

# AQU Catalunya

## Activities Report 2005

AQU Catalunya is the main instrument that promotes and assesses quality, in accordance with the Catalan Universities Act (LUC), and, as such, its purpose is the assessment, accreditation and certification of the quality of the universities and institutions of higher education in Catalonia.

In regard to practically all activities, the experience gained during the previous year (2004) enabled an analysis to be made and strategies for improvement set in place that have consolidated the activities and powers of AQU Catalunya as laid down in Act 1/2003 on the Universities in Catalonia, the AQU Catalunya statutes and current guidelines.

The focus of work at AQU Catalunya during 2005 involved implementation of the Board of Directors-approved activities plan, particularly the process of adaptation of university degrees to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the promoting of quality in the Catalan university system through institutional assessment processes.

Work in 2005 also involved the assessment of teaching staff, and further calls were made for applications for pre-shortlist reports for the posts of tenure-track, tenured and contracted lecturing staff; the issuing of research and advanced research accreditation; assessment of teaching staff at the private universities; and assessment of the teaching merits of teaching staff.

The activities carried out by AQU Catalunya during 2005 cover four main areas of work:

- Quality assessment
- Teaching staff and research
- Promotion, cooperation and communication
- Improving the internal running of the organisation

## THE ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY

### *The quality of training programmes*

AQU Catalunya participated in the activities of the DURSI in relation to the adapting of university degree programmes to the EHEA. In this regard, AQU Catalunya monitored the degree programmes participating in the DURSI Pilot Plan and collaborated in the second run of the Plan. The Quality Assessment Committee (CAQ) approved the standards for certification of EHEA-adaptation for 180-credit programmes participating in the pilot plan that, at the decision of the universities themselves, do not lead to a (non-recognised) degree qualification.

Results of the assessment of the Pilot Plan proposals, 2005 call					
	Proposals submitted	Favourable	Minor shortcomings	Important shortcomings	Unfavourable
Undergraduate	29	5	19	2	3
Master's	10	2	3	1	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>

Results of the assessment of the Pilot Plan proposals. Monitoring of the 2004 call				
	Proposals submitted	Favourable	Shortcomings	Unfavourable
Undergraduate	24	6	15	3
Master's	5	3	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>

AQU Catalunya carried out the *ex ante* assessment of the proposals for the new recognised postgraduate programmes for the 2006-2007 academic year within the framework of the first DURSI-backed structural reform that is now required of university education in order to adapt to the EHEA. In order for this process to be carried out, the methodology was developed, the criteria established, the experts were selected and an assessment made of one hundred proposals for recognised postgraduate programmes that include more than two hundred Masters programmes, sixty of which are inter-university programmes.

### Results of the assessment of the proposals for recognised postgraduate programmes

	Proposals submitted	Favourable	% favorables*
Humanities	33	19	57.6%
Social Sciences	58	31	53.4%
Experimental Sciences	41	27	65.8%
Health Sciences	22	5	22.7%
Technical Subjects	55	36	65.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>56.4%</b>

\*These results do not include the assessments made subsequent to appeals submitted by the universities (January 2006).

A workshop for those involved in designing recognised postgraduate programmes in Catalonia was held within the context of the seventh series of AQU workshops organised in collaboration with the University of Girona, in which one hundred and twenty-five people took part.

AQU Catalunya continued its work of assessing degree programmes that, through different agreements with the Catalan universities, were involved in the Pro-QU programme, and the external assessment of thirty degree programmes was completed.

Work continued on the DISSENY programme that reinforces aspects concerning the design of programme studies. As part of the adaptation of degree programmes to the EHEA, the DISSENY programme working group on Psychology prepared the *Guidelines for preparing a programme specification. The case of Psychology*, a document that deals with the need to identify a programme specification and the competences required of graduates in Psychology. The DISSENY programme working group on Medicine began work on preparing a document regarding the assessment of competences of graduates in Medicine, and the Chemical Engineering working group prepared and submitted for consultation the programme specification for graduates in this field.

The indicators for assessing distance learning programmes were determined and a specific group worked on developing the guidelines for assessing e.learning programmes.

### *Quality of research and teaching institutions*

A group consisting of the DURSI, the Catalan universities, the CBUC (*Consorci de Biblioteques Universitàries de Catalunya*) and AQU Catalunya has been set up to assess the library services at Catalan universities, the goal being to establish the objectives and methodology for the second university libraries assessment programme. The work involved in this assessment was set in motion by the signing of agreements with the units that are to be assessed and preparation of the document *Guidelines for assessing library services and their contribution to the quality of learning and research*, which will be used to carry out the assessment.

AQU Catalunya, in collaboration with other agencies and through the CIAR (an interministerial committee for assessing research, which is accountable to the CIRIT), began work on harmonising the methodology for assessing the research plans for Catalonia as a whole.

### *Annual assessment report*

In order for the assessment activities of AQU Catalunya to be accountable to society at large, approval was given to the seventh report on the process of assessing quality in the Catalan university system (2004 report).<sup>1</sup> The approach of the report, which gives the results of the assessment of thirty-four degree programmes and five processes, is new in that, for the first time, it includes and gives an in-depth analysis of the focal points of activity at AQU Catalunya: the fostering of the quality-based culture, its programmes for assessing degrees, processes, services and teaching staff, new assessment approaches and the EHEA.

### *The impact of training*

A second survey on the placement of graduates from the Catalan university system in the labour market was carried out by AQU Catalunya, together with the Social Councils of the seven public universities in Catalonia. The objective was to monitor the placement in the labour market of students who graduated in 2000-2001 (for graduates in Medicine, the corresponding year was 1997-1998) and to validate the methodology and results obtained from the first survey. The survey was carried out by telephone with a sample of 11,456 graduates. The results are available on the AQU Catalunya website.

### *Studies that have been carried out*

AQU Catalunya was involved in developing the MIRROR Project, together with Sweden, Finland and Ireland. The project analyses the situation of PhD programmes from the students' point of view.

AQU Catalunya completed the benchmark document on good practices, *General framework for evaluating interaction between university-level research and teaching* and prepared the following methodological material:

- *Guia general per dur a terme les proves pilot d'adaptació de les titulacions a l'EEES. Titulacions de grau.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Procés d'avaluació de la qualitat del sistema universitari de Catalunya. Informe 2004*

- *Guia general per dur a terme les proves pilot d'adaptació de les titulacions a l'EEES. Titulacions de postgrau.*
- *Guia per al Transnational European Evaluation Project II.*
- *Eines per a l'adaptació dels ensenyaments a l'EEES.*
- *Guia d'avaluació dels Serveis Bibliotecaris i de la seva contribució a la qualitat de l'aprenentatge i la recerca.*

In line with European standards, AQU Catalunya has promoted student participation in processes of institutional assessment through the Quality management and assessment course, held at the University Autònoma de Barcelona in August. The course foment student participation in processes to guarantee quality, as recommended by EHEA directives.

## TEACHING STAFF AND RESEARCH

### *The issuing of pre-shortlist reports, research accreditation and advanced research accreditation for the hiring of university teaching staff at public universities*

The Tenured and Adjunct Teaching Staff Committee (CLiC) completed settlement of the appeals submitted as a result of the second call in 2004 and, in accordance with resolution UNI/3387/2004 of 7 December 2004, two calls were made for the issuing of pre-selection reports for the hiring of tenured and adjunct teaching staff by Catalan universities. At the request of the universities, the CLiC issued resolution UNI/1060/2005, dated 14 April, whereby an extraordinary call for applications was made to issue tenured and adjunct teaching staff reports.

These three calls, made according to fields of knowledge, were assessed by specific committees accountable to the CLiC. The results of the calls were as follows:

### **Aggregate results of the calls for applications for pre-shortlist assessment reports for tenured and adjunct teaching staff completed during 2005<sup>2</sup>**

COLLABORATING LECTURER	A <sup>(1)</sup>	CWR	F	U	AC	AD	AP	TF	TU	% F
Humanities	115	2	91	20	0	0	2	91	22	79
Social Sciences	229	2	117	89	3	11	7	120	107	52
Sciences	99	0	83	14	0	1	1	83	16	84
Life Sciences	39	2	21	13	1	2	0	22	15	56
Medical Sciences	78	1	57	19	0	1	0	57	20	73
Engineering/Architecture	320	3	223	86	2	2	5	225	93	70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>68</b>

<sup>2</sup> Some tables made be subject to modification as a result of appeals pending resolution.

<sup>(1)</sup> **A**: applications; **CWR**: closed without resolution; **F**: favourable; **U**: unfavourable; **AC**: appeals considered; **AD**: appeals dismissed; **AP**: appeals pending; **TF**: total favourable; **TU**: total unfavourable; **% F**: % favourable out of the total

LECTURER	A <sup>(*)</sup>	CWR	F	U	AC	AD	AP	TF	TU	% F
Humanities	96	2	68	20	2	3	1	70	24	73
Social Sciences	134	2	54	59	1	9	9	55	77	41
Sciences	105	2	66	33	0	4	0	66	37	63
Life Sciences	51	1	19	31	0	0	0	19	31	37
Medical Sciences	45	2	23	15	1	4	0	24	19	53
Engineering/Architecture	121	2	84	34	0	1	0	84	35	69
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>58</b>

The Research Assessment Committee (CAR), in accordance with resolutions UNI/2694/2004, dated 4 October, and UNI/2745/2005, dated 27 September, regarding the issuing of research accreditation, and in accordance with resolutions UNI/2693/2004, dated 1 October, and UNI/2746/2005, dated 27 September, regarding the issuing of advanced research accreditation, made the corresponding calls for applications for 2005 and made its ruling regarding the last call made in 2004 and the first call in 2005.

These calls were assessed according to fields of knowledge by specific committees accountable to the CLiC. The results are as follows:

### Aggregate results of the calls for applications for research accreditation and advanced research accreditation completed in 2005<sup>3</sup>

RESEARCH	A <sup>(*)</sup>	CWR	F	U	AC	AD	AP	TF	TU	% F
Humanities	59	2	20	29	1	2	5	21	36	36
Social Sciences	57	5	18	27	0	2	5	18	34	32
Sciences	59	1	31	22	1	3	1	32	26	54
Life Sciences	40	0	15	20	0	2	3	15	25	37
Medical Sciences	91	0	41	38	2	4	6	43	48	47
Engineering/Architecture	42	3	27	11	0	0	1	27	12	64
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>45</b>

<sup>3</sup> Some tables made be subject to modification as a result of appeals pending resolution.

ADVANCED RESEARCH	A <sup>(*)</sup>	CWR	F	U	AC	AD	AP	TF	TU	% F
Humanities	11	0	8	2	0	0	1	8	3	73
Social Sciences	17	0	4	11	0	0	2	4	13	23
Sciences	25	0	20	4	0	1	0	20	5	80
Life Sciences	13	0	7	5	1	0	0	8	5	61
Medical Sciences	29	2	13	10	1	1	2	14	13	48
Engineering/Architecture	28	0	24	4	0	0	0	24	4	86
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>63</b>

163 applications were received in the second call in 2005 for research accreditation and 53 for advanced research accreditation.

Resolution UNI/3707/2005 dated 27 December was published in the Official Journal of the Catalan Government (DOGC), whereby AQU Catalunya defined procedure for the issuing of pre-shortlist reports for the hiring of tenured and adjunct staff at the public universities in Catalonia in 2006.

### *The assessment of teaching at private universities*

AQU Catalunya continued the assessment of teaching and research activity of teaching staff at the private universities, in accordance with article 58 of the Catalan Universities Act, through a joint committee, part of which assesses university teaching competence and management, and is designated by the chairperson of the Quality Assessment Committee on the advice of the CEMAI, and another, designated by the chairperson of the Research Assessment Committee, that assesses research and professional activity.

Assessment was made of a total of 33 applications from the Universitat Abat Oliba CEU and the International University of Catalonia. The results are as follows:



## Results of the assessment of teaching and research staff at the Universitat Abat Oliba CEU

	Applications	Positive assessment	Negative assessment
Humanities	3	2	1
Social Sciences	14	8	6
Sciences	1	0	1
Medical and Health Sciences	2	2	0
Engineering/Architecture	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>

## Results of the assessment of teaching and research staff at the International University of Catalonia

	Applications	Positive assessment	Negative assessment
Humanities	2	2	0
Social Sciences	6	6	0
Sciences	0	0	0
Medical and Health Sciences	3	3	0
Engineering/Architecture	2	2	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>

AQU Catalunya also started the procedure for assessing the teaching and research staff at the University of Vic.

### *Assessment of the teaching merits of teaching staff*

AQU Catalunya's CEMAI committee, which assesses merits and individual activities, monitored the certification of the manuals for assessing the teaching competence of teaching staff.

Subject to the agreement with the DURSI and Resolution UNI/3130/2005, dated 28 October, the CEMAI committee extended the scope of the certification/assessment of teaching activity. The certificate, which was previously only issued to teaching staff with research accreditation and/or advanced research accreditation, has been extended to cover all other teaching posts at public universities in Catalonia. Five applications were received, four of which were given a favourable ruling, with one pending resolution. 42 applications received in December are to be included in the 2006 call for applications.

## PROMOTION, COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION

### *Promotion and cooperation*

Within the framework of TEEP II (Transnational European Evaluation Project), a project promoted by the ENQA, work was started to assess European Masters programmes. The aim of TEEP is to contribute to the development of a European evaluation method for joint programmes on the basis of an evaluation of level, contents, organisation, management and quality assurance systems of 3 joint Erasmus Mundus Master's programmes. AQU Catalunya participates in this programme in tenured and adjunctoration with the French CNÉ (Comité National d'Évaluation).

AQU Catalunya participated in the ENQA annual General Assembly held in Madrid. It cooperated in initial work to develop the process of quality assurance of the quality agencies themselves being promoted by the ENQA, and in this regard formed part of the working group that prepared the European standards.

It was actively involved in fifteen seminars, congresses and events in Catalonia and Spain, and in four in Europe, where papers were presented on AQU Catalunya and its activities.

### *Communication*

The 150 active pages on the AQU Catalunya website, with over 130 attached documents and 77 news items in Catalan, Spanish and English, were all managed and constantly updated during 2005. The website received 117,009 hits (visits) and registered 100,000 file downloads, particularly of the booklet *Educació superior i treball a Catalunya* (3,631) and the document *Criteria for degree accreditation* (4,659).

In terms of publications, Catalan, Spanish and English language versions of the *General framework for establishing, monitoring and reviewing improvement plans* and the *General framework for evaluating interaction between university-level research and teaching* were produced. The *Catalogue of services*, which presents the work of AQU Catalunya and provides information on the series of activities that it undertakes, was also published in these three languages. Catalan language versions were also published of the *Informe 2003; Adaptació de titulacions a l'EEES. Universitat de Lleida, 11 i 12 de novembre de 2004*;<sup>4</sup> *Guia per al disseny d'un perfil de formació. El cas de Psicologia*; the *Informe 2004*; and the *2004 Activities Report*.<sup>5</sup>

Four editions of the quarterly information Bulletin on university quality were produced in both print-out and on-line editions, and special supplements were published on degree accreditation standards, new publishing developments and the views of the chairpersons of the university social councils concerning the studies on graduate placement in the labour market. The monthly

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<sup>4</sup> Text in this publication is given in the original language used in the paper.

<sup>5</sup> See the AQU Catalunya website for the Spanish and English versions of the *2004 Activities Report*.

AQU News on-line bulletin (*AQU Notícies*) was also distributed and is now well into its second year of edition.

Regarding information on AQU Catalunya and its activities, information brochures in Catalan were published of *Emissió d'informes previs a la selecció per a la contractació a les universitats públiques catalanes de les categories de professorat lector i professorat col·laborador* and *Emissió d'acreditacions de recerca i de recerca avançada prèvies a la selecció per a la contractació a les universitats públiques catalanes de les categories de professorat agregat i catedràtic/a*, and the information brochure for the Education Fair 2005: *La qualitat dels ensenyaments també s'avalua!*

## IMPROVEMENTS TO THE INTERNAL RUNNING OF THE ORGANISATION

AQU Catalunya was the first agency in its field to achieve certification under ISO standard 9002:1994 for quality assurance systems (5 June 2000). The transition to ISO standard 9001:2000 (quality management systems) continued during 2005; flow charts were prepared for all AQU Catalunya procedures; the Board of Directors endorsed the AQU Catalunya quality policy and the quality committee endorsed the quality manual. Actions were also directed to start the process of certification of the quality system by a duly accredited entity.

Development of the GESTA specific management software continued. In this respect, the management and control functions of institutional assessments and teaching staff assessments have been extended. The specific file management module was implemented and work begun on implementing the invoice model. In terms of IT, the computer systems (software, hardware, networks and communications) were consolidated in accordance with the Organic Law on Data Protection (LOPD).

In collaboration with the DURSI Services Organisation and Quality Unit, the first stage of integrating AQU Catalunya into the Management System of the Catalan Government's Administrative Documents Record was completed; this included the first cataloguing to be made of AQU Catalunya's documentary records.

Cataloguing continued of the bibliographical resources of AQU Catalunya in the catalogues of the BEG (Joint Catalogue of the Catalan Government's Specialised Libraries) and CCUC (Joint Catalogue of the Universities in Catalonia), which includes over 800 specialised documents on university quality.