

FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON THE CoARA ACTION PLAN OF AQU CATALUNYA

July 2025 – July 2026



01

First edition

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Executive Summary

In the first year of rolling out the CoARA Action Plan, 86% of goals were met, driven mainly by the new accreditation criteria and staff training.

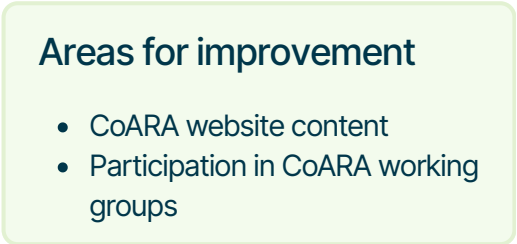
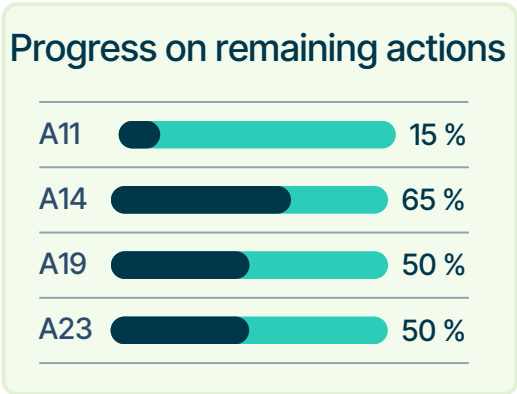
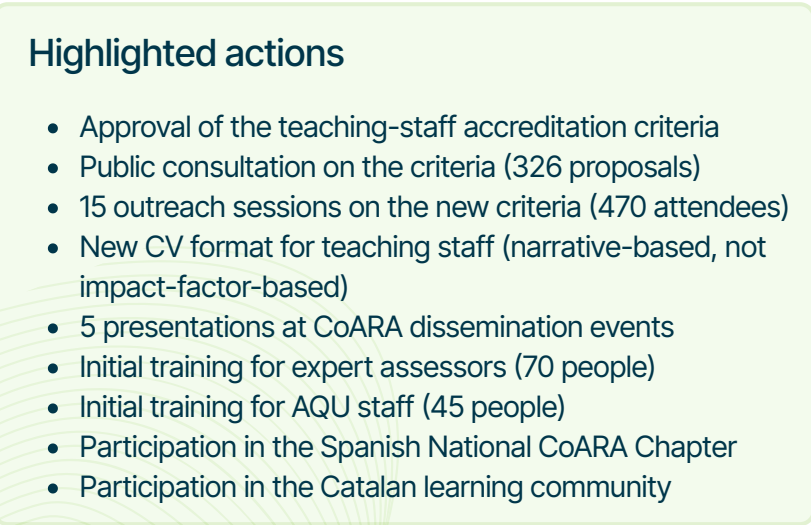
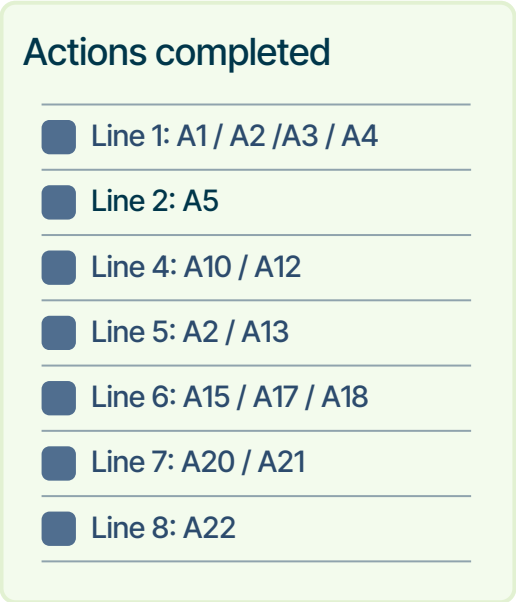
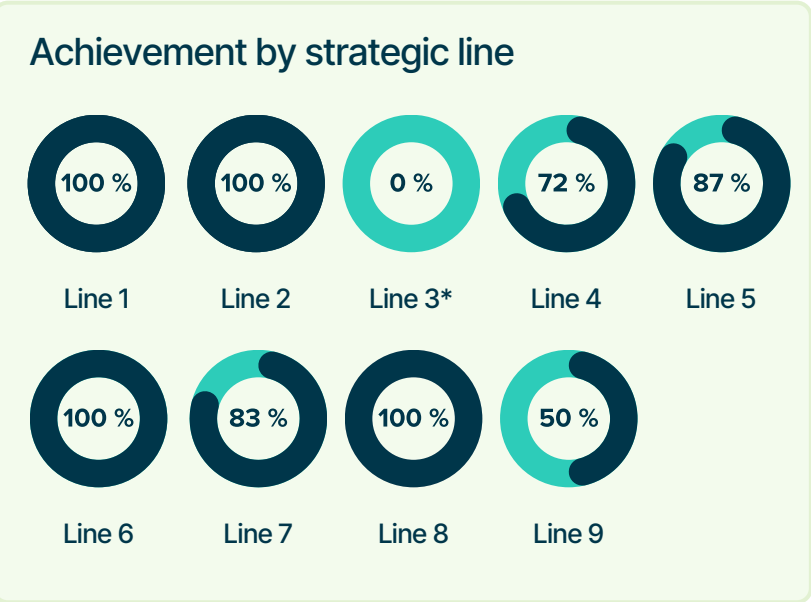
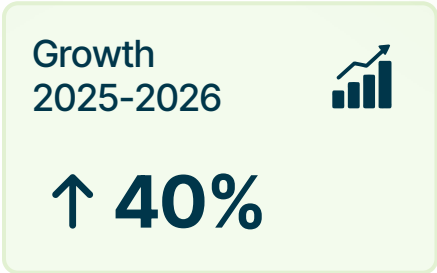
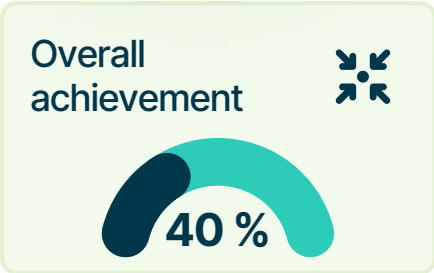
The CoARA Action Plan achieved **86%** of the targets set for the first year of implementation (July 2025 – July 2026). Over its total duration, which runs until mid-2029, overall progress on the project currently stands at 40%. The plan, structured around 9 strategic lines and 23 actions, shows notable progress: four lines (1, 2, 6 and 8) and 15 actions have already been fully completed. By contrast, Line 9 shows the lowest overall progress, at 50% completion. Actions under Line 3 — covering the assessment of research carried out by departments and other university centres and institutes — have not yet begun, pending authorisation from the Department for Research and Universities (DRU).

Among the most significant milestones of this first year are the approval of the new accreditation criteria for teaching staff and the roll-out of a new narrative curriculum vitae format, which prioritises quality over quantitative indicators. A public consultation was held, receiving 326 proposals, alongside several training sessions for assessors and AQU staff — training 70 and 45 people respectively — and 15 outreach sessions attended by 470 people. However, integration with government databases, aimed at reducing the documentary burden on applicants, is still pending. Active participation in the Catalan learning community and in the Spanish national CoARA chapter reaffirms the commitment to transforming research assessment.

Follow-up on the CoARA Action Plan

Key milestones 2025–2026

Project	CoARA Action Plan
Duration	01.07.2025 – 01.07.2029
Review date	14 July 2026



* Line 3's actions are on hold pending external authorisation, so its indicators are excluded from the overall progress calculation

Line 1

Reform of the assessment criteria for the accreditation of university teaching staff

The new accreditation criteria for university teaching staff embed CoARA's principles

The actions under Line 1 were fully completed in the first year of the action plan. The review of the accreditation criteria for university teaching staff has marked a paradigm shift, aligning them with CoARA's principles. For the first time, the university community had the opportunity to take part in the drafting process. The new approach better captures the diversity of academic profiles and ensures that assessment is genuinely fit for purpose. The pillars of the new model are:

Moving beyond a quantitative model: inappropriate uses of quantitative bibliometric indicators as the sole measure of quality have been discontinued. Assessment is now based primarily on the quality, relevance and impact of the contributions submitted.

Introduction of narratives: to support a more qualitative assessment, narrative summaries of career trajectories have been introduced, along with specific narrative sections for each scientific contribution, in which applicants can make the case for the scientific or social impact of their work.

Holistic, multidimensional assessment: teaching staff are now assessed in a comprehensive way, considering three key dimensions: research, teaching and leadership.

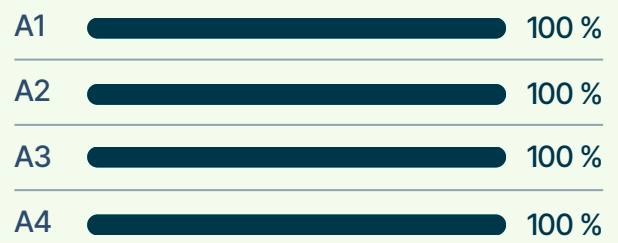
Achievement
2025-2026 



Overall
achievement 



Progress by action 



Public consultation on the criteria 

326 proposals

15 
OUTREACH
SESSIONS

470 
ATTENDEES

Line 2

Adaptation of teaching staff's curriculum vitae to the new assessment criteria

A more qualitative, multidimensional assessment of academic staff

Introduction of narrative career trajectories:

applicants describe the most significant achievements of their careers. Narrative sections have been included for the dimensions of research and knowledge transfer, university teaching, and scientific and management leadership— in 3,600 characters —.

Narratives for each scientific contribution: for each scientific contribution, applicants may make the case — in 300 characters — for its relevance and impact, using bibliometric indicators (such as impact factor or quartile) as well as citations, downloads, social impact, disciplinary impact or open access.

New accreditation dimensions: a teaching trajectory and scientific/management leadership dimension have been incorporated — the latter applying to full professors (catedràtics and catedràtiques).

Limit on the number of contributions: to make assessment more focused and effective (fit for purpose), the number of merits to be assessed has been limited.

New areas of contribution: the CV now covers a wider range of valuable activities, including artistic creation — discipline, career path, impact — knowledge and technology transfer — patents, contracts, social impact — and relevant professional activity within the applicant's field of specialisation. This has made it possible to move beyond the previous "niche field" (àmbit singular) approach.

Achievement
2025-2026



100 %

Overall
achievement

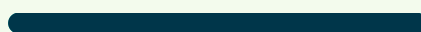


100 %

Progress by action



A5



100 %

Key changes to the CV



- Narrative career trajectories
- Removal of bibliometric indicators as a standalone criterion
- A limit on the number of contributions
- Inclusion of teaching trajectory and leadership

Line 3

Development of criteria for the assessment of research at institutional level

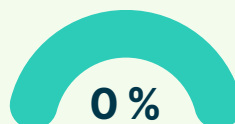
Actions on institutional-level research assessment have yet to be activated

This line, which focuses on the assessment of research departments, centres and institutes, has not yet been activated. Although AQU Catalunya holds the competence to carry out these assessments — under Article 37 of Law 9/2022 on Science — the Department for Research and Universities has not yet launched the Strategic University Plan for Research Excellence, under which the Agency is to carry out the assessments in question.

Since implementation of this line is currently on hold, its progress indicators have not been factored into the final calculations for the plan's overall roll-out.

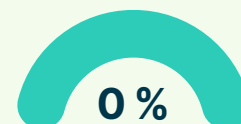
Nonetheless, AQU Catalunya has carried out preliminary studies of international experience in institutional-level research assessment.

Achievement
2025-2026



0 %

Overall
achievement



0 %

Progress by action



A6		0 %
A2		0 %
A7		0 %
A8		0 %
A9		0 %

Preliminary
studies

Authorisation
pending

Line 4

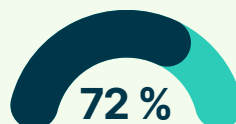
Reduction of administrative burden

Significant progress, though difficulties remain in linking up with other databases

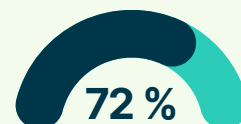
This line shows significant progress, with **72%** achievement in the first year. The actions relating to the new application form (A10) and the automatic recognition of various research and teaching merits have been successfully completed — including research six-year periods (*sexennis*) assessed by CNEAI-ANECA, teaching five-year periods (*quinquennis*) assessed by universities using teaching-assessment manuals certified by AQU Catalunya (A12), ERC excellence distinctions, and I3 and R3 certificates issued by the Spanish State Research Agency (Agencia Estatal de Investigación).

Action A11 shows **15%** progress. This slower pace stems from the technical complexity of linking databases that use different formats and often contain incomplete information. In addition, changes currently being made by some database owners are preventing an effective connection at this time. Even so, action A11 remains active, and its objectives are expected to be met over the course of the plan's period of validity.

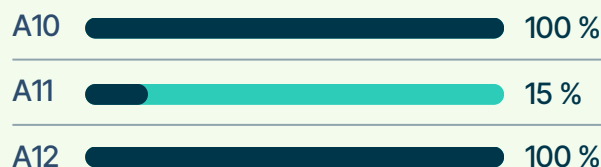
Achievement
2025-2026



Overall
achievement



Progress by action



Key achievements



- New application form
- Recognition of CNEAI's research six-year periods
- Recognition of teaching five-year periods
- Recognition of ERC grants and I3-R3 certificates

Critical outstanding task



- Integration with government databases

Line 5

Community engagement

Strong engagement of the scientific community in co-creating and disseminating the new assessment model

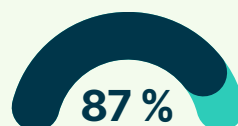
Strategic Line 5, dedicated to fostering engagement of the scientific community, achieved **87%** execution in its first year of implementation, representing **47%** of the total targets set for the 2025–2029 period.

One of the most notable achievements has been the participation of university teaching staff, centres and universities in the review of the accreditation criteria; the public consultation gathered 326 improvement proposals, most of which were incorporated into the final document.

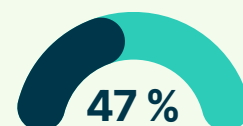
Alongside this co-creation process, AQU Catalunya has carried out extensive dissemination work, taking part in 5 outreach sessions on CoARA's principles, attended by more than 500 people.

This commitment to knowledge-sharing has resulted in the publication of key reports and agreements, such as the study on incorporating the relevance of Catalan-language publications into the concept of quality (doi: [10.5281/zenodo.15736131](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15736131)) and the Research Assessment Committee's agreement to ensure gender equality and work–life balance in the assessment of teaching and research staff —available on the [AQU Catalunya website](#) (in catalan)—.

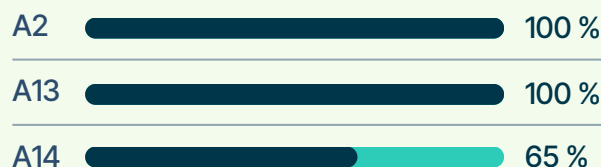
Achievement
2025-2026



Overall
achievement



Progress by action



5



COARA OUTREACH
SESSIONS

+500



ATTENDEES

Highlight



- AQU Catalunya's actions were featured in the Danish EU Presidency report "From principle to practice in reforming research assessment: Policy Brief" (doi: [10.54337/aau.policybrief.euprra](https://doi.org/10.54337/aau.policybrief.euprra))

Line 6

Assessment committees and staff training at AQU

Embedding the CoARA culture: comprehensive training for technical staff and assessment committees

Strategic Line 6, dedicated to training in the new assessment model, achieved **100%** of its targets for the 2025–2026 period. Considering the plan's full period of validity (2025–2029), progress on this line already stands at **46%**.

One of the key milestones in this process took place in July 2025, when all members of the teaching-staff accreditation committees and the Agency's Appeals Committee received training, totalling 70 experts. These efforts were complemented by training for the technical staff responsible for accreditation processes and the remaining 45 members of AQU Catalunya's staff.

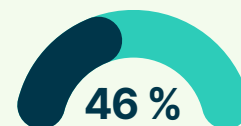
As future actions to sustain this momentum, the plan envisages that, during 2026–2027, an initial training course will be developed and made available online to all newly appointed assessors.

Finally, between 2027 and 2028, continuous training programmes will be launched to ensure that all staff remain up to date with the assessment-reform principles promoted by CoARA.

Achievement
2025-2026



Overall
achievement



Progress by action



A15 100 %

A16 *Starting from 2027–2028*

A17 100 %

A18 100 %

3

TRAINING
SESSIONS



70

EXPERTS
TRAINED



45

AQU STAFF
TRAINED



ONLINE PILOT
TRAINING



Line 7

Results monitoring and publication system

Transparency and monitoring of the CoARA Plan through the new web portal and annual results reports

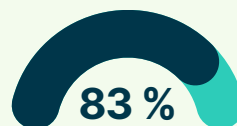
Line 7, focused on the results-monitoring and dissemination system, achieved **83%** of its targets in the first year of roll-out. This figure represents **33%** overall achievement when considering the plan's full 2025–2029 period.

As a notable milestone, a dedicated web page has been launched to track the CoARA action plan at AQU Catalunya, although there is a recognised need to improve its content and update frequency to ensure effective communication with the scientific community.

Regarding the publication of results, the system was consolidated following the 2025 presentation of the annual monitoring report on teaching-staff accreditations, now focused on the new model.

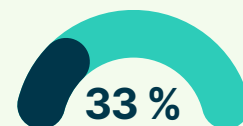
In July 2026, the monitoring report on the teaching-staff accreditation process and the first CoARA plan roll-out report were presented simultaneously to the Governing Board. This milestone means actions A20 and A21 can be considered fully completed, reaffirming the Agency's commitment to transparency and accountability in transforming the assessment model.

Achievement
2025-2026



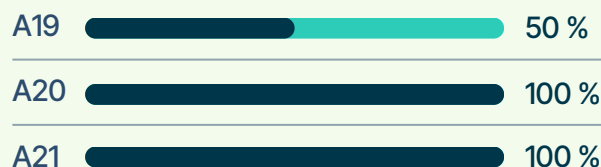
83 %

Overall
achievement



33 %

Progress by action



Area for improvement



- Complete the website content and update it regularly

Line 8

Participation in CoARA working groups and the Spanish chapter

Strategic collaboration in national and international networks to transform research-assessment models

Line 8, dedicated to participation in working groups, achieved **100%** of its targets in the first year of roll-out (2025–2026), representing **25%** of overall achievement across the whole action plan.

The Agency plays an active role in the Catalan-scale learning community on research assessment, a collaborative space bringing together the four Catalan assessment agencies, the Department of Health and the Department for Research and Universities. AQU Catalunya is also a member of the working group on research impact and maintains a constant presence in the Spanish CoARA Chapter. The Agency also sits on the monitoring committee for the *Plan to Strengthen the Catalan Language in Catalonia's University and Research System*.

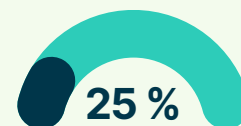
One of the most notable achievements this year has been direct involvement in the working group that proposed the Research Impact Strategy document, which has since been approved by the Interdepartmental Committee for Research and Innovation (CIRI).

Despite the success of action A22, continued future participation in CoARA working groups is planned as an area for improvement, to keep leading the transformation of research assessment.

Achievement
2025-2026



Overall
achievement



Progress by action



A22 100 %

2

CATALAN
COMMUNITIES



1

SPANISH
CHAPTER



Highlight



- Participation in drafting the Generalitat de Catalunya's Research Impact Strategy

Area for improvement



- Participation in CoARA working groups

Line 9

Promotion of Open Science in research assessment

Promoting Open Science through priority recognition of open access and institutional collaboration

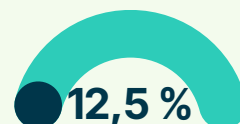
During the first year, **50%** of the targets set for Line 9 were achieved, representing **12.5%** of overall achievement for the 2025–2029 period. One of the most significant milestones of this period is the incorporation of priority recognition for open-access scientific contributions and educational resources within the new teaching-staff accreditation criteria. This momentum is reinforced by AQU Catalunya's participation in the monitoring working group for the Catalan Open Science Strategy of the Interdepartmental Committee for Research and Innovation (CIRI). Actions arising from this group should help establish Open Science as a key element of assessment.

Despite this progress, the Agency acknowledges the difficulty of directly influencing publication practices, since it is universities and research centres that have greater influence over the careers of their research staff. For this reason, and to give committees better tools, AQU plans to draw up a FOCUS guidance document. This document should give committees clear criteria for assessing the quality of open-access publications, ensuring that such contributions are assessed with due academic rigour and in line with the new quality and impact standards.

Achievement
2025-2026



Overall
achievement



Progress by action



A23  50 %

Next steps



- FOCUS document on assessing Open Science

Next Steps

AQU Catalunya enters the second year of the Action Plan, focusing on operational efficiency and transparency.

The focus for the 2026–2027 period is on overcoming the technical and communication challenges identified during monitoring, particularly simplifying the administrative burden and updating publicly available information. The following five actions are defined as priorities for the second year, to maintain momentum in transforming research assessment.

01 Connection with government databases

Continue working to connect AQU's assessment platform with key government databases in order to reduce the administrative burden.

02 Improvements to the CoARA website

Add new sections with news and updated content to AQU Catalunya's CoARA website.

03 Participation in CoARA working groups

Explore participation in the working groups set up by CoARA that best align with the Agency's activities.

04 Organisation of reflection sessions

Promote, from within the Agency, the organisation of reflection sessions on reforming research assessment across the Catalan university system (SUC).

05 Online training

Roll out initial and continuous training modules for committee experts on AQU's online training platform.



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