AQU CATALUNYA
ANNUAL REPORT 2010

May 2011. Summary

Index

00. INTRODUCTION

Two things that were very positive for AQU Catalunya in 2010 were, firstly, the Agency reacquired jurisdiction over the *ex-ante* assessment of proposals for recognised degrees and awards submitted by Catalan universities for accreditation. As such, the Agency can now carry out the entire review process of all degree programmes taught at Catalan universities, as laid down by the regulations.

The second is the existence of a proposed bill for legislation by the Catalan Government relative to the Agency. This initiative, which was held up by the electoral calendar, provides insight into several positive changes that have taken place in the Agency along the lines of the international recommendations made for it to comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EEES).

There are six sections to the 2010 Annual Report that correspond to the Agency's various strategic areas. Activities that stand out in the area of **Teaching quality** include the preparation, approval and initial implementation of the Framework for the ex-ante assessment, monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised degree programmes, the restructuring of the Quality Assessment Commission, completion of the experimental Monitoring programme and the involvement of students in the Agency's activities; in the area of **Academic staff quality**, there was the assessment and review of university academic staff; in **Knowledge generation**, several studies on graduate labour market outcomes were completed, the 2011 survey graduate employment was produced and a workshop organised on research assessment in the Humanities and Social Sciences; in **Internationalisation and institutional relations,** the Agency worked with REACU (the body that brings together all of the university quality assurance agencies in Spain), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA); in **Strategic management and communication**, there was coordination and collaboration with the Catalan universities and their social partners, and the website was restructured; and in **Internal organisation**, accountability and the internal quality assurance system were maintained, the Agency's ICT systems were upgraded, and measures were applied to stem and reduce expenditure.

01. TEACHING QUALITY

1. Quality of the study programmes

1.1. Framework for the ex-ante assessment, monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised degrees

AQU Catalunya produced the *Framework for the ex-ante assessment, monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised degrees* (VSMA Framework). Endorsed by the AQU Board of Management, the aim of the Framework is to give a logical structure to the four review and evaluation processes —ex-ante assessment, monitoring, modification and accreditation— that recognised university degrees are subject to so that they are introduced and run more efficiently.

Continuous review enhances the quality of recognised degree programmes and serves as preparation for accreditation, four years subsequent to ex-ante assessment in the case of Masters programmes and six years in the case of Bachelors programmes.

Figure 1. How the review of recognised degree programmes is organised

AQU Catalunya organised a series of presentations on the VSMA Framework at Catalan universities, which were attended by approximately 900 people.

1.2.   Restructuring of the Quality Assessment Commission

The Quality Assessment Commission (Catalan acronym, CAQ) was restructured by the AQU Board of Management in order for it to carry out its duties relative to the ex-ante assessment, monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised degrees. The main changes were as follows:

- The abolition of the special ATP (that assessed the standards of qualifications and programmes) and AQCAU (quality assurance of university faculties and activities) review panels.

- The setting up of five special review panels according to areas of knowledge, which are now responsible for carrying out ex-ante assessment, monitoring, modification and accreditation

Figure 2. New organisational structure of the Quality Assessment Commission

1.3. Ex-ante assessment

AQU Catalunya regained control over the issuing of mandatory review reports with regard to the ex-ante assessment of recognised degrees and awards in Catalonia. As such, the Agency now has full jurisdiction over the entire review process of recognised degrees and awards in Catalonia.

Within the framework of the Spanish network of university quality assurance agencies (REACU), the Agency participated in establishing common criteria and guidelines for the issuance of review reports for the ex-ante assessment of recognised university degrees and awards.

REACU meeting at AQU Catalunya

In parallel with this, AQU Catalunya started work on producing the *Guide to the formulation and ex-ante assessment of proposals for university Bachelor and Master's degrees*.

1.4. Monitoring

Experimental monitoring programme

The Experimental Monitoring Programme, which was carried out with the collaboration of the Catalan universities to help design the future procedure for monitoring recognised degree programmes, was completed.

A series of *Guidelines and recommendations for programme monitoring reports* were drawn up that served as the basis for the VSMA Framework as a whole as well as the assessment reports for each participating university.

Table 1. Degree courses that participated in the programme

University	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree
UB	Information and Documentation (Faculty of Library Science and Documentation)	Interdisciplinary analysis and sustainable management of water (Faculty of Law)
UAB	Mathematics (Faculty of Sciences)	Human Resources Management in Organisations (Faculty of Psychology)
UPC	Mathematics (Faculty of Mathematics and Statistics)	Optometry and Vision Sciences (Terrassa School of Optics and Optometry)
UPF	Human Biology (Faculty of Health Sciences)	Legal Sciences (Department of Law)
UdG	Biology (Faculty of Sciences)	Business Innovation and Technology Management (Polytechnic School)
UdL	Nursing (School of Nursing)	Free software engineering (Polytechnic School)
URV	Tourism (School of Tourism and Leisure)	Synthesis and Catalysis (Faculty of Chemistry)
UOC	Law	Occupational risk prevention

URL	Nursing (Blanquerna School of Nursing, Nutrition and Physiotherapy)	—
UIC	Medicine (Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences)	Business Management and Production Systems (Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences)
UAO-CEU	Psychology (Faculty of Social Sciences)	Humanistic and Social Studies (Faculty of Social Sciences)

Protocol for the monitoring and renewal of accreditation of recognised university degree programmes

Together with representatives from the Spanish Ministry of Education, the regional Autonomous governments, QA agencies and universities, AQU Catalunya formed part of the SATUO Commission that is responsible for the monitoring and accreditation of recognised university degrees. The Commission produced the *Protocol for the monitoring and renewal of accreditation of recognised university degrees*, which was endorsed by the General Conference on University Policy and the Spanish Universities Council.[1]

2. Support for quality assurance systems in the universities

2.1. AUDIT

The purpose of the AUDIT programme, which is implemented jointly by the Spanish national university quality assurance agency/ANECA, the QA agency for Galicia/ACSUG, and AQU Catalunya, is to assess the adequacy of internal quality assurance systems used by higher education institutions prior to their implementation.

Assessment of the design of internal quality assurance systems submitted for review in 2009 was completed during 2010, and a new call for 2010 was made, with two arrangements for participation: the exportation of positive results from previous IQAS assessments in previous years, and the assessment of new internal quality assurance systems.

Table 2. Faculties and schools that applied for the extension of a previous positive assessment

University	Faculty/School
UdG	Faculty of Education and Psychology
	Polytechnic School/Escola Politècnica Superior
	Faculty of Arts
	Faculty of Economics and Business Studies
	Faculty of Medicine
	Faculty of Law

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[1] Universities Council (Consejo de Universidades).

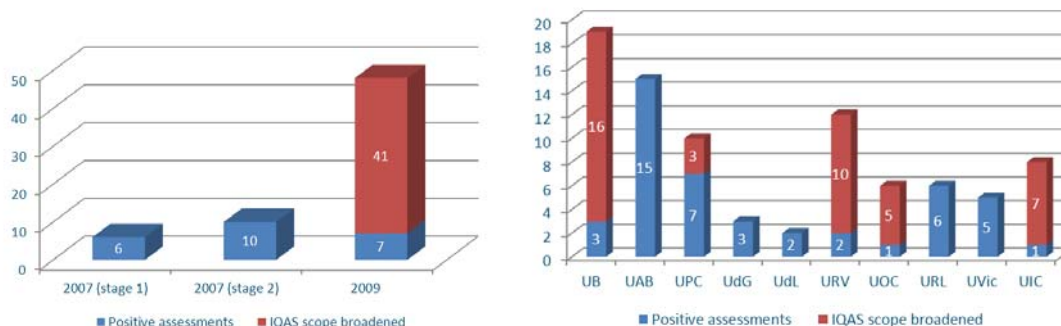| UdL	Faculty of Arts
	Faculty of Law and Economics
	Faculty of Education Sciences
	Faculty of Medicine
	School of Agricultural Engineering/Escola Tècnica Superior d'Enginyeria Agrària
UIC	Faculty of Humanities

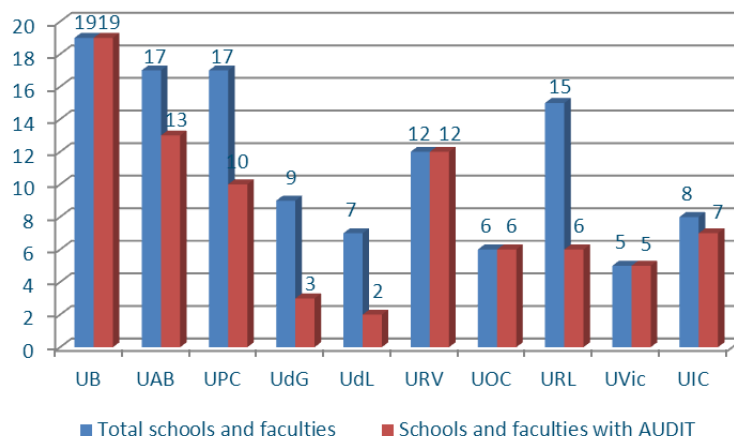**Table 3. Faculties and schools that applied for a basic IQAS review**

University	Faculty/School
UB	Sant Joan de Déu School of Nursing/Escola Universitària d'Infermeria Sant Joan de Déu
UAB	Salesian Institution of Higher Education, Sarrià/Escola Universitària Salesiana de Sarrià
UPC	School of Industrial Engineering, Barcelona/Escola Tècnica Superior d'Enginyeria Industrial de Barcelona
	School of Engineering, Vilanova i la Geltrú/Escola Politècnica Superior d'Enginyeria de Vilanova i la Geltrú
	School of Agriculture, Barcelona /Escola Superior d'Agricultura de Barcelona
	College of Industrial Engineering, Barcelona /Escola Universitària d'Enginyeria Tècnica Industrial de Barcelona
	Terrassa School of Business Management/Escola Universitària Caixa Terrassa
	Technical College, Mataró/Escola Universitària Politècnica de Mataró
	School of Professional & Executive Development/Fundació Politècnica de Catalunya
UPF	Faculty of Health and Life Sciences
	Faculty of Economics and Busines Studies
	Faculty of Political and Social Sciences
	Faculty of Communication
	Faculty of Law
	Faculty of Humanities
	Faculty of Translation and Interpreting
	Polytechnic School
URV	URV Foundation Continuing Education Centre/Centre de Formació Permanent de la Fundació URV
URL	La Salle
	Faculty of Social Education and Social Work - Pere Tarrés
	ESADE Sant Ignasi School of Tourism - Escola Universitària de Turisme Sant Ignasi
	ESDI School of Design
UAO - CEU	Faculty of Social Sciences

Graphs 1 and 2. Results according to year and university

Graph 3. University faculties and schools with AUDIT in relation to the total number at each university[2]

3. Quality of higher education institutions

3.1. Affiliated schools

On the instructions of the Universities and Research Commission,[3] AQU carried out the review of all affiliated schools in the higher education system in Catalonia. The final review stage was completed in 2010.
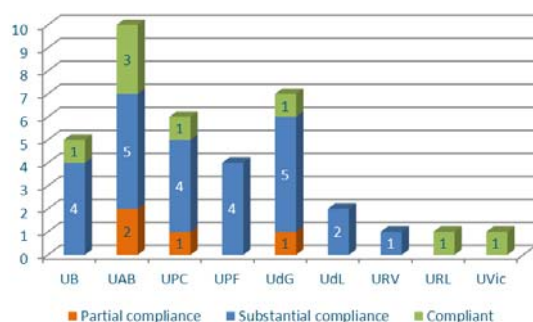
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[2] Fifteen of the UAB's faculties were reviewed, two of which combined later on at the time of the evaluation, giving a total of 13 schools reviewed with AUDIT.

[3] Commissioner for Universities and Research (Comissionat d'Universitats i Recerca).

Table 4. Result of the review of affiliated schools. Third and final stage

University	School	Date of the report	Basic review	Advanced review
UB	School of Nursing, Sant Joan de Déu Hospital/Escola Universitària d'Infermeria Hospital de Sant Joan de Déu	January	Substantial compliance	✓
UAB	School of Life Sciences, Manresa/Escola Universitària de Ciències de la Salut de Manresa	January	Compliant	
	School of Nursing, Santa Creu i Sant Pau Hospital/Escola Universitària d'Infermeria de the Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau	January	Substantial compliance	
	Gimbernat School of Nursing and Physiotherapy/Escola Universitària d'Infermeria i Fisioteràpia Gimbernat	January	Substantial compliance	
	School of Tourism and Hotel Management	February	Compliant	✓
	Red Cross School of Nursing/Escola Universitària d'Infermeria de la Creu Roja	February	Partial compliance	
UPF	Elisava, School of Design	February	Substantial compliance	
UdG	Formàtic Barna School of Tourism/Escola Universitària Formàtic Barna	January	Substantial compliance	
UVic	BAU, School of Design	February	Compliant	

Graphs 4 and 5. Overall results of the 37 affiliated institutions and schools (2009-2010)

4. Student participation in university quality assurance

The Agency established the Student Commission, which is composed of a dozen students from Catalan universities and, as a standing committee, works to systematise student participation in the review activities of AQU Catalunya.

In order to analyse the phenomenon of student participation in university quality enhancement at the international level, a workshop was organised at the Rovira i Virgili University
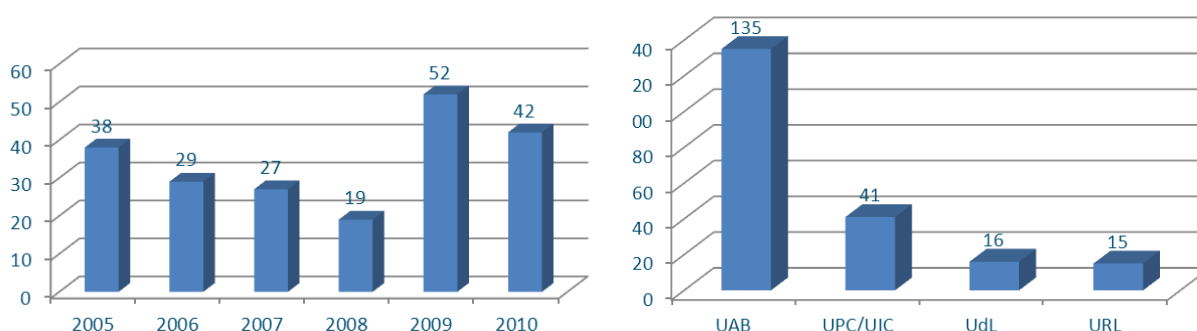

Meeting of the Student Commission at AQU Catalunya

(URV). There were forty-five participants.

AQU Catalunya has been promoting courses since 2005 to enable students to acquire skills so they can be successfully involved in the running of quality assurance systems and university assessment and enhancement processes. During 2010, courses were given at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), the University of Lleida (UdL), the Technical University of Catalonia (UPC) and the International University of Catalonia (UIC).

Graphs 6 and 7. Number of students who received training through courses in university quality assurance, according to year and the universities that participated in the programme (2005-2010)

5. Managing of experts

AQU Catalunya has been working since 2007 to upgrade the Agency's pool of reviewers. The managing of experts was included in AQU Catalunya's quality management system in 2010 and, with the collaboration of the universities, professional bodies and student associations, experts are encouraged to submit CVs.

Graphs 8 and 9. Number of people included in the pool of reviewers (2005-2010)

02. ACADEMIC STAFF QUALITY

1. Teacher assessment prior to university selection

As of 2003 onwards, in order to be admitted for selection to a contract academic staff post at a public university in Catalonia (tenured collaborating staff, junior lecturer, senior lecturer and professor), all applicants must be in possession of a positive assessment issued beforehand by AQU Catalunya. The Agency also assesses academic staff at the private universities.

In 2010, the AQU's CLiC Commission (which deals with junior lecturer and collaborating staff) and the CAR Research Assessment Commission endorsed a protocol for the training of new reviewers and also the procedure to be followed in cases of fraud and inaccuracies in information given in application forms from teaching staff for assessment.

1.1. Pre-selection reports on junior lecturer staff and tenured collaborating (non-PhD holder) academic staff

The second call for applications made in 2009 was completed and the results made available in 2010, and two new calls were made.

Table 5. Results[4] of the second call in 2009 for tenured collaborating academic staff
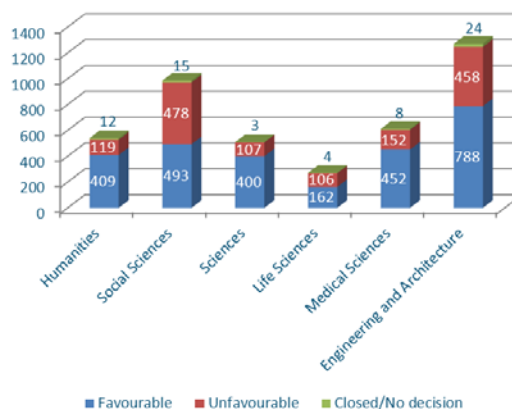
Field of knowledge	TA	CU	F	U	AA	AD	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	4	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	100
Social Sciences	14	3	6	3	2	0	8	3	73
Experimental Sciences	3	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	100
Health Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medical Sciences	104	1	88	14	0	1	88	15	85
Engineering and Architecture	15	4	6	3	1	1	7	4	64
TOTAL	**140**	**12**	**103**	**20**	**3**	**2**	**106**	**22**	**83**

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[4] TA: total applications; CU: closed/no decision; F: favourable; U: unfavourable; AA: appeals accepted; AD: appeals dismissed; AP: appeals pending (see other tables); TF: total favourable; TU: total unfavourable; %F: percentage of favourable out of the total (excluding those closed with no final decision).

Table 6. Results of the 2010 call for applications from non-PhD holder academic staff

Field of knowledge	TA	CU	F	U	AA	AD	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Social Sciences	6	3	3	0	0	0	3	0	100
Experimental Sciences	7	2	4	1	0	0	4	1	80
Health Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medical Sciences	17	4	12	1	0	0	12	1	92
Engineering and Architecture	21	2	8	6	1	4	9	10	47
TOTAL	**52**	**11**	**27**	**9**	**1**	**4**	**28**	**13**	**68**

Graphs 10 and 11. Applications for tenured collaborating staff, according to year and field of knowledge (2003-2009):

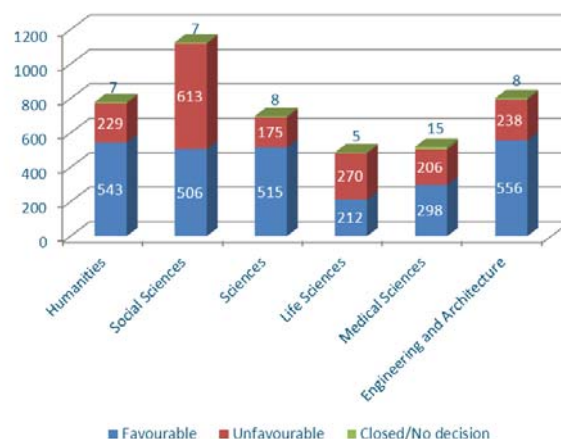**Table 7. Results of the second call for applications in 2009 for junior lecturer staff**

Field of knowledge	TA	CU	F	U	AA	AD	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	50	0	40	7	1	2	41	9	82
Social Sciences	95	1	38	37	3	16	41	53	44
Experimental Sciences	56	0	47	8	0	1	47	9	84
Health Sciences	50	0	22	24	0	4	22	28	44
Medical Sciences	38	2	21	12	0	3	21	15	58
Engineering and Architecture	70	0	45	20	2	3	47	23	67
TOTAL	**359**	**3**	**213**	**108**	**6**	**29**	**219**	**137**	**62**

Table 8. Results of the first call for applications in 2010 for junior lecturer staff

Field of knowledge	TA	CU	F	U	AA	AD	AP	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	61	1	35	22	0	2	1	35	25	58
Social Sciences	106	5	40	48	0	1	12	40	61	40
Experimental Sciences	65	0	42	14	0	5	4	42	23	65
Health Sciences	44	0	17	24	0	3	0	17	27	39
Medical Sciences	33	3	18	10	0	1	1	18	12	60
Engineering and Architecture	70	0	53	13	0	4	0	53	17	76
TOTAL	379	9	205	131	0	16	18	205	165	55

Graphs 12 and 13. Applications for senior lecturer staff, according to year and field of knowledge (2003-2009)

Table 9. Applications received in the second call made in 2010 for collaborating and junior lecturer staff

Field of knowledge	Collaborating staff	Junior Lecturer
Humanities	3	52
Social Sciences	8	65
Experimental Sciences	1	36
Health Sciences	0	28
Medical Sciences	15	29
Engineering and Architecture	4	59
TOTAL	31	269

1.2. Accreditation of research and advanced research

The second call for applications made in 2009 for research accreditation (for senior lecturer staff) and advanced research accreditation (professors) was completed and the results made available in 2010, and two new calls were made.
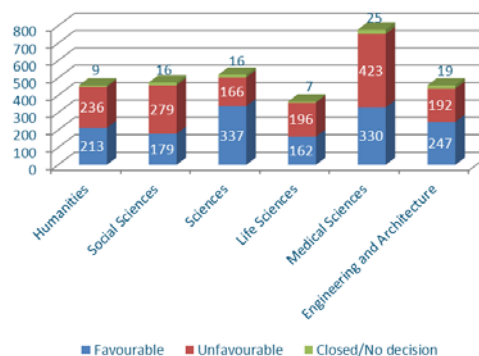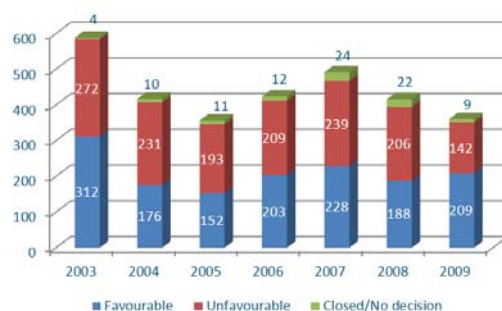
Table 10. Results of the second call made in 2009 for applications for senior lecturer staff

Field of knowledge	TA	CU	F	U	AA	AD	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	29	2	15	11	0	1	15	12	56
Social Sciences	30	1	18	9	1	1	19	10	66
Experimental Sciences	23	1	14	8	0	0	14	8	64
Health Sciences	13	0	8	5	0	0	8	5	62
Medical Sciences	30	0	12	13	2	3	14	16	47
Engineering and Architecture	44	1	32	9	0	2	32	11	74
TOTAL	169	5	99	55	3	7	102	62	62

Table 11. Results of the first call for applications in 2010 for research accreditation

Field of knowledge	TA	CU	F	U	AP	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	27	0	10	12	5	10	17	37
Social Sciences	31	4	16	9	2	16	11	59
Experimental Sciences	19	0	16	3	0	16	3	84
Health Sciences	18	0	12	6	0	12	6	67
Medical Sciences	33	3	9	17	4	9	21	30
Engineering and Architecture	41	2	27	8	4	27	12	69
TOTAL	169	9	90	55	15	90	70	56

Graphs 14 and 15. Number of applications for research accreditation, according to year and field of knowledge (2003-2009)
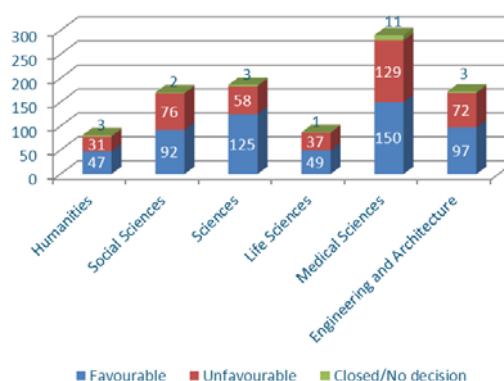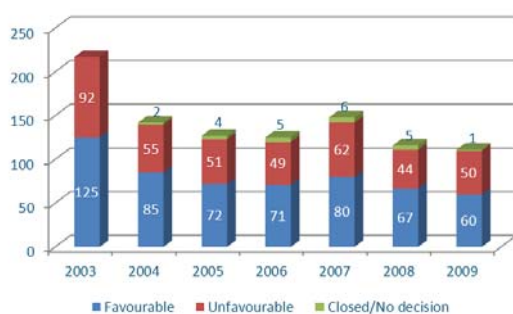
Table 12. Results of the second call for applications for advanced research accreditation in 2009

Field of knowledge	TA	CU	F	U	AA	AD	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	3	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	33
Social Sciences	12	0	8	3	0	1	8	4	67
Experimental Sciences	11	0	6	5	0	0	6	5	55
Health Sciences	7	0	4	1	0	2	4	3	57
Medical Sciences	8	1	6	0	1	0	7	0	100
Engineering and Architecture	10	0	3	4	1	2	4	6	40
TOTAL	51	1	28	15	2	5	30	20	60

Table 13. Results of the first call for applications for advanced research accreditation in 2010

Field of knowledge	TA	CU	F	U	AP	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	100
Social Sciences	14	0	9	5	0	9	5	64
Experimental Sciences	4	1	3	0	0	3	0	100
Health Sciences	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	100
Medical Sciences	11	1	6	4	0	6	4	60
Engineering and Architecture	14	1	8	4	1	8	5	62
TOTAL	46	3	29	13	1	29	14	67

Graphs 16 and 17. Number of applications for advanced research accreditation, according to year and field of knowledge (2003-2009)
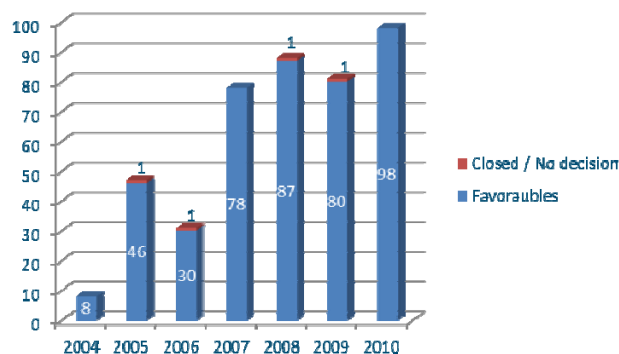
Table 14. Applications received in the second call in 2010 for research accreditation and advanced research accreditation

Field of knowledge	Research	Advanced research
Humanities	27	4
Social Sciences	34	11
Experimental Sciences	15	8
Health Sciences	12	5
Medical Sciences	27	10
Engineering and Architecture	34	14
TOTAL	**149**	**52**

1.3. Teaching assessment certificates

Universities may stipulate that teaching certification is an eligibility requirement. In 2010, 98 applications were received and all were positively assessed.

Graph 18. Growth in the number of teaching assessment certificates (2003-2010)

2. Assessment of merits in research, teaching and management

The allocation of allowances (premiums) to contract and public service academic staff at public universities in Catalonia is linked to the assessment of individual merits in teaching, research and management.

2.1. Research

The Agency itself assesses individual merits in research using an established procedure and criteria. Assessments carried out by the Spanish Research Assessment Commission (CNEAI) for the same purpose are also recognised through a signed agreement.
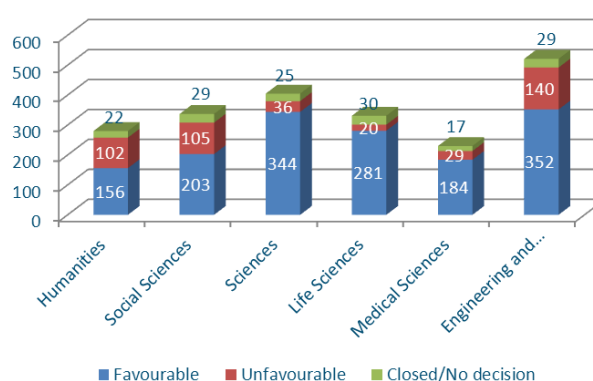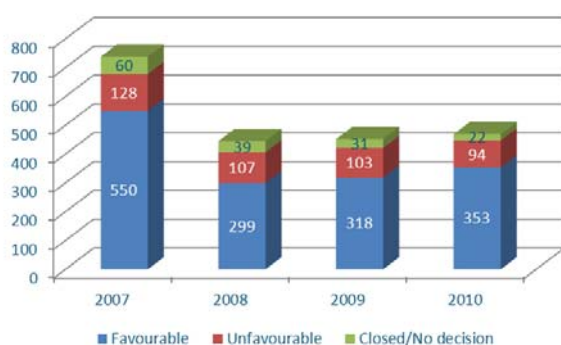
The specific criteria used for the assessment of research work carried out by teaching and research staff at public universities were revised in 2010 in order to give greater recognition to knowledge transfer.

The deadline for public service teaching and research staff to submit applications for the assessment of merits in research was put back until the beginning of 2011 to comply with the calendar of the CNEAI.

Table 15. Results of the assessment of merits in research (research premium) in 2010 for contract teaching and research staff at public universities

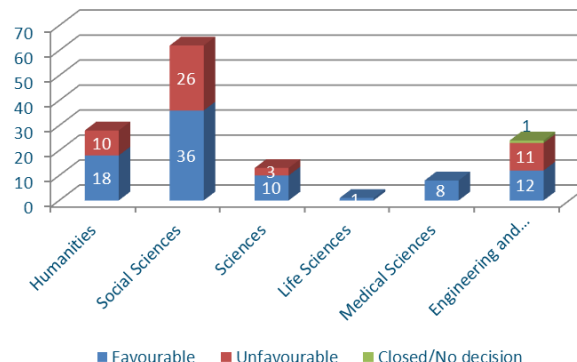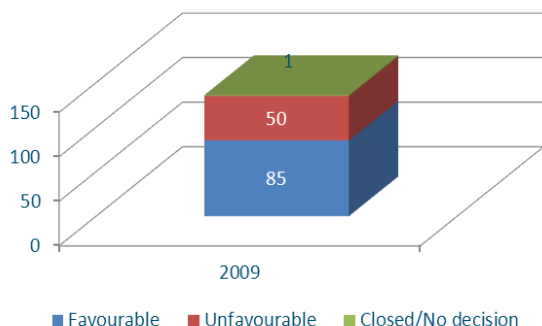| Field of knowledge	TA	CU	F	U	AA	AD	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	61	3	35	11	1	11	36	22	54
Social Sciences	99	8	64	20	0	7	64	27	57
Experimental Sciences	82	0	75	5	1	1	76	6	93
Health Sciences	61	5	50	3	0	3	50	6	74
Medical Sciences	44	3	34	3	3	1	37	4	77
Engineering and Architecture	122	3	87	20	3	9	90	29	71
TOTAL	469	22	345	62	8	32	353	94	71

Graphs 19 and 20. The assessment of contract teaching and research staff at public universities (2007-2010)

Table 16. Results of the assessment of merits in research (research premium) in 2010 for contract teaching and research staff at private universities

Field of knowledge	TA	CU	F	U	AP	TF	TU	%F
Humanities	10	0	5	4	1	5	5	54
Social Sciences	38	1	17	14	6	17	20	46
Experimental Sciences	10	0	6	1	3	6	4	66
Health Sciences	6	0	5	0	1	5	1	87
Medical Sciences	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Engineering and Architecture	13	0	8	4	1	8	5	61
TOTAL	78	1	42	23	12	42	35	57

Graphs 21 and 22. The assessment of contract teaching and research staff at public universities (2009)

Other assessments

AQU Catalunya signed an agreement with the Technical University of Catalonia (UPC) concerning the assessment of research work by researchers at the university. Seven applications were submitted in 2010, of which five were favourably assessed.

Since 2008, the Agency had also had an agreement with the University of Extremadura to assess research work by teaching and research staff on open-ended contracts. Eighteen applications were submitted in 2010, of which twelve were favourably assessed. There are two appeals still pending a decision.

2.2. Teaching and management

For the assessment of teaching competence, the public universities in Catalonia use the form given in the AQU-accredited teaching assessment handbooks that are valid from 2009-2012. The universities' assessment reports on staff merits in teaching are certified by the Agency.

Table 17. Results of the 2009 call for certification of the assessment of merits in teaching

Potential applicants	Actual total applicants	%	Positive	%	Negative	%	% favourable/ potential
2,608	1,369	52%	1,336	97%	33	2%	51%

The number of potential applicants includes academic staff from previous calls with the option to participate in the 2009 call.
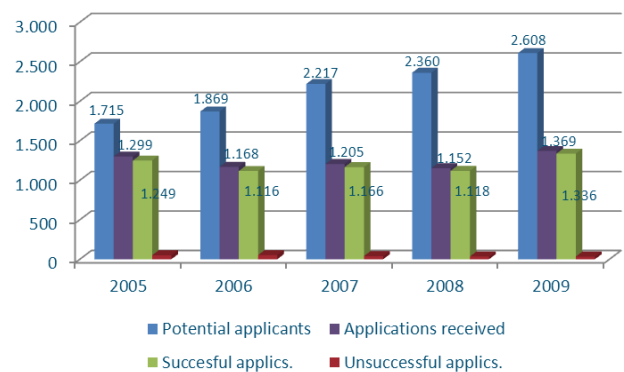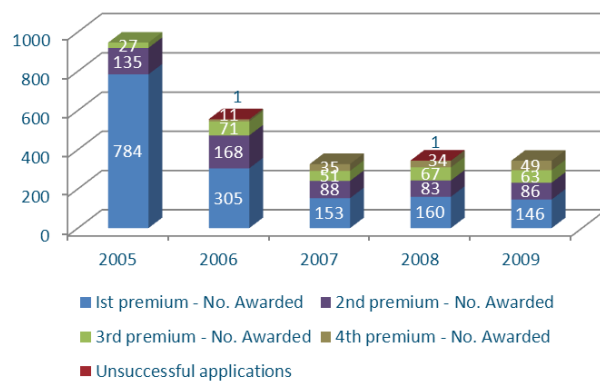
Individual merits in management of both public service and contract academic staff are assessed by Catalan universities using instructions approved by AQU Catalunya and the Directorate-General for Universities. Assessment reports are referred by the university to the Agency for certification.

Table 18. Results of the 2009 call for certification of the assessment of merits in management premium

Periods assessed	Favourable	Unfavourable	1st period	2nd period	3rd period	4th period
344	344	0	146	86	63	49

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

Graphs 23 and 24. The assessment of merits in teaching and management (2005-2009)

Legend (left graph):
- 1st premium - No. Awarded
- 2nd premium - No. Awarded
- 3rd premium - No. Awarded
- 4th premium - No. Awarded
- Unsuccessful applications

Legend (right graph):
- Potential applicants
- Applications received
- Succesful applics.
- Unsuccessful applics.

03. KNOWLEDGE GENERATION

1. Graduate labour market outcomes

1.1. The 2011 graduate labour market outcomes survey

From 2001 onwards and once every three years, AQU Catalunya and the boards of trustees of the Catalan universities have fostered the carrying out a survey on the labour market outcomes of graduates from Catalan universities.

Preparation began in 2010 for the fourth survey, which will have three different objectives: to analyse the employment outcomes of the university student population that graduated at the end of the 2006-2007 academic year; to analyse the graduate population awarded a doctoral degree/PhD between 2005 and 2007; and a follow-up gender-based study of the population interviewed in the 2001 survey.

1.2. Results of the surveys on graduate labour market outcomes

Five studies based on the results of the surveys have been published :

Gender and the labour market outcomes of the university population in Catalonia, produced by AQU Catalunya with the support of the *Institut Català de les Dones* (ICD).

The labour market outcomes of Humanities graduates six years after graduation, produced by AQU Catalunya.

The match between university education and graduate labour market outcomes, written by Enric Corominas Rovira, Carme Saurina Canals and Esperança Villar Hoz, University of Girona (UdG), with funding and support from the Agency.

Catalan universities as a factor of equity and professional mobility, written by Jordi Planas Coll and Dr. Sandra Fachelli, GRET Research Group, Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), with funding and support from the Agency.

Working after university. The quality of employment of the graduate and PhD-holder population in Catalonia, produced by AQU Catalunya.

2. Studies on higher education in Catalonia

2.1.   A study on curriculum pathways

AQU Catalunya is producing a study on the empirical profiles of applicants who have requested either a junior lecturer assessment report or the accreditation of research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, using information provided in their CVs (around 5,000 CVs were received between 2003 and 2008).

One of the main objectives of the study is to establish an empirical basis for the work of the review panels and provide a series of benchmarks that are common and consensual to all quality assurance agencies.

During 2010, a catalogue of scientific journals was produced from the information given in the standard bibliometric indices. With more than 21,000 journal titles listed according to fields of knowledge and disciplines, the catalogue will serve as an aid in the Agency's assessment of academic staff.

2.2.   Results of the 2007 call for study proposals

AQU Catalunya funded and published the following in-depth studies on the understanding and diagnosis of higher education in Catalonia:

Student drop-outs at Catalan universities, Joaquín Gairín Sallán, Pilar Figuera Gazo, Xavier Maria Triadó Ivern et al. (UAB-UB)

The academic performance of first-year students at university, Ferran Mañé Vernet, Daniel Miravet Arnau (URV)

The academic performance of first-year students in Law at the University of Barcelona (UB). An analysis of outcomes and their causes, Max Turull Rubinat, Berta Roca Acedo (UB)

3. Indicators: the UNEIX information system

In line with the requirements of the European standards and guidelines and in compliance with Royal Decree 1393/2007, AQU Catalunya worked on setting up a substantive and efficient catalogue of indicators for the monitoring and accreditation of recognised degrees offered by universities in Catalonia and as an aid in decision-making by university authorities, using accurate and reliable contextual data.

To this end, AQU Catalunya and the Catalan Ministry of Innovation, Universities and Enterprise, through the Universities and Research Commission, collaborated in the maintenance and upgrading of the UNEIX information system and all of the ensuing requirements for analysis and dissemination.

4. Workshops and conferences

4.1. Research assessment in the Humanities and Social Sciences; University of Barcelona

The aim of the Eleventh Series of Workshops with the Catalan Universities, which was held at the University of Barcelona on 28 and 29 January and dealt with the theme of research assessment in the Humanities and Social Sciences, was to outline a series of enhancement proposals and create broader consensus within the scientific and academic community in Catalonia. There were more than 300 participants.

Inaugural session, Auditorium at the UB

Presentation of the Workshop at the Spanish Ministry of Education

The results of the workshop are set out in *Research assessment in the Humanities and Social Sciences*, a publication in Catalan and Spanish that is aimed at the scientific and academic community in Catalonia and Spain as a whole. The conclusions of the workshop were presented to the Spanish Ministry of Education and REACU, the Spanish network of university QA agencies

4.2. University education and employment; Autonomous University of Barcelona

In conjunction with the Autonomous University of Barcelona, a workshop on University Education and Employment was organised on 23 March, where the results of several studies funded by the Agency on the labour market outcomes of graduates from Catalan universities were presented and where the social partners discussed the role of the university in times of crisis. There were around eighty participants.

5. Digital Library

The AQU's Digital Library, a repository of on-line specialised documents on university quality that forms part of the Agency's corporate website, was launched in February. It consists of over six hundred electronic documents produced by quality assurance agencies, the majority in the EU, universities, other higher education institutions and government authorities.

04. INTERNATIONALISATION AND INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

1. Institutional relations

1.1. REACU, the Spanish network of university quality assurance agencies

AQU Catalunya is a founder member of REACU and took part in all of the meetings, which dealt fundamentally with the coordination of review criteria in the ex-ante assessment and monitoring of recognised degree programmes and awards, as well as the comparative study on assessment criteria for academic staff. The Agency, together with all of the other QA agencies in Spain under the coordination of the national agency (ANECA), also participated in the drafting of a report on the state of quality in Spanish universities.

AQU Catalunya is a member of the technical commission that, since 2007, has been running the DOCENTIA programme, which assists universities in designing their own mechanisms for managing the quality of teaching by academic staff. The technical commission met during 2010 to assess the running of the programme and to design stages for monitoring and certification.

1.2. European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

AQU Catalunya is a member of the ENQA Board, the executive body that coordinates the European Association of quality assurance agencies. Within the framework of the association, the Agency participated in the following projects:

- FLLLEX (The Impact of Lifelong Learning Strategies on Professional Higher Education)

- IQA (Internal Quality Assurance)

- QAN (Quality Audit Network)

- MAP-ESG (Mapping the implementation and application of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area).

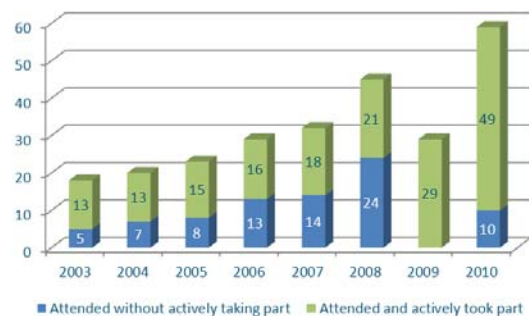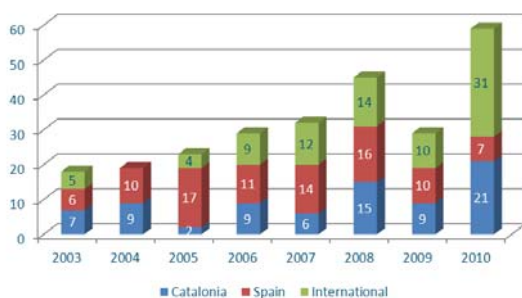## 1.3. European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA)

The main objectives of the ECA are the mutual recognition of accreditation and quality assurance decisions; to promote the conditions for mutual recognition, especially regarding joint programmes; to provide a platform for mutual learning and to disseminate experience in relation to accreditation and related practices; and to provide transparent information on quality and to pave the way for the internationalisation of institutions and students. AQU Catalunya forms part of the ECA working groups.

2. International cooperation and exchange

Among other international projects, AQU Catalunya took part in TEMPUS in Bosnia and Herzegovina (TEMPUS BiH).

In comparison with the previous year, the Agency participated in twice as many events, the majority abroad.

Graphs 25 and 26. The participation of AQU Catalunya in events, workshops and seminars (2003-2010)

05. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

1. The Strategic Plan and the Business Plan

In compliance with the values set out in the Strategic Plan for 2009-2012, the Business Plan (Activities Plan) for 2011 was restructured according to six main areas of action: *teaching quality, quality of academic staff; knowledge generation; internationalisation; strategic management and communication and internal organisation.*

2. Governing bodies and review bodies

The Agency's governing bodies, the Board of Management and the Standing Commission, convened to supervise the Agency's activities during 2010.

The Quality Assessment Commission convened to supervise the work of reviewing and evaluating recognised degrees and awards in the higher education system in Catalonia. Due to requirements called for in the ex-ante assessment, monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised degrees, a process of restructuring the Commission was started at the end of the year.

The CLiC Commission, which deals with junior lecturer and collaborating academic staff, and the Research Assessment Commission convened to supervise the work of the special review panels, adapt the review criteria of several of these panels, enhance the review processes and set up calls for review and assessment.

3. Catalan universities and the social partners

AQU Catalunya met together with senior members of the universities' boards of trustees, the heads (vice-rectors) responsible for quality support, QA units, academic staff and the student body to deal with issues such as implementation of the VSMA Framework, the fourth survey on graduate labour market outcomes, and student participation in quality assurance processes.
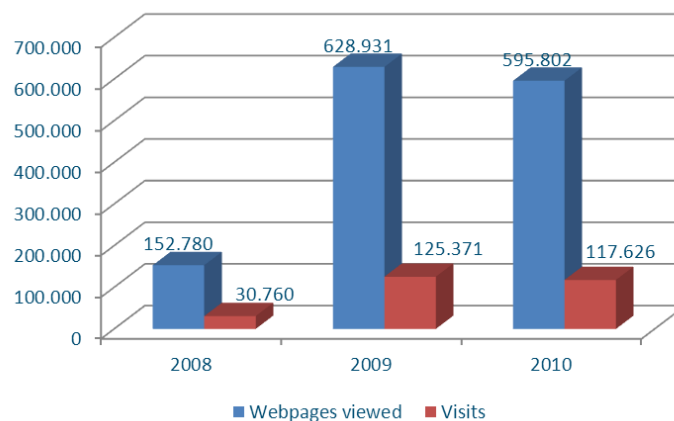
4. Communication

Publications

AQU Catalunya set up a new series of publications, the *Quality Handbooks/Quaderns de Qualitat*, the purpose of which is to improve dissemination of the Agency's activities. Fifteen publications were released in 2010, all of which can be consulted on the AQU website.

Website

The content structure of the Agency's website (http://www.aqu.cat) was altered during 2010 to improve accessibility, and multimedia elements were introduced. The number of visitors was consolidated (more than 117,000) and more than 102,000 documents were registered as being accessed. The documents most consulted were those connected with academic staff assessment processes.

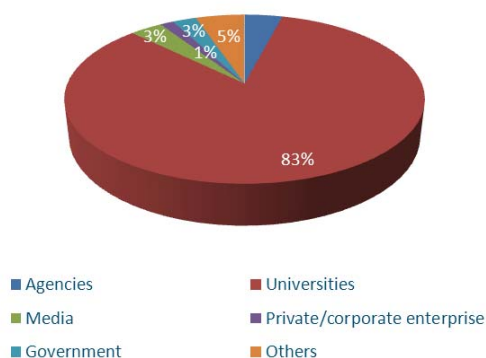**Graph 27. Number of webpages viewed and visits to the AQU website (2008[5]-2010)**

The e-newsletter (elButlletí)

Six issues (editions numbers 46 to 51) were produced of the Agency's e-newsletter (*elButlletí*), a bi-monthly publication in Catalan, Spanish and English that provides extensive information on quality and the universities. The e-newsletter is sent to more than 5,600 subscribers.

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[5] Figures for 2008 are only available from July to December.

Graph 28. Subscribers to the e-newsletter 2010

Pie chart legend:
- Agencies
- Universities
- Media
- Private/corporate enterprise
- Government
- Others

Chart values: 83%, 3%, 3%, 1%, 5%

Media

Two AQU press conferences were held to publicise the results of the studies on graduate labour market outcomes. Two studies, *Catalan universities as a factor of equity and professional mobility*, and *The match between university education and graduate labour market outcomes* were presented at the first.

At the second one, held in conjunction with the Institut Català de les Dones, the results of the study on *Gender and graduate labour market outcomes: an analysis of the quality of the professional employment outcomes of female graduates and possible differences in relation to male graduates three years after graduation* were presented.

Press conference at the Institut Català de les Dones

06. INTERNAL ORGANISATION

1. Accountability and internal quality

1.1. Report to the Parliament of Catalonia and the Annual Report

For purposes of the accountability of actions carried out by AQU Catalunya, the Agency's activities report for 2008-2009 was referred to the Parliament of Catalonia's Education and Universities Commission, and the Annual Report for 2009 was endorsed by the AQU Board of Management and published.
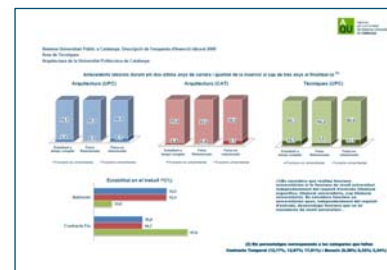
1.2. Internal quality system

AQU Catalunya carried out an internal and external audit of its quality management system based on ISO 900:2008 for university quality assurance, specifically for institutional review and academic staff assessment. The external monitoring audit, where there was zero non-compliance, confirmed its total adaptation according to ISO standard requirements and full consolidation of the Agency's quality management system.

2. Information and communication technologies

In the area of data processing, an intranet was introduced for management of the Agency's projects and, to improve communication and internal efficiency, a new version of the extranet was employed to manage the AUDIT programme with new functions. A system was also developed and applied to automatically produce executive reports on graduate labour market outcomes according to subject (degree).
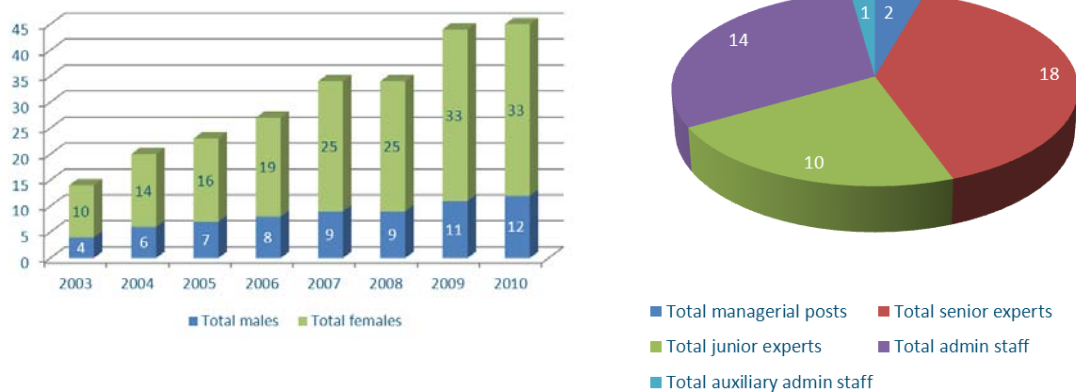
With regard to computer systems, a safe remote access was established to the Catalan Government's (Generalitat de Catalunya) IP network through the VPN (Virtual Private Network) server as an aid to mobility outside of AQU Catalunya, and a centralised monitoring system for servers, hardware and other computer equipment was set up.

3. Human resources

In addition to the director and the manager, a new post introduced this year, the Agency's staff totalled 43 people (33 female and 10 male) with an average age of 36, of which 28 had a permanent contract, 14 were interim staff and one work and services staff member. AQU Catalunya also had the support of one innovation and methodology coordinator and one review adviser.

The Agency made two calls for applications for interim staff in 2010 to fill two temporary posts and it contracted two students in training, by way of the corresponding university agreements.

Graphs 29 and 30. Changes in AQU staff (2003-2010)

With the coming into effect of Decree Law 3/2010, 29 May, and in compliance with the Catalan Executive Council's Resolutions dated 1 June 2010, AQU Catalunya reduced all staff salaries by 5% in agreement with the staff.

4. Financial and accounting management

The financial audit for 2009 was carried out by the Catalan Government's Sub-directorate General for the Financial Audit of Government Entities.[6]

The 2010 financial year was marked by efforts to cut back expenditure and optimise revenue in order to carry out the maximum number of activities possible. Measures to curb and reduce expenditure for 2010 endorsed by Decree Law 3/2010, 29 May, and the Catalan Government's Resolutions dated 1 June 2010 were applied to the Agency's budget.

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[6] Subdirecció General de Control d'Empreses i Entitats Públiques de la Intervenció General
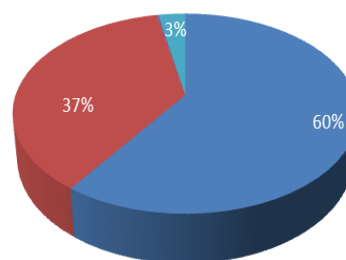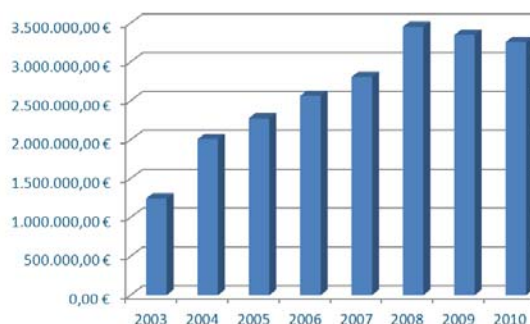
Table 19. Budget revenue 2010

Recognised income and assets	Initial budget	Actual amount in €
Charges, sale of assets and services	64,008.23	46,180.57
Current transfers	3,220,191.57	3,114,823.14
Additions to capital	6,250.00	28.27
Variation in financial assets	109,710.00	98817.49
Total	**3,400,159.8**	**3,259,849.47**

Table 20. Final expenditure 2010

Recognised expenditure and liabilities	Initial budget	Actual amount in €
Staff salaries	1,881,628.55	1,943,686.13
Expenditure on current assets and services	1,288,790.01	1,206,147.30
Financing expenses	20.00	652.04
Current transfers	120,011.24	7,500.00
Current investments	109,710.00	97,773.66
Total	**3,400,159.8**	**3,255,759.13**

Graphs 31 and 32. Liabilities (2003-2010) and distribution of expenditure (2010)

■ Staff salaries ■ Expenditure on current assets and services ■ Current investments

5. Prevailing legislation on data protection and the National Security Framework (ENS)

AQU Catalunya carried out a diagnosis of its compliance with prevailing legislation regarding data protection (LOPD, Spanish acronym), it defined and registered its personal record files with the Catalan Data Protection Authority (APDCAT), and it started the process to implement the corresponding obligations regarding data protection regulations (legal, organisational and technical measures). It also produced a plan to comply with the National Security Framework (ENS), as laid down in the regulations on the review and assessment of academic staff and recognised degree programmes and awards.