



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

www.aqucatalunya.org

AQU-UOC assessment of a fully virtual higher education institution

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Summary

1. General introduction (AQU Catalunya and UOC)
2. Methodology for online degree programmes evaluation
3. The evaluation process
4. Strong and weak points
5. Final remarks



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Quality, the assurance of improvement.

AQU's functions and aims

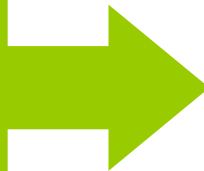


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**Main instrument to
promote and assess the
quality of all universities
in Catalonia**

AQU's functions and aims



Evaluation, accreditation, certification of the quality of universities and HE centers in Catalonia.

1996-06. 334 degree programmes (65%) have been evaluated by AQU.



1995-96 UOC begins its activity.

2006-07. 19 degree programmes; 31,957 students and 8,000 graduates (Catalan campus).

139 professors / 1969 counsellors.



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Assessment methodology vs. UOC characteristics

CIPP Model

Context	Goals
	SWOT
Inputs	Students
	Teachers
	Infrastruct.
Process	Educational
	Organizational
Product	Academic
	Personal
	Professional

Main differences

Virtual education / Private university

Student profile

Teacher profile

Homogeneity delivery processes

Highly centralized organization

The same quality than in traditional homologated degrees is expected

Assessment levels

Policies / Quality Assurance Mec.
Delivery systems / Infrastructures

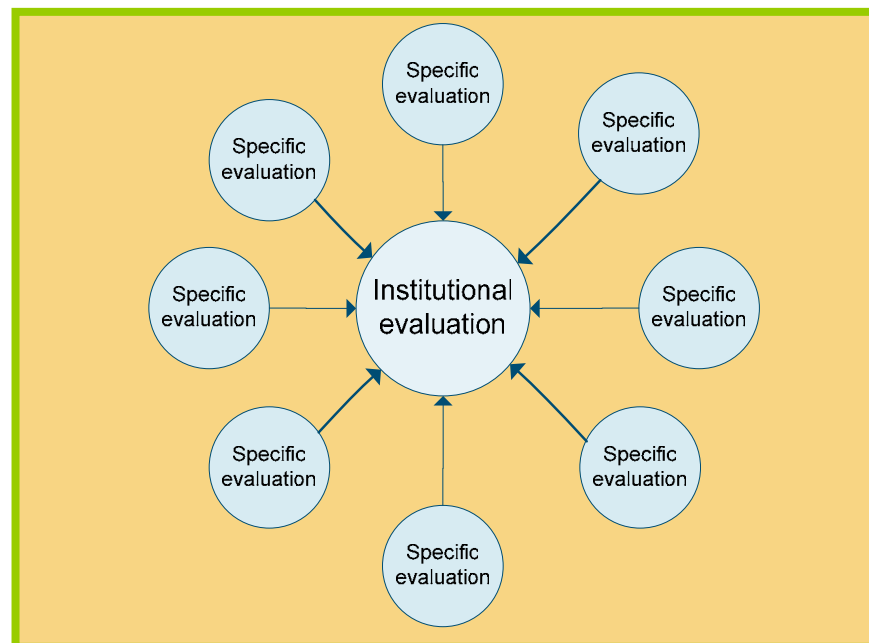


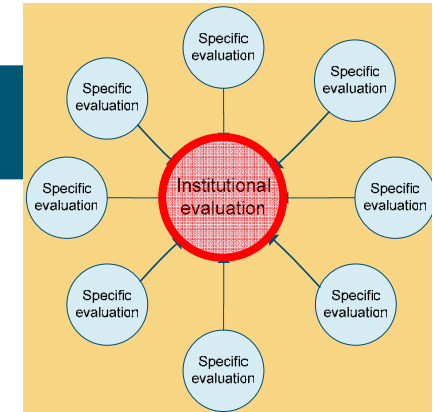
Institutional

Disciplinary dimension
Outcomes: academic, professional



Subject





Sections - Institutional level

Aims

Mission and vision

System capacity

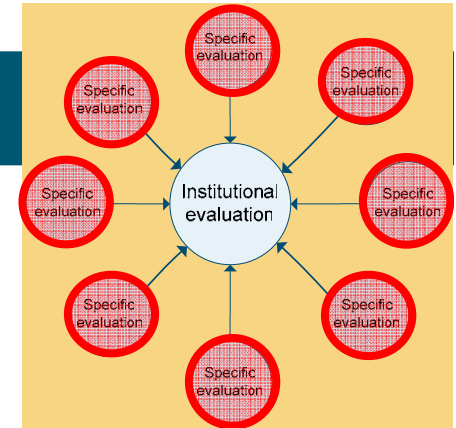
Students	Teaching staff
Infrastructure	
External relations	

Quality assurance mechanisms

Institutional mission and vision
System capacity
Learning outcomes and study programme
Instruction design
Learning assessment
Outcomes: academic, professional, personal

Sections – Degree programme level

Position	Internal and External
Study programme	Definition of learning outcomes Adequacy of study programme
Instruction design	Teaching methodology Adequacy of activities How degree is organised Student orientation and tutorial system Technical set-up for instruction Interpersonal communications systems
Learning assessment	Assessment system
Outcomes	Academic, professional, personal



Steps in the design process

1. Methodology adaptation to a virtual university
2. Identification of the levels of assessment and its sections
3. Setting up standards and evidences

Online education standards



EHEA standards



Evaluation protocol

Key question

Dimension being evaluated

Indicator

Standards

Evidence

Left-hand page

Right-hand page

1. Strategic position of the degree programme

1.1 Internal strategic position

Key question:
Does the degree programme's have a favourable internal strategic position?

Highly favourable	Favourable	Not very favourable	Unfavourable
A	B	C	D

- 1. Strategic position of the degree programme**
- 1.1. Internal strategic position**
- Standards**
- The degree programme has a strong position in the institution, which may be due to the clear match of the proposal with the institutional mission and vision, the number and characteristics of enrolled students, the number and characteristics of the programme's teaching staff, and/or the degree of institutional support received.
- Evidence**
- Studies on the profiles of new entry students and also enrolled students.
 - With regard to the quantity and quality of the students, tables 1a, 1b, 2 and 3 provide the self-evaluation committee with evidence – programmes offered, demand, new entry students, total number of enrolled students – that place the degree programme in a stronger or weaker position, on the basis of its course of development and situation relative to the rest of the university's degree programmes and, in particular, other degree programmes that are similar.
 - Explicit documentation that justifies the programme is in accordance with the institutional mission.
 - Teaching staff (see table 10).

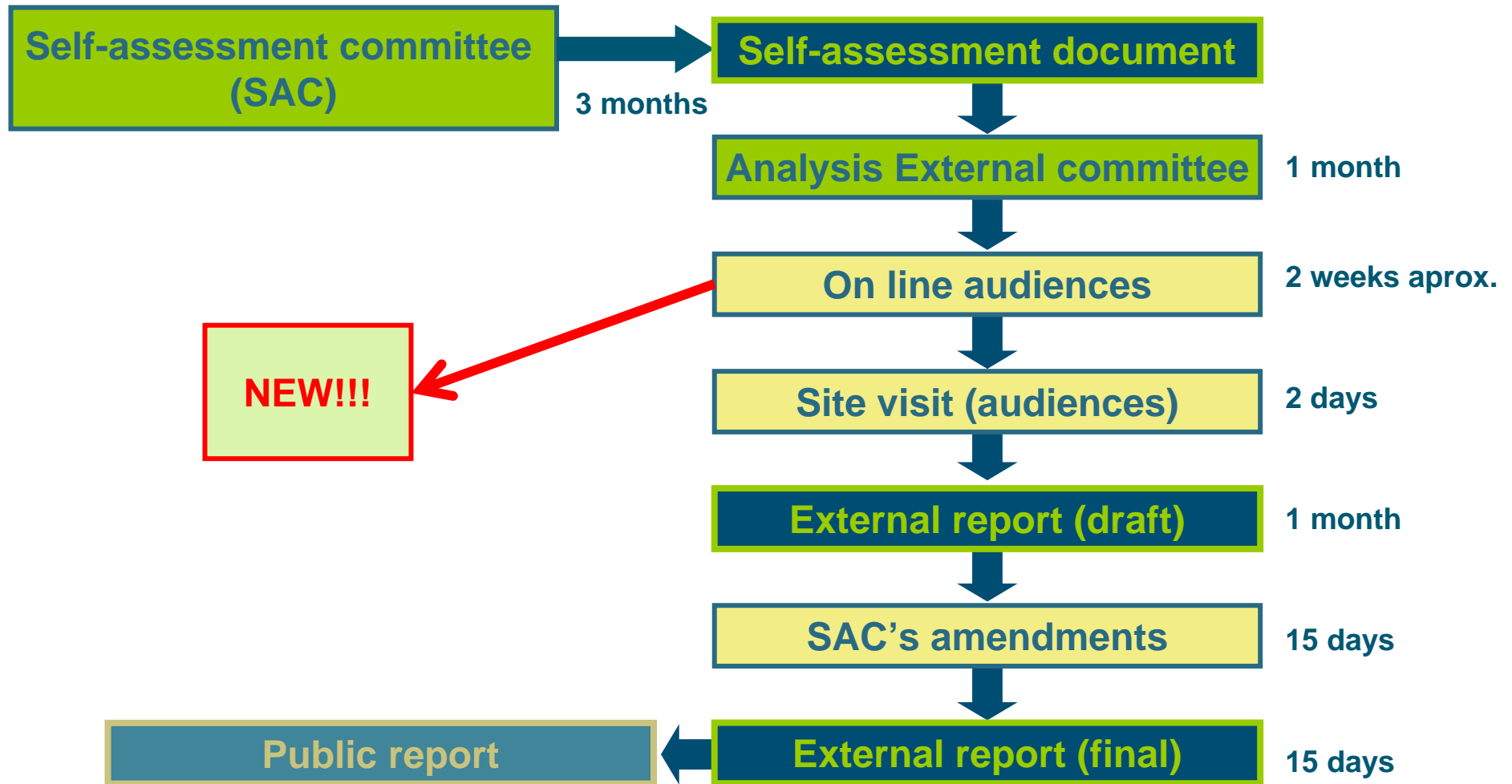
1. Assessment of the quality of the evidence provided
2. Significant changes that have taken place during the last five years
3. Comments/indications regarding the assessment of indicators
4. Most significant strong points
5. Most significant weak points and possible explanations for why they exist
6. Direction of proposals for improvement/change



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Evaluation process



Audiences

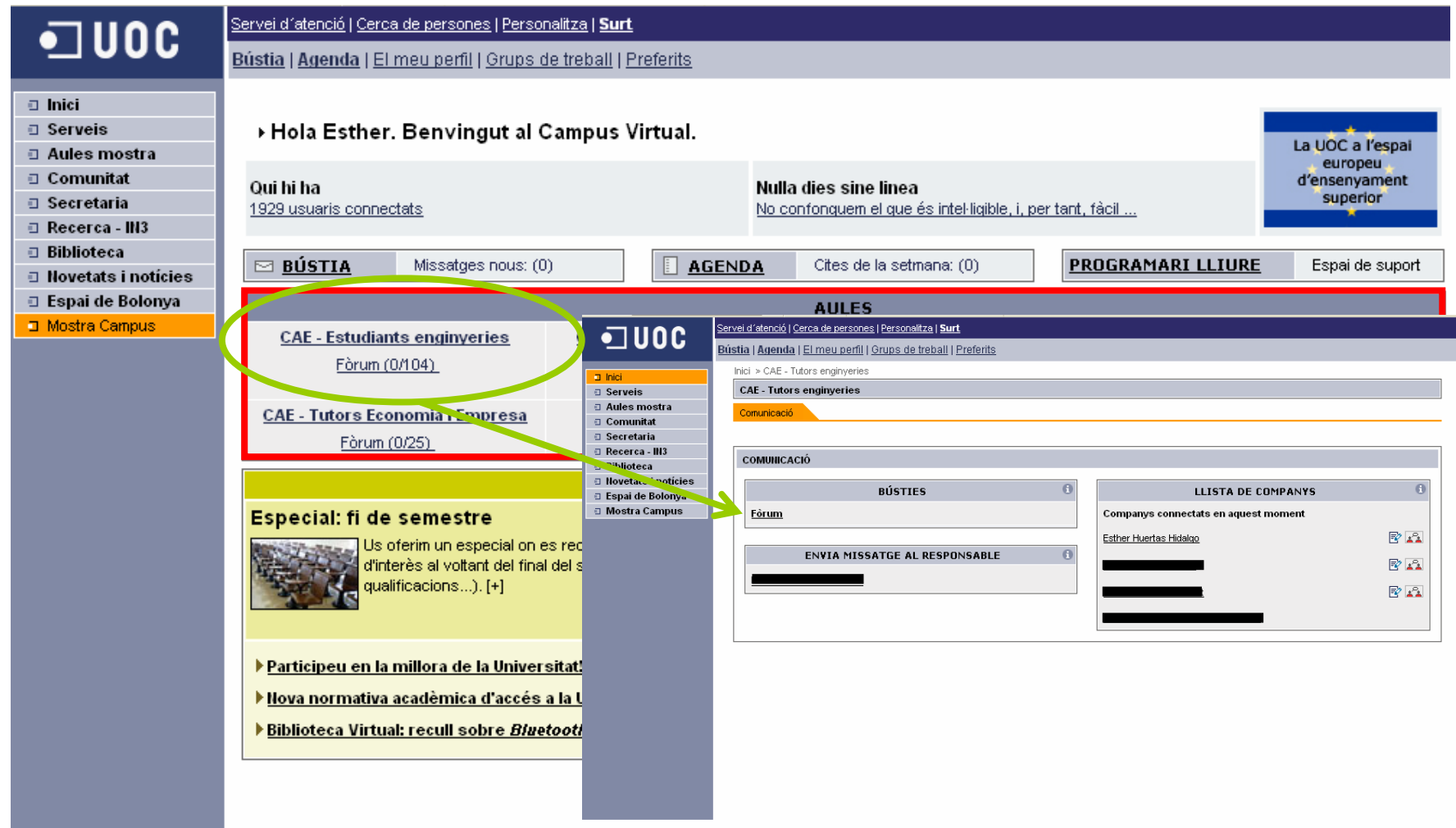
On line

- Students
- Counsellors
- Tutors

In situ

- Self-assessment committee
- Professor responsible of subjects
- Study and Programme directors
- Graduates
- Governmental body (institutional level)
- Review of materials

Audiences II



The screenshot displays the UOC virtual campus interface. On the left, a navigation menu includes: Inici, Serveis, Aules mostra, Comunitat, Secretaria, Recerca - III3, Biblioteca, Novetats i notícies, Espai de Bolonya, and Mostra Campus. The main content area features a header with navigation links (Bústia, Agenda, El meu perfil, Grups de treball, Preferits) and a greeting: "Hola Esther. Benvingut al Campus Virtual." Below this, it shows "Qui hi ha" (1929 users connected) and "Nulla dies sine linea" (No day without a line). A navigation bar includes "BÚSTIA" (Missatges nous: (0)), "AGENDA" (Cites de la setmana: (0)), "PROGRAMARI LLIURE", and "Espai de suport".

The central focus is the "AULES" section, which contains two forum links: "CAE - Estudiants enginyeries" (Fòrum (0/104)) and "CAE - Tutors Economia i Empresa" (Fòrum (0/25)). A red box highlights these links, and a green circle highlights the "CAE - Estudiants enginyeries" link. A green arrow points from the "Mostra Campus" menu item to the "Fòrum" link in the "COMUNICACIÓ" section of the "CAE - Tutors enginyeries" area.

The "COMUNICACIÓ" section includes a "BÚSTIES" forum link, an "ENVIJA MISSATGE AL RESPONSABLE" button, and a "LLISTA DE COMPANYYS" section showing "Companyys connectats en aquest moment" (e.g., Esther Huertas Hidalgo).

At the bottom, there is a yellow banner for "Especial: fi de semestre" (Special: end of semester) with the text: "Us oferim un especial on es recopila tot d'interès al voltant del final del semestre (qualificacions...). [+]" and a list of news items: "Participeu en la millora de la Universitat!", "Nova normativa acadèmica d'accés a la UOC", and "Biblioteca Virtual: recull sobre Bluetooth".

Profiles of external review panels

Institutional

- Professor
- Expert in on line HE
- Professional expert in on line education
- Methodologist

Degree programme

- 2 Professors
- Professional and graduated by UOC
- Methodologist



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Strong and weak points



Methodology



Process

- Two levels of evaluation (institutional and degree programme).
- Counsellors and tutors inclusions at the self-assessment committee (2nd phase).
- Professional/Graduate member (external committee).
- On line audiences.

Strong and weak points



Methodology



- Self-assessment committees highly motivated.
- Committee's training (self-assessment and external committees).
- Understanding of virtual education (UOC's education model: teaching staff, relevance of research...).
- Access to the UOC's Campus (examples of subjects, library...).
- Collaborative processes between AQU and UOC.

Strong and weak points



Methodology



Process

- Quality assurance mechanisms were not defined previously to the evaluation.
- Benchmarking with other universities.
- Lack of economic information at institutional level.
- Evaluation of mission and vision instead of strategic plan assessment (institutional level).
- First time of degree programme's evaluation.
- Quality culture needs to be spread within the institution (poor participation of public audiences).

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Final remarks



- Process helps the institution to its own knowledge.
- Reinforce the institution structure and relationship between academic staff.
- Help to the design of internal quality assurance systems (AUDIT programme).
- First analysis of degree's design in light of Bologna process.



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Thank you for your attention



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