



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

# GUIDE TO THE ACCREDITATION OF ARTS HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1. 1. Aims of the Guide

In our setting, and on the context of the State's regulatory presence, it may be stated that accreditation can be viewed as an administrative procedure or action that responds to a legal mandate and which grants official recognition or legal status to academic credentials (qualifications) awarded to university students by institutions.

Nevertheless, beyond this the goal of accreditation is to **ensure – for the benefit of the user – that study programmes offered by universities meet the formal and administrative requirements enforced by the relevant authority, while guaranteeing that the “educational level” attained by graduates corresponds to the level certified by the institution.**

In relation to the study programme implemented, the procedure and criteria set out in the guide aim to ensure:

- That it meets the legal requirements set by the relevant authority (qualification title, number of ECTS credits, syllabus structure, admission criteria and requirements, etc.).
- That in relation to the established skills profile the academic proposal meets the specifications of the MECES (Spanish Framework for Higher Education Qualification) according to the qualification level, and the extent to which the academic knowledge underpinning it is relevant and up-to-date.
- That it has been developed using suitable resources in terms of teaching staff, infrastructure, learning support services and material resources.
- That certificates awarded (subject grades and final qualification) adhere to suitable, appropriate procedures to assess student achievement, clearly showcasing the level of quality demanded.
- That the academic pathways of progression and graduation, as well as employability, of graduates fall in line with the characteristics of the students and the potential afforded by the labour context.
- That it benefits from internal assurance mechanisms guaranteeing regular review of the study process centred on the continual improvement of the education of its students.

On the basis of the foregoing, this document set out the procedures and criteria for accreditation determined by AQU Catalunya in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG, 2015), the primary goal of which is to ensure equivalence between the study programme given and the European qualification level.

To this end, the Governing Board of AQU Catalunya approved the VSMA Framework (AQU, 2016), from which this accreditation guide – agreed on with the Ministry of Education of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia and approved by AQU Catalunya's Institutional and

Programme Assessment Committee (CAIP) – is derived. This guide pursues the following objectives:

- To ensure the quality of the study programmes offered in accordance with the qualification levels established and the criteria set out in current regulations.
- To assure availability of valid, reliable information to assist users of the university system in decision-making.
- To facilitate internal quality improvement processes in relation to the services and programmes developed by Catalan universities.

In order to achieve these aims, the accreditation model proposed in this guide makes the following presuppositions:

- **International equivalence.** As an acknowledged agency and a member of European quality assurance bodies (ENQA, EQAR), AQU Catalunya must adopt assessment guidelines and criteria in accordance with this status (in line with the ESGs, 2015).
- **Involvement of each institution in the assessment of evidence and the determination of improvement actions.** Internal validation or self-assessment is a vital aspect of the procedure. The improvement plan that supports and sets the timeframe of actions to be performed draws on evidence-based quantitative and qualitative information generated by an internal quality assurance system.
- **Integration of accountability and continual improvement** as a means of incorporating internal and external requirements.
- Specific attention to **students' academic achievements**, vital evidence as to the quality of the study programme.
- **Recognition of progress, best practices and outstanding quality** as an indication of the need to accept the principle that accreditation should foster continual improvement of study programmes.
- **Transparency and disclosure of processes and results, an essential goal to assuring credibility in decisions.** This also implies institutions are guaranteed the right to defence in relation to final decisions in a process of statements.

## 1.2. Regulatory framework

Articles 54 to 58 of Organic Act 2/2006, of 3 May, on Education specifically regulate study programmes in the arts.

Royal Decree 1614/2009, of 26 October, amended by Royal Decree 21/2015, of 23 January, regulates the organisation of arts higher education programmes.

Chapter III of the RD on higher education degree qualifications stipulates the basic content needed when putting together the curriculums and for admission to the programmes. These areas must be approved by the education authority and the curriculum shall be published in the official gazette of each autonomous community.

Chapter IV on Master's degree programmes stipulates that assessment and accreditation should be conducted after six years, including an external visit by quality agencies.

Chapter VI indicates that the education authority shall promote internal and external assessment to provide quality assurance in relation to these study programmes. It likewise determines their equivalence with university qualifications.

Decree 85/2014, of 10 June, of the Catalan Ministry of Education, sets out the organisation for arts HE programmes in Catalonia. It determines that the curriculums shall be assessed by a committee formed by independent, external experts of acknowledged standing.

Accordingly, pursuant to the agreement entered into with AQU Catalunya, proposals for new study programmes must be subject to an **ex ante assessment procedure** (known as **verification**) and, after a period of six years, an **ex post assessment procedure (accreditation)** based on the procedure and terms stipulated by the Government of Catalonia and/or Royal Decree 1914/2009. In all cases, this must include a visit by experts external to the institution. In the time between the two procedures, universities shall conduct a yearly **follow-up** on the development of study programmes implemented in line with their internal quality assurance system (IQAS). The criteria for accreditation are determined jointly by the quality agencies that are registered on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) in line with international quality standards, in particular, the ESGs and the remaining legal regulations.

In order to establish the basis of action for these four processes, AQU Catalunya's Governing Board approved the **Framework for the verification, monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised degree programmes** (VSMA Framework, AQU 2016), bringing them together in a logical manner to provide conceptual coherence and greater efficiency in managing the various assessment processes. In this respect, this guide provides the methodological and procedural definition behind these processes: accreditation.

Independently of whether the requirements of current regulations are met, through its governing bodies AQU Catalunya has committed to ensuring that the procedures and actions it has adopted for the external quality assurance of Bachelor's and Master's study programmes place emphasis on the importance of internal quality assurance systems within universities and their faculties.



This approach to action by AQU Catalunya fully coincides with the ESGs (ESG, 2015), which state that:

“[...] it is important that external quality assurance recognises and supports institutional responsibility for quality assurance [...]”

Accordingly, the framework of reference and the procedures for action set out in the VSMA Framework, in addition to the approach and content set out herein, place specific emphasis on reviewing the operation of the internal quality assurance system. The assessment of internal procedures must take into consideration the array of evidence that has been progressively generated sequentially during the verification and follow-up stages. The quality of this evidence – duly documented – will enable AQU Catalunya to meet standard 2.2 of the ESGs:

“The system for external quality assurance might operate in a more flexible way if institutions are able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal quality assurance.”



## 2. ORGANISATION, PLANNING OF AND CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

### 2.1. The faculty as the unit of assessment

According to the current academic governance of recognised degree programmes, accreditation for recognised qualifications must be periodically renewed in accordance with the established procedure. Accreditation is therefore applicable to all recognised academic programmes that have been introduced in art HEIs in order for them to maintain their status as recognised qualifications.

However, **internal quality assurance systems (IQAS)** have a major impact on the phases in which the accreditation process takes place. In compliance with the ESG, HEIs should have in place an associated policy and processes aimed to assure the quality and level of their degree programmes.

The **faculty** has become the organisational model for QA processes, as it serves as the focus around which a series of programmes of study with similar disciplinary fields is structured, and it is responsible for the implementation and running of the IQAS as regards programme delivery.

AQU Catalunya is committed to ensuring that external visits are made simultaneously on all recognised academic degree programmes and Master's programmes being offered by a HEI.

### 2.2. Assessment committees

One aspect that helps to ensure the validity, reliability and usefulness of external assessment procedures is the action performed by external experts (peer reviews). Peer reviews are based on the academic, scientific and technical guidance afforded by experts as a distinguishing feature. They are also based on a direct study and observation of the reality to be assessed, which makes it possible to clarify the information examined and place it in context; therefore, it may be stated that **the approach to accreditation is peer-based**.

The selection of experts is a procedure that AQU Catalunya keeps open on a permanent basis via a mechanism where experts may register with the Agency's expert panel via the website [http://www.aqu.cat/experts/banc\\_avaluadors\\_en.html](http://www.aqu.cat/experts/banc_avaluadors_en.html). In addition to the CV formats that need to be enclosed when registering, the website expert section includes online training on quality, along with descriptions of the regulatory framework, the Bologna process and higher education in Catalonia.

### 2.2.1 External assessment committees (CAE)

In all accreditation procedures it is necessary for an external team of auditors to visit the HEI, with the subsequent visit report playing a key role in the final decision made by the specific assessment committee (CEA).

It is the responsibility of external assessment committees (CAEs, from the Catalan), the composition of which is designed taking into consideration the specific field of knowledge to which the faculty pertains, to perform external assessments in a specific institution. AQU Catalunya presents the CAE composition to the institution to enable the latter to specify whether any conflict of interest applies to any of the committee's members. This is the only circumstance under which any changes may be made to committee members. Upon completion of the assessment and once the external assessment report has been issued, the CAE's functions are complete.

The standard composition of an external assessment committee (CAE) is as follows:

- The **chairperson**.
- One **academic member** for each field of knowledge in the faculty.
- One **professional member** from the area of knowledge of the faculty.
- One **student** from the same field of knowledge as that of the faculty.
- One **secretary** who is a methodology specialist.

However, **the composition of the committees may vary according to the degree programmes to be assessed at each faculty and the type of visit involved**. Generally, whenever possible, the CAEs will be formed by a combination of members of the accreditation committees and other persons specifically appointed for the committee.

The outcome of these duties is an **external assessment report** that the panel refers to the corresponding accreditation panel.

### 2.2.2. Accreditation committees

In the accreditation process, the specific assessment committees (CEAs, from the Catalan) set up under the VSMA Framework (AQU, 2016) to individually deal with a specific subject area and be responsible for the validation, monitoring and modification of recognised programmes, take on the duties of an accreditation committee. This ensures that the know-how acquired throughout the QA review processes is maintained and serves to reinforce the coherence of decisions made within the context of accreditation. Their main function is to issue the **audit reports** on programmes submitted for accreditation so that the corresponding bodies can make the definitive decision concerning accreditation.

In accordance with the resolution of the Institutional and Programme Assessment Committee (CAIP), the committee responsible for the accreditation of arts HE programmes is the CEA for Arts and Humanities.

### 2.2.3 Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee is the committee in charge of deciding on the appeals which are lodged in university degree programmes accreditation processes. In the decision on appeals, the committee will have on hand reports from experts in the field of the degree programmes which lodge the respective appeals, and such experts should preferably be from outside the Catalan university system.

## 2.3. The accreditation procedure

The main stages of the accreditation process are as follows:

- 1) **Approval of the HEIs to be assessed externally.** Every year, in conjunction with the Catalan Ministry of Education, AQU Catalunya shall approve the HEIs and qualifications that are to be submitted to an external assessment during the following academic year, depending on the degree programmes that should be accredited.
- 2) **Planning of the site visit.** The dates for the site visit to each institution shall be planned jointly by AQU Catalunya and the HEIs.
- 3) **Submission of the accreditation application.** The HEI should formally request the accreditation of its recognised qualifications by lodging its petition to the Directorate General for Special System Degree Programmes and Initial Vocational Training of the Catalan Ministry of Education. Once it has been accepted, said department will then refer the application to AQU Catalunya using the established procedure.
- 4) **Acceptance of the application.** Applications that comply with the prerequisites shall be accepted by the Catalan Ministry of Education. If this is not the case, the institution will be asked to make any relevant changes within fifteen working days. Once the application has been accepted, the Catalan Ministry of Education will then refer it to AQU Catalunya by registration or using online means via the EACAT, and the Agency will decide on it in a maximum time of 9 months.
- 5) **Documentation to be submitted.** The HEI should deliver the following documents **three calendar months** (without counting the month of August or other holiday and/or vacation periods) before the external assessment committee's visit to the faculty.
  - a. **The faculty's self-assessment report.** The faculty's self-assessment report **integrates and replaces the final monitoring reports** of the programmes that are to undergo accreditation. The most significant aspects of each programme offered in the faculty are therefore kept separate in the self-assessment report. In addition, it should also contain an appropriately updated copy of the programme enhancement plan.
  - b. **Evidence.** The recommended evidence detailed in this guide should be submitted.
  - c. **A sample of students' achievements.** It will be necessary to prepare a selection of evidence from the assessment exams of students within the framework of final-

year projects of arts HE programmes (TFE, from the Catalan) or final-year projects of Master's degrees (TFM, from the Catalan), external placements and compulsory selected subjects. The selection of the written tests, projects and/or reports should be done in such a way that there are examples of different qualifications from the last completed academic year.

- 6) **Analysis of the self-assessment report and of the evidence.** This review, which in general is envisaged in all QA procedures, is to identify the strengths and areas for improvement through the application of the standards and criteria given in this guide, and to establish the issues that need to be clarified prior to the site visit and the most important aspects to be dealt with during that visit. An assessment is made of the quality and relevance of both the evidence and the self-assessment report. On the basis on this, the chairperson and the secretary of the external assessment committee (CAE, from the Catalan) have to decide if more or better information needs to be provided and assess whether it is appropriate for the external assessment to continue.
- 7) **7.1 Preliminary visit.** If it is deemed appropriate, **about six weeks** after submitting the documents the chairperson and the secretary of the CAE may visit the centre in order **to clear up any questions which have been posed** on the basis of a preliminary review of the self-assessment report and the evidence, **and to specify the areas of enhancement.** The stakeholders to be interviewed shall also be agreed on. The faculty should be represented by two people, preferably its director and some other person who has been involved in the monitoring and/or management process of the IQAS. On the preliminary visit it will be decided whether the external assessment process may be continued or whether, depending on the evidence provided, it would be appropriate to postpone it.
- 7.2 Issue of the preliminary report.** On the basis of the preliminary visit or, when none is made, on the basis of the analysis of the self-assessment report and of the evidence, the CAE will issue a preliminary report with the actions which should be carried out by the HEI in order to improve information and assure the good performance of the process.
- 7.3 Preparation of new documents.** The HEI will have a period of 20 working days in order to submit amended or additional documentation (the definitive self-assessment report and evidence) required by the preliminary report.
- 8) **Assessment.** The assessment involves the individual analysis by all CAE members of all the documents submitted by the HEI.

The external reviewers are to use the provided rubric table, giving appropriate examples.

**Organisation of the visit.** In accordance with the timetable arranged in the preliminary report for the review of evidence, the HEI shall organise the timetable for the visit, which shall define the various focus group meetings to be held as agreed beforehand with the CAE (teaching staff, students and graduates, inspectors, services and administration staff, employers, degree programme coordinators, management team, QA team, etc.)

and the visit to the facilities. Space and facilities will also need to be set aside for the work of the CAE.

- 9) **The actual visit.** The main objective is to verify the delivery *in situ* of the programmes run in the faculty. The evidence provided has to be checked and verified, any controversies or disagreements detected and, if necessary, new evidence obtained so that any aspects not considered in the documentation provided can be assessed. The length of the visit will depend on the number of programmes to be audited and their status. **Between one and two days** is considered to be a suitable average time for most HEIs.
- 10) **Preliminary external assessment and accreditation reports.** In a period of **between four and six weeks** after the visit, the CAE will send to the CEA for Arts and Humanities the draft preliminary external assessment report (IPAE, from the Catalan) so that the CEA may take it into consideration and prepare the preliminary accreditation reports (IPA, from the Catalan) on the degree programmes under assessment.
- 11) The rubrics given in the examples should be used in the drafting of the IPAE. In the case of degree programmes which present assessments which are different from those applied to the rest of the degree programmes of the faculty, such differentiated assessment should be justified. In this report, the good practices and the aspects which are required to be enhanced should be clearly stated.

The CEA for Arts and Humanities should draft the respective accreditation report once the draft IPAE has been received and the aforementioned documents have been considered. This report will be either favourable or unfavourable, stating the aspects which should necessarily be amended in order to obtain a positive report.

- 12) **12.1 Issue of preliminary reports and allegations.** AQU Catalunya will issue jointly the IPAE and IPA.

**12.2 Submission of allegations.** Within a period of about **twenty days**, the HEI may submit the allegations which it deems appropriate in relation to the preliminary reports, so that the CAE and the CEA may take them into consideration. The allegations should compulsorily include the new enhancement plan for the faculty's degree programmes, and contain the pertinent actions which are considered appropriate for correcting the weaknesses observed by the CAE and the CEA.

- 13) **13.1 Drafting of definitive reports.** Within a period of about **twenty days**, the CAE, after receiving and studying the allegations, will draft the final IAE proposal, which it should send to the respective CEA so that the latter, together with the allegations received, may draft the final IdA.

**13.2 Issue of definitive reports.** AQU Catalunya will issue jointly the IAE and IdA.

If the accreditation report states that it is necessary to introduce enhancements, it will stipulate jointly with the faculty and with the representatives of the degree programme, the deadline for implementing enhancements, **which under no circumstances may**

**exceed two years.** Once this period has elapsed, the faculty will submit, together with the monitoring report, the evidence which justifies the start-up of the required measures.

The **accreditation report (IdA)** will be issued in a maximum time of **nine months counting from the date of the accreditation application.** Otherwise, it will be understood that the degree programme is accredited.

- 14) **Communication of accreditation.** AQU Catalunya will communicate the outcome of the accreditation to the Ministry of Education of the Government of Catalonia.

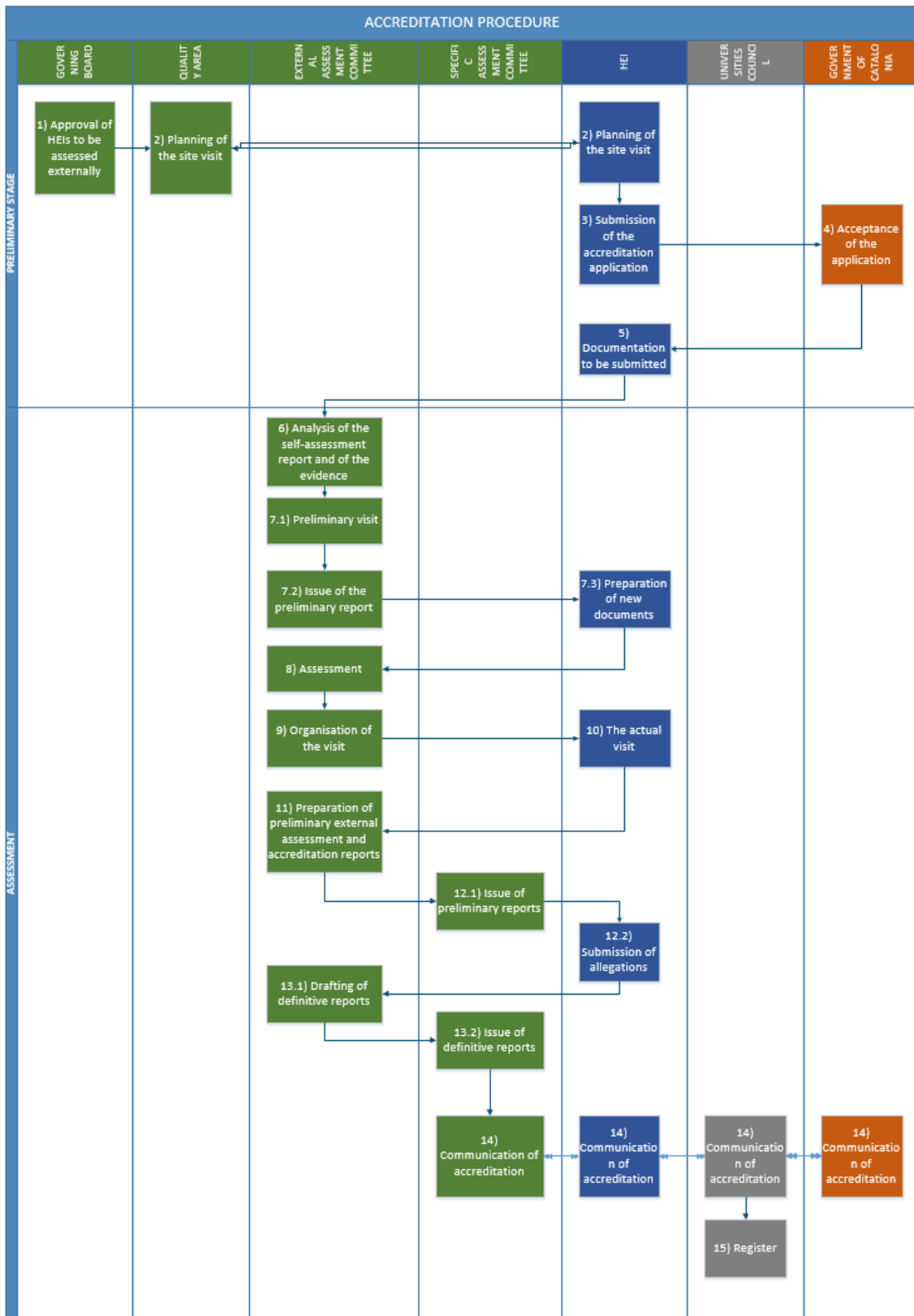
In the case of **higher education qualifications**, AQU Catalunya will communicate the outcome to the Directorate General for Special System Degree Programmes and Initial Vocational Training of the Ministry of Education of the Government of Catalonia, which shall notify the result to the HEI.

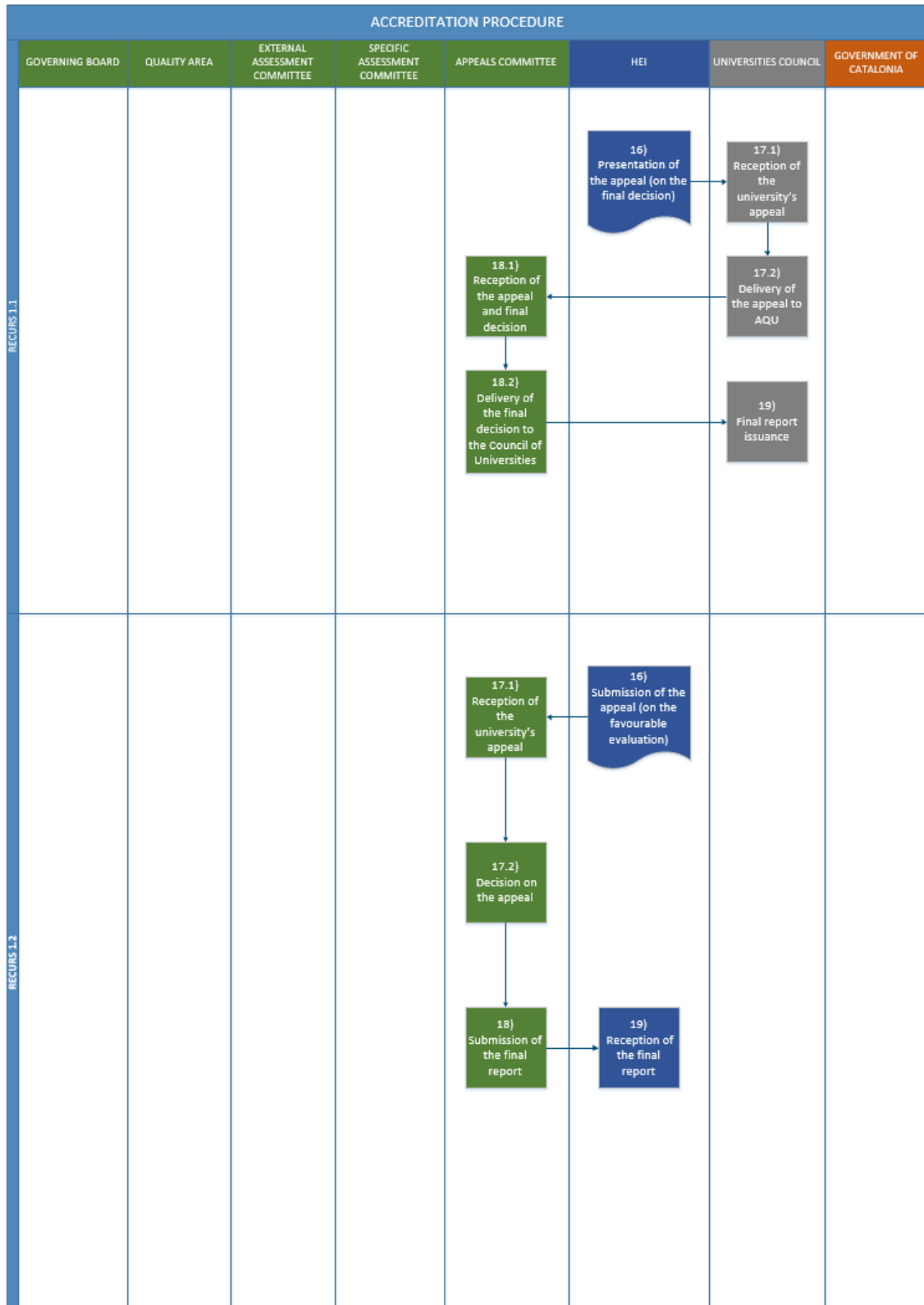
In the case of arts **Master's degrees**, AQU Catalunya will communicate the outcome to the Directorate General for Special System Degree Programmes and Initial Vocational Training of the Ministry of Education of the Government of Catalonia, which shall notify the result to the HEI and submit the outcome to the national register of non-university teaching institutions.

The process for lodging appeals against the accreditation outcome and the qualitative accreditation assessment is specified in section 2.3.1.

- 15) **Register.** In the event in which it is favourable, the respective renewal of accreditation will be registered. If it is unfavourable, the degree programme will be recorded as terminated as from that date. In such case, the resolution that is issued will declare the curriculum to be terminated and suitable measures should be established to assure the academic rights of the students who are in the process of carrying out the respective studies.

An organisational chart of the procedure for assessing accreditation is set out below:







### 2.3.1. The appeal procedure

Once the resolution to award or reject accreditation has been issued, the university may lodge an appeal to the Ministry within a maximum period of one month counting from the day immediately after the date on which notification is received.

Moreover, in relation to the resolution awarding the qualitative evaluation of the accreditation, which includes the results “compliant with conditions”, “compliant” and “progressing towards excellence”, the university may lodge an appeal to the Appeals Committee within a period of one month counting from the day immediately after the date on which notification is received.

## 2.4. The self-assessment report

The processes associated with the quality assurance of courses are described in each HEIs internal quality assurance system. The IQAS is therefore a fundamental instrument for programme accreditation and as such should be seen as the cornerstone in the process of producing the self-assessment report.

In order to guarantee the quality of the process, the self-assessment report should comply, amongst other things, with the following requirements. It should be:

- Complete, rigorous and specific. The report should include an analysis and assessment of the key elements for the particular degree programme being analysed and for enhancement.
- Based on evidence produced in the monitoring process and new evidence from the study programmes (for example, student achievements).
- Systematic and detailed in the analysis of the causes and consequently of whatever is necessary to carry through the improvements and enhancements.
- Balanced, in terms of both the positive aspects and aspects to be improved or enhanced.
- Shared and validated by the university community in order to ensure its representation in the analysis. The self-assessment report should be made public and approved according to the procedures laid down in the IQAS.

## The various stages in producing the self-assessment report

### ***Setting up the self-assessment team (CAI)***

The unit being assessed, in accordance with the IQAS, has to set up the faculty’s committee that is responsible for producing the self-assessment report. This committee will need to consist of representatives from the faculty’s various stakeholders, such as academics, teaching staff, administrative staff, students and any others considered appropriate.

If the committee in charge of producing the self-assessment report is different to the one in charge of the monitoring reports, it is advisable for the members to receive an *ad hoc* training, in which the key aspects to be analysed according to the methodology used are expanded on.

### ***Systematic data collection***

#### **Producing a self-assessment report is not a process that is built from scratch (*ex novo*).**

As mentioned above, it is the culmination of the monitoring process. By following the procedures set out in the IQAS, the CAI therefore needs to aggregate the information gathered in previous monitoring reports and add the most recent data and figures corresponding to the last academic year. Aggregation will include the data and analyses of both the faculty and the programmes delivered in the faculty. The information can be either quantitative or qualitative, and range from administrative data and input indicators to processes and the outcomes of activities in the faculty.

With respect to the degree programmes which are offered, the information of the self-assessment report should encompass the period between the verification (or last accreditation) and the last academic year completed before the external visit for accreditation.

### ***Drawing up of the self-assessment report***

Once all information is available, the CAI will need to thoroughly analyse and discuss the data and figures in order to meet the accreditation standards and establish the basis for a good enhancement plan.

### ***Public information of the self-assessment report***

The HEI will submit the self-assessment report for public consultation in order that it may be validated by the faculty community. **No report which has not been presented for public information may be submitted to AQU Catalunya.**

### ***Final validation and referral to AQU Catalunya***

Lastly, the self-assessment report has to be validated by the HEIs corresponding body before being referred to AQU Catalunya.

## **Contents of the self-assessment report**

The self-assessment report must meet the standards for accreditation defined in this guide. It is to be set out according to the following main sections:

### ***1. Presentation of the faculty***

In this section, the HEI needs to provide the reader with an overview of the faculty. This can include data and figures on significant achievements in the faculty, such as the increase in the number of students and graduates, teaching staff, etc. It is advisable for this section to be no more than two pages.

## **2. The process of producing the self-assessment report**

A brief description is necessary of the production and drawing up the self-assessment report – which should form part of the IQAS – mentioning the setting up of the team in charge of this, the systematic aggregation of the data, the participation of the stakeholders, the inquiry stage and the final analysis and discussion, including an assessment of the quality of the way in which the self-assessment report was produced (in terms of deadlines, involvement of the stakeholders, quality of the evidence, degree of satisfaction, etc.).

## **3. Assessment of compliance with the accreditation standards**

In this section, the HEI has to provide evidence-based reasoning for the degree to which the accreditation standards have been met.

The HEI has to make an assessment through direct reference to the most significant data that demonstrate compliance with the standards. In each case, this means **an assessment of the degree to which the desired outcomes and the programme specification have been fulfilled** (for example, if the desired learning outcomes have been achieved, if agreements concerning staff resources have been complied with, compliance of programme delivery as planned or if modifications need to be made, etc.).

**The HEI is recommended to assess each dimension and each standard on the scale of 4 grades (progressing towards excellence, compliant, compliant with conditions, non-compliant) which appears on Section III of this guide.**



### **Specific considerations to be taken into account in the preparation of the self-assessment report:**

- *With the exception of the suitability of the student admission profile and coordination mechanisms, compliance with Standard 1 is direct if the information on the curriculum is maintained up to date using processes anticipated for this purpose. However, the HEI should report the changes made in the report since the time of its verification and, in any case, the CAE may assess Substandard 1.1 and Substandard 1.2, if necessary.*
- *Standards 2, 3, and 5 will mainly be applied at faculty level and Standards 4 and 6 at degree programme level. As regards the standards at faculty level, it will be necessary to make an overall reflection and, if appropriate, to point out the particularities associated with the various degree programmes.*

#### 4. Assessment and proposal of the quality enhancement plan

The HEI will need to analyse and reflect on the running of the faculty and programme delivery. This should be based on the public information as well as the data, indicators and qualitative information obtained from the IQAS.

Following on from the evaluative analysis, proposals for quality enhancement are made that will need to be integrated into the faculty's quality enhancement plan, which should include quality enhancements across the entire faculty and others that are specific to degree programmes requiring improvements.

#### 5. Evidence

The evidence to be attached to or enclosed with the self-assessment report is given in this guide under each standard, and it will need to be available and accessible to the members of the CAE.



The HEI may complete the list of evidence appearing in the standards using all documents it deems suitable.

A self-assessment report template is available from AQU Catalunya to help HEIs that run arts HE programmes compile the information corresponding to these six sections.

## 2.5. Criteria for accreditation

### Assessment of compliance with the standards

The standards are assessed on four levels according to the degree of compliance:

- **Progressing towards excellence.** The standard is reached in full and, furthermore, examples of best practices are identified that exceed the required minimums.
- **Compliant.** The standard is reached in full within the institution.
- **Compliant with conditions.** The standard is reached to the minimum extent admissible and aspects are identified that must be enhanced. The improvements that need to be implemented are such that it would be possible to do so within a reasonable timeframe.
- **Non-compliant.** The study programme fails to achieve the minimum level required by the respective standard. The improvements that need to be implemented are so substantial that it would not be possible to reach the standard within a reasonable timeframe.

The outcome of the accreditation will be expressed as **favourable or unfavourable** and be structured on four levels:

- a. **Accredited progressing towards excellence.** Most of the accreditation standards are assessed as “progressing towards excellence” and, consequently, numerous good practices which exceed the required minimum level are identified.
- b. **Accredited.** Compliance is made with all the accreditation standards, at least on their minimum level.
- c. **Accredited with conditions.** Compliance is not made with all the accreditation standards. Problems are detected which may be solved in a reasonable period of time.
- d. **Not accredited.** Compliance is not made with most of the accreditation criteria or with the most significant accreditation criteria.

In order to obtain **accreditation “progressing towards excellence”**, the following three conditions should be met:

- a. No standard should be assessed as “compliant with conditions” or “non-compliant”.
- b. At least two standards should be assessed as “progressing towards excellence” including, compulsorily, either Standard 4 or Standard 6. Moreover, it is established that in order for Standards 4 and 6 to be assessed as “progressing towards excellence”, as a minimum Substandard 4.1 (Academic level and experience of teaching staff) and Substandard 6.1. (Academic level and training activities of degree programme), respectively, should obtain this same assessment.
- c. Substandard 4.1 and Substandard 6.1 should be assessed as “progressing towards excellence”.

The degree programme **will be accredited with conditions** in the event of any of the following three conditions:

- a. When three standards are assessed as “compliant with conditions”.
- b. When at least two standards are assessed as “compliant with conditions” and one of them is either Standard 4 or Standard 6. If Substandard 4.1 and Substandard 6.1 are assessed as “compliant with conditions”, Standards 4 and 6, respectively, will also be assessed as “compliant with conditions”.
- c. When Substandard 6.1 (Academic level and training activities of the degree programme) is assessed as “compliant with conditions”.

A degree programme will not be accredited when any of the following standards is assessed as “non-compliant”:

- a. Standard 1: Quality of the training programme
- b. Standard 4: Suitability of teaching staff for the training programme



- c. Standard 5: Effectiveness of learning support systems
- a. Standard 6: Quality of programme learning outcomes

## 3. CRITERIA AND STANDARDS OF THE ASSESSMENT

### 3.1. Quality of the training programme

The interests of society in the quality and standards of HE programmes requires the setting up of an established qualifications framework endorsed by senior officials from the EHEA, which also allows for mutual recognition between the member states. It is within this context that the Spanish qualifications framework for higher education (MECES, from the Spanish) has been developed in alignment with the European Framework constructed on the basis of the so-called Dublin descriptors.

This framework is valid for HEIs and entities responsible for the external quality assurance of degree programmes. It should also promote a shared understanding of the expectations associated with qualifications that allows for the consistent use of degrees awarded and facilitates the international mobility of graduates.

HEIs should have processes in their IQAS which allow the design and approval of the degree programmes, in a way that is consistent with the European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance in higher education institutions, especially **ESG 1.2 (Design and approval of programmes)**, which provides that “HEIs should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area”, as well as **ESG 1.3 (Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment)** which provides that “HEIs should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach” (ENQA, 2015).

The profile of competences should be relevant within the disciplinary field and independent of the mentions or specialities of the degree programme. The proposed competences should correspond with those of national and international networks and entities. The justification for or assessment of the relevance of the proposed profile for the programme is more important in the case of programmes that are either new or not traditional in the Catalan university system. Furthermore, the competence profile has to correspond with the level of studies for the proposal, in line with the MECES (in the present context, either Bachelor’s or Master’s studies).

At the time of the programme’s accreditation the HEI is therefore expected to comply with the following standard:

**The programme’s design (competence profile and structure of the curriculum) is current according to the requirements of the discipline and it meets the required level of study according to the MECES.**

The standard is broken down into the following substandards:

- 1.1. The programme's competence profile meets the requirements of the discipline and complies with the required level of study according to the MECES.
- 1.2. The curriculum and structure of the curriculum are consistent with the programme's competence profile and learning outcomes.
- 1.3. Students who are admitted have an admission profile that is suitable for the programme and the number of students is consistent with the number of places offered.
- 1.4. The existence of effective teaching coordination mechanisms for the programme.
- 1.5. The different regulations are complied with in the correct way and this has a positive impact on the programme outcomes.



**Except for the suitability of the admission profile of students (1.3), the coordination mechanisms (1.4), and implementation of the regulations (1.5), this standard is generally met with the initial verification of the degree programme. In the cases in which it is required, however, the CAE may assess Substandard 1.1 and Substandard 1.2 or present proposals for enhancement.**

In accordance with what has been stated in the previous chapter, the CAE may validate the addition to the degree programme of the modifications which may be communicated through the monitoring process.

When a university offers a degree programme in various faculties, the CAEs will assess that the curriculum (its compulsory subjects) is the same at all the faculties.

The assessment of Standard 1.4 also includes the timetable of the curriculum and of its subjects.

In relation to standard 1.5, the analysis and evaluation shall focus on regulatory aspects linked to teaching quality, such as compliance with regulations in respect of teaching staff, recognition of credits, adaptation for students progressing from phased-out study programmes, etc.

If standard 1.5 is not met, dimension 1 will, at the very least, be deemed as compliant with conditions.

## Evidence

- An updated report for the verification of the degree programme.
- A report on subsequent verification and modifications of the degree programme.
- Monitoring reports.
- Documents relating to the coordination of the teaching activity.
- Specific admission tests, if applicable.
- Training supplements (if any).





The HEI may supplement this list of evidence (and those which appear in the rest of the standards) with all the documents which it deems appropriate.

### ■ Higher education qualification indicators

- Supply, demand and enrolment
- Specific entrance exams
- Admission pathway

#### Supply, demand and enrolment

	Year <i>n-3</i>	Year <i>n-2</i>	Year <i>n-1</i>	Year <i>n</i>
Places for new admissions				
Number of applications				
New incoming students (enrolled)				

#### Specific entrance exams

	Year <i>n-3</i>	Year <i>n-2</i>	Year <i>n-1</i>	Year <i>n</i>
% of students who pass the entrance exam				
% of students who pass and are enrolled				
Minimum grade				

#### Admission pathway

Year <i>n</i>	N	%
Upper secondary education		
Specific vocational training (former and new programmes) or similar		
Entrance exam for over 25s		
University graduates or similar		
Exam of the Catalan Ministry of Education for those who do not meet the academic pre-requisites		
Other means of admission		

## Assessment

In the case of higher education qualifications, the following aspects should be taken into consideration, in a general way, for the assessment of this standard:

- Degree of correspondence between the verified report, including subsequent modifications, and actual implementation.
- Relation between supply, demand, enrolment and their evolution.
- Result of entrance exams.
- Coordination mechanisms of teaching activity, including study time planning.
- Recognition of credits.

### Master's degree indicators:

The following **indicators**, particularly point 1.3, should be taken into consideration for the assessment of this standard:

- Supply, demand and enrolment
- Provenance
- Training supplements (if any)

#### Supply, demand and enrolment

Indicators	Year <i>n-3</i>	Year <i>n-2</i>	Year <i>n-1</i>	Year <i>n</i>
Number of places available				
Number of applicants				
Number of those admitted				
Number of applicants				
Average admission grade in specific exams				

#### Provenance

Indicators	Year <i>n-3</i>	Year <i>n-2</i>	Year <i>n-1</i>	Year <i>n</i>
% students from the same HEI				
% students from other arts HEIs				
% students from universities				
% others				

### Training supplements (if any)

Indicator	Year <i>n-3</i>	Year <i>n-2</i>	Year <i>n-1</i>	Year <i>n</i>
Qualified students that have taken training supplements				
Average number of credits in training supplements held by students who have taken such training				

### Assessment

In the case of Master's degrees, the following aspects should be taken into consideration, in a general way, for the assessment of this standard:

- Degree of correspondence between the verified report, including subsequent modifications, and actual implementation.
- Relation between supply, demand, enrolment and their evolution.
- Profile of newly-admitted students, and especially of the field from which they come and of the need to take training supplements.
- Suitability and effectiveness of training supplements (if applicable).
- Coordination mechanisms of teaching activity, including study time planning.
- Recognition of credits.

### Rubrics

<b>1.1. The programme's competence profile meets the requirements of the discipline and complies with the required level of study according to the MECES.</b>	
<b>Compliant</b>	The programme's competence profile meets the requirements of the discipline and complies with the required level of study according to the MECES.
<b>1.2. The curriculum and structure of the curriculum are consistent with the programme's competence profile and learning outcomes.</b>	
<b>Compliant</b>	The curriculum and structure of the curriculum are consistent with the programme's competence profile and learning outcomes.
<b>1.3. The admission profile of students who are admitted is appropriate for the programme, and the number of students is consistent with the number of places offered.</b>	
<b>Progressing towards excellence</b>	All the enrolled students have an access profile that concurs with what is established for the degree programme and their number is consistent with the places offered.

<b>Compliant</b>	Most of the enrolled students have an access profile that concurs completely with what is established for the degree programme.
	The number of enrolled students is consistent with the number of places offered on the programme.
<b>Compliant with conditions</b>	The academic profile of a significant number of enrolled students fully matches the established profile for the programme.
	Student enrolment does not match the number of places offered on the programme.
<b>Non-compliant</b>	The academic profile of the majority of enrolled students does not match the established profile for the programme.
	Student enrolment deviates considerably from the number of places offered on the programme.
<b>1.4. The existence of effective teaching coordination mechanisms for the programme.</b>	
<b>Progressing towards excellence</b>	The coordination mechanisms in place in the degree programme are very suitable.
<b>Compliant</b>	The coordination mechanisms in place in the degree programme are suitable.
<b>Compliant with conditions</b>	The coordination mechanisms in place in the degree programme show dysfunctions.
<b>Non-compliant</b>	The coordination mechanisms in place in the degree programme are unsuitable.
<b>1.5. The different regulations are complied with and applied correctly, and this has a positive impact on the programme outcomes.</b>	
<b>Compliant</b>	The different regulations are complied with and applied correctly, and this has a positive impact on the programme outcomes.
<b>Compliant with conditions</b>	The application of the various regulations shows shortcomings.
<b>Non-compliant</b>	The legal regulations relating to the programme are not suitably complied with.

## 3.2. Relevance of the public information

Information transparency is the key to building trust in, and increasing competitiveness based on, the quality of university education, and that is why it appears in one way or another in all of the declarations and communiqués of the ministers responsible for higher education in the EHEA, as

reflected in, amongst others, the communiqués of the ministerial conferences in Bergen and London:

“Building on the achievements so far in the Bologna Process, we wish to establish a European Higher Education Area based on the principles of quality and transparency”, Bergen Communiqué, 19-20 May 2005.

“Qualifications frameworks are important instruments in achieving comparability and transparency within the EHEA and facilitating the movement of learners within, as well as between, higher education systems. They should also help HEIs to develop modules and study programmes based on learning outcomes and credits, and improve the recognition of qualifications as well as all forms of prior learning.” London Communiqué, 18 May 2007.

The importance of transparency is evident throughout the European standards defined by ENQA, in which reference is made to access to the information on programmes by the different stakeholder groups (ENQA, 2015). The aim of this accreditation standard is to encompass the important role of the public information connected with the study programme.

According to **ESG 1.8 (Public information)**, “HEIs should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible.” HEIs should provide information that includes the supply of programmes and the selection criteria; the expected learning outcomes; the qualifications to which they lead; the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used; the academic outcomes obtained; degree of satisfaction, and the information on the employability of degree holders.

The publication of the information ensures transparency and facilitates accountability, in harmony with the European references in matters of quality in higher education. Specifically, with respect to **ESG 1.7 (Information management)**, “HEIs should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities”.

Additionally, in the guidelines of **ESG 1.1 (Policy for quality assurance)** it is established that in order to favour this objective, the policy should be public.

In order to assure the quality of public information, HEIs should reflect periodically on the validity, relevance and updating of public information, its accessibility and the continuous enhancement processes which assure its quality.

Against this background, the programme must comply with the following standard:

**The institution appropriately informs all stakeholders of the programme’s characteristics and the management processes for quality assurance.**



**Programme monitoring, as defined in the VSMA Framework, helps to demonstrate compliance with this standard in the sections “Public information on programme delivery” and “Public information on course indicators”.**

The overall standard is divided into the following specific standards:

- 2.1. The HEI publishes truthful, complete, up-to-date and accessible information on the characteristics of the degree programme and its delivery.
- 2.2. The HEI publishes information on the academic and satisfaction outcomes.
- 2.3. The HEI publishes the IQAS which forms the framework of the degree programme and the monitoring and accreditation outcomes of the degree programme.

## Evidence

- The website of either the HEI or the programme.

## Assessment

For the **assessment** of this standard, the following aspects should be taken into consideration:

- The publication, completion and updating of the information relating to the degree programme (characteristics, development and outcomes). As a minimum, it will be compared to the information required in Section 3.2 of the *Guia per al seguiment de les titulacions de grau i de màster* (Guide for the follow-up of Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programmes).<sup>1</sup>
- The readiness of access to the published information.
- The reports on accountability to society which may have been published by the HEI (monitoring report of the degree programme, self-assessment accreditation report, other reports, etc.).

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<sup>1</sup> <[http://www.aqu.cat/doc/doc\\_33310592\\_1.pdf](http://www.aqu.cat/doc/doc_33310592_1.pdf)>

## Rubrics

<b>2.1. The HEI publishes truthful, complete, up-to-date and accessible information on the characteristics of the degree programme and its delivery.</b>	
<b>Progressing towards excellence</b>	Up-to-date, exhaustive and pertinent information is offered on the characteristics of the degree programme and its delivery.
	The information is very clear, legible, aggregated and accessible to all stakeholders.
<b>Compliant</b>	Pertinent information is offered on the characteristics of the degree programme and its delivery.
	The information is clear, legible, aggregated and accessible to stakeholders.
<b>Compliant with conditions</b>	Partial information is offered on the characteristics of the degree programme and its delivery.
	The published information shows certain shortcomings with respect to clarity, legibility, aggregation and accessibility.
<b>Non-compliant</b>	The information offered on the programme's characteristics, delivery and actual outcomes is inadequate.
	The published information shows serious shortcomings with respect to clarity, legibility, aggregation and accessibility.
<b>2.2. The HEI publishes information on the academic and satisfaction outcomes.</b>	
<b>Progressing towards excellence</b>	The HEI publishes up-to-date, aggregated, accessible and exhaustive information on the academic and satisfaction outcomes of the degree programme.
<b>Compliant</b>	The HEI publishes information on the academic and satisfaction outcomes of the degree programme.
<b>Compliant with conditions</b>	The HEI publishes partial information on the academic and satisfaction outcomes of the degree programme.
<b>Non-compliant</b>	The HEI does not publish information on the academic and satisfaction outcomes of the degree programme.
<b>2.3. The HEI publishes the IQAS which forms the framework of the degree programme and the monitoring and accreditation outcomes of the degree programme.</b>	
<b>Progressing towards excellence</b>	The HEI publishes and disseminates exhaustively the quality policy, the IQAS processes and the elements derived from it for accountability, including the monitoring and accreditation outcomes.



<b><i>Compliant</i></b>	The HEI publishes the quality policy, the IQAS processes and the elements derived from it for accountability, including the monitoring and accreditation outcomes.
<b><i>Compliant with conditions</i></b>	The HEI publishes partially the quality policy, the IQAS processes and the elements derived from it for accountability, including the monitoring and accreditation outcomes.
<b><i>Non-compliant</i></b>	The HEI does not publish the quality policy, the IQAS processes and the elements derived from it for accountability.



### 3.3. Efficacy of the programme's internal quality assurance system

Consistent with the trust placed by society in autonomous management in HEIs and the transparency called for within the framework of the EHEA, HEIs should ensure that their actions are appropriately guided to achieve the objectives associated with the programmes and courses that they deliver. HEIs consequently need policies and internal quality assurance systems that have a formal status and are publicly available. The IQAS is therefore a key instrument for defining the faculty's teaching activities.

The design and implementation of the IQAS respond to the European standards and guidelines (ESG) for the internal assurance of quality in HEIs, especially in the case of **ESG 1.1 (Quality assurance policy)** and **1.9 (Continuous monitoring and periodic review of programmes)** (ENQA, 2015). As stated in ESG 1.1, "HEIs should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders". These internal stakeholders assume their responsibility for quality and commit themselves to its assurance on all levels and to develop a quality culture. In order to achieve this objective, they should develop and implement a strategy for the on-going enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and they should be publicly available".

Likewise, according to **ESG 1.9**, HEIs "should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous enhancement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned".

At the time of programme accreditation, it is assumed that the HEI already has a formally established and sufficiently implemented IQAS, which assures the quality of the programmes that it covers and consequently defines the processes for the design, approval, implementation, monitoring, revision and improvement and, finally, accreditation of its programmes of study. This moment, which is related to the external assurance of quality in higher education, should also respond to **ESG 2.1 (Consideration of internal quality assurance)**, which states that "External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes [...]" (ENQA, 2015).

At the time of programme accreditation, the HEI is therefore expected to comply with the following standard:

**The HEI has a functioning internal quality assurance system that has a formal status and assures the quality and continuous enhancement of the programme in an efficient way.**

This overall standard is divided into the following specific standards:

- 3.1. The implemented IQAS has processes which ensure the design, approval, monitoring and accreditation of the degree programmes.
- 3.2. The implemented IQAS ensures the collection of information and of outcomes relevant to the efficient management of the degree programmes, especially including the academic and satisfaction outcomes of the stakeholders.
- 3.3. The implemented IQAS is periodically reviewed and generates an enhancement plan that is used for its continuous enhancement.

An institution's IQAS will also need to be based on a model of continuous improvement. The HEI will need to periodically assess the IQAS' fitness for purpose as the key instrument for the quality assurance and continuous improvement of its programmes. The IQAS' efficacy can be determined on the basis of the degree to which its processes are implemented and the analysis of the evidence produced through its application, such as the programme monitoring reports, the IQAS review reports, time series data on learning outcomes and satisfaction, knowledge of IQAS and stakeholder involvement, and the documentation necessary for accreditation, amongst other things.

## Evidence

- The host of documentation linked to the IQAS.
- Degree programme improvement plans, identifying weaknesses and actions introduced on the basis of processes for the verification, monitoring and accreditation of the qualification.
- IQAS review documents/reports and improvement plans, provided they are not included in the degree programme monitoring reports.
- Existence of time series data on learning outcomes, as described in standards 2 and 6.
- Information on satisfaction among the primary stakeholders relating essentially to the following aspects (examples):
  - Students: with the degree programme, with teaching staff, with TFE/TFM projects and external placements, and with academic and professional guidance services, specialised services, the library and the facilities.
  - Teaching staff: with the curriculum structure (subjects and their value), with organisation of curriculum implementation (groups, timetables, etc.), with teaching coordination, with teaching methodologies and assessment systems, with available teaching resources, and with learning outcomes attained by students.
  - Employers: with training placement agreements, with the profile of graduates and with ties with the HEI.
  - Graduates: with the education provided and employment.



**At the time of the accreditation, HEIs should have instruments that are formally established and implemented for compiling information on stakeholder satisfaction. Considering the cross-dimensional nature of these outcomes, it is recommended that they are not only analysed overall in this section, although this information will be a key element for the focus groups.**

It is advisable to incorporate the following information on each instrument or mechanism employed with the results on satisfaction:

METHODOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INSTRUMENT/MECHANISM	
Instrument/mechanism <sup>2</sup>	
(satisfaction items or dimensions included)	
Population ( <i>N</i> total target number)	
Response rate	
Submission method	
Frequency	
Assessment and aspects for improvement of the mechanism	

## Assessment

For the **assessment** of this standard, the following aspects, among others, may be taken into consideration:

- Extent of implementation of degree programme design, approval (including verification), monitoring and accreditation processes.
- Extent of implementation of instruments/mechanisms for compiling information.
- Efficacy of the instruments/mechanisms employed.
- Suitability of degree programme improvement plans, their relationship with evidence, results and indicators attained by the degree programme and level of efficacy of the actions implemented.
- Extent of implementation of the process for reviewing the IQAS and its improvement plan.

## Rubrics

<b>3.1. The implemented IQAS has processes that ensure the design, approval, monitoring and accreditation of the degree programmes</b>	
<b><i>Progressing towards excellence</i></b>	The IQAS comprises an implemented process that facilitates optimum programme design and approval, as well as the monitoring and accreditation thereof, with the involvement of all the stakeholders.
<b><i>Compliant</i></b>	The IQAS comprises an implemented process that facilitates programme design and approval, as well as the monitoring and accreditation thereof, with the involvement of the most important stakeholders.
<b><i>Compliant with conditions</i></b>	The IQAS comprises implemented processes that partially foster the design and approval of programmes, as well as the monitoring and accreditation thereof.
<b><i>Non-compliant</i></b>	The IQAS does not comprise any process (or it has not been implemented) for programme design and/or approval, monitoring and accreditation.
<b>3.2. The implemented IQAS ensures the compilation of relevant information and outcomes for efficient programme management, in particular the learning outcomes and stakeholder satisfaction.</b>	
<b><i>Progressing towards excellence</i></b>	The IQAS has an implemented process that optimally manages the collection of relevant outcomes, with the existence of a table of indicators providing complete information on its evolution in time.
	The IQAS allows for the compilation of information on stakeholder satisfaction (in particular, that of graduates, students, teaching staff and employers) with the programme of studies.
<b><i>Compliant</i></b>	The IQAS has an implemented process that manages the collection of relevant outcomes, with the existence of a table of indicators providing information on its evolution in time.
	The IQAS provides for the compilation of information on the satisfaction of students and graduates, with the programme of study.
<b><i>Compliant with conditions</i></b>	The IQAS has an implemented process that partially manages the collection of relevant outcomes, with the existence of a table of indicators providing partial information on its evolution in time.
	The IQAS compiles information on student satisfaction only with regard to certain aspects of the programme of study (for example, subject/teacher).
<b><i>Non-compliant</i></b>	The IQAS does not have a process (or it is not implemented) for the management of the collection of the outcomes of the degree programme. The data available are partial and do not include any time series.
	The IQAS does not compile any information on stakeholder satisfaction with the programme of study.

<b>3.3. The implemented IQAS is periodically reviewed and generates an enhancement plan that is used for its continuous enhancement.</b>	
<b><i>Progressing towards excellence</i></b>	The IQAS has an implemented process that obliges the HEI to periodically and completely review the suitability of the IQAS itself. The revision is materialised in a report that presents a reflection on the operation of the IQAS and that allows the tracking of the changes carried out.
	The enhancement actions of the IQAS are consistent with the revision carried out and are structured in enhancement plans that include all the necessary elements for the optimum periodic monitoring of their implementation.
<b><i>Compliant</i></b>	The IQAS has an implemented process for its revision which is materialised in a report that presents a reflection on the operation of the IQAS and that includes the changes carried out on the system.
	The enhancement actions of the IQAS are consistent with the revision carried out and are structured in enhancement plans that include the minimum necessary elements to carry out a sufficient monitoring of the implementation of the measures.
<b><i>Compliant with conditions</i></b>	The IQAS has a process for its revision but it is not implemented. Some non-systematic revision and enhancement actions are carried out on the processes of the IQAS.
	The enhancement actions of the IQAS have a partial scope and prioritisation, and their monitoring is not systematic.
<b><i>Non-compliant</i></b>	The IQAS does not have a process for its revision.
	Revision and improvement actions are not carried out on the IQAS.

### 3.4. Suitability of teaching staff for the training programme

Teaching staff will need suitable experience and training in line with the aims of the degree programme, and there must be a sufficient number of teachers with a suitable number of teaching hours in order to cover the main academic tasks. Assuring the quality and suitability of teachers responds directly to the European standards for internal quality assurance in higher education institutions, and specifically to **ESG 1.5 (Quality assurance of teachers)**, which recommends that “HEIs should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff” (ENQA, 2015).

At the time of the accreditation of a programme, the HEI is therefore expected to comply with the following standard:

**Staff involved in teaching in the faculty are both sufficient and suitable in accord with the characteristics of the programmes and the number of students.**

The analysis of the degree of achievement of this standard is considered, giving individualised attention to certain teacher typologies:

- **Higher education degree year-one teachers**, due to the implications that the first year (year one) has on ensuring the successful transition from secondary to university education (persistence, year-one drop-outs, academic integration, etc.).
- **Teaching staff responsible for TFE/TFM projects and compulsory external placements**, given the fact that in these areas of the curriculum it is specified that the teaching staff who are supervising and assessing student achievement should have research and/or professional experience.
- **Master’s degree teachers**, to check that the requirements of academic level, research potential and professional training are appropriate to this level of study.

Compliance with current legal regulations is deemed an indispensable requirement:

#### Applicable regulations:

**Royal Decree 303/2010**, of 15 March, establishing the minimum requirements of HEIs that run arts HE programmes regulated by Organic Act 2/2006, of 3 May, on Education.

#### Article 20. Requirements for teaching within the framework of arts HE programmes

1. HEIs in the arts shall be endowed with the teaching structure needed for the organisation and development of the study programmes leading to the qualifications of graduate and Master’s qualifications in arts, as well as arts doctoral programmes in accordance with the agreements

established between the education authorities and universities, and the development of research programmes within their specific academic fields.

2. When an arts HEI runs Master's degree programmes, at least 15% of teaching staff responsible for those programmes will need to hold a PhD.

3. In order to practice teaching of arts HE programmes it will be necessary to hold a qualification of graduate, graduate of a phased-out degree programme, engineer or architect, or a similar qualification for the purposes of teaching, notwithstanding qualification in other study programmes as determined by the Government for the purposes of teaching certain subjects, subject to a consultation with the autonomous communities.

4. Subject to a consultation with the autonomous communities, in regulating arts HE programmes the Government may incorporate other requirements for teaching staff, as a result of the terms of incorporation for such study programmes within the framework of higher education.

5. Under exceptional circumstances, for certain subjects taught at arts HE programmes, professionals who are not necessarily qualified graduates may be incorporated as specialist lecturers when they hold the necessary professional credentials and perform their functions in the occupational sphere or hold foreign nationality, in accordance with their qualification and the needs of the education system. Said incorporation shall take place pursuant to the pertinent labour or administrative system in line with applicable regulations.

#### **Article 22. Teacher/student ratio**

In arts HEIs that run music programmes, this shall be as follows:

- a) In non-instrumental instruction classes, the maximum shall be 1/15.
- b) In chamber music, orchestra, choir or other instrument ensemble classes, the teacher/student ratio shall be determined by the specific ensemble in question or by the stipulations set out in the regulations governing the curriculum, if applicable.
- c) In individual instrumental instruction classes, the ratio shall be 1/1.

#### **Article 24. Teacher/student ratio**

In arts HEIs that run dance programmes, the maximum shall be 1/25.

#### **Article 26. Teacher/student ratio**

HEIs that run performing arts programmes shall have a maximum ratio of 1/12 for teaching classes defined as practical; and the ratio may not exceed 1/24 for classes defined as theoretical/practical and technical in the curriculum. For instrumental study programmes, the education authorities may determine the ratios envisaged in article 22 of this Royal Decree.

#### **Article 28. Teacher/student ratio**

HEIs that run study programmes for conservation and restoration of cultural heritage shall have a maximum ratio of 1/20 for theory classes; and 1/10 for theory/practical classes and workshops.

#### **Article 30. Teacher/student ratio**

Arts HEIs that run design study programmes shall have a maximum ratio of 1/20 for theory classes; and 1/10 for theory/practical classes and workshops.

#### **Article 34. Teacher/student ratio**

Arts HEIs that run study programmes specialising in glasswork shall have a maximum ratio of 1/20 for theory classes; and 1/10 for theory/practical classes and workshops.

This overall standard is divided into the following specific standards:

- 4.1. The teaching staff meet the qualifications requirements for programme delivery in the faculty, and they have sufficient and recognised teaching, research and, where applicable, professional experience.
- 4.2. There are sufficient teaching staff in the faculty, and staff assignment is adequate for them to carry out their duties and attend the students.
- 4.3. The HEI offers support and opportunities for enhancing the quality of teaching and research activity in the faculty.

## **Evidence**

- Deployment of the curriculum: assignment of teachers, category of teachers and department/area of knowledge.
- Profile of teaching staff assigned to the degree programme.
- Profile of teachers responsible for the supervision/assessment of TFE/TFM projects.
- Profile of teachers responsible for the supervision/assessment of compulsory external placements.
- Training plan or other document suitable for assessing the improvement of the quality of the teaching and research activity of teachers.
- For Master's degrees: a list of active research projects in which teaching staff are involved.

## **Indicators**

The **indicators** that should be taken into consideration in order to assess this standard are as follows:

- Teaching staff by academic degree programme and continuance (overall and broken down according to subject type).
- Percentage of teaching hours (or credits) taught according to academic degree programme and continuance.



### Teaching staff by academic degree programme and continuance (overall)

	Full-time staff	Part-time staff	Others	Total
Doctors				
University graduates				
No higher education qualification				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

One table needed per qualification.

Others: visiting professors, scholarship holders, etc.

Full-time teaching staff: staff devoting more than 60% of working hours to the HEI.

Part-time teaching staff: staff devoting less than 60% of working hours to the HEI.

### Teaching staff by academic degree programme and continuance (subject type)

(\*) Four subjects in higher education qualifications and two in Master's degrees

Teaching staff file per qualification	Full-time staff	Part-time staff	Others	Total
Subject 1				
Subject 2				
Subject 3*				
Subject 4*				
Specialisation subject				
External placements				
TFE or TFM project				

### Percentage of teaching hours (or credits) taught

	Full-time staff	Part-time staff	Others	Total
Doctors				
University graduates				
No higher education qualification				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

One table needed per qualification.

Others: visiting professors, scholarship holders, etc.

Full-time teaching staff: staff devoting more than 60% of working hours to the HEI.

Part-time teaching staff: staff devoting less than 60% of working hours to the HEI.

### Assessment

For the **assessment** of this standard, the following aspects should be taken into consideration:

- Type and dedication of teaching staff according to categories, educational history, credentials (doctors/non-doctors, etc.) and employment background.
- Relationship between the number of students and lecturers according to the teaching activity.
- Criteria of assignment of teachers to subjects (especially, the selected compulsory subjects, TFE/TFM projects and external placements).

## Rubrics

4.1. The teaching staff meet the qualifications requirements for the faculty's programmes, and they have sufficient and recognised teaching, research and, where applicable, professional experience.	
<b><i>Progressing towards excellence</i></b>	<p><b>For Bachelor's degree teaching staff:</b></p> <p>The teaching staff have the relevant academic qualifications and external recognitions, as well as suitable experience to provide quality training.</p> <p>The faculty has established suitable criteria for the assignment of teaching, ensuring the best teachers in all cases.</p> <p>Students are highly satisfied with the teaching competence of the teaching staff.</p>
	<p><b>For Master's degree teaching staff:</b></p> <p>The teaching staff have the relevant academic qualifications and external recognitions, as well as suitable experience to provide quality training.</p> <p>The faculty has established suitable criteria for the assignment of teaching, ensuring the best teachers in all cases.</p> <p>All teaching staff are actively involved in recognised research projects and have made significant research contributions within the field of the Master's degree programme.</p> <p>Students are highly satisfied with the teaching competence and the research/professional experience of the Master's degree programme teaching staff.</p>
<b><i>Compliant</i></b>	<p><b>For Bachelor's degree teaching staff:</b></p> <p>The teaching staff have the established qualifications and external recognitions, as well as suitable experience.</p> <p>The faculty has established criteria for the assignment of teaching.</p> <p>Students are satisfied with the teaching competence of the teaching staff.</p>
	<p><b>For Master's degree teaching staff:</b></p> <p>The teaching staff have the established academic qualifications and external recognitions, as well as suitable experience.</p> <p>The faculty has established criteria for the assignment of teaching.</p> <p>Most of the teaching staff are actively involved in recognised research projects and have made significant research contributions in the field of the Master's degree programme.</p> <p>Students are satisfied with the teaching competence and the research/professional experience of the teaching staff of the Master's degree programme.</p>
<b><i>Compliant with conditions</i></b>	<p><b>For Bachelor's degree teaching staff:</b></p> <p>Part of the teaching staff have the established academic qualification and external recognitions and/or not all have suitable experience for the delivery of the training entrusted to them.</p> <p>The faculty has not established suitable criteria for the assignment of teaching.</p>

	<p>Students are partially satisfied with the teaching competence of the teaching staff.</p> <p><b>For Master's degree teaching staff:</b></p> <p>Part of the teaching staff have the established academic qualification and external recognitions and/or not all have suitable experience for the delivery of the training entrusted to them.</p> <p>The faculty has not established suitable criteria for the assignment of teaching.</p> <p>The involvement of the teaching staff in recognised research projects and their research contributions are scant.</p> <p>Students are partially satisfied with the teaching competence and the research/professional experience of the teaching staff of the Master's degree programme.</p>
<b>Non-compliant</b>	<p><b>For Bachelor's degree teaching staff:</b></p> <p>Only a minority of the teaching staff have the established academic qualification and external recognitions and suitable experience for the delivery of the training entrusted to them.</p> <p>The faculty has not established criteria for the assignment of teaching.</p> <p>Most of the students are dissatisfied with the teaching competence of the teaching staff.</p>
	<p><b>For Master's degree teaching staff:</b></p> <p>Only a minority of the teaching staff have the established academic qualification and external recognitions, or suitable experience for the delivery of the training entrusted to them.</p> <p>The involvement of the teachers in recognised research projects is practically non-existent.</p> <p>The faculty has not established criteria for the assignment of teaching.</p> <p>Most of the students are dissatisfied with the teaching competence and the research/professional experience of the teaching staff of the Master's degree programme.</p>
<p><b>4.2. There are sufficient teaching staff in the faculty, and staff assignment is adequate for them to carry out their duties and attend the students.</b></p>	
<b>Progressing towards excellence</b>	<p>The structure of the body of teaching staff and the number of teachers are ideal for delivery of the programme and attending the students.</p> <p>The students are highly satisfied with the attentiveness of the teaching staff in their learning process.</p>
<b>Compliant</b>	<p>The structure of the body of teaching staff and the number of teachers are sufficient for delivery of the programme and attending the students.</p> <p>The students are satisfied with the attentiveness of the teaching staff in their learning process.</p>

<b><i>Compliant with conditions</i></b>	<p>The structure of the body of teaching staff and the number of teachers are insufficient for delivery of the programme and attending the students.</p> <p>The students are partially satisfied with the attentiveness of the teaching staff in their learning process.</p>
<b><i>Non-compliant</i></b>	<p>There are serious shortcomings in the structure of the body of teaching staff and the number of teachers as regards delivery of the programme and attending the students.</p> <p>The majority of students are mostly dissatisfied with the attentiveness of the teaching staff in their learning process.</p>
<b>4.3. The HEI offers support and opportunities for the quality enhancement of teaching and research activities of the teaching staff.</b>	
<b><i>Progressing towards excellence</i></b>	Teaching staff receive considerable institutional support for carrying out their duties and for the quality enhancement of teaching and research activities.
<b><i>Compliant</i></b>	Teaching staff receive institutional support for carrying out their duties and for the quality enhancement of teaching and research activities.
<b><i>Compliant with conditions</i></b>	Teaching staff receive little institutional support for carrying out their duties and for the quality enhancement of teaching and research activities.
<b><i>Non-compliant</i></b>	Teaching staff receive no institutional support for carrying out their duties or for the quality enhancement of teaching and research activities.

### 3.5. Effectiveness of learning support systems

In addition to the teaching staff, HEIs make a series of services and resources available to students to motivate, facilitate and enhance learning. In this context, **ESG 1.6 (Learning resources and student support)** recommends that “HEIs should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided” (ENQA, 2015).

Compliance with current legal regulations is deemed an indispensable requirement.

At the time of the accreditation of a programme, the HEI is therefore expected to comply with the following standard:

**The HEI has adequate and efficient guidance services and resources for student learning.**

This section refers to all of the services and resources that support student learning. The scope of this section includes:

- Academic and professional guidance services.
- Physical resources – such as facilities, artistic, technical and scientific equipment and material – adapted to the type of programme.
- **Library services** or learning resource centres.
- **Technological infrastructures** needed for the deployment of the degree programme and the acquisition of competences by students. These infrastructures are especially important for degree programmes of semi-distance learning or e-learning nature.

#### Note about the guide

##### ***Semi-distance learning***

For semi-distance learning courses the analysis and assessment of the following aspects is of particular importance:

- The structure and potential of the virtual learning environment and tools used for the development and delivery of teaching and learning.
- The design of materials for the development of teaching and learning.
- Tutorship and the assessment of student tests and performance.

##### ***e-learning***

In e-learning HEIs, the foregoing aspects acquire even greater significance. Moreover, the following aspects should be added:

- Guidance, tutoring and consulting systems.
- Interpersonal communication systems.

This overall standard is divided into the following specific standards:

- 5.1. The academic guidance services provide adequate support for the learning process, and the professional guidance services facilitate entry into the labour market.
- 5.2. The available physical resources are adequate for the number of students and the characteristics of the programme.

## Evidence

- Documents on the tutorial action plan (design, organisation and activity carried out), distinguishing, if appropriate, between tutorial actions for newly admitted students and for the set of students who are already enrolled.
- Institutional action plan to foster professional guidance (design, organisation and activity carried out).



**Programme coordinators are encouraged to provide evidence – where this is available and easily accessible – on the physical resources considered to be of particular significance.**

## Indicators

- Student satisfaction with the learning support systems

### Student satisfaction with the learning support systems

Year <i>n</i>	Indicator description	Value obtained	Percentage of responses
	Academic tutorials		
	Facilities (classrooms and teaching areas)		
	Library		
	Support services (enrolment, information, etc.)		

## Assessment

For the **assessment** of this standard, the following aspects should be taken into consideration:

- Academic and professional guidance services and tutorial action plan (PAT, from the Catalan): adequacy, participation, satisfaction of stakeholders involved and link with the student profile.
- Availability, use and suitability of material resources.
- Generally, but especially in semi-distance learning and e-learning studies:
  - The structure and potentiality of the e-learning campus, and the interpersonal communication systems.
  - Design of the materials for the performance of the teaching/learning process.



## Rubrics

<b>5.1. The academic guidance service provides adequate support for the learning process, and the professional guidance service facilitates entry into the labour market.</b>	
<b>Progressing towards excellence</b>	The efficacy of the tutorial action plan is clearly a fundamental element of support for the students in teaching and learning, as is evident from, among other aspects, the evolution of the indicators on academic achievement.
	The tutorial support plan has been progressively adapted to the students' needs.
	The HEI has an action plan to facilitate integration into the labour market, and the activities carried out (type, duration, dissemination, support staff, etc.) are very adequate.
<b>Compliant</b>	The level of both student and tutor satisfaction with the academic and professional guidance services is high.
	The tutorial and academic guidance support plan responds to students' needs.
	The professional guidance is suitable, considering the available evidence and the suitability of the activities carried out (type, duration, dissemination, performing agents, etc.).
<b>Compliant with conditions</b>	Students and tutors are satisfied with the academic and professional guidance services.
	The effectiveness of the tutorial and academic guidance support plan as a fundamental support element for students in the teaching/learning process is clearly partial.
	Professional guidance shows shortcomings, as may be seen from the available evidence and the unsuitability of some of the activities carried out (type, duration, dissemination, performing agents, etc.).
<b>Non-compliant</b>	Students and tutors are partially satisfied with the academic and professional guidance services.
	The effectiveness of the tutorial and academic guidance support plan as a fundamental support element for students in the teaching/learning process is not clear.
	Professional guidance is insufficient and the activities carried out (type, duration, dissemination, performing agents...) are inadequate.
<b>5.2. The available physical resources are adequate for the number of students and the characteristics of the programme.</b>	Students and tutors are not satisfied with the academic and professional guidance services.
	Teaching and learning support infrastructures are excellent for motivating, facilitating and enriching students' learning (in terms of number, updating and equipment quality).

<b><i>Progressing towards excellence</i></b>	The library's collection satisfactorily fulfils the needs of the programme, there is a high level of use of it and it is clearly inter-connected with research work going on in the faculty.
<b><i>Compliant</i></b>	Teaching and learning support infrastructures respond suitably to students' learning needs (pertinent and sufficient equipment and suitable facilities).
	The library's collection is adequate for the needs of the programme, it is accessible and there is a certain connection with research work going on in the faculty.
<b><i>Compliant with conditions</i></b>	Teaching and learning support infrastructures show shortcomings with respect to the number of places, safety, and shortage and/or unsuitability of equipment.
	There are certain documentary shortcomings and/or accessibility problems with the library's collection.
<b><i>Non-compliant</i></b>	Teaching and learning support infrastructures do not suitably respond to students' learning needs over the course of their studies.
	Library collections fail to offer students sufficient documentation throughout their studies and/or the documentation is not adequately accessible.

### 3.6. Quality of programme (learning) outcomes

The programme outcomes need to be enumerated and analysed for programme review and enhancement. “Programme learning outcomes” means not only the learning and academic outcomes, but also graduate labour market outcomes (graduate destinations) and stakeholder satisfaction.

Programme outcomes are what students are expected to be capable of demonstrating on completion of their studies. They define and give identity to the programme. The entire teaching and learning process and a large part of the organisation’s resources are directed at the objective of achieving the intended learning outcomes. The degree itself is certification of this achievement. In recent years, increasing emphasis has been placed in external review on the learning outcomes and less on the actual processes leading to their achievement. The causes of this change lie in the fact that, on the one hand, the responsibility for the design and monitoring of the processes has now been placed under the autonomy of the universities and, on the other, in the growing emphasis on outcomes assessment. The assessment of learning outcomes is therefore increasingly necessary in accreditation procedures, especially in facilitating the mutual recognition of accreditation decisions (ECA, 2009).

#### Note

Reference is made more often in this guide to **learning outcomes**, rather than to competences, given the more frequent use of the term at international level.

Learning assessment is the process which allows the determination of the degree of achievement of the learning outcomes, as is stated in **ESG 1.3 (Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment)**, which recommends that “HEIs should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach” (ENQA, 2015).

The teaching/learning process should respect and attend to the diversity of students and their needs, allowing flexible learning pathways. If appropriate, it should consider and use different teaching modalities; use various teaching methods with flexibility; assess and adjust periodically the teaching modalities and teaching methods; foster the sense of independence in students and ensure suitable guidance and support from the teacher; it should also promote mutual respect in the student-teacher relationships; and provide suitable procedures for dealing with student claims.

Both the learning activities as well as the system of assessment need to be relevant, public and adequate to certify the intended learning outcomes set out in the competence profile. The fitness of purpose of the system for assessment infers a judgement regarding its relevance (validity) and an assessment of the level of discrimination of these activities on learning achievement.

The labour market outcomes of graduates are also assessed in this section, as these are one of the key outcomes of university studies. This section makes use of the wealth of information on this aspect, which provides for a contextualized analysis of the main indicator.

### Note about the guide

An analysis of the satisfaction outcomes of the main stakeholders provides an assessment of the degree to which their needs and expectations regarding the programme have been met. These outcomes affect many of the elements in programme accreditation, given that the awareness of stakeholder satisfaction, in particular that of students and graduates, with the programme of study as a whole and the different dimensions of the programme that are assessable, such as teaching staff, physical resources, support and guidance services and public information, amongst others, is very important. At the time of accreditation, the HEI should have in place a system for compiling information on the satisfaction of the different stakeholders, at least the students and graduates, which is formally established and implemented within the framework of the processes defined in the IQAS. The cross-dimensional nature of these outcomes means that satisfaction outcomes are not dealt with as a whole in this section, but across and throughout the entire accreditation process.



**At the time of accreditation, HEIs should have instruments that are formally established and implemented for compiling information on stakeholder satisfaction. Considering the cross-dimensional nature of these outcomes, it is recommended these be not just analysed as a whole in this section, although this information will be a key element for the focus groups.**

At the time of programme accreditation, the HEI is therefore expected to comply with the following standard:

**Learning and assessment activities are consistent with the programme's competence profile. The outcomes of these processes are adequate in terms of both academic achievements, which correspond to the programme's level as of the MECES, and the academic, satisfaction and employment indicators.**

This overall standard is divided into the following specific standards:

- 6.1. The learning outcomes achieved meet the expected training goals and the MECES level of the degree programme.
- 6.2. The training activities, the teaching methodology and the assessment system are suitable to ensure the achievement of the expected learning outcomes.
- 6.3. The values for the academic indicators are adequate for the characteristics of the programme.
- 6.4. The values for the graduate labour market/destination indicators are adequate for the characteristics of the programme.

## Evidence

The following **evidence** should be provided to assess this standard:

- List of presented TFE/TFM projects.
- Evidence of the acquisition of level B2 of a foreign language by graduates.
- Placement centres and volume of students per institution.
- Access to the selected subjects and to samples of developments of these subjects. Assessment rubrics, if any.
- The following should be kept in mind with respect to the subjects:

Higher education qualification	Master's degree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Between two and four compulsory subjects. They must represent the major areas of the curriculum and the various academic years of the curriculum. In terms of subject type, they must be theoretical and technical/applied. At least one must be a year-one subject.</li> <li>– One compulsory subject for each specialist area.</li> <li>– For mandatory external placements, the most important types.</li> <li>– TFE project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Two compulsory subjects, representing the major areas of the curriculum.</li> <li>– If there are specialist areas, one compulsory subject for each specialist area.</li> <li>– If any, mandatory external placements.</li> <li>– TFM project.</li> </ul>

Note: for the higher education qualification, a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 8 subjects should be submitted.



**In its preliminary visit to the faculty or during the assessment, the CAE may ask for additional subjects to be included if the analysis of the evidence so dictates.**

The following three types of evidence should be provided for each selected subject:

### 1. Teaching guide of the subject

Information that should be published on the website of the degree programme, where the following should necessarily be included:

- List of topics.
- Learning outcomes and competences to be acquired.
- Assessment system.
- Most significant training activities, including those which are the object of assessment (pointing them out). In the case of external placements and TFE/TFM projects: supervision system.

### 2. Teachers of the subject

- Summarised CVs of the lecturers teaching the subject and supervising TFE/TFM projects or training placements (teaching profile, research lines and professional profile).

### 3. Sample of student achievements

- Selection of evidence of the assessment exams for the subjects chosen (written exams, projects, reports, audition recordings, performances, etc.), TFE/TFM projects and external placements. The samples provided for each chosen subject should give an overview of the following assessments: failing the subject, passing the subject, passing the subject with a distinction. The exam will need to be the one that takes precedence over the rest.
- Anonymity must be assured.

## Indicators

**The indicators** which should be considered to assess this standard, most of which are available in Winddat (Academic outcomes and occupational integration), are as follows:

- Satisfaction of graduates with the overall educational experience of the degree programme (time series).
- Satisfaction of students with the teaching in the chosen subjects (last academic year).
- Overall academic indicators for the degree programme (time series).
- Overall academic indicators for year one (time series).
- Breakdown of all grades obtained in all the degree programme subjects (last academic year).
- Labour market access (AQU labour market access survey or own data).

### Satisfaction of graduates with the overall educational experience (upon degree programme completion, time series)

Academic year <i>Questions linked to:</i>	Average assessment	Percentage of responses
Curriculum content		
Skills acquisition level		
Teaching staff quality		
Professional and academic guidance services		
Equipment and facilities		
Willingness to take the same programme again		
Willingness to study again at the same HEI		

It is necessary to specify the year the survey was taken and the year of graduation of the graduates, as well as the assessment scale. To the extent feasible, survey results shall be classified according to categories that are as closely aligned to those specified in the table as possible.

### Satisfaction of students with the teaching in the chosen subjects (last academic year) Surveys:

Year <i>n</i>	Total enrolment	Percentage of responses	Teaching methods	Assessment system	Teaching staff	Overall satisfaction
Subject 1						
...						
Subject <i>n</i>						
External placements						
TFE/TFM projects						

The table should be completed, indicating the scale used, based on the results of the surveys used in the HEI. To the extent feasible, survey results shall be classified according to categories that are as closely aligned to those specified in the table as possible.

### Overall academic indicators for the degree programme (time series)

	Year $n-3$	Year $n-2$	Year $n-1$	Year $n$
Achievement rate				
Graduation rate				
Drop-out rate				

Achievement rate: credits passed/credits enrolled.

Graduation rate: percentage of graduates up to  $t+1$  (including  $t$ ,  $t$  and  $t+1$ ) in relation to the number of students in the starting cohort.

Drop-out rate: accumulated drop-out rate at  $t+1$  (specified in the qualification verification report) refers to the accumulated number of graduates over five years (from the start and up to  $t+1$ , assuming that the study programme has a theoretical duration of four years), divided by the number of students in the starting cohort.

### Overall academic indicators for year one (time series)

	Year $n-3$	Year $n-2$	Year $n-1$	Year $n$
Achievement rate				
Turnout rate				
Success rate				
Drop-out rate				

### Breakdown of all grades obtained in all the degree programme subjects (last academic year)

Year $n$	Results						
	Enrolled	1st class honours	Excellent	Good	Pass	Fail	Absent
Subject 1							
....							
Subject $n$							
External placements							
TFE/TFM projects							



## Access to the labour market

	Indicator
Employment rate	Employed / unemployed / inactive***
Suitability rate* (functions)	Linked to the programme
Satisfaction with theoretical training**	
Satisfaction with practical training **	

All data can be obtained from the last AQU Catalunya survey on access to the labour market. In any event, if deemed pertinent, other sources may be used. It is necessary to specify the year the survey was taken and the year of graduation of those surveyed.

\*Percentage of individuals in full-time work performing higher education-level functions or functions linked to the degree programme.

\*\*The assessment scale should be specified.

\*\*\*The percentage should be specified for each of the cases indicated.

## Assessment

For the **assessment** of this standard, the following aspects should be taken into consideration:

- Overall outcomes of the degree programme (performance, drop-outs, graduation, etc.), specifically of the year-one course.
- Level of adequacy for the exams and, accordingly, whether they serve to illustrate the level of skills achievement and learning outcomes according to the respective MECES level.
- Student satisfaction with teaching.
- Graduate satisfaction with the overall educational experience.
- Degree programme access to the labour market, for instance, and satisfaction with the education provided.



**One of the goals of this section is to verify that the learning outcomes are achieved on the expected level. Consequently, the criterion is to verify that the tests are pertinent, that is to say, that they serve to express the level of achievement of the outcomes. Under no circumstances will there be a revision of the assessments assigned.**

## Rubrics

6.1. The learning activities are consistent with the intended learning outcomes and correspond to the appropriate level for the programme in the MECES.	
<b><i>Progressing towards excellence</i></b>	<p><b>With respect to subjects:</b></p> <p>The documentary evidence of the students' achievements shows high levels of student learning and they easily comply with the requirements for the programme's level specified in the MECES.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to TFE/TFM projects:</b></p> <p>The documentary evidence of the students' achievements shows that the TFE/TFM projects comply most satisfactorily with the learning outcomes and the programme's required level in the MECES.</p> <p>The TFE/TFM projects follow a subject planning that is consistent with the groups and lines of research and/or knowledge transfer of the teaching staff.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to external placements:</b></p> <p>The documentary evidence of the students' achievements shows that the external placements conform most satisfactorily to the learning outcomes and the programme's level specified in the MECES.</p> <p>The entities participating as practical work settings are highly appropriate for external placements.</p>
<b><i>Compliant</i></b>	<p><b>With respect to subjects:</b></p> <p>The documentary evidence of the students' achievements shows an adequate level of student learning and that they sufficiently comply with the requirements for the programme's level specified in the MECES.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to TFE/TFM projects:</b></p> <p>The documentary evidence of students' achievements show that the TFE/TFM projects correspond to the MECES level required for the degree programme.</p> <p>Most TFE/TFM projects correspond to subject planning that is consistent with the groups and lines of research and/or knowledge transfer of the teaching staff.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to external placements:</b></p> <p>The documentary evidence of students' achievements show that the external placements correspond to the MECES level required for the degree programme.</p> <p>External placements take place mostly in adequate work settings (centres).</p>
<b><i>Compliant with conditions</i></b>	<p><b>With respect to subjects:</b></p> <p>The documentary evidence of the students' achievements shows an uneven level of student learning and it is doubtful whether the requirements for the programme's level specified in the MECES are complied with.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to TFE/TFM projects:</b></p>

	<p>The documentary evidence of the students' achievements shows that the TFE/TFM projects only partially correspond to the learning outcomes and the programme's level specified in the MECES.</p> <p>The TFE/TFM projects partially correspond to subject planning that is consistent with the groups and lines of research and/or knowledge transfer of the teaching staff.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to external placements:</b></p> <p>The documentary evidence of the students' achievements shows that the external placements only partially conform to the programme's level specified in the MECES.</p> <p>There are certain inadequacies in the entities that participate as work settings for external placements.</p>
<p><b>Non-compliant</b></p>	<p><b>With respect to subjects:</b></p> <p>The documentary evidence of the students' achievements shows an inadequate level of student learning and non-compliance with the requirements for the programme's level specified in the MECES.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to TFE/TFM projects:</b></p> <p>The documentary evidence of the students' achievements shows that the TFE/TFM projects correspond with neither the programme learning outcomes nor the programme's level specified in the MECES.</p> <p>The TFE/TFM projects seldom correspond to subject planning that is consistent with the groups and lines of research and/or knowledge transfer of the teaching staff.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to external placements:</b></p> <p>The documentary evidence of the students' achievements shows that external placements correspond with neither the programme learning outcomes nor with the programme's level specified in the MECES.</p> <p>There are considerable inadequacies in the entities that participate as work settings for external placements.</p>
<p><b>6.2. The training activities, teaching methods and assessment are suitable and pertinent to ensure the achievement of the expected learning outcomes.</b></p>	
<p><b>Progressing towards excellence</b></p>	<p><b>With respect to subjects:</b></p> <p>The teaching methods and activities are satisfactorily aligned with the learning outcomes.</p> <p>The assessment systems and criteria are varied, innovative and very pertinent to certify and distinguish learning outcomes.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to TFE/TFM projects:</b></p> <p>The TFE/TFM projects are supervised and assessed using very pertinent and suitable criteria.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to external placements:</b></p>

	External placements are supervised and assessed using very pertinent and suitable criteria.
<b>Compliant</b>	<p><b>With respect to subjects:</b></p> <p>The teaching methods and activities are designed with the aim to offer opportunities to students to integrate the learning outcomes.</p> <p>The assessment systems and criteria are suitable for certifying and distinguishing the learning outcomes.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to TFE/TFM projects:</b></p> <p>The TFE/TFM projects are supervised and assessed using suitable criteria.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to external placements:</b></p> <p>External placements are supervised and assessed using suitable criteria.</p>
<b>Compliant with conditions</b>	<p><b>With respect to subjects:</b></p> <p>Teaching methods and activities offer a reasonable number of opportunities to develop the required learning outcomes.</p> <p>The assessment systems and criteria show some shortcomings which do not allow the learning outcomes to be certified and/or distinguished in all cases.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to TFE/TFM projects:</b></p> <p>The systems for supervision and assessment of TFE/TFM projects show shortcomings.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to external placements:</b></p> <p>The systems for supervision and assessment of external placements show shortcomings.</p>
<b>Non-compliant</b>	<p><b>With respect to subjects:</b></p> <p>There is no clear relationship between learning outcomes and the teaching methods and activities of the training provided in the degree programme.</p> <p>The assessment systems and criteria are not suitable for certifying and distinguishing the learning outcomes.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to TFE/TFM projects:</b></p> <p>The systems for supervision and assessment of TFE/TFM projects show significant inadequacies which do not make them suitable for certifying and distinguishing the learning outcomes.</p>
	<p><b>With respect to external placements:</b></p> <p>The systems for supervision and assessment of external placements show significant inadequacies which do not make them suitable for certifying and distinguishing the learning outcomes.</p>
<b>6.3. The values for the academic indicators are adequate for the characteristics of the programme.</b>	

<b><i>Progressing towards excellence</i></b>	The documentary evidence shows that the time series for the academic indicators is consistent with the type of students and equivalent programmes, and it clearly shows continuous enhancement of the programme.
<b><i>Compliant</i></b>	The documentary evidence shows that the time series of most of the academic indicators is consistent with the type of students and the equivalent degree programmes.
<b><i>Compliant with conditions</i></b>	The documentary evidence shows that there is a certain mismatch in the time series for the academic indicators in relation to the type of students and equivalent programmes, and it does not show continuous improvement of the programme.
<b><i>Non-compliant</i></b>	The documentary evidence shows that there is a significant and serious mismatch in the time series for the academic indicators in relation to the type of students and equivalent programmes, and there is no sign of continuous enhancement of the programme.
<b>6.4. The values for the graduate labour market/destination indicators are adequate for the characteristics of the programme.</b>	
<b><i>Progressing towards excellence</i></b>	The employment rate is higher than that of the working population for the same baseline period and age bracket, and it is higher than that of similar programmes.
	The match rate is higher than that of other programmes in the same discipline.
	The mean assessment for the usefulness of theoretical and practical knowledge acquired is higher than that of other programmes in the same discipline.
<b><i>Compliant</i></b>	The employment rate is above that of the working population for the same baseline period and age bracket, and it is adequate compared to that of similar programmes.
	The match rate is adequate compared to that of other programmes in the same discipline.
	The mean assessment for the usefulness of theoretical and practical knowledge acquired is adequate compared to that of other programmes in the same discipline.
<b><i>Compliant with conditions</i></b>	The employment rate is close to that of the working population for the same baseline period and age bracket, although it is low compared to that of similar programmes.
	The match rate is slightly low compared to that of other programmes in the same discipline.
	The mean assessment for the usefulness of theoretical and practical knowledge acquired is slightly low compared to that of other programmes in the same discipline.
<b><i>Non-compliant</i></b>	The employment rate is low compared to that of the working population for the same baseline period and age bracket.
	The match rate is lower than that of other programmes.



	The mean assessment as regards the usefulness of theoretical and practical knowledge acquired is clearly low.
	There have been no studies on the labour market outcomes of graduates of the programme.

## 4. ACCREDITATION RESULT

### 4.1. Final report

In order to prepare the definitive accreditation report (from the Catalan, IdA) issued by the CEA for Arts and Humanities (IdA), said committee shall rely on the external visit report (from the Catalan IAE) drawn up by the CAE as the primary source of evidence. The final assessment report may be favourable or unfavourable and, on the basis of accreditation criteria, the outcome may be placed at four possible levels:

1. Favourable report:
  - a. Accredited progressing towards excellence.
  - b. Accredited.
  - c. Accredited with conditions.
2. Unfavourable report:
  - a. Not accredited.

The IdA must include at least the following:

1. Description of the context of the qualification.
2. Description of the procedure used, including the experts involved.
3. Results of the assessment for each of the standards.
4. Final assessment result.
5. Best practices identified.
6. Proposals for improvement (recommendations for follow-up measures).

AQU Catalunya will submit the definitive accreditation report (IdA) to the Catalan Ministry of Education.

In the case of Master's degrees, AQU Catalunya will submit the definitive accreditation report (IdA) to the Catalan Ministry of Education and to the national register of non-university teaching institutions (Spanish Ministry of Education) so that the recording in the register may be renewed in line with the legally established procedure.

AQU Catalunya shall publish the accreditation and visit reports on its review reports portal (<http://estudis.aqu.cat/informes>).

### 4.2. Labels

If the study programme assessed is awarded a favourable accreditation report, AQU Catalunya will issue a quality label with its own unique number and the corresponding certificate. The label shall be valid for a maximum period of six years in the case of Bachelor's degrees and of four years in the case of Master's degrees.



According to the evaluation made in the final report, study programmes will be awarded a favourable accreditation label (accredited or accredited with conditions) or a label for an accreditation of excellent (accredited progressing towards excellence).

The terms of use are specified in the document [\*AQU Catalunya quality labels and the conditions of use\*](#), approved by the Governing Board of AQU Catalunya.

### 4.3. Effects of accreditation

Accreditation of an arts HE programme by the Autonomous Government of Catalonia or of an arts Master's degree by the Spanish Ministry and the Autonomous Government of Catalonia will enable the HEI that runs the programme to continue to offer it for a maximum period of six years before needing to renew its accreditation.

If a study programme is not granted accreditation, the institution responsible **may not register any new students and will need to embark on all the actions detailed in the verification report in order to gradually phase out the study programme** while adhering to the rights of students already enrolled.





## 5. FOLLOW-UP AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

Once accreditation has been awarded, the study programme must undergo a process of monitoring in relation to its development at least once every two years. The reflection shall be carried out on the same six dimensions that formed part of the accreditation process and shall be based on the last improvement plan. As a result, the study programme follow-up procedure lays the foundations for the forthcoming accreditation which, in turn, takes the follow-up process to its conclusion. The intention is for these two procedures to be viewed as a single process: a process of continual improvement that concludes with the external validation of the results achieved.

## 6. REFERENCES

Organic Act 2/2006, of 3 May, on Education

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