisitos siguientes:

- a) Los señalados en el artículo 6.2 [con excepción de lo previsto en el segundo párrafo de la letra a)] a 13 del presente real decreto.
- b) Que las enseñanzas extranjeras cuya impartición se pretende:
 - 1.º Estén efectivamente implantadas en la universidad o institución extranjera de educación superior que expida el título, certificado o diploma.
 - 2.º Sus planes de estudios se correspondan en estructura, duración y contenidos con los que se imparten en la universidad o institución de educación superior extranjera matriz, debiendo acreditarse dicho extremo a través de un certificado del rector o remitiendo copia del plan de estudios de la universidad matriz con referencia a asignaturas, secuencia curricular y carga lectiva.
 - 3.º Conduzcan a la obtención de títulos, certificados o diplomas que tengan idéntica validez académica oficial en el país de origen y la misma denominación que los que expida la universidad o institución de educación superior extranjera matriz por dichos estudios.
 - 4.º Estén sometidas a los procesos de evaluación, acreditación e inspección de los órganos competentes del indicado sistema, si los hubiere.

Estos requisitos se acreditarán mediante certificación expedida al efecto por la representación acreditada en España del país conforme a cuyo sistema educativo se haya de impartir la enseñanza.

4. Las comunidades autónomas comunicarán al Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte las autorizaciones conferidas a los centros a efectos de su inscripción en el RUCT.



5. El expediente de autorización requerirá el informe del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación sobre la conveniencia de la misma, basada en la existencia de tratados o convenios internacionales suscritos por España y, en su defecto, en el principio de reciprocidad.

2. ORGANISATION AND PLANNING OF THE ASSESSMENT

2.1. Assessment committees

2.1.1. External assessment committees (CAE)

The review process relies on an external assessment committee (CAE, from the Catalan) which undertakes a visit to the institution. It is incumbent upon said body to draft a report on the visit which will form a decisive instrument in relation to the resolution ultimately issued by the Institutional and Programme Assessment Committee (CAIP).

The CAE shall be formed by at least four people with the following profiles:

1. Academic expert
 - At least one academic representative with expertise in management of institutions.
 - As a general rule, the committee should be chaired by the academic person with the greatest seniority, provided said individual has held a position of authority on a governing body.
2. Expert in quality assurance systems
 - At least one person with expertise in procedures for assessing quality assurance systems and, if applicable, degrees, institutions or teaching staff.
3. Methodology expert
 - At least one person with specific expertise in quality assessment methodologies for university systems. These people will preferably be technical staff of a quality agency or a technical quality unit (UTQ, from the Catalan) at a university outside Catalonia, with experience of quality assurance systems and quality assessment of qualifications, institutions or teaching staff. In exceptional cases this role may be taken by one of the quality assurance experts.
4. Students
 - An undergraduate or postgraduate student, preferably with experience in the application of quality assurance systems.

Members of CAEs are to be appointed by the CAIP chairperson. The individuals appointed must ensure that independence, objectivity, absence of conflicts of interests, ethical commitment and

confidentiality form the pillars of their work. Accordingly, committee members should be external to the institution they are assessing and have no association with it whatsoever.

To ensure the necessary transparency, the composition of CAE will be published on the AQU Catalunya website.

2.1.2. The Institutional and Programme Assessment Committee (CAIP)

Among other functions, it shall be incumbent on the Institutional and Programme Assessment Committee (CAIP, from the Catalan) to prepare the final external assessment report. To this end, the external visit report prepared by the CAE should be taken into consideration as the primary source of evidence.

The CAIP shall be formed by the following members:

- a) A chairperson.
- b) No more than six people of acknowledged academic or professional standing from the university community of Catalonia.
- c) No more than six people of acknowledged academic or professional standing from the international university community.
- d) A secretary, who must be an individual employed by AQU Catalunya.

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

2.1.3. The Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee is responsible for addressing all appeals lodged on the context of the foreign institution assessment procedure. In order to resolve appeals, the committee shall use reports prepared by experts in the field or fields covered by the degree programmes in relation to which the appeal is lodged, preferably outside the Catalan university system.

2.2. The assessment procedure

2.2.1. Description of the assessment procedure

The assessment procedure comprises the following key stages:

1. **Application for authorisation.** The institution must formally apply for the authorisation that is granted to institutions teaching degree programmes corresponding to foreign education systems in the section Procedures (<http://web.gencat.cat/en/tramits/>) of the Government of Catalonia website.

Institutions must submit all documentation stipulated in the section Procedures; specifically, the following:

- i. Certificate issued by the diplomatic office (embassy or consulate) with a sworn translation into Spanish or Catalan, certifying that the study programmes have been implemented in the university, that the study plans match those of the home university and that the qualifications issued are valid, likewise specifying the assessment and accreditation the study programmes are subject to.
 - ii. Report.
 - iii. If the institution it attached to or a franchisee of the foreign university, it will be necessary to submit an agreement setting out the academic ties between the two institutions, along with a sworn translation into Spanish or Catalan.
 - iv. Self-report for the assessment of the institution offering a foreign degree in Catalonia and a response to the self-assessment questionnaire.
2. **Analysis of documentation.** The competent department for universities shall review the legal aspects stipulated in the standard.
3. **Submission of documentation to AQU Catalunya.** The competent department for universities shall submit the documentation to AQU Catalunya provided the analysis of documentation (point 2) has been completed satisfactorily.
4. **Assessment.** The assessment entails the analysis of all documentation submitted by the CAE.
5. **Visit.** The primary goal of this stage is to gain an acquaintance *in situ* of the institution's potential to properly run study programmes along with its internal and external quality assurance mechanisms. The evidence provided will be compared or validated, any discrepancies or conflicts will be identified and, if applicable, further evidence will be obtained in order to review areas not envisaged in the documentation provided.

A day-long visit is considered a suitable average length of time for most institutions.
6. **Preliminary external assessment report.** Within a period of four weeks at the most, the CAE chairperson shall submit the committee's report to AQU Catalunya.
7. **Approval of the preliminary external assessment report.** The CAIP shall issue a preliminary external assessment report which shall be primarily based on the evidence gleaned from the report on the visit issued by the CAE. Subsequently, the result shall be reported to the institution.

Within a period of approximately **twenty days**, the institution may submit any statements it deems pertinent for the preliminary report for the CAE and the CAIP to take into consideration.
8. **Final report.** Within a period of approximately twenty days, subject to an examination of the remarks made on the report by the institution, the CAE shall draw up and issue a definitive external assessment report.

The CAIP will receive the definitive external assessment report and give ratification. The result of the report will be specified as favourable or unfavourable, as described in section 4.1 of this guide.

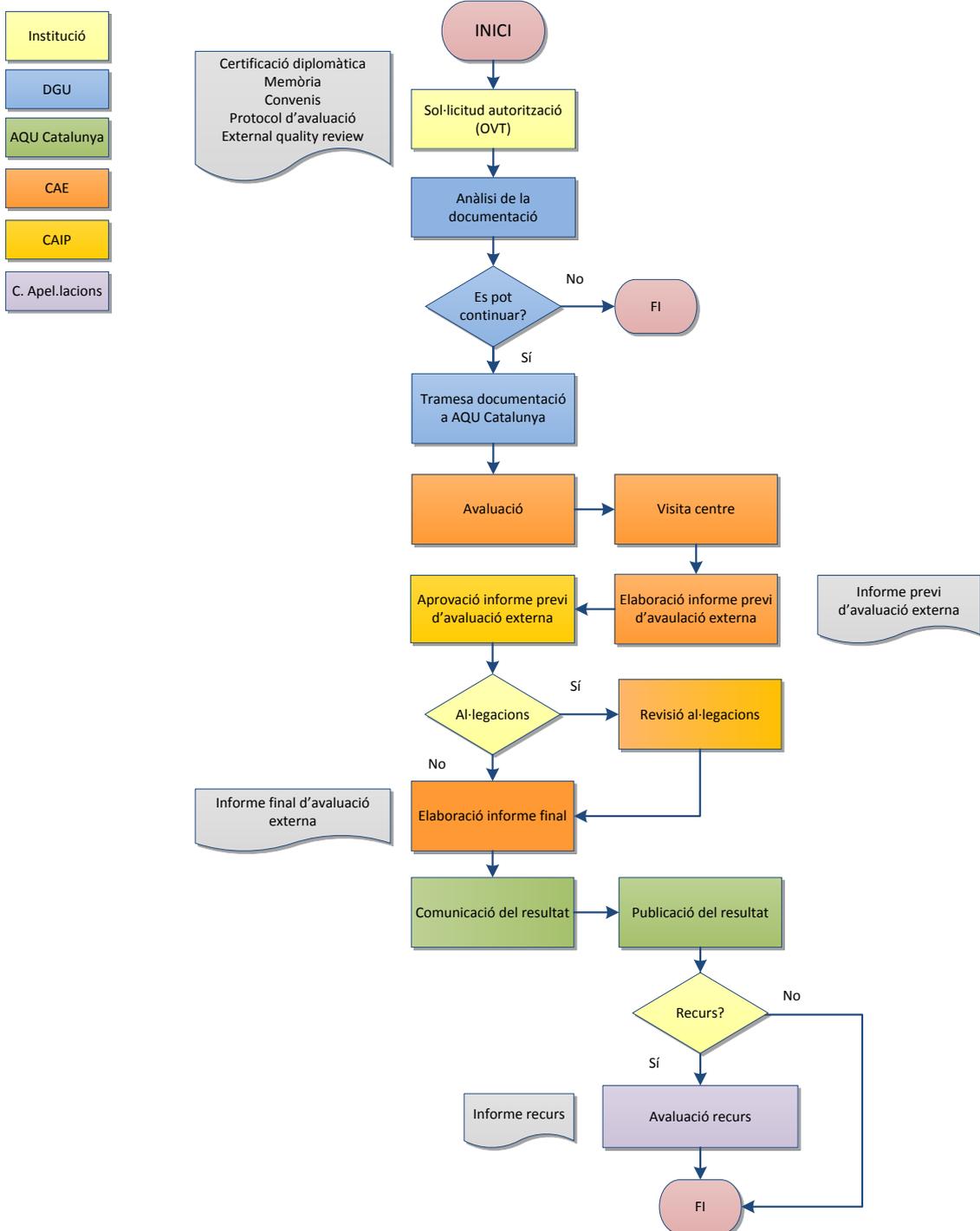
9. **Disclosure of the result.** Once the final report has been issued, the result will be notified to the competent department for universities, the institution and the competent organisation for quality in the institution's home country.
10. **Publication of the result.** AQU Catalunya will publish the result of the assessment procedure on its website as specified in section 4 hereof.
11. **The appeal procedure.** An appeal may be lodged to AQU Catalunya Appeals Committee in objection to reports issued by the CAIP.

The Appeals Committee must issue a resolution within a period of no more than 3 months. A resolution issued in relation to the appeal will put an end to administrative proceedings.

AQU Catalunya will serve notice of the result of the appeal on the competent department for universities, the institution and the competent organisation for quality in the institution's home country and, if applicable, will alter the published result.

12. **Authorisation and publication in the Official Journal of the Government of Catalonia (DOGC, from the Catalan).** The competent department for universities will, if applicable, request, draw up and evaluate the pertinent reports in relation to the legal aspects of the project (reports concerning university organisation and programming, academic staff, infrastructure, finances and legal consultancy). Then, once the draft ruling has been submitted to the pertinent procedural hearing, the definitive ruling shall be formally published in the DOGC.

An organisational chart of the procedure for assessing institutions offering foreign degree programmes in Catalonia is set out below:



3. DIMENSIONS AND STANDARDS OF THE ASSESSMENT

The methodology proposed by AQU Catalunya envisages two instruments:

- A protocol for drafting the self-report that should make it possible to determine the potential of the institution established in Catalonia to properly run the study programme. This protocol pays special attention to: public information on the study programme, management of the study programme, the resources and the internal quality assurance system.
- A self-assessment questionnaire for analysing the position of the foreign institution awarding the degree. The aim of the questionnaire is to gather evidence on its academic potential in the discipline and its internal and external quality assurance systems.

These two instruments, together with a site visit to the institution giving the programme, are the primary sources of evidence in order for the CAE to draw up the external visit report.

3.1. Protocol for drafting a self-report

The following basic information on the study programme must be provided in the self-report:

- a. Programme level
- b. Programme name
- c. Institution awarding the degree
- d. Institution delivering the degree

Then a response should be provided in connection to the following four standards, which are detailed further below:

- a. Public information
- b. Running of the study programme in Catalonia
- c. Resources
- d. The quality assurance system

3.1.1. Public information

“Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.” (ESG 1.8)

Details should be provided about the content of the information aimed at users relating to the curriculum (this information should be printed out and, where applicable, details given of the website where the information can be found). The following items should be taken into account:

- The degree that the student is awarded on completion of his/her studies and its recognition in the countries of the European Union and internationally.
- Curriculum structure: compulsory credits, credits from elective courses, curriculum pathway, free-choice subjects, credit transfers, and course prerequisites, where applicable.
- Competences/learning outcomes of the programme.
- Job opportunities.
- Places offered.
- Admission criteria.
- What are the various ways of gaining access to the degree course (entrance exams, COU/final year of secondary studies, etc.)? Are they the same as in the awarding institution?
- Continuance criteria (for ongoing student status):
 - What continuance criteria are laid down in the programme? Are they the same as those of the awarding institution?
 - Compulsory stay requirements at the awarding institution, where applicable.
- Continuance criteria (for ongoing student status) at the awarding institution. Requirements for doing work experience/placement abroad.
- Registration fee for the student:
 - The registration fee for each course should be stated, together with the registration fee of a stay at the awarding institution, where applicable, with details of all expenses that are both included (teaching, accommodation, etc.) and not included.
- In the case of grant programmes and/or student exchange programmes, the eligibility requirements should be clearly stated.
- Languages in which classes will be given at the teaching institution and at the awarding institution.
- Stipulated language knowledge requirements for students at the time of registration.
 - What are the formal mechanisms for establishing the students' level of language knowledge (recognised examinations, etc.)?
 - In what language/s is the teaching material, information pamphlets, signs in the institution, etc., given in?
 - What language learning does the providing institution offer?

3.1.2. Running of the study programme in Catalonia

Study activities

- Distribution of teaching activity: the class hours and the distribution of the subjects in the timetable should be stated. Duration of the teaching periods.
- Practical dimension of the curriculum: specifications of work experience/placement and the final year project/dissertation, where applicable, stating:
 - the objective of work experience in private enterprise,
 - the timing of work experience in private enterprise,
 - the organisation and procedures for supervision and evaluation.
 - centres where students can undertake work experience/placement.

Regarding the final year project/dissertation, and where applicable, the policy for decision making should be described in terms of both its nature and the academic discipline.

Student assessment

“Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.” ESG 1.3

The following aspects should be described:

- The types of exams that will be used (test, oral, etc.).
- The mechanisms for correcting exams (with the participation of the awarding institution), the criteria for assessment and the schedule for assessment (final exams, mid-term exams, continuous assessment, etc.).
- Criteria to average out term or yearly grades in different courses.
- How and when the students are informed about the results of mid-term and final exams.
- Regulations regarding exam review.
- Where applicable, the mechanisms for analysing the results and finding irregular trends.
- Supervisory mechanisms used by the awarding institution for student assessment.

3.1.3. Resources

“Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.” (ESG 1.5)

“Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.” (ESG 1.6)

Overall viability of the project

- The institution's overall objectives regarding the running of the programme should be stated.
- Reasons justifying the programme's introduction in Catalonia.
- Anticipated demand for places on the programme.
- The required evidence for the necessary financial resources that will ensure the project's viability should be specified, along with details of the providing institution's income and expenditure as precisely as possible and on an annual basis from the start of the activities to when the programme is fully running.
- In addition, the resources should be specified, giving evidence of the financial agreements to endorse funding (asset backing, mortgage guarantees, etc.).

Quality of the teaching staff

- The anticipated teacher/student ratio should be stated.
- The working time assignment of the teaching staff on the degree programme should be reported.
- For each course, the staff in charge of teaching should be specified.

Administrative and service staff

- The administrative and service staff associated with the degree programme should be stated: name, category and times that the administrative (secretary's) office is open.

Facilities (physical space and equipment)

During the site visit, an assessment is made of the institution's facilities, and in particular those that will be used for the degree programme requesting authorisation. This will mainly cover:

- The classrooms with their audio-visual equipment.
- Specific rooms, such as laboratories where practicals will be held.
- The library: capacity, number of places, physical conditions and functionality, technical equipment, organisation of the collection, access to other sources (number of journal subscriptions, number of specific monographs), reference and access systems, and opening hours.
- ICT (information and communications technologies): specific ICT spaces, access.
- Complementary services: restaurants, cafeterias, printing services, sports services, cultural services.
- An assessment will also be made of compliance with the regulations regarding handicapped persons.

Specific collaborations in teaching and research

Documentation must be submitted that attests to the points referring to:

- The mobility of teaching staff (co-teaching, visiting lecturers, etc.)
- Collaboration in research projects and activities (please specify projects, researchers, funding body, etc.).

3.1.4. Internal quality assurance system

“Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.” (ESG 1.1)

“Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.” (ESG 1.2)

“Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.” (ESG 1.7)

Bearing in mind that the programme design and its quality assurance, which is paramount with regard to general objectives and content, are done by the awarding institution, the providing institution in Catalonia will need to provide information on:

- The existence of an institutional quality plan.
- The level at which the different stakeholders in the degree programme are involved in defining the objectives for enhancement.
- Procedures to be used to establish the level of achievement of the learning outcomes.
- In the case where the running of the programme is brought to an end or if the providing institution were to close, the providing institution’s mechanisms to ensure the safe-keeping of the student transcripts.
- The structure of the report sent by the providing institution to the awarding institution.
- The indicators to be used for the monitoring of programme quality.
- Procedures at the providing institution for receiving information from the awarding institution so that the programme content and assessment activities can be updated and reference indicators be provided on the delivery of the programme at the awarding institution’s campus.
- The system for receiving and dealing with complaints and suggestions made by the students.

3.2. Self-assessment questionnaire

Together with this documentation and prior to an external review of the quality of the educational services, the short questionnaire below is to be completed by the awarding HE institution. Short, specific answers would be appreciated.

The questionnaire should be signed by:

- a) The highest-level academic coordinator/manager at the degree-awarding HE institution.
- b) The academic coordinator/manager at the degree-awarding HE who will monitor the quality of the study programme being delivered in Catalonia.

Programme identification

Name of the programme in Catalonia	
Name of the degree awarded: a) Duration of the programme in terms/ECTS b) Anticipated student numbers for the programme in Catalonia for a period of (e.g. 5) years c) To what extent is use made of the Diploma Supplement?	
Name of the providing institution in Catalonia	
Name of the degree-awarding HE institution	
If applicable: Position of the qualification in the National Qualification Framework of the home country	

Part 1: Experience and academic potential of the awarding institution in the field of the study programme

Basic facts of the awarding HE institution

- a) Status of the university (public / private)
- b) Total numbers of degrees offered (BA, MA, PhD):
- c) Total numbers of students in each type of degree (BA, MA, PhD):
- d) Total number of Bachelor students in the last academic year:
- e) Total number of teachers on Bachelor degree programmes in the last academic year:
- f) If possible, the total number of foreign students in BA, MA and PhD programmes:

Teaching activities at the awarding HE institution related to the study programme provided in Catalonia

- a) Taking into account the syllabus that is to be offered in Catalonia, state whether your institution delivers an identical syllabus and awards an identical degree at the home

campus. Provide the syllabus and the name and CV of the academic coordinator/s (Use the appendix for this).

- b) Number of students taking the identical study programme and/or similar ones in the last three (3) academic years at the awarding institution.
- c) How long has/have the programme/s been running and how many students have been awarded the degree?

Networking within the scope of the programme

- a) Have any agreements to deliver the same or similar programmes been signed between your institution and other foreign universities? If so, please give details and answer questions b and c; if not, go on to part 2.
- b) To what extent do students who are registered in programmes awarded by your institution but delivered by other institutions have access to student services at your institution? (e.g. remote access to the library, graduates' register, alumni associations, etc.).
- c) Do the general admission requirements at your institution also apply to foreign students? If not, what are the admission requirements for the foreign students?

Part 2: Internal quality assurance

- a) Student admission requirements: Mechanisms to ensure that student requirements and procedures at the home campus and at the new site of the providing institution in Catalonia are the same.
- b) Student assessment: Mechanisms to ensure that the intended learning outcomes achieved by students in study programmes delivered abroad are comparable to those achieved by students on the study programme (or similar study programmes) at the home campus.
- c) Mechanisms to ensure that the learning outcomes of the study programme delivered abroad are achieved.
- d) Provide evidence of the coordination of all processes regarding teaching and research between the home campus and the new site.
- e) Does your website provide public information about the programme delivered in Catalonia?

Part 3: External quality assurance

- a) External review of the quality of the programme at your institution.
- b) The corresponding body that carries out and publishes the results of the external review.
- c) The external review of quality in your institution.
- d) The corresponding body that carries out and publishes the results of the external review.



- e) Provide evidence of these processes (e.g. public reports in the case of the external review of the study programme and/or institution).
- f) Programme and/or institutional accreditation.
- g) Provide evidence of the relevant accreditation process.
- h) The legal entitlement of your institution to offer this programme abroad. Are the degrees awarded for the programme offered in Catalonia given automatic recognition in the home country or does national legislation in the home country call for a specific procedure for this? If this is the case, please provide evidence.

4. ASSESSMENT RESULT

4.1. Final report

On the basis of the final report drawn up by the External Assessment Committee (CAE), the Institutional and Programme Assessment Committee (CAIP) shall prepare its definitive report. Upon its issue, the result shall be reported to the competent department for universities so it may be taken into consideration in order to assess whether or not it is appropriate to authorise the institution to run the study programmes. The latter report shall also be notified to the competent organisation for university quality in the institution's home country.

The result of the report will be specified as **favourable** or **unfavourable**.

The report must at least incorporate the following information:

1. Introduction
 - 1.1. Description of the institution assessed
 - 1.2. Composition of the committee and visit agenda
 - 1.3. Aims of the report
2. Public information on study programmes
3. Management of the study programme in Catalonia
 - 3.1. Study activities
 - 3.2. Student assessment
4. Resources
 - 4.1. Overall project feasibility
 - 4.2. Teaching staff quality
 - 4.3. Administration and service staff
 - 4.4. Areas and equipment
 - 4.5. Specific cooperative relations in teaching and research
5. Internal quality assurance system
6. The committee's evaluation
7. Recommendations
8. Executive report in English

In both cases, i.e., whether the result is deemed favourable or unfavourable, AQU Catalunya shall publish the final external assessment report concerning the institution on the review reports portal (<http://estudis.aqu.cat/informes>).

The report shall be published upon completion of the entire procedure by AQU Catalunya, including resolving on the appeal, if any. This is regardless of whether the report may be used as the main source of evidence in other cases.

4.2. Effects of the assessment

The assessment report is an essential instrument in order to authorise an institution from another country to run a study programme in Catalonia. A favourable rating in the assessment does not automatically imply authorisation being granted to allow the institution to run foreign study programmes in Catalonia. Indeed, it is incumbent on the competent department for universities to grant authorisation to teaching institutions intended to be set up in Catalonia to run study programmes under any format which lead to the award of HE university qualifications that have not been validated in accordance with recognised university qualifications, whereby said department shall also be responsible for withdrawing the authorisation (article 113 of Act 1/2003, of 19 February, on Universities in Catalonia).

Moreover, a report with an unfavourable evaluation means that under no circumstances shall authorisation be granted to the institution to run study programmes in Catalonia.

On a separate issue, it is necessary to point out that authorising an institution to run foreign study programmes in Catalonia does not entail the initiation of procedures for validating the studies in Spain, although it is a condition precedent in order to process said validation with the competent ministry for universities.

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 external assessment, the goal of AQU Catalunya should be to ensure that the institution swiftly addresses areas with scope for improvement and that a spirit of accomplishment is encouraged.

With this approach in mind, throughout the effective period of the authorisation the institution shall be responsible for performing follow-ups and continual improvement of study programmes, pursuant to its own internal quality assurance system.

Along these lines, the assessment will be valid for a period of 5 years, whereupon the institution will need to re-apply for an assessment using the AQU Catalunya *Guide to the accreditation of recognised Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programmes*. The result of this assessment will be notified to the competent department for universities, the institution and the competent organisation for quality in the institution’s home country.



6. REFERENCES

Organic Act 6/2001, of 21 December, on Universities. <http://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2001-24515>

Act 1/2003, of 19 February, on Universities in Catalonia http://dogc.gencat.cat/ca/pdogc_canals_interns/pdogc_resultats_fitxa/?documentId=310153&language=ca_ES&action=fitxa

Act 15/2015, of 21 July, on Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya. <http://portaldogc.gencat.cat/utillsEADOP/AppJava/PdfProviderServlet?versionId=1435962&type=01>

ENQA (2015). *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*. http://www.aqu.cat/doc/doc_75679572_1.pdf

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