



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

AQU CATALUNYA 2017 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT



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AQU CATALUNYA, 2018



Generalitat
de Catalunya



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Universitari de Catalunya**

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First edition: July 2018

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INTRODUCTION

This document is a summary of the AQU Catalunya 2017 Annual Report, which describes the main activities carried out by the Agency over the course of the year, the most important of which are described below.

Before briefly going over the main activities undertaken by the Agency in 2017, I put the focus on those that I believe to be of particular importance.

- AQU Catalunya successfully underwent its third review to validate compliance with the ESG, thereby enabling the Agency to maintain its full membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and registration with the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).
- The Advisory Committee was established.
- Subject benchmark statements were produced for the ex-ante accreditation of programmes to define the necessary skills and competences expected of graduates to develop knowledge and skills in the discipline. In 2017, benchmark statements were approved and published for Tourism and Computing and are currently being produced for Economics and Business Administration.
- A new simplified procedure for submitting applications for the assessment of university teaching staff was introduced, with changes to the way in which abbreviated CVs are submitted. Applicants can now fill out an online form that via ORCID automatically loads their submissions from the Portal de Recerca de Catalunya (Research in Catalonia) website.
- The sixth survey of graduate employment outcomes was undertaken. The results and findings of the survey can be consulted, compared and exported from the EUC-Dades platform.
- The Agency collaborated in the recognised Master's in Quality Assurance and Management in Higher Education. AQU Catalunya collaborates with the Open University of Catalonia (UOC) in the running of this pioneering Master's programme in Spain.



INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY

1. Framework for ex-ante accreditation, monitoring, modification and accreditation

The Framework for the ex-ante accreditation, monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised degree programmes (VSMA Framework) was approved by AQU Catalunya in 2010, and subsequently updated in 2016, to establish a cyclical and harmonious system of external review for recognised degree programmes delivered in Catalan universities.

The VSMA Framework lays down the relationship between the procedures of **ex-ante accreditation** prior to the introduction of programmes; **monitoring** of programme delivery; **modification** of programmes to incorporate enhancements identified during the monitoring stage; and **accreditation**, in which an external visit is made by a panel of experts to verify that the programme is being delivered as planned.

2. Accreditation

During 2017 50 external review panels were convened and a total number of 53 site visits made to 51 faculties and one school offering Arts higher education programmes, which represents a decrease of 40% in the number of institutions visited compared to the previous year. A total number of 133 degree courses were evaluated and reviewed.

Issuance of accreditation reports

139 accreditation reports were issued in 2017. 16% of accredited degree programmes were awarded accreditation at the level of "on track to excellence", while conditional accreditation was granted (with prescriptions/conditions) in the case of 9%. In the case of conditional accreditation, a progress report must be submitted within two years to show that any shortcomings identified in a programme have been addressed.

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The following table shows the results according to field of study:

	Accreditation withheld	Conditional accreditation	Accreditation	Accreditation on track to excellence	Total	Accreditation on track to excellence (%)
Arts and Humanities		0	14	4	18	22%
Social and Legal Sciences		8	42	8	58	14%
Experimental Sciences		1	10	5	16	31%
Health Sciences		3	11	2	16	13%
Engineering and Architecture		1	27	3	31	10%
Total		13	104	22	139	16%

AQU Catalunya has so far accredited 698 degree programmes, which account for 69% of the total number of programmes delivered at higher education institutions (HEIs) in Catalonia.

154 applications for accreditation were submitted by HEIs during 2017. Accreditation reports are subsequently referred to the corresponding national and regional authorities for the administrative processing of programme accreditation. Following the issuance of an accreditation report, AQU Catalunya issues the corresponding certificates and quality labels that are awarded to programmes and institutions as an instrument of distinction that informs society at large that they have successfully undergone accreditation.

Recognised first degrees and Master's degrees

Higher awards (first degree) and Master's degrees in Arts higher education programmes



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Additional dimensions

AQU Catalunya offers accreditation assessment that is voluntary for institutions in the following additional dimensions:

- Career development, employability and recruitment
- Research-teaching linkages
- Internationalisation

Successful assessment entitles the use of the corresponding quality label. AQU Catalunya's Governing Board updated all quality labels in 2017 to ensure they are all clearly distinguishable.

The outcome of assessment will be either "Accreditation" or "Accreditation with excellence":

Career development, employability and recruitment



AQU Catalunya està inscrita a EQAR

Research-teaching linkages



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Internationalisation



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In the period between 2014-2017 AQU Catalunya assessed 54 additional dimensions of programmes that had previously been awarded accreditation.

3. Ex-ante accreditation, modification and monitoring

The design of a proposal for a new first degree, master's or doctoral programme has to undergo **ex-ante accreditation** (also referred to as validation) prior to the introduction of the programme, which involves a procedure that targets continuous improvement and enhancement.



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A total of 94 proposals for the ex-ante assessment of recognised degrees were submitted by HEIs in Catalonia during the year: 37 first degrees, 54 master's and 5 doctoral programmes. 97% of the total number of validation proposals passed assessment. According to degree level, 97% of first degree proposals, 96% of master's programmes and all proposals (100%) for doctoral degrees passed. 19% were programme revalidations and 81% were new programme ex-ante accreditations.

As regard applications for the **modification** of programmes already introduced, 121 proposals were submitted in 2017: 65 for first degree programmes, 50 for Master's programmes and 6 for doctoral/PhD programmes. Overall, 96% of the programme modification applications were successful.

In relation to **monitoring**, AQU Catalunya issued 36 progress reports on learning providers (faculties and schools) that deliver 107 degree programmes. The process of monitoring the doctoral programmes that will undergo accreditation in 2018 also started in 2017. The Committee dealing with recognised doctoral programmes monitored a total number of 57 programmes.

Subject benchmark statements

AQU Catalunya has started to produce **subject benchmark statements** for each discipline for use in the **design of new programmes**. Subject benchmark statements provide coherency and identity, as well as defining what can be expected of graduates in the subject, in terms of what they might know, do and understand on completing their studies.

In 2017:

- Subject benchmark statements for Computing and Tourism were approved and published.
- Work also began on producing benchmark statements for Economics and Business Administration in working groups made up of experts from Spain and abroad.

4. Institutional assessment

Certification of faculty-level internal quality assurance systems (IQAs)

AQU Catalunya has been assisting universities in the design of internal quality assurance systems (IQAs) through the AUDIT programme since 2007. IQAs were introduced into institutions in Catalonia several years ago and in 2017 the Agency developed the certification programme to evaluate IQAs implementation and issue, where applicable, the corresponding certification.



After testing the review methodology in one faculty at the Ramon Llull University and another at the Rovira i Virgili University, together with an open consultation with the university system in Catalonia, the Agency approved the new version of the *“Guide to the Certification of IQAs Implementation”*. New features in the Guide include the separation in the review process of the core IQAs processes handled by the university from IQAs processes that are dealt with at faculty level.

The certification of faculty IQAS implementation is planned on an annual basis by the Agency and the universities together. Institutions must submit an application for the certification for each faculty or school using the corresponding form, which is submitted to the official registry.

5. Support for the internationalisation of the university system in Catalonia

AQU Catalunya recognises the internationalisation of degree programmes delivered in Catalonia to be one of the areas that give great impetus to excellence in higher education. The two mechanisms used by the Agency are:

■ Internationalisation as an additional dimension in programme accreditation

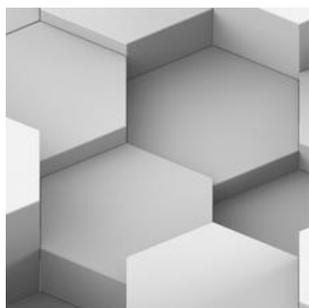
Internationalisation as an additional dimension for programme accreditation, which four (4) Master's programmes applied for, was reviewed and assessed by an international panel of experts nominated by AQU Catalunya. The use of external quality assurance procedures specifically designed for internationalisation activities is aimed at facilitating strategies undertaken by Catalan universities in this field.

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■ **Thematic certification of programmes (quality labels and seals)**

In accordance with the Framework for the positioning of AQU Catalunya with regard to "thematic", or subject-specific, quality labels (2014), AQU Catalunya started providing support for the Ramon Llull University to carry out reviews, on an integrated basis, for the accreditation of programmes to obtain the international subject-specific EUROMASTER label, which will be undertaken together with the Accreditation Agency Specialised in Accrediting Degree Programmes in Engineering (ASIIN), in the following programmes:

- Master's Degree in Pharmaceutical Chemistry
- Master's Degree in Analytical Chemistry



QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHING

1. Ex-ante (pre-selection) accreditation of university teaching staff

In 2017 AQU Catalunya continued to cooperate with the Government of Catalonia's Executive Council (Govern) in the call for applications for faculty staff recruitment at universities in Catalonia under the Serra Húnter programme. In the second calls for applications for tenure-eligible lecturing staff posts and research posts, a total number of 604 applications were received.

Reports for tenure-eligible lecturing staff

There was a 59% increase in the number of applications to the call for the recruitment of tenure-eligible lecturing staff at universities in 2017 compared to the previous year. The results of the calls for applications processed in 2017 were as follows:

Table 1. First call for applications in 2017: tenure-eligible teaching staff¹

<i>Field of knowledge</i>	<i>TS</i>	<i>TSR</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>RP</i>	<i>RE</i>	<i>RD</i>	<i>TF</i>	<i>TD</i>	<i>% F</i>
Humanities	77	8	0	50	17	2	0	0	50	19	72.5%

¹ TS, total applications; TSR, applications closed with no final decision; P, pending; F, successful; D, unsuccessful; RE, appeals upheld; RD, appeals dismissed; RP, pending an appeal; TF, total successful; TD, total unsuccessful; %F, successful as a % of the total (excluding applications closed with no final decision).

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Social Sciences	142	31	0	58	44	9	0	0	58	53	52.3%
Experimental Sciences	42	5	0	29	8	0	0	0	29	8	78.4%
Life Sciences	39	1	0	25	12	1	0	0	25	13	65.8%
Medicine and Health Sciences	66	7	0	46	11	2	0	0	46	13	78.0%
Engineering and Architecture	60	3	0	49	8	0	0	0	49	8	86.0%
Total	426	55	0	257	100	14	0	0	257	114	69.3%

Table 2. Second call for applications 2017 for tenure-eligible teaching staff

<i>Field of knowledge</i>	<i>TS</i>	<i>TSR</i>	<i>P</i>
Humanities	98	8	90
Social Sciences	213	40	173
Experimental Sciences	113	11	102
Life Sciences	100	10	90
Medicine and Health Sciences	96	10	86
Engineering and Architecture	160	22	138
Total	780	101	679

Accreditation of research and advanced research

In 2017 there was a 3% decrease in the number of applications submitted in the calls for applications from senior academic staff (associate professor and full professor staff) compared to 2016. The results of the calls processed in 2017 were as follows:

Table 3. First call for applications in 2017 - associate professors

<i>Field of knowledge</i>	<i>TS</i>	<i>TSR</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>TF</i>	<i>TD</i>	<i>% F</i>
Humanities	29	0	18	8	18	11	62.1%
Social Sciences	56	1	25	20	25	30	45.5%

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Experimental Sciences	17	1	12	3	12	4	75.0%
Life Sciences	23	1	10	10	10	12	45.5%
Medicine and Health Sciences	67	1	33	25	33	33	50.0%
Engineering and Architecture	36	2	32	2	32	2	94.1%
Total	228	6	130	68	130	92	58.6%

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Table 4. Second call for applications in 2017 - associate professors

<i>Field of knowledge</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>TSR</i>	<i>P</i>
Humanities	31	4	27
Social Sciences	126	30	96
Experimental Sciences	33	3	30
Life Sciences	29	3	26
Medicine and Health Sciences	83	3	80
Engineering and Architecture	63	8	55
Total	365	51	314

Table 5. First call for applications in 2017 - full professors

<i>Committee</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>TSR</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>RP</i>	<i>TF</i>	<i>TD</i>	<i>% F</i>
Humanities	12	0	6	5	1	6	6	50.0%
Social Sciences	26	0	11	14	1	11	15	42.3%
Experimental Sciences	13	0	12	1	0	12	1	92.3%
Life Sciences	6	0	2	4	0	2	4	33.3%
Medicine and Health Sciences	19	0	10	8	1	10	9	52.6%
Engineering and Architecture	22	1	20	1	0	20	1	95.2%
Total	98	1	61	33	3	61	36	62.9%

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Table 6. Second call for applications in 2017 - full professors

<i>Committee</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>TSR</i>	<i>P</i>
Humanities	13	3	10
Social Sciences	37	3	34
Experimental Sciences	13	1	12
Life Sciences	7	0	7
Medicine and Health Sciences	12	0	12
Engineering and Architecture	20	2	18
Total	102	9	93

Teaching assessment certificates

One application was received during 2017, which was successfully assessed.

2. Assessment of merits in research, teaching and management

The provision of additional salary allowances to public service and contract teaching and research staff at public universities in Catalonia is based on the assessment of individual merits in teaching, research and management².

It should be noted that in 2017 temporary assistant professors were assessed using the same assessment criteria and procedures as for all other contract teaching and research staff, pursuant to Sentence 40/2017, 9 February, by the Administrative Disputes Court in Barcelona.

In the call for applications for the assessment of merits in research of public service teaching and research staff at public universities and teaching and research staff at private universities and affiliated and partner schools and institutes, AQU

² Decree 405/2006, 24 October, whereby additional salary allowances were established for both public service (civil servant) and contract teaching and research staff at public universities in Catalonia.

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Catalunya introduced a new procedure for the submission of applications, with changes to the way in which abbreviated CVs are to be submitted. Instead of attaching a PDF document, applicants can now just fill out an online form that automatically loads their submissions from the Research in Catalonia website (Portal de Recerca de Catalunya) via ORCID. This change simplifies the process for both applicants and reviewers as it ensures that publications that are uploaded automatically with the necessary information for assessment are valid.

By now there are more than 600 researchers who know about this feature and around 400 have already cross-loaded information from the PRC (67%).

Merits in research

Table 7. Applications for the issuance of reports in recognition of research according to field of knowledge

<i>Committee</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>TSR</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>TF</i>	<i>TD</i>	<i>% F</i>
Humanities	90	7	76	7	76	7	91.6%
Social Sciences	121	3	114	4	114	4	96.6%
Experimental Sciences	117	1	114	2	114	2	98.3%
Life Sciences	62	0	62	0	62	0	100.0%
Medicine and Health Sciences	53	0	46	7	46	7	86.8%
Engineering and Architecture	106	5	98	3	98	3	97.0%
Total	549	16	510	23	510	23	95.7%

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Table 8. 2017 call for applications from public service teaching and research staff at public universities

Committee	TS	TSR	F	D	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	79	10	44	18	44	18	63.8%
Social Sciences	134	16	90	21	90	21	76.3%
Experimental Sciences	69	9	54	4	54	4	90.0%
Life Sciences	49	1	42	4	42	4	87.5%
Medicine and Health Sciences	75	23	36	14	36	14	69.2%
Engineering and Architecture	103	7	85	7	85	7	88.5%
Total	509	66	351	68	351	68	79.2%

Evaluation of six-year periods of research and the award of research premiums by agreement

AQU Catalunya maintain different agreements to review and assess the research and related activities of teaching staff and researchers at private universities in Catalonia, research staff at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC) and the following affiliated institutions: the Catalan Institute for Physical Education (INEFC), which is affiliated with the University of Barcelona (UB) and the University of Lleida; the TecnoCampus Foundation (Mataró-Maresme), affiliated with the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC) and the Pompeu Fabra University; the EUSS School of Engineering, affiliated with the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB); the EUSES School of Health and Sport, which is affiliated with the University of Girona; the El Mar Nursing College (ESIM), affiliated with the Pompeu Fabra University; and the College of Mediterranean Tourism (EU Mediterrani), affiliated with the University of Girona.

The criteria and procedures are the same as those used in the review and assessment of research and related activities by public service and contract teaching and research staff at public universities in Catalonia.

Table 9. Institutions with which AQU Catalunya maintains agreements for the assessment of six-year periods of research and the award of research premiums. Results for 2017

Institution	T	TSR	F	D	RP	TF	TD	% F
Private universities in Catalonia	124	11	89	18	6	89	24	71.8%
Affiliated institutions	25	4	12	7	2	12	9	48%

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Research staff at UPC	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	100%
Total	150	15	102	25	8	102	33	68%

Merits in teaching and management

Merit-based evaluation of teaching: teaching quality assurance handbooks

The certification of merits in teaching and management is dealt with by the Teaching and Management Assessment Committee (CEAADG).

In 2017, the CEAADG certified the merits in teaching and management and monitored the use of the teaching quality assurance handbook at the Open University of Catalonia.

The Agency also certified the review reports on the merits in teaching of teaching staff produced by the public universities in Catalonia, using the model provided in their respective teaching assessment handbooks.

Table 10. Results of the 2016 call for certification of the merit-based evaluation of teaching

<i>Potential applicants</i> ³	<i>Total applicants</i>	<i>Percentage applications</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Percentage positive/ applications</i>	<i>Unfavourable</i>	<i>Percentage positive/ potential</i>
2.647	1.709	64.5%	1.579	92.4%	67	64.6%

³ The number of potential applicants includes teaching staff from previous calls for applications with the option to participate in the 2016 call for applications.

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Merit-based evaluation of skills in management

Table 11. Results of the 2016 call for applications for certification of the review of merits in management

6-year periods assessed	Positive	Unfavourable	1st period	2nd period	3rd period	4th period
277	277	0	104	74	58	41

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



KNOWLEDGE GENERATION AND TRANSFER

1. Surveys and indicators of the university system in Catalonia

The transition into employment of graduates (graduate employment outcomes study surveys)

AQU Catalunya has coordinated the three-yearly survey study of graduate destinations in Catalonia over the last sixteen years. The purpose of this project by the public universities, under the auspices of their social councils, and the private universities in Catalonia, is to gather data and benchmarks on the quality of the employment outcomes of graduates in the labour market. The sixth survey was carried out in the first quarter of 2017 and involved 27,715 people, or 48.1% of the reference population.



Table 12. 2017 Graduate destination survey

	<i>Population</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Sample error</i>
First degree Individuals who graduated in the 2012-2013 academic year (Medicine 2009-2010)	30,262	15,563	51.4%	0.56%
Master's Individuals who graduated in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 academic years	19,824	8,747	44.1%	0.80%

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Doctorate/PhD

Individuals who graduated in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 academic years

2,546	1,358	53.4%	1.85%
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The studies again confirm that the higher the level of education, the better the employment outcomes.

The descriptive findings of the survey of first degree (bachelor's) graduates have been released on the new EUC-Dades portal, which was developed for this purpose: <http://estudis.aqu.cat/dades>

One new development in the sixth survey of graduate destinations by AQU Catalunya (2017) is the participation of institutions delivering first degree, bachelor-equivalent programmes in Arts higher education programmes.

IDESCAT population-based survey of graduate destinations

AQU Catalunya, with the help of the Statistics Institute of Catalonia (IDESCAT), is promoting a survey of graduate destinations based on the registration details of the baseline population of graduates given in IDESCAT censuses. This survey serves to complement the three-yearly survey for the years in which the three-yearly survey is not carried out. During 2017 the work of cross-checking the data began in what is a preliminary stage in the integration of this data into scheduling at IDESCAT.

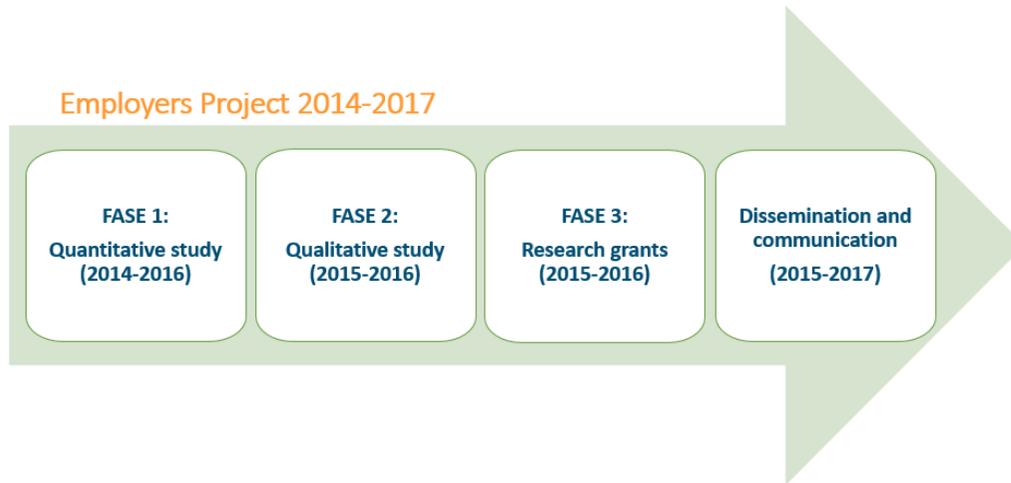
Graduate employment outcomes and employability, from the perspective of employers

Through an agreement signed with the Government of Catalonia, "la Caixa" Bank Foundation collaborates with the Agency to carry out a study on the transition to employment of graduates from the point of view of employers. The purpose of the study and accompanying survey, which complement the three-yearly survey of the employment outcomes of graduates of universities in Catalonia, is to give universities insight into prevailing perceptions in the labour market regarding the skills, education and training of graduates on completing their studies at university.

During 2017, work was carried out to bring to a close the first stage of the Employers project 2014-2017 and to start the first stage of the second project, covering the three-year period from 2017-2019.

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Employers Project stages:



The activities carried out during 2017 involved the stage of dissemination and communication of the results and findings, with the reports from the (grant scheme) research into the project's results and findings being published on the AQU Catalunya website.

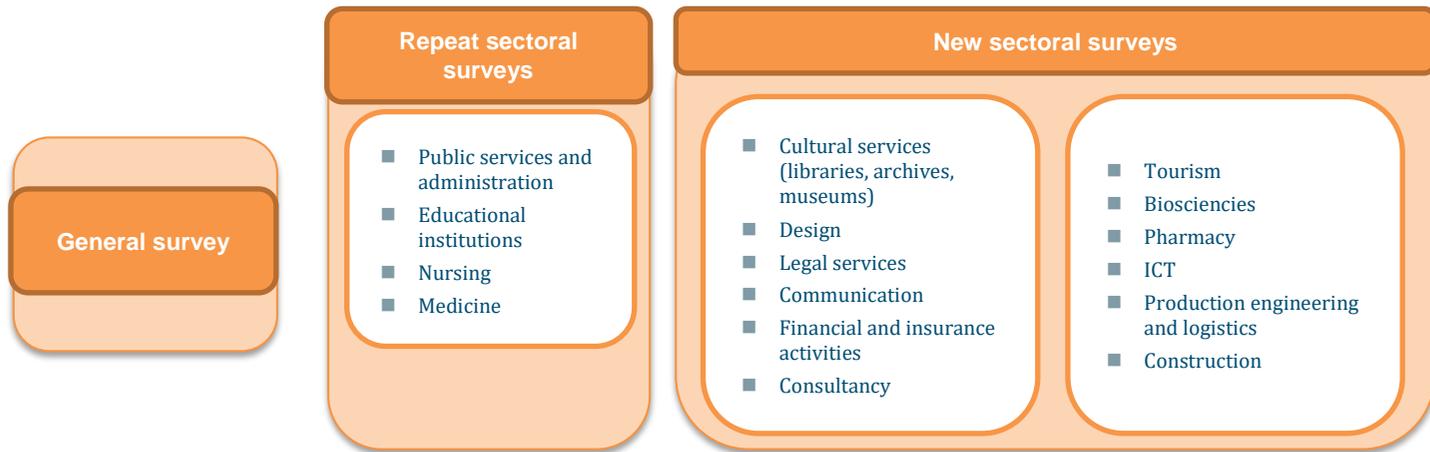
Four workshops and events were also organised in relation to the four surveys carried out in Nursing, Medicine, Education and Engineering.

Employers project 2017-2019

As a result of the interest shown in the results and findings of the surveys in the first Employers project (in public services and administration, education, medicine and nursing), the number of surveys with a sector-adapted design in the second project has been increased to sixteen (sectors). The general survey will again be carried out as well to obtain the opinions of enterprises not falling into any of the given specific sectors.

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Figure 1. The various surveys in the second Employers project



During 2017 the general survey was updated and adapted to the specific sectors, which mainly concerned the section with the definition of the specific skills for professional practice. Academics and professionals from professional bodies and associations collaborated with the Agency in adapting the surveys. The following universities and entities collaborated in the project:



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Graduate satisfaction survey (first degree and master's programmes)

The purpose of this project is to produce benchmarks for the university system in Catalonia on graduate satisfaction with their education, learning outcomes, services and facilities at university. The survey provides common indicators for use by programme coordinators to improve and enhance programmes of study and higher education as a whole.

Field work was carried out between December 2016 and January 2017 for the second survey of first degree graduates who completed their studies at the end of the 2015-2016 academic year. All seven public universities in Catalonia together with four private universities participated in the survey.

The third satisfaction survey of first degree graduates was started on 1 December 2017, together with the first Master's satisfaction survey of graduates who had completed a Master's degree in the 2016-2017 academic year.

Vía Universitaria survey

2017 saw the signing of the Agreement to establish the collaborative framework between the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya) and the Joan Lluís Vives Institute for a second edition of the Vía Universitaria programme covering access and admission, learning environments, student expectations and the return that students obtain from the courses they take. Under the agreement, AQU Catalunya is in charge of the technical supervision of the programme, which consists of four stages: the preparatory work, the field work, dissemination and discussion of the results and findings, and new forms of data mining and future opportunities for the programme.

Work on this during 2017 involved the revision and definition of the questionnaire for the second survey, and preparations were made for the field work in coordination with the programme's scientific supervision and executive management.

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The Engineering Observatory

AQU Catalunya continued to collaborate with the Professional Association of Industrial Engineers of Catalonia (COEIC) within the framework of the Engineering Observatory (*Observatori de l'Enginyeria*).

The aim of the project is to produce a report on the current situation of engineering in Catalonia, as well as its international standing and the competitive development of Catalan industry and enterprises over the next ten years. During 2017 the Engineering Observatory carried out a broad-based survey of engineers in Catalonia and the business and institutional context in which they work.

AQU Catalunya participated due to the fact that it has the necessary centralised databases to undertake surveys using information from professional bodies and associations, as well as higher education institutions in Catalonia.

The results and findings are the subject of a report, *El Observatorio de la Ingeniería*, which was presented on 6 July 2017 at an event organised by the Observatory at the Museo de las Aguas in Cornellà de Llobregat.

Programme catalogue

AQU Catalunya's programme catalogue, which was approved in 2016, classifies degree programmes according to four levels of aggregation, which provides for both internal harmonization and external comparability. This structure is used in all surveys (graduate destinations and satisfaction) carried out by AQU Catalunya and is constantly updated.

Indicators of the university system in Catalonia

AQU Catalunya is acutely aware of the importance of indicators for decision-making in the quality assurance and enhancement of programmes and the analysis of specific aspects of higher education and the university system.

The Agency, in cooperation with the Secretariat for Universities and Research, provides HEIs with the necessary indicators for the monitoring and accreditation of recognised degree programmes. These indicators are currently available on two platforms, WINDDAT and EUC-Dades.

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2017 saw the launch of the EUC-Dades web portal (<http://estudis.aqu.cat/dades>), a trilingual search engine (in Catalan, Spanish and English) of the results and findings of the six surveys of the employment outcomes (graduate destinations) of the graduate population in Catalonia carried out up until the present time. The search engine provides qualitative figures for each of the six three-yearly graduate surveys (2001, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017), grouped according to each degree programme.

2. Workshops and events

The following events were organised during 2017:

Improving the training of nurses

Held in the Hall of the Rectors Building, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Cerdanyola del Vallès - 15 February 2017

This event provided the opportunity for the various actors responsible for nursing training to discuss different aspects of nurse education and training. AQU Catalunya published a document of conclusions with the contributions made during the event entitled Challenges regarding training and professional qualification in Nursing.

190 people signed up for the event.

Ways to improve the training of medical students

Auditorium of the University of Barcelona's Faculty of Medicine and Sciences, Barcelona - 15 March 2017

A document of conclusions entitled Challenges regarding training and professional qualification in Medicine was published with the contributions made during the event.

146 people signed up for the event.



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Incorporating evidence into decision-making

Palau Macaya, Barcelona - 16 May 2017

This symposium was jointly organised by the Catalan Institute for Public Policy Evaluation (Ivàlua), the Agency for Health Quality and Assessment of Catalonia (AQuAS), the Catalan Ministries of the Vice-presidency and Economy and Finance, and the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya).

JORNADA: COM INCORPORAR
L'EVIDÈNCIA A LA PRESA
DE DECISIONS



Teacher training: from access to university to professional practice

Palau Macaya, Barcelona - 27 June 2017

The purpose of this workshop was for the Agency to present aspects identified within the framework of education and international standards, and to encourage discussion, reflection and the proposal of actions to improve and enhance the training of pre-school and school teaching staff.

174 people signed up for the workshop.

Presentation of the results and findings of the sixth survey of the employment outcomes of graduates from Catalan universities

Vèrtex building Auditorium, Campus Nord, Polytechnic University of Catalonia, Barcelona - 12 July 2017

This event was organised to present the results and findings of the sixth survey of the employment outcomes of first degree graduates and doctoral degree/PhD graduates from universities in Catalonia.

177 people signed up for the event.

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Ways to improve the training and skills of Engineering students in industrial sectors and logistics

Diagonal-Besòs Campus Auditorium, Polytechnic University of Catalonia, Barcelona - 12 December 2017

The workshop served as a point of departure for the discussion of the challenges facing programmes in Engineering as well as proposals for improving and enhancing the

training and skills of Engineering students. The main challenges facing programmes in Engineering in the industrial field and logistics were subsequently compiled in [this publication](#).

148 people signed up for the workshop.



COM MILLORAR LA FORMACIÓ DELS ENGINYERS
I LES ENGINYERES DE L'ÀMBIT INDUSTRIAL I LA LOGÍSTICA?
12 de desembre a la Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya



INTERNATIONALISATION

1. International institutional relations

AQU Catalunya withdrew from the European Consortium for Accreditation, due to the Agency's need to focus all efforts and resources on other projects and areas of activity. The main organisations that AQU Catalunya continued to maintain relations with during 2017 are described below.

INQAAHE

Beginning in October 2013 and through until 30 June 2018, **AQU Catalunya hosted the Secretariat of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)**, an international association with more than 300 organisations involved in the quality assurance of higher education, the majority of which are QA agencies.

The Agency's activities in hosting the organisation's Secretariat focused mainly on the management of annual calls and projects, support for the Board of Directors, support for the members and economic management.



ENQA

AQU Catalunya has been a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) since the association was founded in 2000. The



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Agency actively participates in various different ENQA working groups, including the **Internal Quality Assurance** working group, the main mission of which is to analyse and provide insight into the outcomes of the ENQA external review process; the **Impact of quality assurance** working group (finished), the main focus of which was to reflect on the impact of the quality assurance in higher education; the **Quality assurance and recognition** working group, set up to map current practices on the external quality assurance of academic recognition among institutions and ENQA agencies; and the **Quality assurance and E-learning** working group, coordinated by AQU Catalunya, with the general purpose of establishing a series of recommendations for the quality assurance of e-provision.

EQAR

The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) is a register of QA agencies that have demonstrated substantial compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance.

AQU Catalunya has been registered with EQAR since 5 December 2008 and was one of the first three QA agencies to be listed on the register.

2. International projects

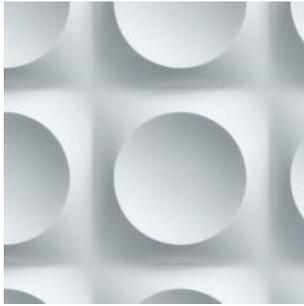
The international projects that the Agency participated in during 2017 were as follows:

- An Adaptive Trust-based e-assessment System for Learning, **TeSLA** (in progress, started in 2016).
- Linking Academic Recognition and Quality Assurance, **LIREQA** (in progress, started in 2016).
- Database of External Quality Assurance Reports, DEQAR (in progress, started in 2017)
- Development of Public Accreditation of Agricultural programmes in Russia, **PACAgro** (finished, 2014-2017).
- Enhancing Quality of Technology-Enhanced Learning at Jordanian Universities, **EQTeL** (finished, 2015-2017).

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3. International quality assurance and exchange

- Programme review at the University of Andorra: within the framework of the collaboration arrangement between AQU Catalunya and the Government of Andorra's Department of Higher Education, an addendum was agreed and signed for the external review of different degree programmes delivered at the University of Andorra during the 2017-2018 academic year. The reviews, to be finalised in 2018, are based on the VSMA Framework.
- Exchange: AQU Catalunya has actively participated in events, forums and projects that contribute added value to the university system and higher education in Catalonia and which publicise and disseminate the Agency's activities at international level and enable it to keep abreast with the latest developments in quality assurance. Throughout 2017, the Agency presented a total number of 21 papers in 21 international events.



STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

1. Strategic management and external relations

European standards and guidelines compliance review

All QA agencies in Europe must undergo an external review once every five years of their compliance with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015)* in all review procedures that they undertake, in order for their decisions to be recognised across Europe.

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) coordinated the external review of AQU Catalunya, which was carried out between 5-8 February 2017. The review panel issued an external review report that served as the basis for the ENQA Board and EQAR Committee (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) to renew AQU Catalunya's full membership of ENQA and maintain its EQAR listing.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2015-2018

AQU Catalunya continued to deploy the Strategic Plan for 2015-2018 through the annual activities approved by the Governing Board. The Plan underpins the quality of the technical aspects of the Agency's activities and aims at ensuring that international best practices are taken into account and incorporated as much as possible, increased involvement by the universities and other HEIs in the Agency's activities and enhanced visibility for AQU Catalunya among the different stakeholder groups, while maintaining its rigorous standards.

Compliance with the Strategic Plan during 2017 has been assessed at 68% of what was initially planned.

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State relations

During 2017 AQU Catalunya hosted the Technical Secretariat of REACU, the national body that coordinates the network of higher education QA agencies in Spain and organised two meetings in Barcelona that the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Andorra attended as a guest.

Relations between AQU Catalunya and other QA agencies in Spain developed favourably and the Agency presented papers at five events organised by other agencies.

2. Governing, assessment and advisory bodies

AQU Catalunya's governing and assessment bodies are:

- Governing Board and Standing Committee
- Institutional and Programme Review Commission (CAIP)
- Research Assessment Commission
- Appeals Committee

AQU Catalunya's advisory bodies are:

- Advisory Committee
- Vice Rectors Committee
- University QA units Committee
- Student Advisory Committee
- University Councils Committee (including representatives of private universities)
- Technical Committee for Surveys

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1. Communication

EUC web portal

AQU Catalunya inaugurated the EUC web portal (*Estudis Universitaris de Catalunya*), a trilingual search engine (in Catalan, Spanish and English) with information on the quality as well as quality assurance of recognised first degree and master's degree programmes at universities and other HEIs in Catalonia. Produced in cooperation with the Secretariat for Universities and Research and the universities in Catalonia, the aim of the new EUC portal, in accordance with ENQA standards, is to draw attention to the results of external site visits and the accreditation of recognised programmes, in addition to presenting programme quality in a way that is easy to comprehend for all stakeholders.



EUC Reports (*EUC Informes*)

The EUC Reports web portal was launched in 2016. Following on from the Agency's first web portal which was launched in 2011 for the publishing of QA reports on programme delivery, the new web portal also includes the publication of reports on Arts higher education programmes that come under the jurisdiction of the Government of Catalonia's Ministry of Education.



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Website

Work started in 2017 to renew the Agency's corporate website, the first stage of which is the content analysis and conceptualisation. Amongst other things, the purpose of the renewal is to make the website more accessible so that users can find relevant information quickly and intuitively.



YouTube

AQU Catalunya started a YouTube channel in 2015 to increase its presence in social networks and disseminate its activities. The channel received 1,475 visits in 2017.

During 2017, all papers presented at workshops and events organised by AQU Catalunya were published on the channel. Nevertheless, the video with the highest number of accumulated visits (2,000) was the *Guide to accreditation*.



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Twitter

At the end of 2017 the AQU Catalunya Twitter account had 1,233 followers, which represented a 33% increase in the total number compared to 2016, and 263 tweets were sent. In addition, there were 499 mentions of @aqucatalunya and 12,000 profile visits.



Media outlets

During 2017 there were 18 citations in written news media.

In addition, the director and the president of the Agency published an editorial article in La Vanguardia (23/03/2017) newspaper on the quality and employment outcomes of degree programmes.

Online newsletter (*eButlletí*)

The four corresponding issues for the year (numbers 84 to 88) of AQU's online newsletter (*eButlletí*) in Catalan, Spanish and English were produced and sent to 10,900 subscribers.

Publications

AQU Catalunya produced 23 publications in 2017, including the reports with the findings of the survey of graduate employment outcomes and the Employers study project; the methodology for the accreditation of Arts higher education programmes; two subject benchmark statement reports for Tourism and Computing, and the *Annual report for 2016*.

INTERNAL ORGANISATION

During 2017, AQU Catalunya addressed key aspects of accountability and optimisation in the allocation of human and physical resources to the different projects and activities undertaken by the Agency

AQU Catalunya's quality management and information security system successfully passed the external certification audit according to ISO 9001:2008 and ISO 27001:2013, which was carried out by AENOR. The highpoint in this regard in 2017, however, was the Agency's successful adaptation to the new edition of ISO 9001: 2015.

In relation to the external users of AQU Catalunya, 40 expressions of satisfaction were received, associated mainly with the Agency's support for teaching assessment procedures and the committees dealing with teaching staff and quality assurance, together with 103 website enquiries, mainly concerning procedures involving teaching staff, the official nature of degree qualifications and students' problems.

Within the framework of the deployment of the Strategic Plan for 2015-2018, an internal communications matrix was defined in order to clearly identify content that needs to be communicated internally.

The AQU Catalunya register, which is the official e-Administration register, registered 5,793 entries in 2017, which was 5% more than the previous year. This increase was due to the increase in the number of applications for assessment from teaching staff. Work also began on the process of adaptation in compliance with Act 39/2015, as a result of which electronic registration will come into effect on 2 October 2018. AQU Catalunya is also gradually adapting its instruments and formalities to the requirements of e-Government. In 2017, the Agency started to use e-Valisa, a tool made available by the Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya) for sending and registering documents in electronic format online and in real time.

In the area of management information systems, of particular note was the development and implementation in AQU's extranet of the functions for the online assessment and evaluation of accreditation protocols and additional dimensions (from now on, accreditation reports will be produced automatically from the data that are entered); the online abbreviated CV form was developed and introduced; and the new EUC-Dades website was developed and launched.

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With regard to IT systems, the Agency signed up to CSUC's Eduroam service; the new Basecamp virtual meetings software was installed, along with the ZOOM application for video-conferences; and compliance was established with the controls specified in ISO 27002 standard for information security, with the migration to a higher level risk management tool (Pilar) and the acquisition and installation of a new SAI.

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Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya

July 2018 · AQU-12-2018



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