



Agència
per a la Qualitat
del Sistema Universitari
de Catalunya



Framework Collaboration Agreement with international quality assurance, certification and accreditation bodies in the field of higher education

Barcelona, 1st September 2014

Prof. Martí Casadesús Fa, director, as the representative of the Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya, of the one part

and

Dr. Iring Wasser, Managing Director, as the representative of the Accreditation agency specialising in undergraduate degree programmes in Engineering, Computer Science, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, of the other part

Hereby mutually recognise each other

as having sufficient legal capacity to execute this framework partnership agreement and to enter into a binding agreement as representatives of their respective institutions, and

Agree that

1. The *Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya*, hereinafter AQU Catalunya, is the primary instrument for the promotion and assurance of quality in the university system in Catalonia. The objective of AQU Catalunya is the assurance, accreditation and certification of quality in the universities and other higher education institutions in Catalonia (courses, faculty staff, faculties and services), in accordance with articles 139 and 140 of Act 1/2003, 19 February, concerning the universities in Catalonia, respectively.

The Accreditation agency specialising in undergraduate degree programmes in Engineering, Computer Science, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, hereinafter ASIIN, is a registered association in accordance with the law of the Federal Republic of Germany. ASIIN is supported by many organisations that consider the quality of university education to be a core issue, including university associations, applied science university associations, professional bodies of experts, profession-related organisations, industrial and business associations and trade unions.



2. AQU Catalunya is a founder and current full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and is registered with the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). It is a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), REACU (the national body that brings together all higher education QA agencies in Spain) and the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). It was the first QA agency in Europe to be ISO-certified.

ASIIN is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, and it is registered with the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education. It is also listed in the INQAAHE database on Guidelines of Good Practice.

3. Both ASIIN and AQU Catalunya have participated in national and European projects on quality in higher education from an early stage in their development and have been involved in the coordination of the European and international organisations in their role as members.

The two entities consider the application of external quality assurance (QA) mechanisms designed specifically for activities to internationalise higher education to be of strategic importance. This aspect should uphold the strategies of European universities, as well as project and enhance their status beyond the European Higher Education Area, in compliance with the ESG.

4. Within the context of the European Higher Education Area, in addition to promoting the mobility of students, academic staff and graduates, greater recognition is given to the activities of quality assurance agencies in other countries.

ASIIN and AQU Catalunya consider one of the mainstays of the European standards (ESG) is that QA bodies also comply with the same standards in the internationalisation of their activities to ensure their reliability for European universities as a whole.

Bearing in mind the above, the two entities are interested in establishing a framework for collaboration and action to be established through specific collaborative agreements in the areas that refer to the internationalisation of quality assurance; impetus for QA procedures that lead to the multiple recognition and integration of their review and evaluation work; encouragement to the participation of international experts in these procedures; the exchange of staff between the two agencies in these procedures; and the exchange of experience in review work and methodological development in quality assurance, accreditation and certification procedures.

Having regard to the above, the two parties agree to enter into this Framework Agreement according to the following

AGREEMENTS

ONE. Aim:

The aim of the Agreement is the establishment of a general framework for collaboration between AQU Catalunya and ASIIN to set in motion opportunities for collaboration that take form through the following actions:

- To advance the internationalisation of QA procedures in the universities that are reviewed by the two agencies.
- To coordinate QA procedures that lead to the multiple recognition and integration of QA procedures, of both national and international scope.
- To promote the participation of international experts in the quality assurance, accreditation and certification of quality in higher education.
- To encourage the exchange of staff between the two agencies in quality assurance, accreditation and certification procedures.
- To share and exchange experience in quality assurance and methodological development in quality assurance, accreditation and certification procedures.

The areas for collaboration and action mentioned above are to be established in specific collaborative agreements, according to the terms and agreements established in this framework.

TWO. Purpose:

The activities to be developed within this framework agreement and subsequent specific collaborative agreements shall have the following purpose:

- To improve the information on degree programme quality for the different national and international stakeholders.
- To optimise the work of self-assessment by the universities in obtaining multiple recognition.
- To advance the consolidation of the EHEA.
- To improve the instruments for mutual recognition between the review activities of European QA agencies.
- To promote the international dimension of QA activities by the participating agencies.

THREE. Commitments of the two parties:

The two parties formally undertake to:

- Comply with the ESG in the procedures they carry out within the scope of this framework agreement and any subsequent specific collaborative agreements.
- Uphold international recognition through their membership to ENQA and registration with EQAR.

- Have a process for the selection and training of experts and reviewers that complies with the principles laid down in the ESG.
- Obtain sufficient funding to carry out any assignment or task requested of either party by the other party, which shall be specified in the corresponding specific working agreement.
- Keep each other regularly informed of any changes and/or innovations associated with their quality assurance procedures.

FOUR. Content of specific collaborative agreements

Specific collaborative agreements may be established for either a project or sphere of activity, or for more than one of these. The rights and obligations of both parties shall only come into effect with the signing of any specific collaborative agreement.

FIVE. Follow-up committee

AQU Catalunya and ASIIN shall set up a Follow-up Committee in order to ensure compliance with the obligations of both parties established in this Framework agreement and any others specified and set out in addenda and/or specific agreements, together with the interpretation of the application of the same and, in the absence of agreement, to settle any differences in the execution of this framework agreement and any specific collaborative agreements entered into.

The Follow-up Committee shall consist of three members, one of which is to be appointed by the director of AQU Catalunya, another appointed by the director or corresponding governing body of ASIIN. The third member, who will chair the committee, is to be appointed jointly by both institutions.

The Follow-up Committee can meet, either in person or on-line, at the request of either of the two parties provided fifteen days notice is given.

SIX. Duration

This framework agreement shall have an initial duration of five years from the time of signature.

After this time, the functioning of the Framework Agreement and specific collaborative agreements entered into is to be reviewed to improve the scope of collaboration and, if neither of the parties has any objections, this agreement may be renewed for a further period of five years.

SEVEN. Termination of the Framework Agreement

This Framework Agreement may be terminated:

- a) by mutual agreement of the parties.
- b) due to non-compliance with the commitments of this Framework Agreement.



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And, as proof of agreement with the contents of this Framework Agreement, the parties hereby sign the agreement in duplicate at the place and date mentioned at the beginning of this document.

For AQU Catalunya

Director

For ASIIN

Managing Director

