

AQU CATALUNYA

**2018 SUMMARY ANNUAL
REPORT**



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



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2018 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT

AQU CATALUNYA, 2019

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Universitari de Catalunya**

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Annual Report 2018

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INTRODUCTION

This document is a summary of the AQU Catalunya 2018 Annual Report, which describes the main activities carried out by the Agency over the course of the year, the most important of which are described below.

Before outlining the main activities undertaken by the Agency throughout 2018, I would like to emphasise certain events that took place and were of particular relevance for both the Agency and the system of universities and higher education as a whole in Catalonia:

- **Renewal of the appointment of the AQU Catalunya president**. The Executive Council (Govern) of the Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya) renewed the appointment of Dr. Josep Joan Moreso as president of AQU Catalunya, on a proposal by the corresponding minister with jurisdiction over higher education institutions.
- **The start of institutional accreditation**. In 2018 the Agency issued the first positive assessment report for institutional accreditation at faculty-level, whereby all programmes of study that are delivered in a faculty or school receive automatic accreditation for a renewable period of five years.
- **The start of accreditation of doctoral/PhD programmes**. In 2018 AQU Catalunya started the site visits associated with the accreditation of doctoral programmes, in which the corresponding review and evaluation guide is used.
- **Publication, for the first time in Europe, of the General framework for the integration of a gender perspective into higher education teaching**
- **First analysis of recent first-degree (bachelor's) graduate satisfaction**. In 2018 the report *Graduate satisfaction at Catalan universities* was published, together with the aggregate data of the results of the survey from the three previous years.

In addition to these important issues for the university system, the Agency's activities between 2011 and 2018 increased more than twofold in the areas of **programme review, teaching staff assessment, transparency, knowledge generation and modernisation in e-government**.

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Many thanks to all of you for being with us on the path to continuous improvement.

Martí Casadesús Fa
Director



INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY

1. Programme review

The Framework for the ex-ante accreditation, monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised degree programmes (VSMA Framework) was approved by AQU Catalunya in 2010, and subsequently updated in 2016, to establish a cyclical and harmonious system of external review for recognised degree programmes delivered in Catalan universities.

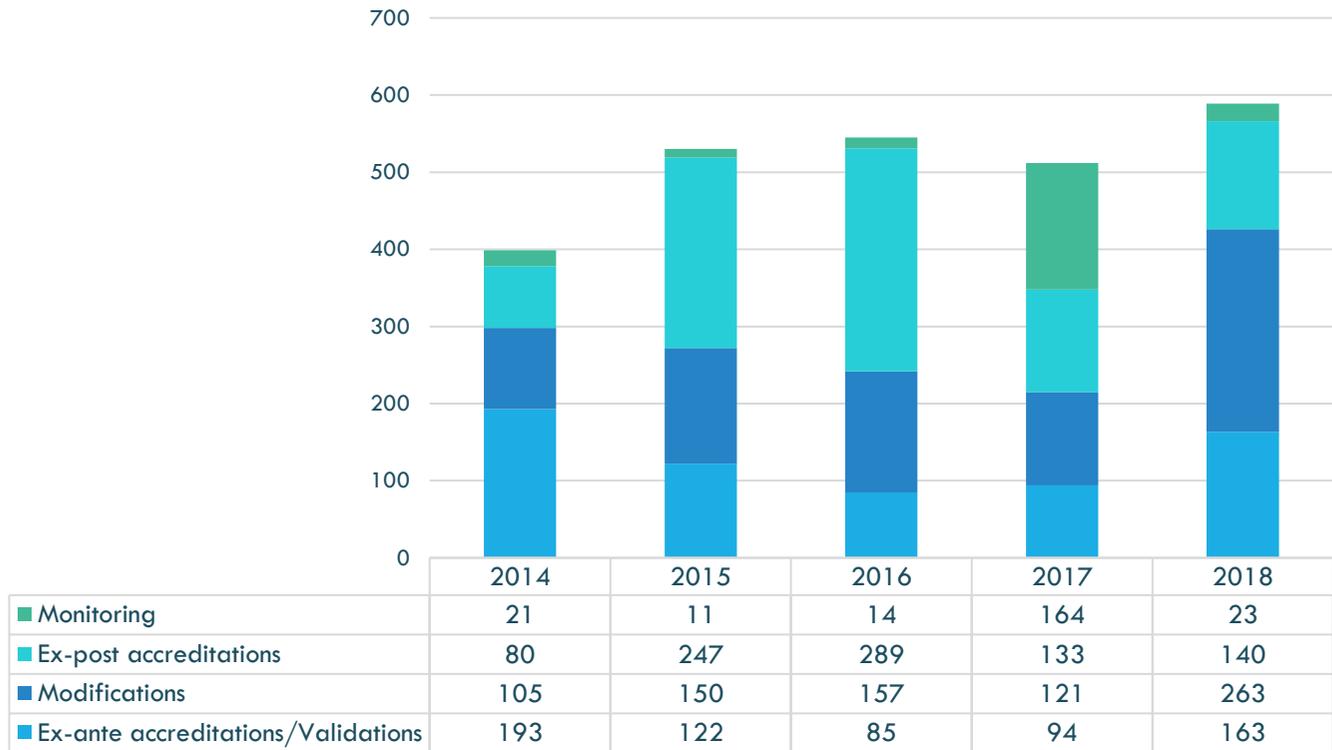
The VSMA Framework lays down the relationship between the procedures of **ex-ante accreditation** prior to the introduction of programmes; **monitoring** of programme delivery; **modification** of programmes to incorporate enhancements identified during the monitoring stage; and **accreditation**, in which an external visit is made by a panel of experts to verify that the programme is being delivered as planned.

In 2018 AQU Catalunya reviewed 15% more degree programmes than in the previous year as a result of the increase in programme modifications and validations. It was also the first year in which the Agency was involved in the accreditation of doctoral programmes.

Ongoing developments in the implementation of the VSMA Framework in Catalonia are shown in the following graph:

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Graph 1. Number of reviews for ex-ante accreditation/validation, monitoring, modification and ex-post accreditation (2014-2018)¹



During 2018 the outcomes of all ex-post accreditation procedures under the VSMA framework were added to AQU Catalunya's information system in the move towards preparing for automatic indicator reporting for programme accreditation and monitoring.

¹ Includes bachelor programmes in the Arts.

Institutional quality

1.1. Ex-ante accreditation, modification and monitoring

The purpose of **ex-ante accreditation**, or validation, is to ensure the design quality of all proposals for bachelors, masters and doctoral/PhD degrees prior to their introduction.

In 2018, unlike in previous years, the Agency handled two calls for ex-ante accreditation and modification: the first was from October 2017 to February 2018, and the second from March to November 2018. The first call dealt with programmes to be introduced in the 2018-2019 academic year, and the second with programmes to be introduced in the 2019-2020 academic year.

All together, in the two calls, a total number of 163 proposals were submitted for ex-ante accreditation by universities in Catalonia: 71 first degrees/bachelors, 86 masters and 6 doctoral programmes. 86% of the total number of proposals submitted for ex-ante accreditation successfully underwent evaluation: 91% of the first degrees/bachelors, 82% of the masters and 75% of the doctoral programmes. 75% of the proposals were for new degrees and 25% were for the (ex-ante) re-accreditation of existing degrees.

86% of proposals for ex-ante accreditation were successful. 75% were new degrees and 25% were re-accreditations (ex-ante) of existing degrees



With regard to the **modification** of programmes of study already introduced, all together in the two calls made in 2018 a total number of 263 applications were received: 139 first degrees/bachelors, 105 masters and 19 doctoral programmes. The total number was considerably higher than in 2017.

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As for programme **monitoring** in 2018, the Agency evaluated 23 degree programmes at 7 faculties and schools: 7 first degrees/bachelors, 6 masters, 1 higher vocational programme and 9 masters in the Arts.

In 2018, AQU monitored 23 degree programmes

1.2. Subject benchmark statements

With the adoption of the new VSMA framework (2016), AQU Catalunya established a second pathway for undertaking the ex-ante accreditation of degree programmes. In order to facilitate this new pathway, the Agency is in the process of publishing a series of subject benchmark statements for use in the design of new programmes.

Two new subject benchmark statements for [Economics](#) [es] and [Business Administration](#) [es] were drawn up and approved during 2018.



1.3. Accreditation

Accreditation is the process of verification, by way of a site visit, that a degree programme is being delivered as planned and stipulated in the ex-ante accreditation procedure. All recognised degree courses must undergo accreditation within a period of six years following ex-ante accreditation (or within six years of a previous accreditation) in the case of bachelors and doctoral/PhD degrees, and four years in the case of master's degrees.

Site visits to institutions are planned each year jointly by the universities and AQU Catalunya according to the programmes that are due to undergo the accreditation procedure.

The accreditation of doctoral programmes was started in 2018, in accordance with the [Guide to the accreditation of recognised doctoral programmes](#), which was endorsed by AQU Catalunya in the same year.

Institutional quality

87 site visits were organised during 2018 to review and evaluate the running and delivery of 140 degree programmes, which was 61% more than the previous year. A total number of 77 external review panels were convened, nine of which included international experts.

In order to ensure that the work of the external review panels was carried out smoothly and effectively and that the criteria were applied consistently, AQU Catalunya organised five training sessions for new members of the review panels and one training session for new external secretaries.

During 2018, higher education institutions in Catalonia submitted 154 applications, with 78 programme accreditation reports and one (1) Arts programme accreditation report being issued. The outcome of accreditation in 16% of the programmes was "on track to excellence" and in the case of 9% was "conditional". In the latter case, programmes must submit a progress report after two years, showing that any shortcomings identified have been resolved.

The following table shows the results according to field of study:

Table 1. Accreditation reports according to specific evaluation committee (2018)

	Accreditation withheld	Conditional accreditation	Accreditation	Accreditation on track to excellence	Total	Accreditation on track to excellence (%)
Arts and Humanities		2	6	1	9	11%
Social and Legal Sciences		6	27	3	36	8%
Experimental Sciences			3	2	5	40%
Health Sciences		1	9	1	11	9%
Engineering and Architecture		4	7	2	13	15%
Total			1	3	4	75%
Total		13	53	12	78	15%

Accreditation reports are subsequently referred to the corresponding national and regional authorities for the administrative processing of programme accreditation. Following the issuance of an accreditation report, AQU Catalunya

Site visits were made to 140 degree programmes

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issues the corresponding certificates and quality labels that are awarded to programmes and institutions as an instrument of distinction that informs society at large that they have successfully undergone accreditation.

Recognised first degrees and Master's degrees



Higher awards (first degree) and Master's degrees in Arts higher education programmes



Additional dimensions

AQU Catalunya offers accreditation assessment that is voluntary for institutions in the following additional dimensions:

- Career development, employability and recruitment
- Research-teaching linkages
- Internationalisation

The outcome of assessment will be either "Accreditation" or "Accreditation with excellence":

Career development, employability and recruitment



Research-teaching linkages



Internationalisation



Institutional quality

In 2018 four (4) programmes at one institute were assessed for accreditation in the additional dimension of internationalisation.

2. Institutional review

In accordance with the Agency's Strategic Plan for 2019-2022, AQU Catalunya is gradually giving impetus to institutional review throughout the university system in Catalonia. Internal quality assurance system (IQAs) implementation certification and institutional accreditation are the first actions that deal with this strategic objective.

2.1. Certification of internal quality assurance system (IQAs) implementation

The IQAs certification programme is a logical development in the evaluation of IQAs implementation, with issuance where applicable of the corresponding certification. The purpose of assessment for IQAs certification is to verify that the IQA system has been introduced and is being implemented in the faculty/school that is responsible for the delivery of the degree programmes covered by the IQAs, and that it is fit for purpose as regards programme quality assurance.



In 2018 AQU Catalunya endorsed a new version of the *Guide to the certification of IQAs implementation*.

2.2. Institutional accreditation

AQU Catalunya started the institutional accreditation of faculties and schools in 2018. Institutional accreditation confers accreditation to all recognised programmes being delivered in the educational facility for a period of five years, renewable once.

Faculties and schools that have renewed the accreditation on 50% of their degree programmes (50% of first degrees/bachelors and 50% of the masters programmes) and that have obtained certification for their IQAs implementation are eligible to obtain institutional accreditation.



In 2018, the Pere Tarrés Faculty for Social Education and Social Work (Ramon Llull University) was the first in Catalonia to obtain a positive review report for institutional accreditation.

2.3. Research assessment at department level

The assessment of research being undertaken in university departments in Catalonia is a pioneering project by AQU Catalunya in Spain. The aim of the project is to underpin the universities and other HEIs as top-level international research institutions.

In 2018 AQU Catalunya carried out the external site visit to review and assess the research activities in the University of Barcelona/UB's Department of Mathematics and Computer Science. The department successfully underwent the evaluation and review procedure laid down in the [*Guide to the assessment of university research at department level*](#), the overall outcome of which was excellent, and obtained the corresponding certificate and quality label that is valid for a period not exceeding five years.



AQU Catalunya està inscrita a EQAR



AQU Catalunya està inscrita a EQAR

3. Support for the internationalisation of the university system and higher education in Catalonia

AQU Catalunya recognises the internationalisation of degree programmes delivered in Catalonia to be one of the areas that give an important boost to excellence in higher education as a whole. The Agency uses two mechanisms to support this: internationalisation as an additional dimension in programme accreditation and thematic certification of programmes.

3.1. Internationalisation as an additional dimension in programme accreditation

The use of external quality assurance procedures specifically designed for internationalisation activities is aimed at facilitating strategies undertaken by Catalan universities in this field.

In 2018 one site visit was made to a faculty at the Ramon Llull University to assess the additional dimension of internationalisation of four (4) master's programmes, the accreditation outcome of which was "on track to excellence" for all four.

Institutional quality

3.2. Thematic certification of programmes

In accordance with the [Framework for the position of AQU Catalunya regarding subject-specific quality labels \[ca\]](#), AQU Catalunya carried out the integrated assessment for programme accreditation and the assessment for the EUROMASTER international thematic certification of the following programmes: Master's in Pharmaceutical Chemistry and Master's in Analytical Chemistry, at the Ramon Llull University. This procedure was organised jointly with the German Accreditation Agency Specialised in Accrediting Degree Programmes in Engineering (ASIIN).



QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHING

1. Ex-ante (pre-selection) accreditation of university teaching staff

In order to be eligible for selection for a contract teaching post at a public university in Catalonia, applicants must, for the category of pre/non-career grade (tenure-track) lecturer, be in possession of a favourable pre-selection report and, for the categories of senior lecturer (*agregat*) and professor, accreditation in research or advanced research, respectively.

Two calls for applications are made every year for the positions of pre/non-career grade (tenure-eligible) lecturer, senior lecturer and professor, the assessment of which is carried out by the Research Assessment Committee.

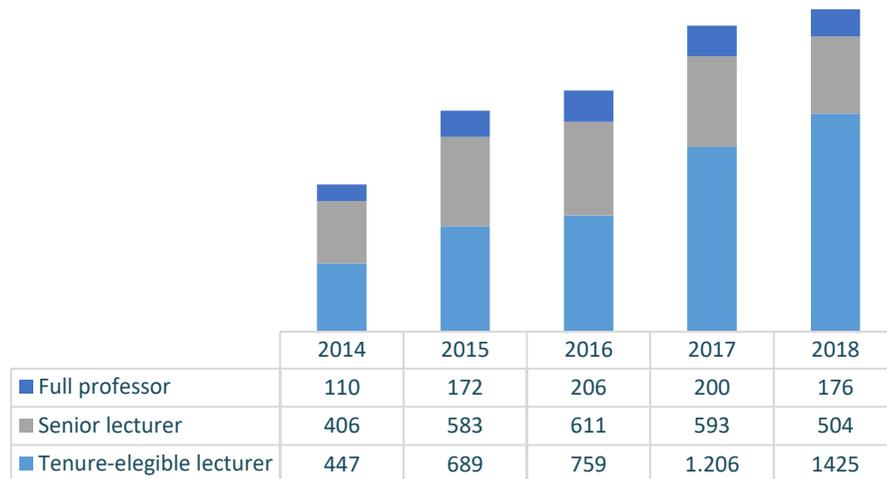
In 2018 AQU Catalunya continued to cooperate with the Government of Catalonia's Executive Council (*Govern*) in the call for applications for faculty staff recruitment at universities in Catalonia under the Serra Húnter programme. In the second call for applications for pre/non-career grade (tenure-eligible) lecturer and research accreditation (not including advanced research), 710 applications were received through the Serra Húnter programme.

Knowledge generation and transfer

In 2018 2,105 applications were received, or 5% more than in 2017, due to the pull factor of the Serra Húnter programme

The subject-specific committees worked continuously throughout 2018 to revise and harmonise the criteria, which were progressively improved to incorporate reflect changes in academia and to ensure greater coherency in the career pathway from lecturer to senior lecturer to professor.

Graph 2. Applications from pre/non-career grade (tenure-eligible) lecturers, senior lecturers and professors (2014-2018)



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1.1. Reports for tenure-eligible lecturing staff

In 2018 two calls for applications from pre/non-career grade (tenure-eligible) lecturers were made, to which a total number of 1,425 applicants applied. This was an increase of 18% compared to 2017.

702 applications from the Serra Húnter programme were processed and assessed in the calls made in 2018, which was a 41.5% increase over the previous year.

The results of the calls for applications processed in 2018 were as follows:

Table 2. First call for applications in 2018: tenure-eligible teaching staff²

<i>Field of knowledge</i>	T	TSR	P	F	D	RP	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	67	7	0	40	20	0	40	20	66,7%
Social Sciences	218	37	0	88	69	24	88	93	48,6%
Experimental Sciences	50	7	0	31	11	1	31	12	72,1%
Life Sciences	75	8	0	36	28	3	36	31	53,7%
Medicine and Health Sciences	64	3	0	42	14	5	42	19	68,9%
Engineering and Architecture	113	16	0	75	20	2	75	22	77,3%
Total	587	78	0	312	162	35	312	197	61,3%

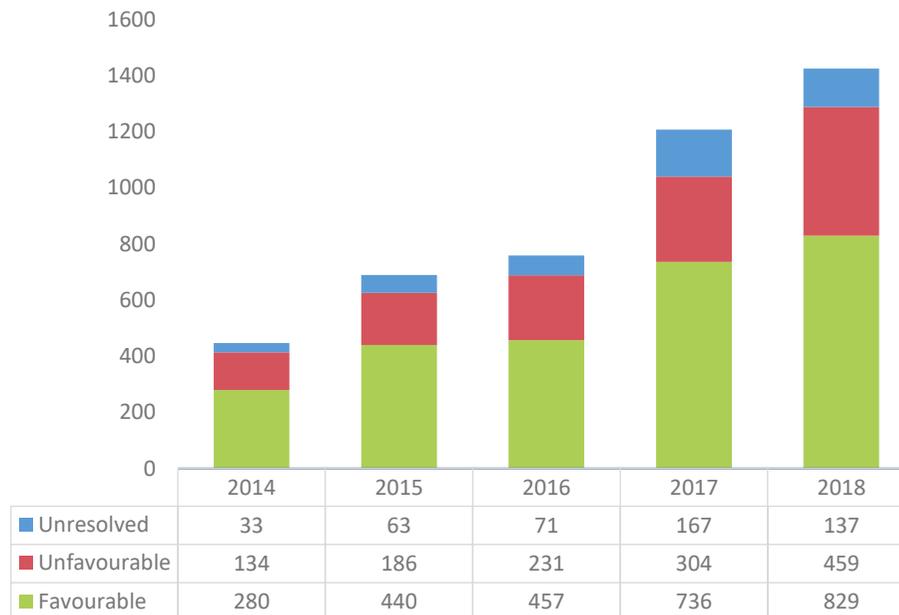
² TS, total applications; TSR, applications closed with no final decision; P, pending; F, successful; D, unsuccessful; RE, appeals upheld; RD, appeals dismissed; RP, pending an appeal; TF, total successful; TD, total unsuccessful; %F, successful as a % of the total (excluding applications closed with no final decision).

Knowledge generation and transfer

Table 3. Second call for applications in 2018: tenure-eligible teaching staff

Field of knowledge	T	TSR	P	F	D	% F
Humanities	118	9	1	61	47	56,0%
Social Sciences	212	18	2	98	94	50,5%
Experimental Sciences	130	6	0	97	27	78,2%
Life Sciences	107	5	0	62	40	60,8%
Medicine and Health Sciences	104	8	0	76	20	79,2%
Engineering and Architecture	167	11	0	109	47	69,9%
Total	838	57	3	503	275	64,4%

Graph 3. Trend in applications - pre/non-career grade (tenure-eligible) lecturers (2014-2018)



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1.2. Accreditation of research and advanced research

Appointment to a permanent contract position in a higher education institution is possible in the categories of senior lecturer, eligibility for which requires a proven teaching and research capability, and professor, eligibility for which requires a consolidated teaching and research career.

The number of applications submitted to the calls for senior lecturer and professor were 17% less than in 2017.

In the calls for applications in 2018 eight (8) applications were submitted through the Serra Húnter programme, which was a drop of 96% compared to the previous year.

The results of the calls processed in 2018 were as follows:

Table 4. First call for Applications in 2018 – associate professors

<i>Field of knowledge</i>	T	TSR	F	D	RP	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	37	5	19	11	2	19	13	59,4%
Social Sciences	82	3	38	21	20	38	41	48,1%
Experimental Sciences	28	4	19	5	0	19	5	79,2%
Life Sciences	33	0	19	12	2	19	14	57,6%
Medicine and Health Sciences	73	7	38	24	4	38	28	57,6%
Engineering and Architecture	48	5	32	5	6	32	11	74,4%
Total	301	24	165	78	34	165	112	59,6%

Table 5. Second call for Applications in 2018 – associate professors

<i>Field of knowledge</i>	T	TSR	P
Humanities	30	2	28
Social Sciences	48	2	46
Experimental Sciences	26	1	25
Life Sciences	26	2	24
Medicine and Health Sciences	47	2	45
Engineering and Architecture	26	3	23
Total	203	12	191

Knowledge generation and transfer

Graph 4. Trend in applications - associate professors (2014-2018)

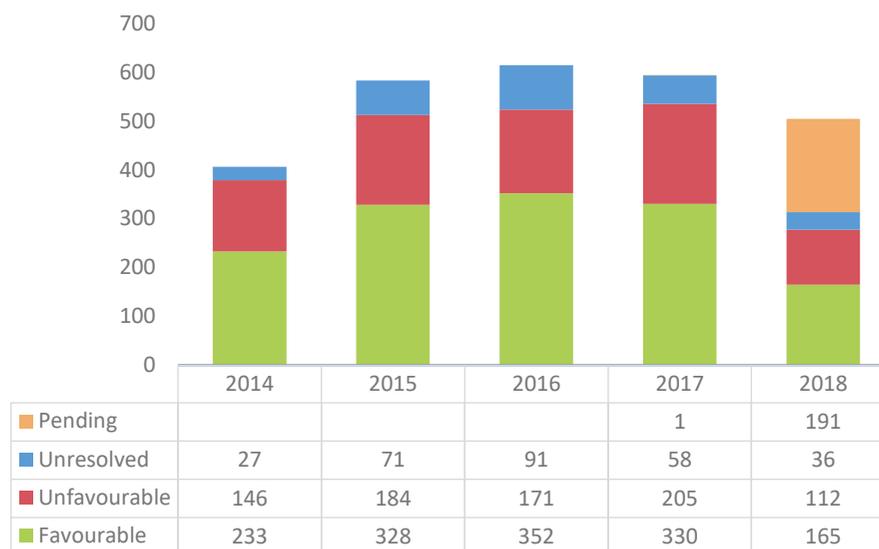


Table 6. First call for applications in 2018 - full professors

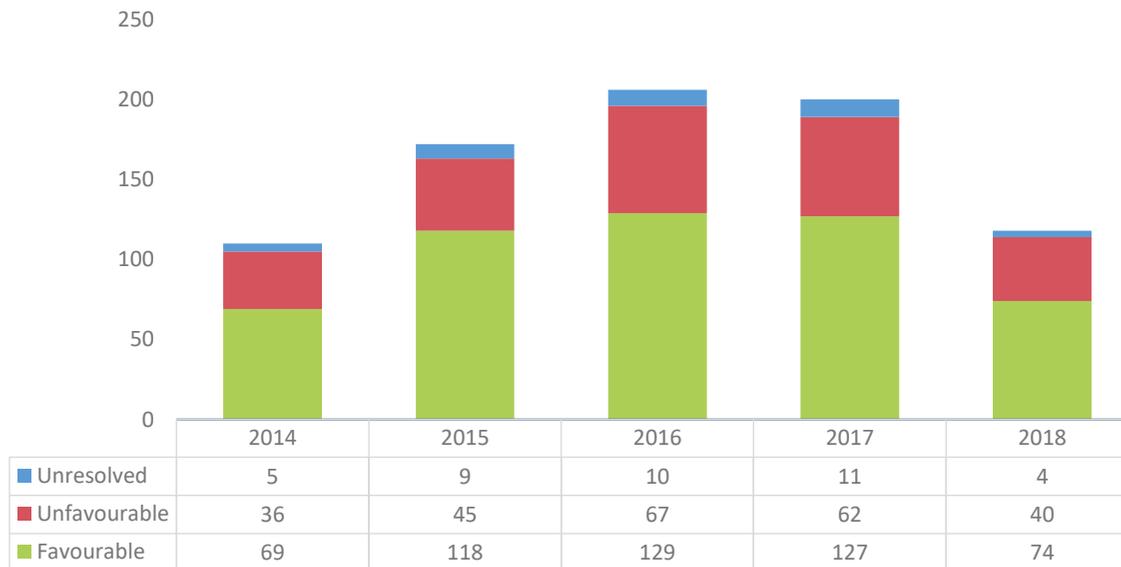
Field of knowledge	T	TSR	F	D	RP	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	6	0	1	3	2	1	5	16,7%
Social Sciences	27	0	11	11	5	11	16	40,7%
Experimental Sciences	14	0	10	3	1	10	4	71,4%
Life Sciences	14	0	5	5	4	5	9	35,7%
Medicine and Health Sciences	23	0	20	3	0	20	3	87,0%
Engineering and Architecture	31	1	27	1	2	27	3	90,0%
Total	115	1	74	26	14	74	40	64,9%

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Table 7. Second call for applications in 2018 - full professors

Field of knowledge	T	TSR	P
Humanities	7	1	6
Social Sciences	19	2	17
Experimental Sciences	11	0	11
Life Sciences	5	0	5
Medicine and Health Sciences	10	0	10
Engineering and Architecture	9	0	9
Total	61	3	58

Graph 5. Trend in applications - professors (2014-2018)



Knowledge generation and transfer

2. Assessment of merits in research, teaching and management

The provision of additional salary allowances to public service and contract teaching and research staff at public universities in Catalonia is based on the assessment of individual merits in teaching, research and management.

In the assessment of merits in teaching and in management, AQU Catalunya certifies that institutions have applied the corresponding assessment procedure in accordance with the regulations; and, with regard to six-year research quality premiums, in the case of public service staff recognises previous assessments made and, in the case of contract staff, it carries out the assessment. In the case of the latter (contract staff), the number of applications was 11% higher than in 2017, with an increase from 659 to 731 applications.

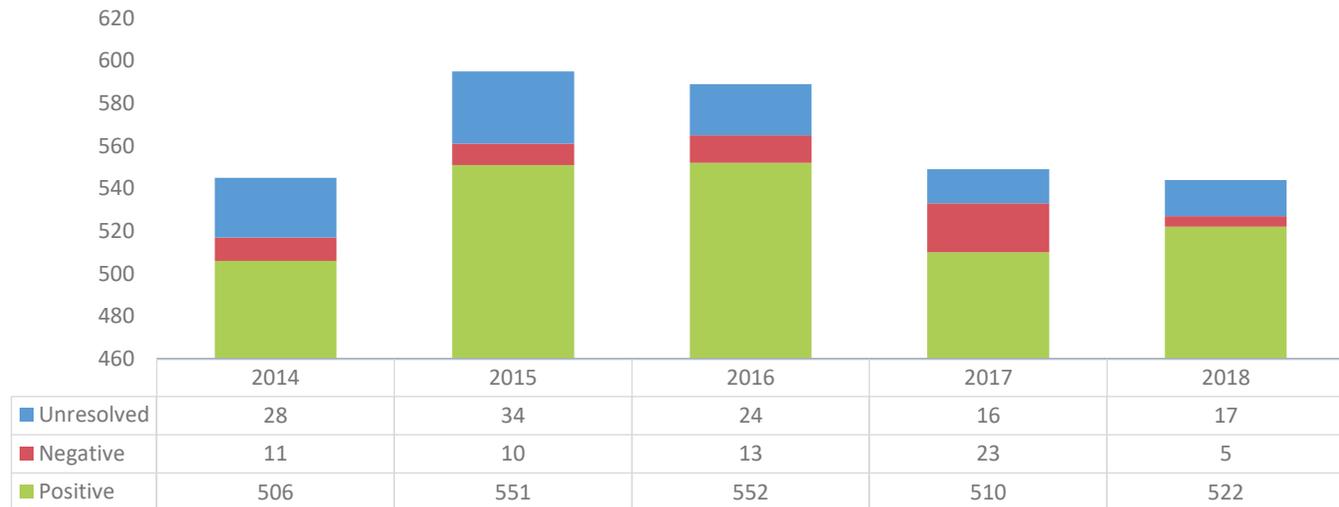
2.1. Merits in research

Table 8. 2018 call for applications - public service teaching and research staff at public universities. Outcomes

<i>Field of knowledge</i>	T	TSR	F	D	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	105	5	99	0	99	1	99,0%
Social Sciences	140	6	127	5	127	7	94,8%
Experimental Sciences	90	1	88	0	88	1	98,9%
Life Sciences	48	3	45	0	45	0	100,0%
Medicine and Health Sciences	50	1	49	0	49	0	100,0%
Engineering and Architecture	116	1	114	0	114	1	99,1%
Total	549	17	522	5	522	10	98,1%

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Graph 6. Trend in the number of applications for the assessment of merits in research - public service teaching and research staff at public universities (2014-2018)

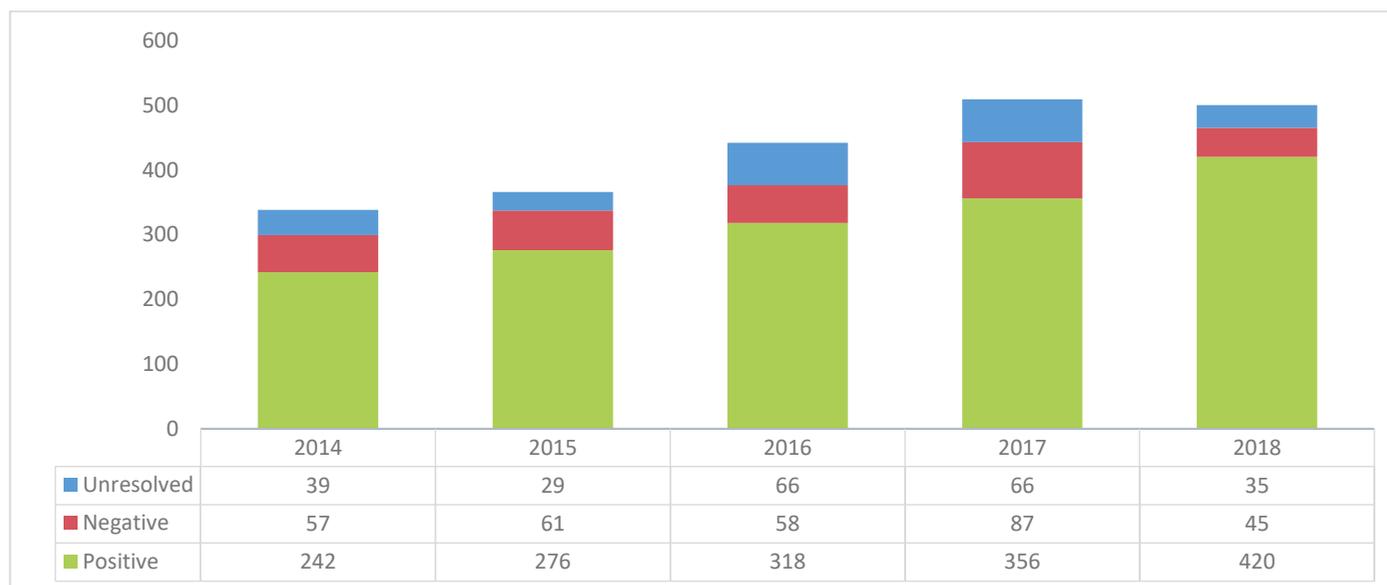


Knowledge generation and transfer

Table 9. 2018 call for applications - contract teaching and research staff at public universities. Outcomes

<i>Field of knowledge</i>	TS	TSR	F	D	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	62	3	40	7	44	15	74,6%
Social Sciences	148	5	111	18	116	27	81,1%
Experimental Sciences	87	3	83	0	83	1	98,8%
Life Sciences	60	9	39	4	40	11	78,4%
Medicine and Health Sciences	63	9	43	8	44	10	81,5%
Engineering and Architecture	120	6	104	8	105	9	92,1%
Total	540	35	420	45	432	73	85,5%

Graph 7. Trend in the number of applications for the assessment of merits in research - contract teaching and research staff at public universities



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Evaluation and award of research premiums by agreement

AQU Catalunya maintain different agreements to review and assess the research and related activities of teaching staff and researchers at private universities in Catalonia, research staff at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC) and the following affiliated institutions: the Catalan Institute for Physical Education (INEFC), which is affiliated with the University of Barcelona (UB) and the University of Lleida; the TecnoCampus Foundation (Mataró-Maresme), affiliated with the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC) and the Pompeu Fabra University; the EUSS School of Engineering, affiliated with the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB); the EUSES School of Health and Sport, which is affiliated with the University of Girona; the El Mar Nursing College (ESIM), affiliated with the Pompeu Fabra University; and the College of Mediterranean Tourism (EU Mediterrani), affiliated with the University of Girona; the University School ERAM (ERAM), affiliated with the University of Girona; the Sant Joan de Déu Nursing School (EISJD), affiliated with the University of Barcelona; the BAU Design College of Barcelona (BAU), affiliated with the University of Vic (UVic-UCC); and the Barcelona School of Management, affiliated with the Pompeu Fabra University.

The criteria and procedures are the same as those used in the review and assessment of research and related activities by public service and contract teaching and research staff at public universities in Catalonia.

Table 10. Institutions with which AQU Catalunya maintains agreements for the assessment of six-year periods of research and the award of research premiums. Results for 2018

<i>Institution</i>	T	TSR	F	D	RP	TF	TD	% F
Private universities in Catalonia	160	11	112	20	17	112	37	75,2%
Affiliated institutions	30	5	16	5	4	16	9	64,0%
Research staff at UPC	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	100,0%
Total	191	16	129	25	21	129	46	73,7%

Knowledge generation and transfer

2.2. Merits in teaching and management

Merit-based assessment of teaching: teaching quality assurance handbooks

In 2018 the strategy for the renewal of accreditation for the teaching assessment handbooks used in the public universities was defined and drawn up.

Table 11. Results of the 2017 call for certification of the merit-based evaluation of teaching

<i>Potential applicants</i> ³	<i>Total applicants</i>	<i>Percentage applications</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Percentage positive/ applications</i>	<i>Unfavourable</i>	<i>Percentage positive/ potential</i>
2.280	1.350	59,2%	1.272	41	94,2%	55,8%

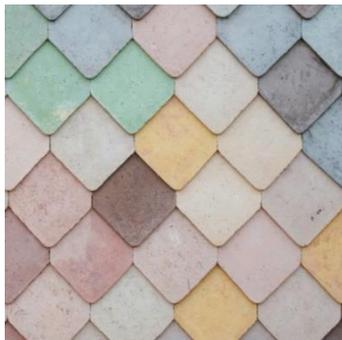
Merit-based evaluation of skills in management

Table 12. Results of the 2017 call for applications for certification of the review of merits in management

6-year periods assessed	Positive	Unfavourable	1st period	2nd period	3rd period	4th period
287	287	0	96	82	42	67

The information in the table refers to periods of externally assessed skills in management, not the number of teachers.

³ The number of potential applicants includes teaching staff from previous calls for applications with the option to participate in the 2016 call for applications.



KNOWLEDGE GENERATION AND TRANSFER

1. Surveys and indicators of the university system in Catalonia

1.1. The transition into employment of graduates (graduate employment outcome surveys)

AQU Catalunya has coordinated the three-yearly survey study of graduate destinations in Catalonia since 2000. This work continued in 2018 with activities involving the management, innovation and dissemination of the study survey carried out in 2017:

- Complementary field work was carried out in two university sectors to include doctoral degree graduates from the Ramon Llull University and to enlarge the sample in one faculty at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia/UPC.
- The first study on *[The transition into employment of graduates from higher education programmes in the Arts](#)* [ca] was produced and presented.
- A report on *[Access to the labour market for graduates of Master's Degrees from Catalan universities](#)* was produced and presented.



Knowledge generation and transfer

- Comparative indicator reports were produced for each first/bachelor degree using a bootstrap methodology (statistical testing appropriate to the type of sample), for use by the universities.
- Indicator reports on graduate employment outcomes at faculty/school level were produced, for use by faculty management teams.
- The outcomes of masters programmes were published and disseminated on the [EUC Dades](#) platform for the first time.

Work was begun in 2018 on planning and preparing for the 2020 graduate employment outcomes study survey.

1.2. IDESCAT population-based survey of graduate destinations

AQU Catalunya, with the help of the Statistics Institute of Catalonia (IDESCAT), is promoting a survey of graduate destinations based on the registration details of the baseline population of graduates given in the censuses. This survey serves to complement the three-yearly survey for the years in which the three-yearly survey is not carried out.

During 2018 the first results of the cross-checking of data were presented and analysed, and work was continued to assimilate the survey into the Statistics Institute of Catalonia/IDESCAT's production department.

1.3. Graduate employment outcomes and employability, from the employers' perspective

Through an agreement signed with the Government of Catalonia, “la Caixa” Bank Foundation collaborates with the Agency to carry out a study on the transition to employment of graduates from the point of view of employers. The purpose of the study and accompanying survey, which complement the three-yearly survey of the employment outcomes of graduates of universities in Catalonia, is to give universities insight into prevailing perceptions in the labour market regarding the skills, education and training of graduates on completing their studies at university.

The purpose of this survey study is for institutions to develop policies that lead to improvement in the university system in terms of academic provision and programmes of study, and thereby ensure that higher education qualifications better match labour market requirements.

Knowledge generation and transfer

1.5. Via Universitària survey

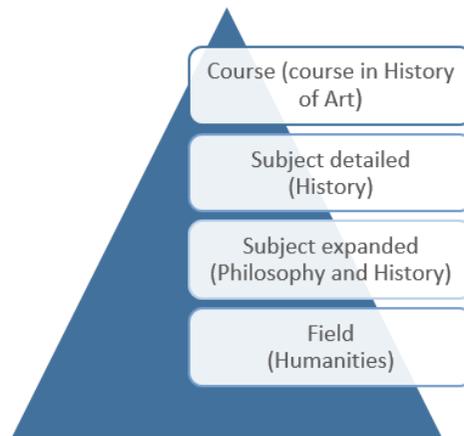
Via Universitària is a project based on the Eurostudent survey, the purpose of which is to better understand the profile of and quality of life among university students in order to establish policies that best serve their needs.

The field work for a second edition of Via Universitària was carried out between February and April 2018, with AQU Catalunya being responsible for the technical supervision of the survey.

The main developments in this edition of the survey were the classification of degrees in accordance with [AQU Catalunya's programme catalogue](#), which provides for comparison with programmes from other systems through a programme grouping code, and the substantial increase in the sample, with an almost twofold increase in the number of outcomes.

1.6. Programme catalogue

The programme catalogue is a hierarchical classification system for programmes of study according to their relationship to adjacent disciplines. The purpose is to enable indicators to be obtained for each of the levels of aggregation defined, which are four in the case of AQU Catalunya:



Implementation of the catalogue was consolidated in 2018 and, in order to formalise its updating and use, a procedure for the revision, updating and coding of new programmes was established. AQU Catalunya also worked to ensure that in this regard the catalogue is comparable with other international systems.

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As a result, the catalogue has transcended the scope of the Agency itself and is now a classification shared by all public bodies involved in information and data management concerning the system of higher education and universities in Catalonia.

1.7. Indicators of the university system in Catalonia

AQU Catalunya is acutely aware of the importance of indicators for decision-making in the quality assurance and enhancement of programmes and the analysis of specific aspects of higher education and the university system.

The Agency, in cooperation with the Secretariat for Universities and Research, provides HEIs with the necessary indicators for the monitoring and accreditation of recognised degree programmes.

During 2018 work was done on establishing the catalogue of indicators used in institutional and programme quality assurance review procedures.

Indicators are currently available on two platforms, WINDDAT (system data) and EUC Dades (data and figures from the graduate employment outcome and student satisfaction surveys).

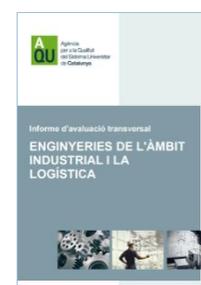
2. Studies and reports

2.1. Cross-sectional reports

AQU Catalunya started a series of cross-sectional studies to review the current state of recognised programmes of study. These provide valuable information on courses, in addition to the outcomes of the QA procedures that all recognised programmes undergo.

In 2018 cross-sectional reports on first degree programmes in [Industrial Engineering and Logistics](#) and [Nursing](#) were produced.

Work also continued during 2018 on a cross-sectional report on programmes in Design, which was started in 2017.



Knowledge generation and transfer

2.2. Customised reports for higher education institutions

AQU Catalunya designed a customised report for each HE institution from the data available at the Agency on programme review, teaching staff assessment and opinion studies, with a comparison with the mean data for Catalonia.

2.3. Proposal for a qualifications framework for higher education in Catalonia

AQU Catalunya continued work on drawing up a proposal for a qualifications framework for higher education in Catalonia (higher vocational courses, first/bachelor degrees and masters degrees, and doctoral degrees).

The purpose of the proposed framework, which is aligned with the [European Qualifications Framework](#) (EQF) and the [Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education](#) (MECES), is to be an instrument that promotes lifelong learning and facilitates mobility and the recognition of educational qualifications at both national and international level.

2.4. General framework for incorporating the gender perspective in higher education teaching

AQU Catalunya endorsed the [General framework for incorporating the gender perspective in higher education teaching](#).

The framework, which is a pioneering measure instigated jointly by AQU Catalunya and the Secretariat for Universities and Research, through the Inter-university Council of Catalonia (CIC), fulfils compliance with article 28.1 of Act 17/2015, 21 July, on effective equality between men and women, which calls for the promotion and inclusion of the gender perspective and studies concerning women and gender in both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in all disciplines, and that the gender perspective shall be considered in accreditation procedures.



2.5. The profile of teaching staff who have successfully undergone assessment by AQU Catalunya

Work was done in 2018 on the automated data buffering of the curricula of people who have successfully undergone assessment by AQU Catalunya, the aim being to define a mean quantitative profile of the main variables assessed

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(projects, publications, research stays, etc.) for pre/non-career grade (tenure-track) lecturers and senior lecturers. As a result, a report on pre/non-career grade (tenure-track) lecturers has been produced, which is now in the approval stage.

In addition, AQU Catalunya analysed the [profile of teaching staff in higher education that, from 2012-2016](#), underwent assessment by the Agency.

2.6. Other reports

AQU Catalunya, together with all of the other QA agencies in higher education in Spain, contributed to the drawing up of the [2017 Report on the state of external quality assurance and higher education institutions in Spain](#) [es].

3. Knowledge transfer

3.1. EUC web portal

The outcomes of quality assurance and review procedures are made publicly available on the various webpages of the EUC portal, which offers information on the quality of degree programmes. Outcomes of QA procedures are published on *EUC Estudis*; supporting documentation for reviews and evaluation are provided on *EUC Informes*; and the outcomes of surveys coordinated by AQU Catalunya appear on *EUC Dades*.

EUC Estudis

The [EUC Estudis](#) (programme quality assurance outcomes) web portal, which is in three languages (Catalan, Spanish and English), offers information on the quality of recognised bachelor or master's degree programmes delivered at HE institutions in Catalonia. Developed in collaboration with the Secretariat for Universities and Research, together with all of the universities in Catalonia, the purpose of the EUC portal, in accordance with ENQA standards, is to draw attention to the outcomes of site visits and programme accreditation, as well as presenting programme quality in a way that is easy to understand for all stakeholders, including school counsellors in secondary education, prospective university students and their families.



Knowledge generation and transfer

In 2018 the link to each programme's website was added to each programme's page, providing students with more information when browsing the portal.

In 2018 there were 27,000 visits to the EUC Estudis web portal by 18,700 users, who visited a total number of 127,000 pages.

EUC Informes

The [EUC Informes](#) (QA documentation) web portal offers information on all of the packages of evidence and review reports from the different QA programmes carried out by the Agency dealing with degree programmes delivered at universities in Catalonia and Department of Education programmes leading to higher awards in the Arts. In addition, it provides information on institutional reviews carried out by the Agency.

One aim of this application is to comply with the standards of transparency and openness set out in the [Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#) (ENQA, 2015).

The publication of programme accreditation reports was automated in 2018, which enhanced the updating of information made available to users.

The portal contains 4,790 reports, which is 16% more than in 2017.

In 2018 the EUC Informes portal received 4,500 visits from 2,700 users who visited a total number of 24,000 pages.

EUC Dades

[EUC Dades](#) (EUC Data) is a trilingual search engine (in Catalan, Spanish and English) of the results and findings of the surveys carried out by the Agency up until the present time of graduate employment outcomes (graduate destinations) and the satisfaction of the recent graduate population with their degree studies. The results of the graduate employment outcomes of doctoral degree holders according to subject area, and master's graduates according to subject, were also made available in 2018.

At the present time, the quantitative results of the following surveys of graduate employment outcomes and transition to employment are available:

- First degrees/bachelors: surveys from 2001, 2005, 2008, 2014 and 2017

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- Masters: surveys from 2014 and 2017
- Doctoral degree holders: surveys 2011, 2014 and 2017

The results of the satisfaction survey of recent graduates were also added in 2018. Indicators can be consulted according to course or subject, together with the aggregate data from the last three surveys (2015-2017).

In 2018 the EUC Dades portal received 9,800 visits from 6,400 users who visited a total number of 46,000 pages.

3.2. Workshops

The following events were organised during 2018:

Professional qualifications and skills in the Catalonia of 2030: foresight and the definition of public policies

Sala Cotxeres, Palau Robert, Barcelona — 4 June 2018

The event was organised jointly by AQU Catalunya and the Catalan Council for Professional and Vocational Training (CCFP), in collaboration with the Directorate General for Analysis and Foresight (DGAP).

The purpose of the event was to explain the key concepts and basics of foresight and forward planning, with a description of the main methodologies in the field, with the focus on the scenario in Catalonia in 2030.

140 people signed up for the event.

e-Learning (online) and blended learning programmes: quality assurance and assessment

Sala Àgora, CosmoCaixa, Barcelona — 15 November 2018

The purpose of the workshop was to make information available to the university system in Catalonia on the latest trends in the quality assurance of online and blended learning programmes.

The document [Conclusions of the round table workshop on "The higher education requirements of public administration. Challenges for the future"](#) was produced as a result of the event.



Knowledge generation and transfer

221 people signed up for the event.

Training course on QA in higher education

Sala d'actes, AQU Catalunya, Barcelona — 17 November 2018

AQU Catalunya, together with CEUCAT (the Student Council for Catalan Universities/Consell de l'Estudiantat de les Universitats Catalanes), organised a course for university students on quality assurance.

The main objective of the course was to provide student reps with the necessary tools and training to participate in internal and external QA procedures in higher education institutions in Catalonia.

20 people signed up for the event.

The opinion of pharmacies regarding the education and training of graduates. Challenges for the future

Aula Magna, Faculty of Pharmacy and Food Sciences, University of Barcelona, Barcelona – 21 November de 2018

The purpose of the round table-workshop was for the Agency to provide universities and other HEIs with information on the way in which the labour market perceives the higher education of graduates in the field of Pharmacy and thereby enhance the synergies between these two worlds and lead to improvements in programmes of study.

The document [Conclusions and proposals for improving the education and training of future pharmacists](#) was produced as a result of the event.

64 people signed up for the event.



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[The requirements of public administration in higher education. Challenges for the future](#)

Room 13.007, Ciutadella Campus, Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona — 18 December 2018

The purpose of this workshop was for the Agency to provide institutions with information on the perception of the public authorities and administration at both local level and in general of higher education, the objective being to strengthen synergies between these two worlds and for the purposes of programme enhancement.

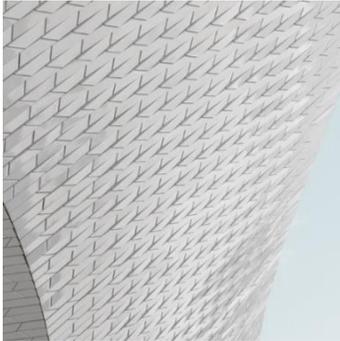
The document [Conclusions of the round table workshop on The higher education requirements of public administration. Challenges for the future'](#) was produced as a result of the event..

95 people signed up for the event.



3.3. Publications

AQU Catalunya released 22 publications in 2018.



INTERNATIONALISATION

1. International institutional relations

The main organisations that AQU Catalunya continued to maintain relations with during 2018 are described below.

1.1. INQAAHE

AQU Catalunya has hosted the INQAAHE Secretariat since October 2013. The Agency's activities in hosting the organisation's Secretariat focus on three main areas:

- Support for the Board of Directors
- Support for the members
- Economic management



1.2. ENQA

AQU Catalunya has been a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) since the association was founded in 2000. The Agency actively participates in various different ENQA working groups:

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- Quality assurance and E-learning (finished, 2016-2018)
- Review sub-committee (in progress)
- ENQA leadership programme (2018)

1.3. EQAR

The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) is a register of QA agencies that have demonstrated substantial compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance.

AQU Catalunya has been registered with EQAR since 5 December 2008 and was one of the first three QA agencies to be listed on the register.



1.4. Other institutional relations

During 2018, the Agency participated, together with the Open University of Catalonia/OUC, in seminars and training workshops on quality assurance in distance education in Mexico, Peru and Barcelona.

2. International projects

- **An Adaptive Trust-based e-assessment System for Learning, TeSLA (in progress, started in 2016)**

As part of the European framework programme Horizon 2020, the European Commission has endorsed the TeSLA innovation and research project (Adaptive Trust-based e-assessment System for Learning), the objective of which is to define and develop a system that facilitates online examination in such a way that guarantees authentication and authorship at different points in the learning process. In addition to educational aspects (teaching and learning), the project addresses related ethical, technological and legal aspects, such as data protection. It will also be adapted for students with special education needs.



The TeSLA consortium partnership consists of eighteen organisations that are experts in different fields of knowledge and research with recognised experience across Europe and is coordinated by the Open University of Catalonia (UOC).

AQU Catalunya organised a round table-workshop for the university system in Catalonia to provide information on the latest trends in the quality assurance of e-learning and blended learning programmes on 15 November 2018. A similar session at national level was organised, together with the Aragon Agency for Quality Assurance and Strategic Foresight in Higher Education (ACPUA), the day before on 14 November.

- **Linking Academic Recognition and Quality Assurance, LIREQA (in progress, started in 2016).**

The LIREQA project is funded by the European Erasmus+ programme (Key action 3: Support for Policy Reform), which is coordinated by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), and AQU Catalunya participates by lending its expertise as a QA agency.

The main aim of the LIREQA project is to contribute to the fair recognition of qualifications through the development of recommendations dealing with academic recognition and internal and external quality assurance.

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



572168-EPP-1-2016-1-LT-EPPKA3-NARIC

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The second meeting of the project members was held at AQU Catalunya in February 2018. The results and findings of the surveys carried out in the universities and ENIC-NARIC (the bodies that deal with the recognition of qualifications across Europe) were presented during the meeting, and preparatory work was done on a recommendation paper for these bodies.

■ Database of External Quality Assurance Reports, DEQAR (in progress, started in 2017)

El Database of External Quality Assurance Reports (DEQAR) project was selected for EU co-funding under Erasmus+ Key Action 3 - European Forward-Looking Cooperation Projects.

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The main aim of the DEQAR project is the development of a database that will enhance access to reports and decisions on higher education institutions/programmes externally reviewed against the ESG, by an EQAR-registered agency.

590216-EPP-1-2017-1-BE-EPPKA3-PI-FORWARD

During 2018 AQU Catalunya introduced the system for the automatic transmission of accreditation reports issued by the Agency to the data base. It also participated in two project follow-up meetings in Bonn and Rome.

3. International quality assurance and exchange

3.1. Programme review at the University of Andorra

Within the framework of the cooperation agreement between AQU Catalunya and the Government of Andorra's Department of Higher Education and Research, the Agency:

- Issued an external ex-ante accreditation report for the introduction of the Master's degree in Law at the University of Andorra.
- Issued a preliminary QA report on the Bachelor's degree in Communication and the Bachelor's degree in Catalan at the University of Andorra, in accordance with the European standards and guidelines (ESG).

Internationalisation

3.2. Exchange

AQU Catalunya has actively participated in events, forums and projects that contribute added value to the university system and higher education in Catalonia and which publicise and disseminate the Agency's activities at international level and enable it to keep abreast with the latest developments in quality assurance.

In 2018 the Agency delivered 27 presentations and papers at international meetings (see annex 2).



STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

1. Strategic management and external relations

1.1. Implementation of the Agency's Strategic Plan for 2015-2018 and the drafting of its Strategic Plan for 2019-2022

AQU Catalunya completed the implementation of its Strategic Plan for 2015-2018. The Strategic Plan sets out the Agency's main lines of action, which are defined in a series of strategic and operational goals, together with performance indicators that are calculated throughout the year.

The Agency's Strategic Plan for 2019-2022 was drawn up in 2018 on the basis of a questionnaire survey of the stakeholders and the subsequent application of a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), followed by a TOWS analysis to generate strategic options.

1.2. Quality assurance according to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

In order for the decisions quality assurance agencies in Europe to be recognised by all other countries in Europe, they are required to undergo an external review of their quality assurance procedures once every five years to ensure their compliance with the [*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*](#) (2015).

Strategic management

In 2017 AQU Catalunya successfully underwent its third review of compliance with the ESG. In 2018, in response to the enhancement recommendations, 14 internal working groups were set up to analyse the conclusions and recommendations in each standard and a Work Plan drawn up for 2019-2022.

1.3. Restructuring of AQU Catalunya in accordance with the legal framework

AQU Catalunya has updated its catalogue of services, with regard to the Agency's objectives, functions, its action principles and values.

The catalogue, establishes AQU Catalunya's main action principles and identifies the activities and services that it offers, which are structured according to the Agency's main activities:

- Programme and institutional review
- Assessment of teaching staff
- Knowledge generation
- Internationalisation

1.4. State relations

AQU Catalunya is a founder member of the [Spanish Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education](#) (REACU). In 2018 the document [Guidelines to developing and evaluating bachelors and master's degrees in e-learning and blended learning](#) was endorsed by REACU.

Relations with other quality assurance agencies in Spain continued to be smooth, and AQU Catalunya presented papers in 10 sessions organised by national agencies, universities and associations.

2. Governing, assessment and advisory bodies

AQU Catalunya's governing and assessment bodies are:

- Governing Board and Standing Committee
- Institutional and Programme Review Commission (CAIP)
- Research Assessment Commission
- Appeals Committee

AQU Catalunya's advisory bodies are:

- Advisory Committee
- Vice Rectors Committee
- University QA units Committee
- Student Advisory Committee
- University Councils Committee (including representatives of private universities)
- Technical Committee for Surveys

3. Catalan universities, social agents and experts

AQU Catalunya held different meetings with representatives from the universities in Catalonia and social agents to coordinate the Agency's activities in the higher education system in Catalonia.

Experts are individuals of reputable academic and/or professional standing, together with students, who take part in AQU Catalunya's review and evaluation procedures according to criteria of independence, objectivity and the absence of any conflict of interests. In 2018 316 new curriculums, mostly from academics, were added to AQU Catalunya's pool of

Strategic management

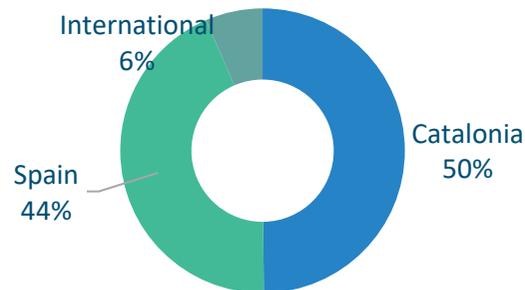
reviewers thereby increasing the total number of expert reviewers now to 1,721 (1,051 academics, 279 professionals and 391 students).

In 2018 714 experts took part in the Agency's various quality assurance procedures (450 in institutional and programme reviews, and 264 in teaching staff assessments), of which 290 (41%) were females and 46 (6%) were international experts.

Illustration 1. Experts according to gender (2018)



Graph 8. Experts according to place of origin (2018)



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3.1. Students

Three courses were run in 2018 to promote the involvement of students in quality assurance procedures in the university system in Catalonia. A pool of students with the requisite skills to take part in these procedures was also set up.

In addition, AQU Catalunya, together with the Catalan Universities Students' Council (CEUCAT), organised a course on quality assurance for students at HE institutions in Catalonia.



4. Instruments of communication

4.1. AQU website

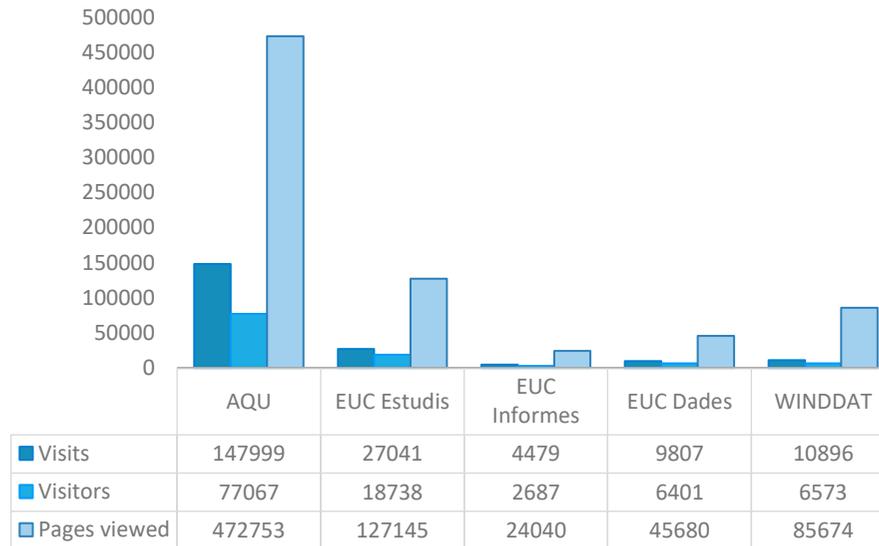
The project to renew the corporate website continued throughout 2018, with the completion of the first stage of analysis, content conceptualisation and design for the subsequent development of the new website.

Impetus was given to the use of infographs to give a better visual representation of the results and outcomes of the projects carried out by the Agency, and the information on the main navigation menus was reorganised to simply and make browsing and the search for information easier for the user.

There were approximately 148,000 visits to the corporate website by 77,000 users, who viewed around 473,000 pages on the website.

Strategic management

Graph 9. Number of visits, visitors and pages viewed on the AQU websites (2018)



4.2. Online newsletter (*eButlletí*)

The four corresponding issues for the year (numbers 88 to 91) of AQU's online newsletter (*eButlletí*) in Catalan, Spanish and English were produced and sent to 9,100 subscribers.

These are subscribers who renewed their registration with the AQU Catalunya database in 2018, due to the entry into force of new data protection regulations (RGPD) and the need for subscribers to renew their client consent in order to receive notifications.

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4.3. Twitter

At the end of 2018 the AQU Catalunya Twitter account had 1,565 followers, which represented a 27% increase in the total number compared to 2017, and 294 tweets were sent. In addition, there were 754 mentions of @aqucatalunya and nearly 12,000 profile visits.



4.4. YouTube

The channel received 2,210 visits in 2018.

During 2018, all papers presented at workshops and events organised by AQU Catalunya were published on the channel.

4.5. Media outlets

During 2018 thirty (30) citations from AQU Catalunya appeared in the written media, which was 66% more than in the previous year.

The president of AQU Catalunya was interviewed on the BTV evening news TV programme (*BTV notícies vespre*) on 13 September.



The director of AQU was interviewed on the TV3 programme *Més 324* on 14 September.





INTERNAL ORGANISATION

The Agency responds to requests for information and promotes **transparency** by updating the [AQU Catalunya transparency portal](#). In relation to users outside of AQU Catalunya, 50 expressions of satisfaction were received, together with 103 entries via the user support link on the website.

The **AQU Catalunya register**, which is an official e-government register, recorded 6,047 entries in 2018, which was 4% more than the previous year. This increase was due to the increase in the number of applications for teaching staff assessment. The processing of administrative procedures between AQU Catalunya, the universities and other institutions by way of EACAT, which allows for direct communication between all of the bodies, was set up and introduced in 2018. AQU Catalunya's **quality management and information security system** successfully passed the external certification audit carried out by AENOR according to ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 27001:2013.

With regard to its **IT systems**, AQU Catalunya implemented the automatic publishing of accreditation reports on the EUC Informes portal; it extended the current extranet in order to define users from higher education institutions; and it incorporated a channel to enable them to share documents and statistical reports and records; it adapted all administrative formalities for teaching staff to comply with recent data protection regulations (RGPD); the Agency worked together with the Secretariat for Universities and Research to simplify the Serra Húnter programme and on the integration of information systems; work continued with the implementation of e-NOTUM, the e-notification platform; work was done to set up two new procedures on the extranet used by Catalan government authorities (EACAT); an IT procedure was set up to generate quality labels and certificates for ex-ante accreditation, accreditation and the accreditation of additional dimensions on the EUC Estudis portal; figures and data from the outcome reports were published on the EUC Dades portal; requisite modifications were made to the Avalua programme for the automatic transfer of accreditation reports to the EQAR database; in addition to other internal improvements.

Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya

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