



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

Final report assessing the design of the internal quality assurance system

Blanquerna Faculty of Communication Sciences
Universitat Ramon Llull (Ramon Llull University,
URL)

18 June 2008



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

University	Ramon Llull University (URL)
Centre	Blanquerna Faculty of Communication Sciences
IQAS scope	Degrees taught at the Blanquerna Faculty of Communication 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 Blanquerna Faculty of Communication Sciences at Ramon Llull University.

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
1.4.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	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 Blanquerna Faculty of Communication Sciences is advised to take these aspects into consideration within the framework of an ongoing improvement process.

As far as **cross-disciplinary aspects** are concerned, elements strengthening the design of the IQAS include the support given by Ramon Llull University to the proposal submitted for the design of the IQAS, as well as the accurate definition of the bodies in charge of each of the guideline areas. Lastly, mechanisms regulating and ensuring decision making (with the exception of those linked to the assessment, promotion and acknowledgment of academic and teaching support staff which need to be strengthened) are indicated as another positive aspect of the IQAS.

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 public disclosure mechanisms associated with this guideline as well as the system for their implementation.

As far as the **quality assurance of training programmes** is concerned (guideline 1.1), particularly positive emphasis is placed on the systems described for compiling and analysing information and which make it possible to assess how the range of training on offer is maintained, updated and renewed.

Various positive aspects have been identified in relation to the extent to which **teaching is student-oriented** (guideline 1.2). To be precise, the following are aspects that strengthen the IQAS: mechanisms designed to ensure the quality of external practices and student mobility, as well as the tutoring system; systems for analysing and compiling information making it possible to become acquainted with and assess needs relating to the profile for admission and professional guidance systems; and mechanisms that govern and provide information on regulations affecting students.

On the context of **management and improvement of services and material resources** (guideline 1.4a), elements lending the IQAS its steadfast nature include mechanisms for monitoring, reviewing and improving services and material resources; as well as mechanisms for rendering accounts as to these resources, including the extent to which they are used by students.

With respect to **management and improvement of the quality of services and administration staff** (guideline 1.4b), particularly worth highlighting are the mechanisms for monitoring, reviewing and improving the policy and actions associated with this group of staff, as well as the mechanisms for rendering accounts to said group about the results of the staff policy.

The **analysis and use of results** (guideline 1.5) encompasses various aspects that enhance the satisfactory assessment given to the IQAS. Firstly, mechanisms are highlighted which enable information to be gleaned on the needs of stakeholders concerning teaching quality. Moreover, the scheme envisaged for the analysis and use of results from learning (particularly

with regard to participation on the part of stakeholders) provides data regarding the results of learning and the mechanisms for monitoring, reviewing and improving these results. What is more, the scheme used for the analysis and use of results on access to the labour market is another positive aspect of the quality system. Particularly noteworthy in this latter scheme are the systems for compiling and analysing information and, to a lesser extent, rendering of accounts. Lastly, as for the results on the extent to which stakeholders are satisfied, particular note is made of systems conceived for compiling and analysing information and the rendering of accounts.

The **publication of information on degrees** (guideline 1.6) includes a number of positive aspects. Firstly, particular note must be made of procedures for informing stakeholders as to the actions which carry the fundamental goal of promoting student learning (availability, goals and planning of degrees; policies for admission and focus on students; teaching, learning and assessment methodology; mobility policy and external training programmes), and also prominent are procedures for informing stakeholders as to the results of access to the labour market. Lastly, it is necessary to underline the mechanisms for monitoring, reviewing and improving public information provided to the stakeholders.

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 Blanquerna Faculty of Communication 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 the Blanquerna Faculty of Communication Sciences must stem from the faculty's strategic plan, in line with that of Ramon Llull University.
- 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 Ramon Llull University and the specific procedures

pertaining to the Blanquerna Faculty of Communication 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 meets 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 in order to ensure smooth implementation of the IQAS.

With respect to the **quality goals and policy** (guideline 1.0), it is suggested that a more explicit definition be given of the mechanisms for rendering accounts and said mechanisms should be accompanied by indicators making it possible to show and report on the extent to which they have been fulfilled.

The **quality assurance of training programmes** (guideline 1.1) must incorporate a more systematic design of mechanisms for rendering accounts to the main stakeholders with regard to teaching quality and it must set out the tools it will use, as well as the stakeholders to which it will be addressed.

In cross-disciplinary terms with respect to the guideline on the extent to which **teaching is student-oriented** (guideline 1.2), the IQAS is ill-focussed when specifying the stakeholders involved in some aspects that affect this guideline. Specifically, it is advisable to specify the stakeholders linked to the design and development of the following: defining the graduation profiles; systems for student focus and support; teaching methodology and learning assessment; systems for providing students with professional guidance; and the systems to giving statements, making claims or providing suggestions.

In the case of the **quality improvement and assurance of academic and teaching support staff** (guideline 1.3.) there is a need to better define how the stakeholders participate in defining and implementing the academic and teaching support staff policy. Generally speaking, and despite receiving a satisfactory assessment, there is a need for a more systematic design to be carried out on aspects for outlining the policy in relation to this group, particularly when it comes to mechanisms for monitoring, reviewing and implementing improvements to the staff policy. It is also advisable for further endeavours to be achieved with respect to mechanisms for compiling and analysing information aimed at gaining an acquaintance of staff needs, as well as mechanisms for rendering accounts on the outcomes of the staff policy. In addition, it is

recommended that aspects relating to the training of academic and teaching support staff also be enhanced, particularly when it comes to setting out a training plan that is able to meet the needs of such staff in a comprehensive manner. Likewise, there is a need to show the links between the training plan and the results of the teaching assessment at Ramon Llull University as a whole.

As far as the **management and improvement of services and material resources** is concerned (guideline 1.4a), it is advisable for a more specific design to be prepared on the mechanisms according to which stakeholders shall become involved in managing services and material resources.

As regards the **management and improvement of the quality of services and administration staff** (guideline 1.4b), it is advisable for a more specific design to be prepared on the mechanisms according to which stakeholders shall become involved in defining, reviewing and improving the policy applicable to this staff group.

Lastly, when it comes to the **structure of the IQAS design document**, it is strongly advisable to implement a host of measures aimed at producing a swiftly readable document that, since it constitutes a tool for the disclosure and dissemination of quality at the centre. The following recommendations are made:

- To sum up or overlook aspects already included in the manual in great detail and which are liable to quickly transform the proposal into an obsolete document.
- To improve the links and common ground between the procedures associated with Ramon Llull University and those associated with the Blanquerna Faculty of Communication Sciences to eliminate potential redundancies from the document.
- In order to make the document more reader-friendly, according to each centre's wishes, it is advisable to show a description of procedures alongside the flowcharts, instead of including them as annexes.

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