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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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.

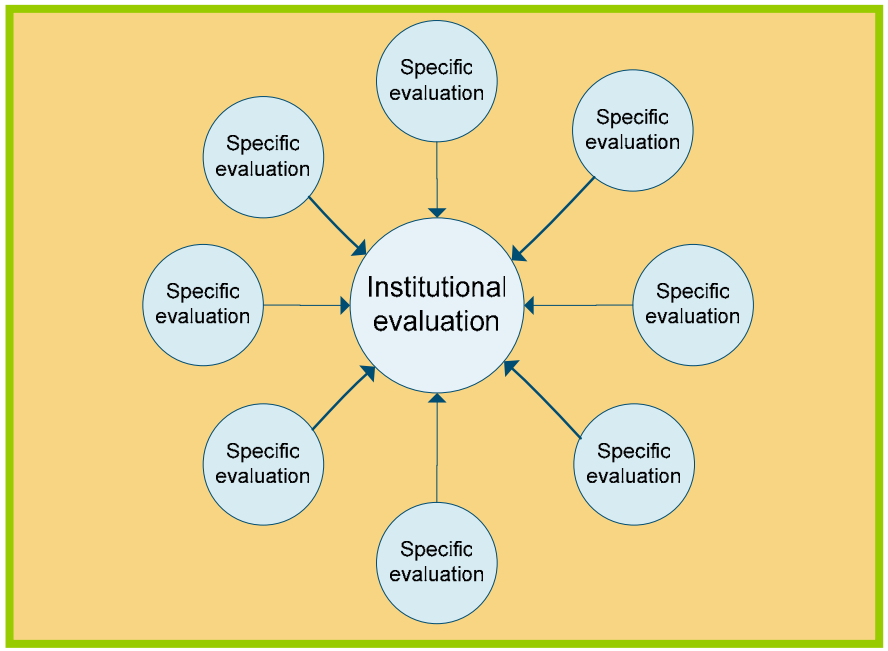
Delivery systems / Infraestructures

→ Institutional

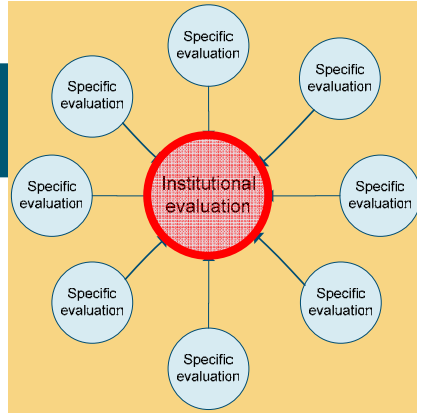
Disciplinary dimension

Outcomes: academic, professional

→ Subject

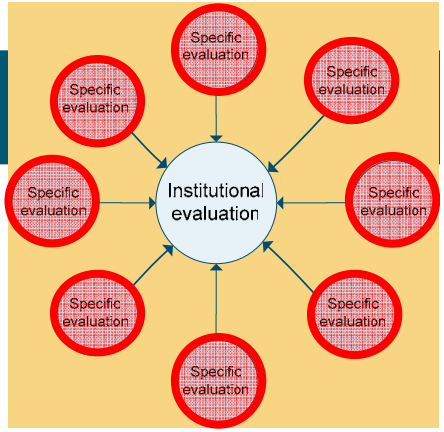


Sections - Institutional level



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

CHEA · IHEP · wcet

EHEA standards

ENQA EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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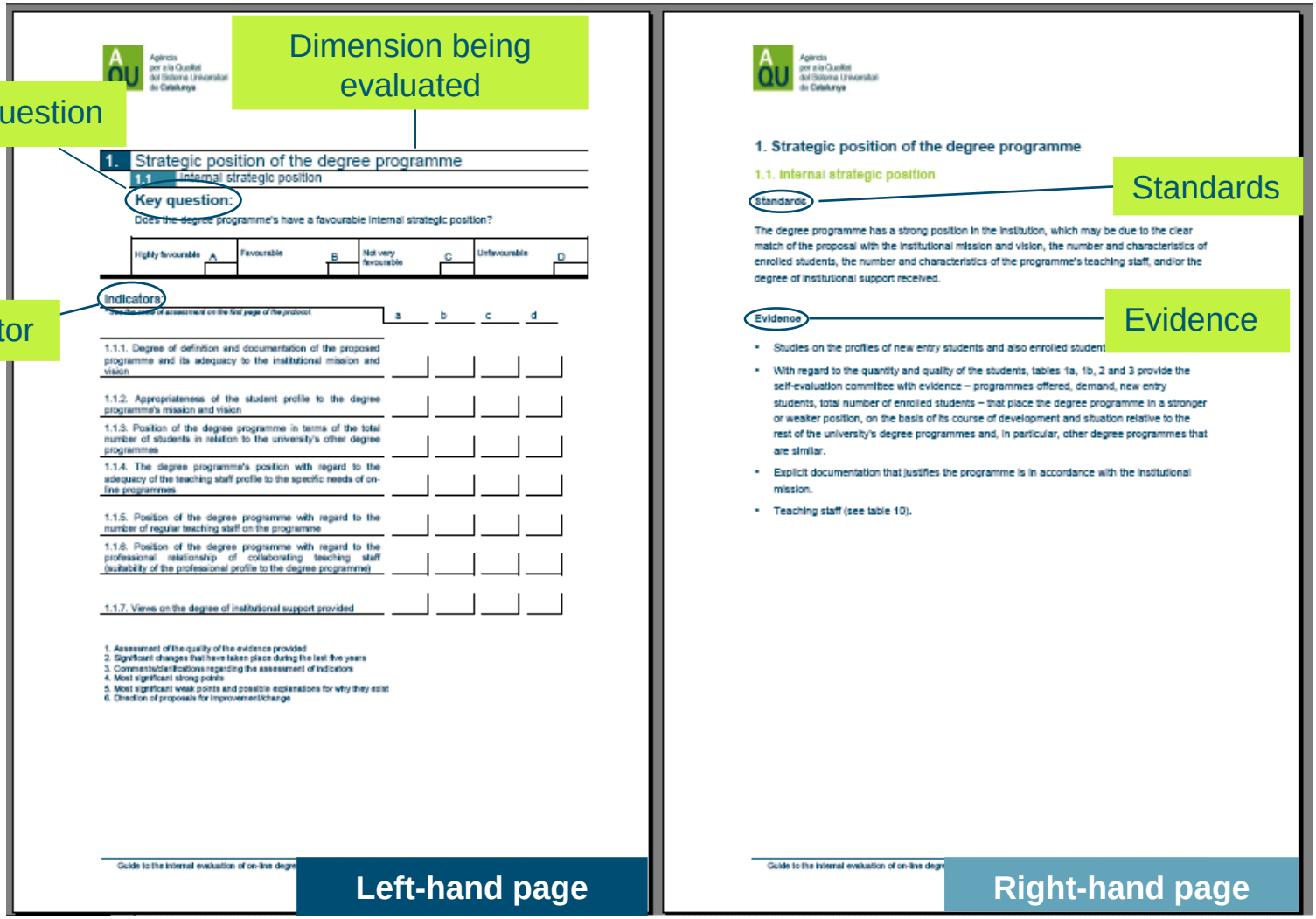
Evaluation protocol



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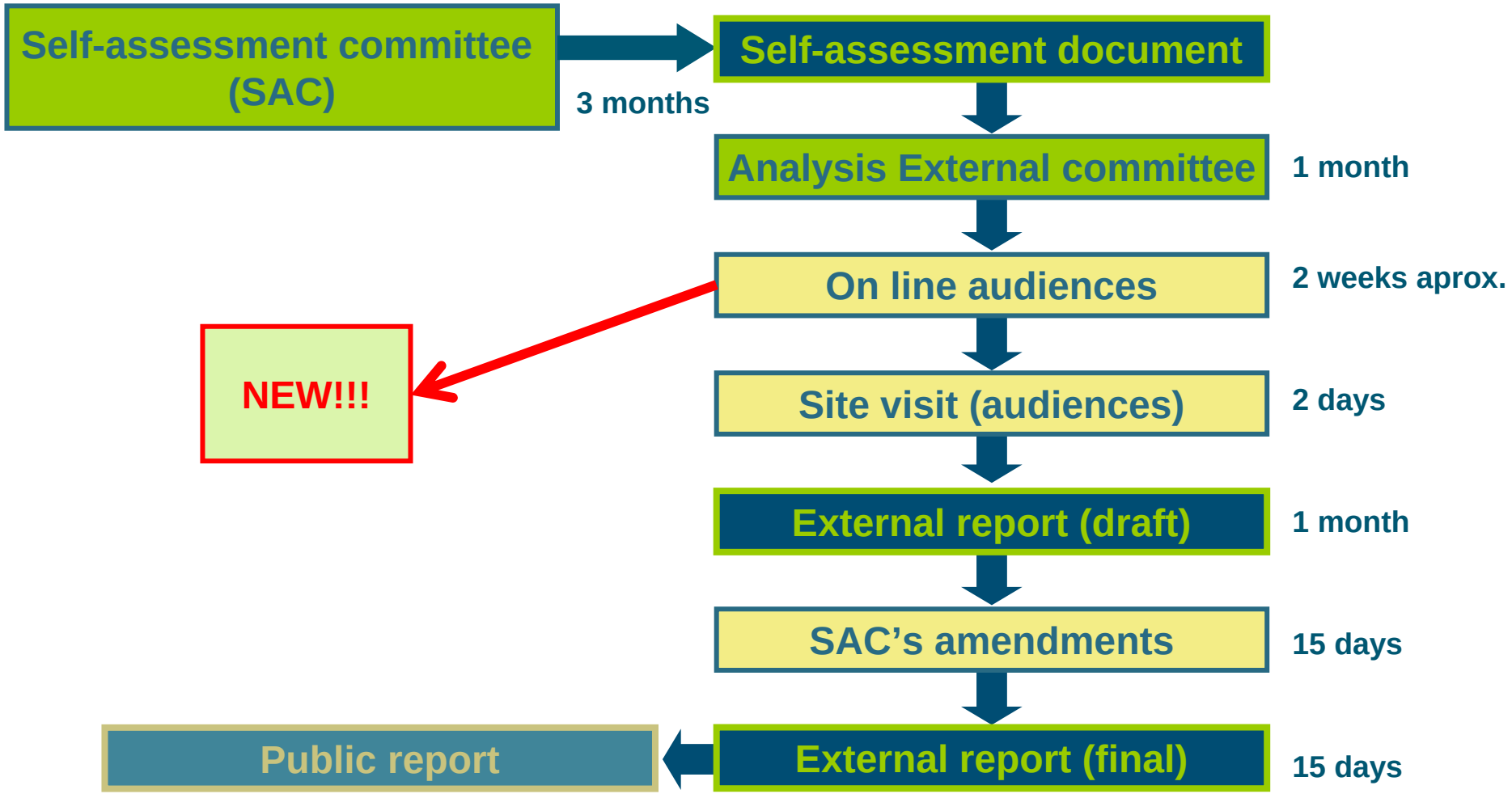
Evaluation process



Audiences

UOC Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

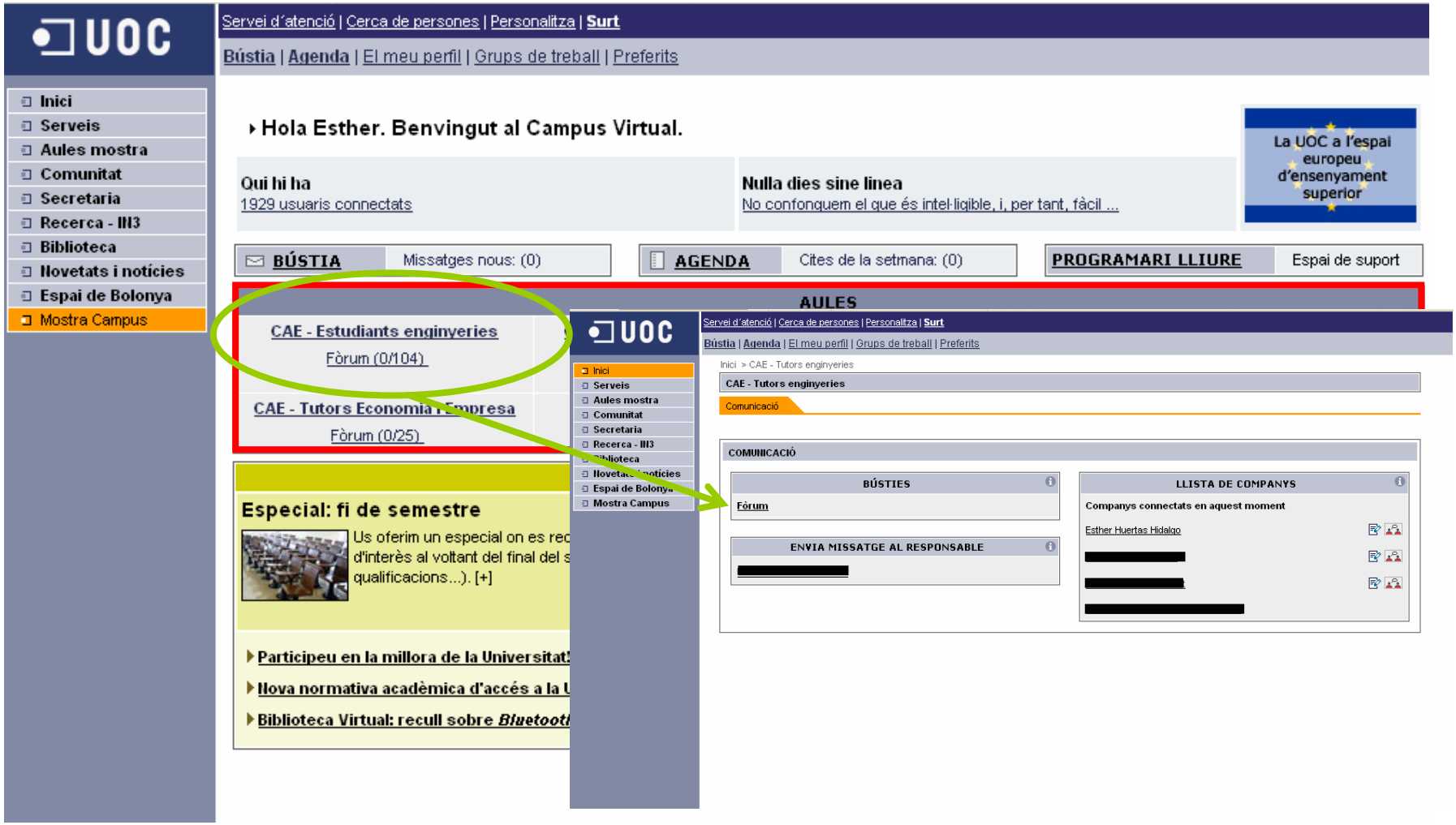
On line

- 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



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

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UOC

- 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.

Thank you for your attention

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