

AQU CATALUNYA ANNUAL ACTIVITIES AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REPORT 2024





AQU CATALUNYA

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BARCELONA, 2025

© Author: Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya, 2025
C. d'Enric Granados, 33
08007 Barcelona

Approved by the AQU Catalunya Governing Board on 2 April 2025.

First edition: July 2025

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FOREWORD

Every year, AQU Catalunya compiles the Activities and Corporate Social Responsibility Report to update both the university community and society at large on the work we have carried out. While preparing this report may be an obligation, it also serves as a valuable opportunity for reflection, allowing us to review our accomplishments so that we can improve our practices and foster innovative thinking beyond the well-structured framework of our Strategic Plan.

This document contains detailed information about the work we have undertaken during the year, structured, as always, under headings corresponding to the different areas of commitment. I want to take this opportunity to comment on two non-routine activities undertaken in 2024, which are included in this report and are particularly relevant to the Agency's assessment activities: the new criteria for teacher accreditation and the work to prepare the Framework for Improving the Institutional Quality of the Catalan Higher Education System.

The alignment of teacher accreditation criteria with the provisions of Organic Law 2/2023 of 22 March on the university system (LOSU) has been a pressing issue in the area of teaching staff. It involved establishing new assessment criteria that would introduce substantial changes to the existing arrangements. The work to adapt the criteria has involved many hours of reflection and in-depth discussions to ensure we meet the requirements of the law while upholding the high academic quality standards that the Catalan Higher Education System should strive to achieve. I am confident that exceptional work has been done in this area, and I would like to express my gratitude to the Research Assessment Commission (CAR) for its efforts. I especially want to thank its president, Dr Maria Pau Ginebra Molins, as well as the presidents and members of the specific assessment commissions. This has been a substantial undertaking, achieved alongside the CAR's regular activities.

In the area of institutional assessment, we have made progress in developing the Framework for Improving the Institutional Quality of the Catalan Higher Education System. This framework, which we have named the QUALINS framework, is expected to be approved by the Governing Board at its first meeting in 2025. It has been a long process involving working meetings with vice-chancellors and university technical staff, multiple consultations (CAIP, Advisory Commission, etc.) and an open consultation with the universities at the end of the year. The document goes beyond the existing Framework for the Validation, Monitoring, Modification and Accreditation of Official University Degrees (VSMA Framework) and establishes institutional accreditation as the primary external quality assessment process in Catalonia. We anticipate that the new QUALINS framework will play a key role in the implementation and consolidation of institutional accreditation within the Catalan Higher Education System in the coming years.

I would also like to specifically address the future impact of two legislative changes that, while they have not yet affected our activities, will significantly influence them in the near future: the law regulating higher arts education and the implementation of research credentials.

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In 2024, the government approved Law 1/2024 of 7 June, regulating higher arts education and establishing the organisation and equivalences of professional arts education. The new law mandates that quality agencies will undertake the same activities currently conducted by AQU Catalunya, along with additional responsibilities, including institutional assessment and the accreditation of teaching and research activities undertaken by faculty members. The law also stipulates that quality agencies must adopt standardised criteria for assessing qualifications, institutions and teaching staff. We will need to wait for the full implementation of the law, which is progressing slowly, and for additional guidance from the Ministry of Education before we can assess its impact on the Agency's activities.

With regard to what we refer to simply as *department assessment*, meetings were held in 2024 with the Ministry for Research and Universities to make progress on defining a pilot plan for awarding a credential for excellence in research, development and innovation to departments, research institutes and affiliated centres of excellence, which must be implemented in accordance with the provisions of Catalonia's Law on Science.

Lastly, a note on a study that was completed in 2024 on *Equity in the Employment Outcomes and Social Mobility of Graduates from Catalan On-campus Universities*, which was presented to the AQU Catalunya Governing Board in December. We hope it will provide universities with evidence that enables them to make proposals for improvements in equity, which is undoubtedly an extremely important issue.

This report highlights the enormous amount of work carried out in a context of significant change in our environment; work that we have undertaken, as always, with the firm belief that it will benefit the public and contribute to improving the Catalan Higher Education System, which, ultimately, is our central mandate. The results presented in this report are the outcome of the work and good judgement of the Agency staff, the support and collaboration of the heads of Catalan universities and the Ministry for Research and Universities, and the numerous experts who collaborate with AQU Catalunya. Their dedication has enabled us to carry out the work documented in this report, and it is thanks to their efforts that the Agency has become a well-established and internationally respected organisation. Many thanks.

As my tenure as the Agency's director ends in September 2025, this is the last annual report in which I will appear as the individual accountable for a complete year of activities. I would like to take this opportunity to formally express my heartfelt thanks to everyone at the Agency for their commitment to the organisation and the support afforded to me during my time as director.

Jaume Valls Pasola
Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The AQU Catalunya annual activities and corporate social responsibility report 2024 is structured around the corporate social responsibility commitments the Agency strives to uphold. Each of these commitments, in turn, is linked to one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Agency's strategic lines of action:

Table 1. Alignment of AQU Catalunya's corporate social responsibility commitments with its strategic lines of action

Corporate social responsibility commitments	Strategic lines of action
Commitment to improving higher education	Institutional and programme quality Teaching staff quality Knowledge generation and transfer
Commitment to society	Knowledge generation and transfer
Commitment to good governance	Strategic management Internal organisation
Commitment to partnerships	Strategic management Internationalisation
Commitment to employees	Internal organisation

The assessment results included in this report were extracted as of 31 January 2025. The activities carried out by the Agency in 2024 are summarised below, by commitment and line of action:

COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION. This commitment encompasses all the actions aimed at improving the higher education system in Catalonia:



> Institutional quality

- > Work began on defining the new Framework for Improving the Institutional Quality of the Catalan Higher Education System, and a draft was drawn up and submitted for public consultation.
- > With regard to institutional assessments, 16 preliminary visits were organised in 2024 to certify the implementation of internal system of quality assurance, and the reports issued were favourable; in addition, 13 centres —faculties, schools and departments—

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obtained favourable assessment reports for initial institutional accreditation and, for the first time, an institution successfully completed the institutional accreditation renewal process. Also for the first time, AQU Catalunya began the process of monitoring the institutional accreditation of 18 institutions, and the second monitoring process for the *Teaching Assessment Handbook* of the Open University of Catalonia was completed, meaning that this university is now eligible to apply for accreditation.

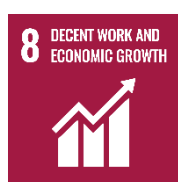
- > With regard to degree programme assessments, throughout the year, we continued to roll out the framework for the validation, monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised university degree programmes. In total, 333 degrees were assessed, representing an increase of 7% compared to the previous year: 75 validations, 29 follow-ups of degrees with conditions, 169 requests for modification and 60 degrees submitted for accreditation. The downward trend in the number of accredited degrees has continued due to the fact that some universities have now obtained institutional accreditation.
- > In the area of internationalisation, the European Approach methodology was applied to four joint international programmes and external visits were made to the medical faculties of two universities, the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of Lleida.
- > With regard to improving assessment processes, the most notable developments include the updating of assessment guidelines and procedures; the drafting of four reference frameworks for Nursing, Industrial Engineering, Biosciences, and Philology and Language Studies; and work to implement an assessment file manager that will provide immediate access to data on completed processes.
- > **Teaching staff quality**
 - > The bulk of the work in this area focused on adapting the teacher accreditation criteria to the LOSU requirements. A draft document has been drawn up and submitted for public consultation and is currently under review. The criteria for assessing six-year research periods were also adapted to the provisions of the LOSU, and measures have been put in place to ensure equality and work-life balance are taken into account in the assessment of teaching and research staff in teacher evaluation processes. 2024 was also the year in which the second call for assessment reports for tenure-eligible lecturers was concluded, a process that was eliminated in 2023, and on 8 April, the process for submitting applications for teacher accreditation was opened on a permanent basis.
 - > With regard to the issue of research accreditations prior to university teaching staff selection processes, 714 applications were received in 2024, representing a 38% decrease compared to 2023, undoubtedly due to the anticipated changes in the assessment criteria: 463 of the applications were for research accreditation and 251 were for advanced research accreditation. We continued to issue reports for Serra Hùnter Programme temporary teaching staff, which are designed for Catalan public

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university staff who have a contract as a tenure-eligible lecturer. A total of 56 applications were submitted within the framework of the Serra Húnter Programme.

- > As for the assessment of research merits, 487 applications were submitted in 2024 in the call for civil servant teaching and research staff (88 for assessment and 399 for recognition), 3% more than the year before. Non-civil servant teaching and research staff submitted 1,302 applications (1,230 for assessment and 72 for recognition), 13% more than the previous year. There were 281 research periods under agreement, 7% more than the previous year. We issued 99 reports recognising six-year periods of research activity (IRAR) for Ramón y Cajal and Beatriz Galindo research staff. AQU Catalunya also certified the teaching merits for the 2023 call (1,462 applicants) and received 10 applications for teaching merits. Lastly, 247 management periods were certified favourably.
- > There were 239 appeals lodged against the decisions of the Research Assessment Commission, 17% of which were upheld by the Appeals Commission.
- > **Knowledge generation and transfer.** In 2024, we continued to disseminate the results of the employment outcomes survey among university graduates from 2023 and began work on the 2026 study. We continued to analyse the employment outcomes survey data from the perspective of employers and launched the fourth edition of the survey. We continued to survey the satisfaction levels of graduates with bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and higher arts education qualifications, using a modified version of the survey in the fieldwork that took place from December. AQU Catalunya carried out the fieldwork for the fourth edition of the Via Universitaria survey, led by the Vives Network of Universities, given that it is responsible for its technical management. We continued our maintenance work on the Agency's data system and the various tools that allow it to organise its repository of assessment indicators. During the year, the study *Equity in access and employment outcomes in the Catalan Higher Education System* was completed and presented to the Ministry for Research and Universities and the Governing Board of AQU Catalunya.

COMMITMENT TO SOCIETY. This commitment encompasses all the work undertaken by AQU Catalunya to communicate the results of its actions to society:



- > **Knowledge transfer.** In 2024, we maintained the EUC Studies and EUC Reports portals and added a user-friendly tool that allows prospective university students to consult employment indicators for university degrees. Over the course of the year, the Agency organised a total of 4 conferences in both face-to-face and virtual formats, which

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together attracted more than 1,664 participants. AQU Catalunya published 53 publications, 21 of which were original.

- > **Communication tools.** AQU Catalunya disseminates its activities via the corporate website and other specific websites. We continued to publish our four annual newsletters, with a 3% increase in the number of subscribers (19,830) compared to the previous year. The LinkedIn account has 899 followers, 36% more than the previous year, and the posts have had 21,947 views, representing a 1.200% increase on last year's numbers. We posted 8 videos on the YouTube channel, twice as many as the year before, which received 7,626 views. Activity on the social media platform X (previously Twitter) was also maintained.

COMMITMENT TO GOOD GOVERNANCE. This commitment encompasses all the actions that AQU Catalunya takes to transparently ensure that it is responding appropriately to the goals it has set out:



- > **Strategic management.** AQU Catalunya approved the 2024-2027 Action Plan within the framework of the ESGs and defined 29 actions, of which 36% have been implemented. Work to implement the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan continued, with 41% of its objectives achieved. The Agency also continued to guarantee its governance through the smooth functioning of the governing bodies (Governing Board and Standing Commission) and review bodies (Institutional and Programme Review Commission, Research Assessment Commission and Appeals Commission), given that each of these bodies adopted resolutions while preserving their independence. Additionally, the Agency received input from its advisory bodies, including the Advisory Commission, the Vice-Rectors Committee competent in matters of quality and academic organisation, the University QA Units Committee and the Survey Committee, and the Student Advisory Committee was strengthened. During the year, 754 experts collaborated with AQU Catalunya on review tasks.
- > **Internal organisation.** AQU Catalunya has been accountable and transparent in the actions it has carried out. In 2024, 135 procurement files were prepared (119 for minor contracts and 16 for non-minor contracts), which were managed through the Government of Catalonia's electronic procurement file management system. In 2024, the Agency kept the quality and information security management system up and running, updating procedures and identifying 149 measures for improvement, 39% more than the previous year. During the year, the qualification and institution assessment file manager was developed, the IT application for permanently opening calls for teacher

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accreditation was updated, and the IT application technologies were upgraded. The budget was approximately €5.78 million, the 2023 accounts were audited, and the relevant legally required compliance audit was carried out. The Agency also participated in the cross-sectional controls and studies organised by the Government of Catalonia's General Comptroller's Office.

COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIPS. This commitment encompasses all the actions that AQU Catalunya undertakes together with social agents in Catalonia, as well as its institutional relations at national and international level, to ensure maximum visibility and to help improve higher education:



- > **Relations with social agents in Catalonia.** Within the Catalan higher education system, the Agency maintains relations primarily with the Ministry of Research and Universities and the Inter-university Council of Catalonia (CIC), where it sits on several commissions. During 2024, we also participated in the new commission created by the CIC on University Teaching Policy. The Agency also liaises with the Ministry of Education to manage the assessment and quality of higher arts education.
- > **National institutional relations.** AQU Catalunya continued to participate in the Spanish Network of University Quality Agencies [Red Española de Agencias de Calidad Universitaria] (REACU) and maintained relations with other state quality agencies. In the case of REACU, minimum standardised criteria for faculty accreditation processes were agreed upon.
- > **International institutional relations.** The Agency kept its membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), and the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), and in July it became a member of the Global Academic Integrity Network (GAIN). Additionally, it maintained its status on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and continued to be recognised by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) while also adhering to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). In addition, throughout the year, we continued our involvement in European projects (REMOTE, QaDOC). Our personnel also gave talks, participated in discussions on quality assurance at an international level, and took part in exchange experiences.

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COMMITMENT TO EMPLOYEES. This commitment encompasses all the actions that AQU Catalunya carries out for its staff, so that they remain committed to their roles and are able to successfully deal with change:



- > **Human resources.** In 2024, AQU Catalunya began rolling out its 2024-2027 Equality Plan, implementing 21% of the measures. The Governing Board also approved AQU Catalunya's public offer of employment for 2025. Additionally, we maintained our Training Plan, which adopts the gender perspective in human resources management.

Further information on all the activities carried out by AQU Catalunya in 2024 is provided in the following pages.

COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION



INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAMME QUALITY

This chapter provides details of the activities related to the external evaluation of the quality of recognised university degree programmes and the institutions that offer them.

The review commissions in charge of this task are the Institutional and Programme Review Commission and its associated specific commissions.

Review of the assessment framework

The first *Framework for the validation, monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised university degree programmes* was approved in 2010, the second edition was published in 2016, and in 2024, work began on the *Framework for improving the institutional quality of the Catalan Higher Education System*, which is intended to replace the earlier framework.

In 2024, AQU Catalunya organised two discussion sessions with universities to hear their views on the new framework and presented a draft to the vice-chancellors for quality. To gather the opinions of the universities, AQU Catalunya has opened a period for contributions and comments from 15 December to 22 January 2025.

Review and quality assurance of institutions

In this section, AQU Catalunya includes activities related to the institutional accreditation of centres—a process that is gradually replacing the accreditation of study programmes—which comprises the certification of the implementation of internal systems for quality assurance (IQAS) and the institutional accreditation renewal process. In addition, as another form of institutional assessment, the Agency carries out the accreditation of the teaching assessment handbooks used in Catalan universities.

Certification of the implementation of internal quality assurance systems (IQAS)

The [IQAS certification](#) programme is a voluntary process whose objective is to verify that the internal quality assurance system is implemented in the institution and that it ensures the quality of the degree programmes within its scope.

In 2024, the new version of the [Guide to Internal Quality Assurance System Certification in Higher Education Institutions](#), which now includes doctoral schools and lifelong learning, came into force. The new [procedure for the certification of internal quality assurance systems in higher education institutions](#) was also implemented. It includes the option of evaluating, prior to the certification of the institution's IQAS, any cross-cutting elements the IQAS of the university it forms part of. This assessment does not lead to a certificate, but the results are taken into account in the subsequent certification of the IQAS for the institution as a whole.

The external visits organised during 2024 followed the model approved by the Institutional and Programme Review Commission, which provides for an online preliminary visit and an in-person certification visit.

Lastly, AQU Catalunya organised three training sessions, in which twenty-seven experts received training on the methodology of this assessment process.

Results

In 2024, the process of evaluating the cross-cutting elements applied to the IQAS of the University of Girona's integrated faculties and schools was completed with a favourable result.

Additionally, ten preliminary certification visits were carried out at various other centres to analyse key aspects of the implementation of the IQAS and to decide whether the certification process can be continued as initially planned.

COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION

Table 2. Centres at which a preliminary visit was conducted (2024 call)

Centre	University
Faculty of Psychology	UB
Faculty of Pharmacy and Food Sciences	UB
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine	UAB
Phd/Doctoral school	UAB
Phd/Doctoral school	UPC
School of Agri-Food and Biosystems Engineering of Barcelona	UPC
School of Telecommunications and Aerospace Engineering in Castelldefels	UPC
Barcelona School of Architecture	UPC
El Vallès School of Architecture	UPC
Phd/Doctoral school	UPF
School of Engineering and Department of Information and Communications Technologies	UPF
Faculty of Translation and Language Sciences and Department of Translation and Language Sciences	UPF
TecnoCampus University Centre	UPF
Faculty of Oenology	URV
Technical School	UdL
Faculty of Education, Psychology and Social Work	UdL

Within the framework of the IQAS implementation certification process, in 2024 AQU Catalunya completed five certification processes pertaining to the 2023 call for applications and carried out seven external visits to centres that form part of the 2024 call for applications. The results were as follows:

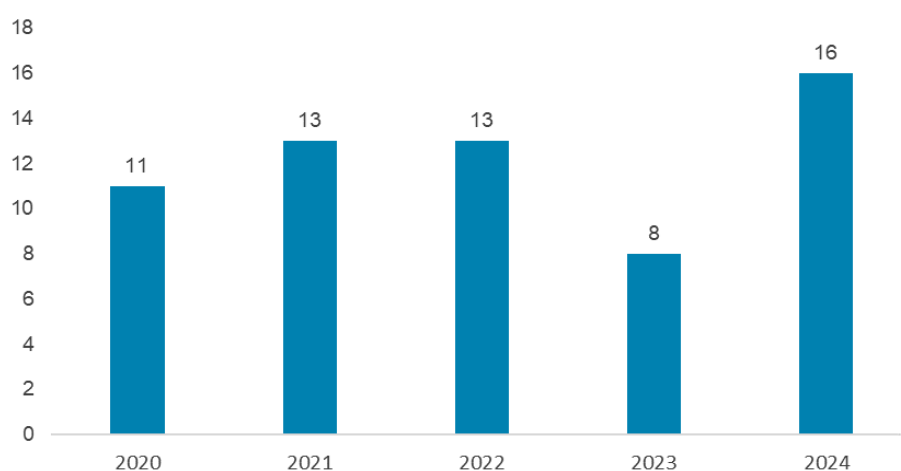
Table 3. Centres participating in the 2023 IQAS implementation certification process that have completed the process in 2024 and centres that have started the process in 2024

Centre	University	Result	Call
Faculty of Earth Sciences	UB	Positive	2024
Faculty of Translation and Interpretation	UAB	Positive	2024
Barcelona School of Industrial Engineering	UPC	Positive	2024
Manresa Technical School of Engineering	UPC	Positive	2024
Vilanova i la Geltrú School of Engineering	UPC	Positive	2024

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Centre	University	Result	Call
Faculty of Philology and Communication	UB	Positive	2024
Phd/Doctoral school	UAB	Positive	2024
Phd/Doctoral school	UPC	Positive	2024
School of Industrial Aerospace and Audiovisual Engineering of Terrassa	UPC	Positive	2024
School of Agri-Food and Biosystems Engineering of Barcelona	UPC	Positive	2024
School of Telecommunications and Aerospace Engineering in Castelldefels	UPC	Positive	2024
Phd/Doctoral school	UPF	Positive	2024
School of Engineering	UPF	Positive	2024
Department of Information and Communications Technologies	UPF	Positive	2024
Faculty of Nursing and Physiotherapy	UdL	Positive	2024
Technical School	UdL	Positive	2024
Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering	UVic-UCC	Positive	2024
Faculty of Psychology	UB	Pending	2024
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine	UAB	Pending	2024
Faculty of Oenology	URV	Pending	2024
Faculty of Education, Psychology and Social Work	UdL	Pending	2024

Graph 1. Evolution of the number of centres receiving external visits as part of their IQAS implementation certification process (2020–2024)



COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION

Centres that have their internal system for quality assurance certified receive a certificate and a seal for differentiation purposes. The reports with their results can be consulted at [EUC Reports](#) and the [Database of External Quality Assurance Results of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education \(EQAR\)](#).



Institutional accreditation

[Institutional accreditation](#) in Catalonia is a voluntary process that was first introduced in 2018 to simplify the external assessment processes of recognised university degrees. Specifically, instead of accrediting individual degrees, the centre that delivers them is accredited, and the compliance with the standards established in a continuous improvement scheme is validated.

The current regulatory framework stipulates that universities that have accredited at least 50% of their bachelor's degrees, 50% of their master's degrees and 50% of their doctoral programmes and that have a certified internal system for quality assurance (IQAS) may obtain initial institutional accreditation.

After three years, AQU Catalunya conducts a follow-up assessment of the institutional accreditation obtained by the institution to identify any weaknesses in the delivery of the study programmes and prepare for the future accreditation process.

Six years after the initial institutional accreditation, the institution must undergo an accreditation renewal process that includes an internal study and an external evaluation, the aim of which is to verify that the institution continues to effectively ensure the quality of the university education it offers and that the results are as expected, both in the disciplinary fields and in the educational levels of its degree programmes.

Results

Initial institutional accreditation

In 2024, thirteen centres —faculties, schools and departments— received a favourable evaluation report for initial institutional accreditation.

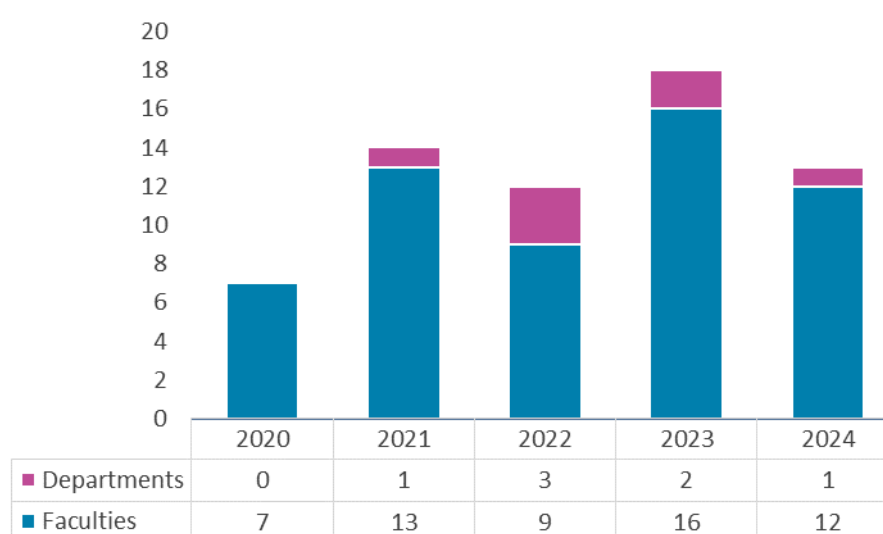
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Table 4. University centres with a favourable institutional accreditation report (2024)

Centre	University	Result
Faculty of Philology and Communication	UB	Positive
Faculty of Earth Sciences	UB	Positive
Faculty of Translation and Interpretation	UAB	Positive
Phd/Doctoral school	UAB	Positive
School of Industrial Aerospace and Audiovisual Engineering of Terrassa	UPC	Positive
Barcelona School of Industrial Engineering	UPC	Positive
Manresa Technical School of Engineering	UPC	Positive
Department of Engineering	UPF	Positive
School of Engineering	UPF	Positive
Phd/Doctoral school	UPF	Positive
Technical School	UdL	Positive
Faculty of Nursing and Physiotherapy	UdL	Positive
Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering	UVic-UCC	Positive

By the end of 2024, 68 centres had obtained initial institutional accreditation in Catalonia.

Graph 2. Evolution of the number of centres obtaining a favourable institutional accreditation report from AQU Catalunya (2020–2024)



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Institutional accreditation renewal

With regard to the renewal of institutional accreditation, we began the evaluation of the Pere Tarrés Faculty of Social Education and Social Work at Ramon Llull University, which is the first centre (in the pilot phase) to reach the six-year mark since its initial accreditation. The external visit took place at the end of 2023, and the Specific Commission for Institutional Assessment resolved in 2024 to renew the faculty's institutional accreditation.

Accredited centres are authorised to use a seal that designates them as institutionally accredited. The reports with their results can be consulted at [EUC Reports](#) and the [Database of External Quality Assurance Results of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education \(EQAR\)](#).



Monitoring of Institutional Accreditation

To assess their progress, all institutionally accredited centres are required to submit a follow-up report related to the dimensions of institutional accreditation three years after receiving their accreditation. In 2024, this monitoring activity was conducted for the first time, with eighteen centres undergoing institutional accreditation review.

The institutional monitoring assessments aimed at fostering improvement. Their purpose was to provide a meaningful assessment that would help universities and centres analyse their data, ensuring that this analysis is backed by objective evidence. As a result, the assessment reports focused on identifying strengths and enhancement areas while also guiding the drafting of the institutional accreditation self-report.

As this is a new process, meetings were held with the technical quality units prior to its launch, and, in some cases, meetings were held with the centres and universities that requested them after the report was submitted in order to resolve any queries.

Table 5. University centres with an institutional accreditation monitoring report (2024)

Centre	University
Faculty of Chemistry	UB
Faculty of Economics and Business	UB
Faculty of Psychology	UAB
Faculty of Economics and Business	UAB

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Centre	University
Faculty of Philosophy and Literature	UAB
Faculty of Sciences	UAB
Faculty of Biosciences	UAB
Faculty of Political Science and Sociology	UAB
Barcelona School of Management	UPF
Barcelona School of Economics	UPF
Faculty of Economics and Business	URV
School of Engineering	URV
Faculty of Chemistry	URV
Blanquerna Faculty of Psychology, Education and Sport Sciences	URL
ESADE Faculty of Law	URL
ESADE School of Business Administration and Management	URL
IQS School of Management / IQS Faculty of Economics	URL
IQS School of Engineering / IQS Technical School	URL

Accreditation of teaching assessment handbooks

Since 2003, AQU Catalunya has been working with Catalan universities on developing and applying models for the teaching assessment of their teaching staff with the aim of supporting universities to design their own mechanisms for managing the quality of the teaching imparted by university teaching staff and promoting their development and recognition, in accordance with European quality assurance standards and guidelines.

Practically all Catalan universities have assessment handbooks that have been accredited on more than one occasion by the Agency, which shows that this is a firmly established programme.

In 2024, AQU Catalunya completed the second monitoring process for the Open University of Catalonia's teaching assessment handbook, which means that this university is now eligible to apply for accreditation.

The Specific Commission for Teaching and Management Activity, the body responsible for this programme, monitored the implementation of the conditions and recommendations established in the third process to renew the accreditation of the teaching assessment handbooks of public universities. In this context, it's important to stress the need to apply the criteria and procedures of the teaching assessment handbooks to the teaching staff of affiliated centres and to reinforce the mechanisms for recognising teaching excellence, among other aspects.

COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION

It should be noted that the agreement between the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) and AQU Catalunya for [collaboration in the teaching assessment support programme](#) (Docentia) remains in force.

Finally, in 2024, AQU Catalunya appointed an *ad hoc* working group to update the methodology for assessing teaching activity. The new guide will need to respond to advances in this field and take into account:

- > Teaching competency frameworks by level.
- > Contributions from the Margalida Comas programme.
- > The requirements set out in the LOSU (2023) and the new royal decrees on the accreditation of teaching and research staff.

AQU Catalunya is a member of the CIC's University Teaching Policy Committee, contributing its insights to the ongoing review of teaching assessment methods.

Assessment of university degrees

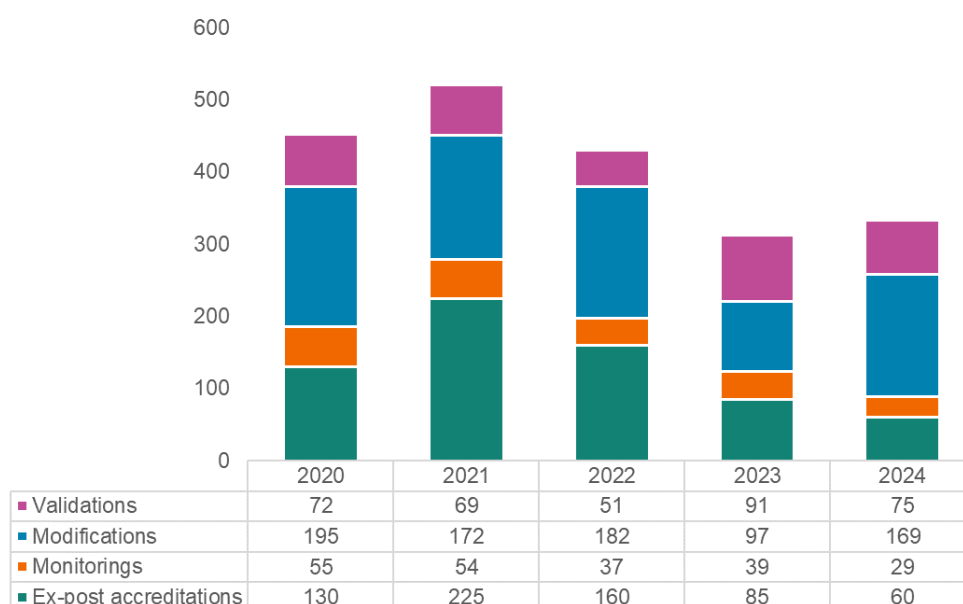
The [Framework for the validation, monitoring, modification and accreditation of university degree programmes](#) (VSMA Framework, 2016) implemented a cyclical and standardised external assessment system for recognised university degrees in Catalan universities and higher arts education.

The VSMA Framework establishes the relationship between the processes involved in validation (assessment prior to implementation), monitoring the performance of the degree, modification to make the improvements detected during the monitoring phase, and accreditation, which verifies that the degree programme is being implemented as planned by means of an external visit by a committee of experts. Recognised university degrees must cyclically pass an accreditation process in order to be taught. In 2024, as explained above, we worked on a review of this framework alongside Catalan universities.

The assessments carried out under the VSMA Framework in Catalonia over the last five years are shown below:

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Graph 3. Evolution of validation, monitoring, modification and accreditation evaluations (2020-2024)¹



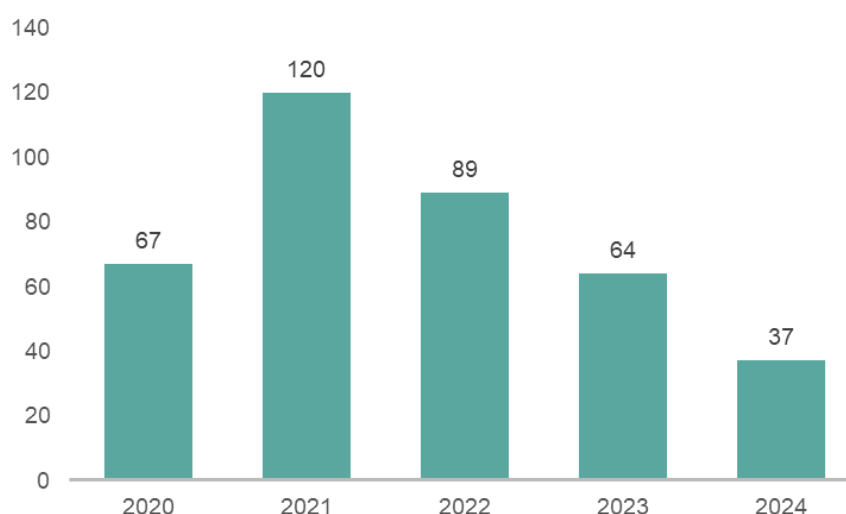
Overall, the number of degrees undergoing any assessment process (validation, monitoring, modification or accreditation) in 2024 (n = 333) increased by 7% compared to 2023 (n = 312). However, the distribution of the different types of assessment processes changed. While there was a slight decrease in the number of validation, monitoring and accreditation processes, there was a significant increase in the number of modifications assessed (75%) due to the need to adapt degree programme reports to Royal Decree 822/2021. In 2024, the downward trend in the number of accredited degrees continued (n = 60). This can be explained by the fact that some universities have now obtained institutional accreditation.

In 2024, AQU Catalunya carried out a total of thirty-seven visits for degree programme accreditation purposes, which represents a reduction of 40% compared to 2023. Of these, one was conducted virtually, one took place in a hybrid format, and the others took place in person.

1. Includes higher education courses equivalent to bachelor's and master's degrees.

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Graph 4. Evolution of external visits to centres offering the assessed degree programmes (2020–2024)



Validation

The purpose of [validation](#) by AQU Catalunya is to ensure the quality of the design of proposed bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programmes before they are implemented.

In 2024, the Agency carried out a preliminary assessment of the recognised bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees proposed by Catalan universities for implementation in the 2025-2026 academic year. Specifically, Catalan universities submitted 75 proposals to the validation process: 32 for bachelor's degrees, 41 for master's degrees and 2 for PhDs.

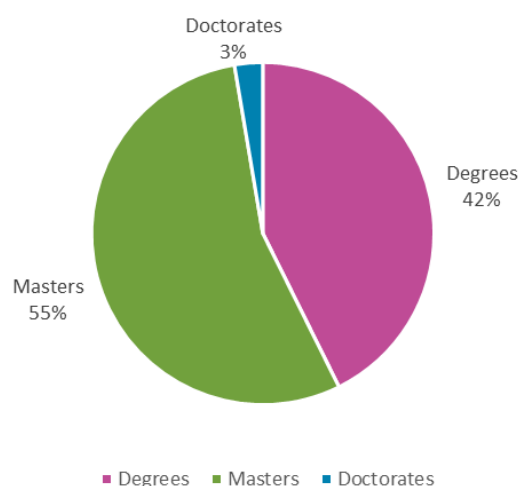
Table 5. Submitted validation proposals by university² (2024)

	UB	UAB	UPC	UPF	UdG	UdL	URV	URL	UOC	UVic-UCC	UIC	UAO CEU	EAS	Total overall
Degrees	5	4	3	7		1	1	5	1	1		2	2	32
Masters	10	6	13	3	1		1	3	2		1		1	41
Doctorates	1		1											2
Total	16	10	17	10	1	1	2	8	3	1	1	2	3	75

² UB: University of Barcelona; UAB: Autonomous University of Barcelona; UPC: Technical University of Catalonia; UPF: Pompeu Fabra University; UdG: University of Girona; UdL: University of Lleida; URV: Rovira i Virgili University; URL: Ramon Llull University; UOC: Open University of Catalonia; UVic-UCC: University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia; UIC: International University of Catalonia; UAO CEU: Abat Oliba University CEU; EAS: Higher arts institutions.

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Graph 5. Submitted validation proposals by degree level (2024)



Results

Of the proposals for validation, 95% received a favourable assessment. By educational level, favourable assessments were given to 96% of the bachelor's degrees, 95% of the master's degrees and 100% of the doctorates. In 2024, there was a slight increase in the number of verification proposals withdrawn, which rose from 4 in 2023 to 9 in 2024.

Table 6. Results of the validation process according to degree level (2024)

	Favourable	Unfavourable	Withdrawn ³	Pending	Total	Percentage of favourable outcomes ⁴
Degrees	26	1	5		32	96.3%
Masters	35	2	4		41	94.6%
Doctorates	2				2	100%
Total	63	3	8	2	75	95.4%

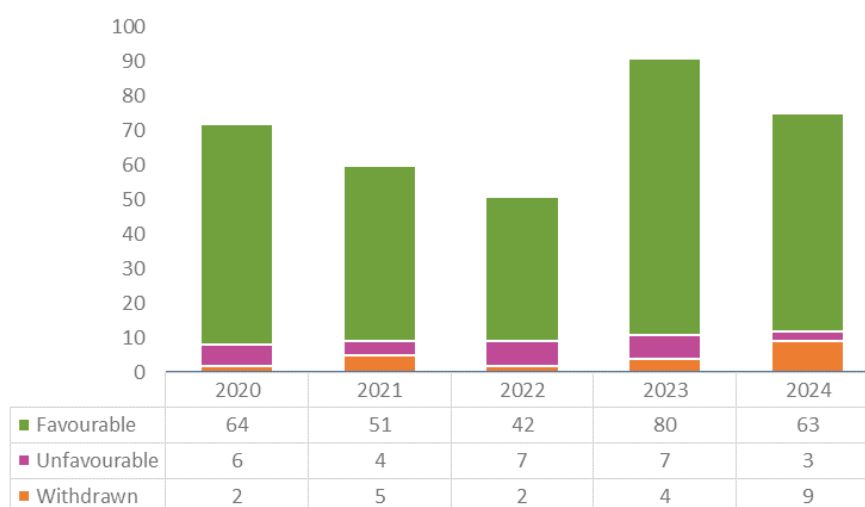
The following chart shows the results of the validation processes in an incremental and aggregate form from 2020 to 2024.

³ Proposals that did not complete the assessment process and are not included in the calculated percentage of favourable outcomes.

⁴ Proposals that did not complete the assessment process were not taken into account when calculating the percentage of favourable outcomes.

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Graph 6. Evolution of the outcomes of the proposals for validation (2020–2024)



The reports issued are officially forwarded to the competent state and autonomous community bodies to continue the administrative process of validating the degree.

The validated recognised university degrees were awarded the corresponding seal that distinguishes them for having passed the process.



Modification

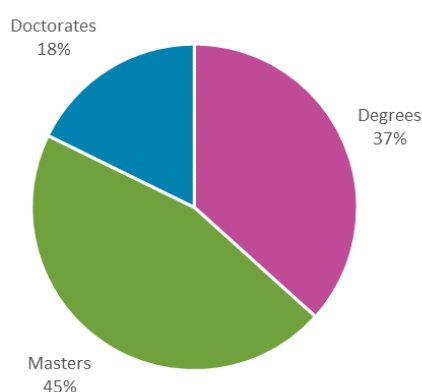
AQU Catalunya assesses the changes institutions wish to make to their degree programmes to improve their quality. Modifications made to recognised degree programmes are assessed using the same standards and criteria applied to the assessment of proposals for validation. In 2024, the Agency received 169 applications for modifications to be implemented in the 2024-2025 academic year: 62 for bachelor's degrees, 77 for master's degrees and 30 for PhDs.

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Table 7. Submitted modification proposals by university (2024)

	UB	UAB	UPC	UPF	UdG	UdL	URV	URL	UOC	UVic- UCC	UIC	UAO CEU	EAS	Total
Degrees	5	11	2	4	2	2	12	3	11	5	3	2	-	62
Masters	17	9	-	5	2	7	2	15	9	-	6	4	1	77
Doctorates	9	15	1	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
Total	31	35	3	10	4	9	18	18	20	5	9	6	1	169

Graph 7. Submitted modification proposals by degree level (2024)



Results

Of the 169 modification requests submitted, 163 received a favourable decision.

Table 8. Results of the modification process according to degree level (2024)

	Favourable	Unfavourable	Withdrawn ⁵	Total	Percentage of favourable outcomes ⁶
Degrees	59	2	1	62	95.2%
Masters	74	2	1	77	96.1%
Doctorates	30	-	-	30	100%
Total	163	4	2	169	96.4%

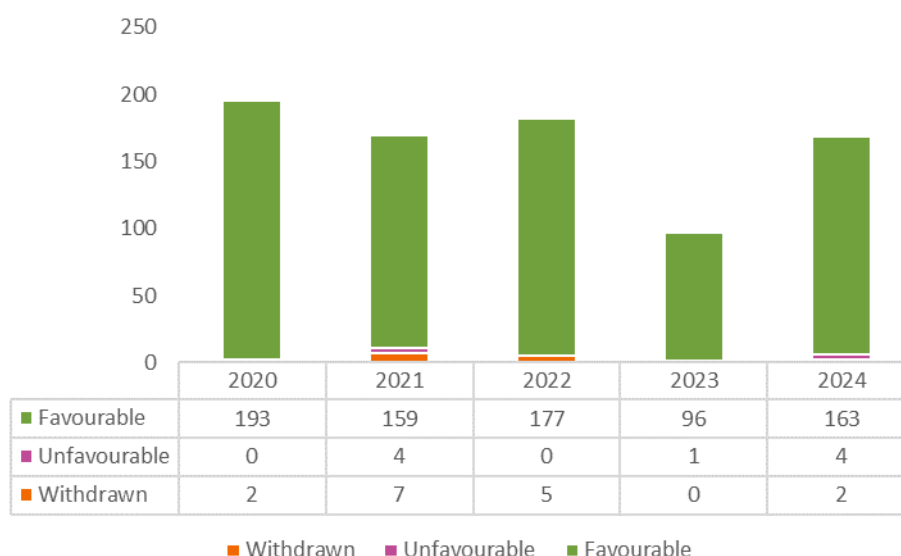
⁵ Proposals that did not complete the assessment process and are not included in the calculated percentage of favourable outcomes.

⁶ Proposals that did not complete the assessment process were not taken into account when calculating the percentage of favourable outcomes.

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The following graph shows the results of the modification processes in an incremental and aggregate form from 2020 to 2024.

Graph 8. Evolution of the outcomes of the proposals for modification (2020–2024)



Monitoring

The [monitoring](#) process aims to encourage reflection and analysis to enable those responsible for the degree at the various levels (university, faculty and degree programme) to take action on any identified issues and suggest changes to improve it, thereby ensuring a successful outcome in the next accreditation process.

Results

In 2024, the Agency evaluated the monitoring of nine degrees with conditional accreditation reports, four with enhancement areas in the validation reports and, exceptionally, four doctorate programmes, which were the subject of a special monitoring plan, in addition to three doctorate programmes that were subject to the standard monitoring process. In addition, we monitored the accreditation of 12 higher arts education programmes. Specifically, the monitoring reports of 29 degree programmes taught at 13 centres were analysed: 9 bachelor's degrees (5 university degrees and 4 higher arts degrees), 13 master's degrees (8 master's degree in higher arts education and 5 university master's degrees) and 7 doctorates.

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Table 9. Monitoring reports on centres and degree programmes, grouped by universities (2024)

University	Centres	Degrees
University of Barcelona	0	0
Autonomous University of Barcelona	1	1
Technical University of Catalonia	1	4
Pompeu Fabra University	2	2
Ramon Llull University	0	0
University of Lleida	2	2
University of Girona	2	2
Rovira i Virgili University	2	2
Open University of Catalonia	0	0
University of Vic-UCC	2	3
International University of Catalonia	1	1
Abat Oliba University CEU	0	0
Total no. of universities	13	17
Higher arts education	6	12
Total	19	29

The monitoring process associated with the accreditation of degree programmes can alter the assessment of standards or even the overall outcome of the accreditation. In 2024, 13 accreditation protocols (52%) were assessed as having exceeded requirements out of a total of 25 accreditation monitoring processes. Of these 13 accreditation protocols in which the requirements were met, 5 saw their overall rating change to “accredited” and thus surpassed their initial overall assessment of “accredited with conditions” (20% of the total), and 4 achieved an overall rating of “accredited in progress towards excellence” thus improving on their initial assessment as “accredited” (16% of the total).

At the time of data closure for this report, 100% of the final monitoring reports had been issued.

The reports with the results can be consulted in the AQU Catalunya [EUC Reports](#) .

Accreditation

Accreditation is the verification, through an external visit, that the degree programme is being implemented as planned in the validation process. All recognised university degree programmes must undergo the accreditation process within six or eight years of the initial validation (or the most recent accreditation).

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Each year, AQU Catalunya liaises with the universities to jointly plan the external visits for the degree programmes that are to undergo the accreditation process.

The accreditation process is structured in two stages: the external visit and accreditation. The external visit is an in situ inspection of the functioning of the degree programme, which is reflected in the external visit report. Accreditation is the issuance, by the specific committee for each area of knowledge, of a report that assesses, based on all the evidence available to AQU Catalunya and particularly on the external visit report, the functioning of the degree programme. It is called the accreditation report.

With regard to the methodology, in 2024 the [recognised degree programmes accreditation procedure](#) came into force.

External visits

In 2024, 37 external visits were organised to assess the performance of 59 degree programmes: 22 bachelor's degrees (of which 2 were arts degrees), 34 master's degrees (of which 4 were arts degrees) and 3 doctorates. Of these, one was conducted virtually, one took place in a hybrid format, and the others took place in person. In addition, one degree programme was accredited because AQU Catalunya recognised the assessment carried out by an international quality assurance agency.

To ensure the proper functioning of the external assessment committees and consistency in the application of the criteria, 9 virtual training sessions were organised for the assessment committees, which were attended by 48 people.

The accreditation of medical degree programmes took into account the Basic Medical Education Standards of the World Federation for Medical Education. In these cases, two training sessions were organised, attended by a total of 8 people.

Of the 347 people contacted to participate in external assessment committees, 209 responded in the affirmative and were appointed.

Table 10. Centres visited, visits made and degrees assessed, by university (2024)

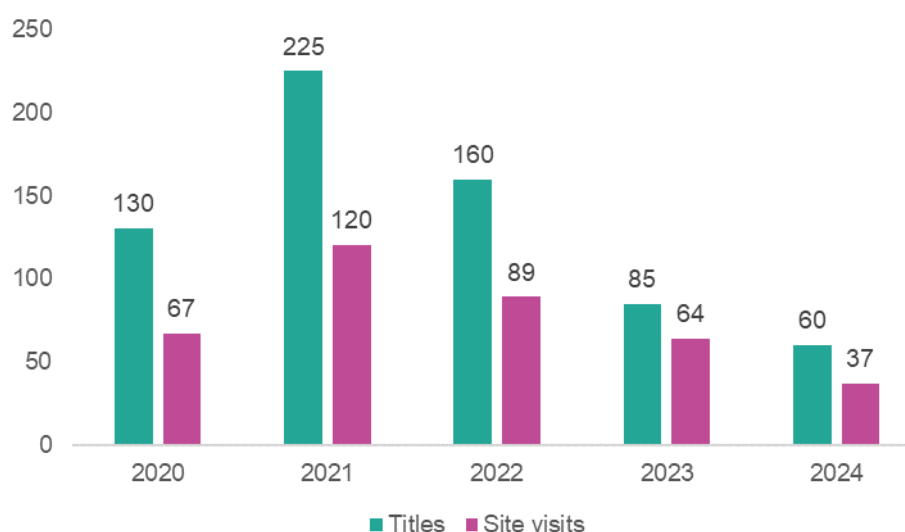
University	Centres visited	Visits made	Degrees assessed
University of Barcelona	5	5	7
Autonomous University of Barcelona	3	5	8 ⁷
Technical University of Catalonia	3	3	5
Pompeu Fabra University	1	1	2

⁷ 7 degrees were accredited following an external assessment visit, and 1 degree was accredited based on the recognition of an assessment by an international quality assurance agency.

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University	Centres visited	Visits made	Degrees assessed
Ramon Llull University	1	1	2
University of Lleida	3	4	5
University of Girona	3	4	6
Rovira i Virgili University	0	0	0
Open University of Catalonia	1	1	2
University of Vic-UCC	4	4	5
International University of Catalonia	4	4	8
Abat Oliba University CEU	2	2	4
Total no. of universities	30	34	54
Higher arts education	3	3	6
Total	33	37	60

Graph 9. Evolution of the external visits to the assessed centres and degree programmes (2020–2024)



Results of the 2023 accreditation reports

In 2024, we issued the final degree programme accreditation reports that had been pending following visits made in 2023.

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Table 11. Accreditation results by degree level (2023)*

	Not accredited	Accredited with conditions	Accredited	Accredited as progressing towards excellence	Total	Percentage accredited as progressing towards excellence
Degrees	1	12	56	3	72	4.2%
Masters		3	11		14	0.0%
Doctoral programmes			1	6	7	85.7%
EAS			1		1	0.0%
Total	1	15	69	9	94*	9.6%

* Results at degree level/centre.

Table 12. Results of the accreditations by the Specific Assessment Commissions (2023)*

	Not accredited	Accredited with conditions	Accredited	Accredited as progressing towards excellence	Total	Percentage accredited as progressing towards excellence
Arts and Humanities		2	8		10	0.0%
Social and Legal Sciences			6	1	7	14.3%
Sciences		7	14	1	22	4.5%
Health Sciences	1	1	27		29	0.0%
Engineering and Architecture		5	13	1	19	5.3%
Doctorate			1	6	7	85.7%
Total	1	15	69	9	94*	9.6%

* Results at degree level/centre.

Results of the 2024 accreditation reports

As of 31 January 2025, 39 final accreditation reports had been issued out of the total of the 60 recognised university degrees visited during 2024.

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Table 13. Accreditation results by degree level (2024)

	Total visited	Total issued	Not accredited	Accredited with conditions	Accredited	Accredited as progressing towards excellence	Percentage accredited as progressing towards excellence
Degrees	21	15	1	1	12	1	6.7%
Masters	30	18			17	1	5.5%
Doctoral programmes	3						
EAS	6	6			6		
Total	60	39	1	1	35	2	5.1%

Table 14. Results of the accreditations by the Specific Assessment Commissions (2024)*

	Not accredited	Accredited with conditions	Accredited	Accredited as progressing towards excellence	Total	Percentage accredited as progressing towards excellence
Arts and Humanities			8		8	
Social and Legal Sciences 1		1	10		11	
Social and Legal Sciences 2			8		8	
Sciences						
Health Sciences			6	2	8	25.0%
Engineering and Architecture	1		3		4	
Doctorate						
Total	1	1	35	2	39	5.1%

Results according to the dimensions assessed

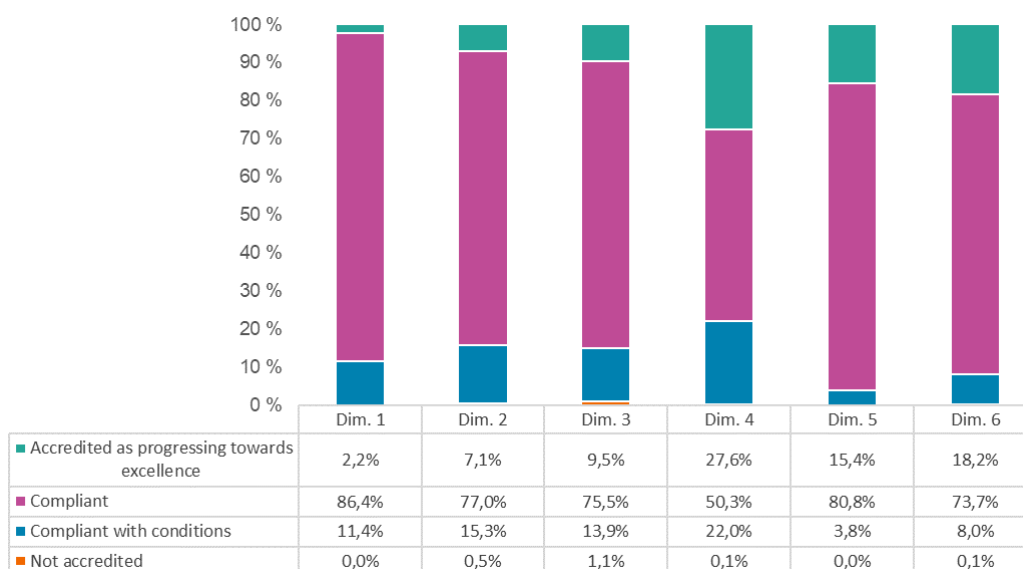
With regard to the evaluation of the dimensions assessed in the accreditation process, in all cases, the most common evaluation given was that of “achieved”. However, differences were observed between the dimensions.

In the five years from 2019 to 2023, the dimension encompassing the suitability of the teaching staff for the training programme obtained the best results, with 27.6% of the degree programmes

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attaining the “progressing towards excellence” rating. However, at the same time, it is the dimension which has one of the highest percentages of “achieved with conditions” ratings, at 22%.

Graph 10. Results broken down by dimension assessed (period 2019–2023)



Dim. 1: Quality of the education programme; dim. 2: Relevance of public information; dim. 3: Quality of the IQAS; dim. 4: Suitability of the teaching staff to the education programme; dim. 5: Effectiveness of learning support systems; dim. 6: Quality of the results of the education programmes.

The reports issued are officially forwarded to the competent state and autonomous community bodies to continue the administrative process of accrediting the degree.

Once the degree has been accredited, AQU Catalunya issues certificates and quality seals to the universities, providing them with a means to distinguish their degree programmes. The reports with their results can be consulted at [EUC Reports](#) and the [Database of External Quality Assurance Results of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education \(EQAR\)](#).



Support for the internationalisation of the Catalan Higher Education System

AQU Catalunya has identified the internationalisation of university programmes offered in Catalonia as one of the areas for promoting excellence in higher education.

Work was carried out with the Catalan Higher Education System in this area in 2024 to support two activities:

- > The assessment of inter-university programmes according to the European Approach methodology.
- > The accreditation of medical degree programmes according to the Basic Medical Education Standards of the World Federation for Medical Education.

However, no integrated accreditation processes have been carried out with a view to obtaining international subject-specific certifications.

Assessment of inter-university programmes according to the European Approach

The [European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint programmes](#) (EA) aims to simplify the external assessment processes of European joint degrees by using common standards. This methodology can only be applied to international programmes offered jointly by higher education institutions in two or more states.

In 2024, AQU Catalunya carried out a number of assessments using the European Approach to assess the design of international joint degrees. The degree programmes assessed were:

- > The Master's Degree in Global Challenges for Sustainability (CHARM), coordinated by the University of Barcelona.
- > The Master's Degree in Intelligent Field Robotic Systems (IFRoS), coordinated by the University of Girona.

In 2024, visits were also made to the Master's in Tourism Transformations for Regenerative Futures (MATTERS), coordinated by the University of Girona, and the Master's in Innovative Design of Themed Entertainment and Attractions for Sustainability (IDEAS), coordinated by the Rovira i Virgili University.

During the year, several meetings were held with Catalan universities to go over the process and agree on the planning of the assessment processes that would be taking place in 2025. Additionally, we approved a new version of the *Guide to the Accreditation of Joint Programmes Using the European Approach* and the associated *Procedure for the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes*.

Accreditation according to the Basic Medical Standards of the World Federation for Medical Education

The internationalisation of medical education in quality assurance processes is a relevant issue. AQU Catalunya is aware of the growing interest in the international accreditation of basic medical training and therefore places special emphasis on introducing the global standards of the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) into the current accreditation process.



Since 2021, AQU Catalunya has been recognised by the WFME, which means that all the Medical faculties accredited by AQU Catalunya also receive worldwide recognition.

In 2024, we approved a new edition of the [recognised degree programmes accreditation procedure](#), which now incorporates the specific characteristics of this assessment.

In 2024, visits using this methodology were made to the Bachelor's Degrees in Medicine offered by the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of Lleida.

Certification of degree programmes by subject area

The [Framework for AQU Catalunya's position with regard to subject-based quality assurance seals](#) foresees that the Agency is able to conduct integrated assessments for both the accreditation of degree programmes and the award of international subject-based certifications. No requests for integrated assessment were received in 2024.

Awarding of credentials of excellence

Law 9/2022, of 21 December, on science, establishes that AQU Catalunya approves, convenes, organises and manages the external assessment or appraisal processes for awarding and renewing credentials of excellence to university departments, internal research institutes or affiliated institutions engaged in research, development and innovation activities and participating in the Strategic University Plan for Excellence in Research. Credentials of excellence are granted for a period of five years and renewable for successive periods of the same duration, subject to a positive assessment or evaluation.

Awarding of credentials of excellence

During 2024, we coordinated with the Ministry for Research and Universities to agree on the direction of a Pilot Plan within the framework of the Government of Catalonia's Strategic University Plan for Excellence in Research.

Improvements in assessment procedures

Methodological documents

2024 has been marked by the updating of the methodological materials associated with international assessment processes, such as the accreditation of joint international degrees using the European Approach and the approach linked to the assessment of foreign institutions.

Additionally, work was carried out on the methodological documents linked to the student report, which now constitute new evidence that forms part of the institutional accreditation renewal process.

Specifically, the following methodologies were reviewed:

- > *Guide to the Accreditation of Joint Programmes Using the European Approach.*
- > *Guide to the Assessment of Foreign Institutions.*
- > [Guidelines for preparing the student report for the accreditation of degrees and centres.](#)
- > [Template for drafting the student report for degree programme accreditation.](#)
- > [Template for drafting the student report for institutional accreditation.](#)

Furthermore, in 2024, the procedures relating to the assessment processes for the accreditation of doctorate degrees and the accreditation of joint international degrees using the European Approach were reviewed.

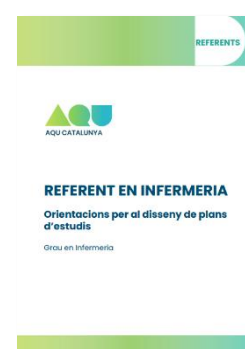


Preparation of benchmarks

Benchmarks are documents designed to provide coherence and identity and set out what is to be expected from a graduate at the end of their studies. Under Royal Decree 822/2021, the learning expectations of graduates must be expressed as learning outcomes, grouped into knowledge, skills and competences. The benchmarks are intended to serve as support tools for universities when preparing new degree programmes or modifying existing ones.

In 2024, four benchmarks were approved and published:

- > [Nursing Benchmark](#)
- > [Industrial engineering Benchmark](#)
- > [Biosciences Benchmark](#)
- > [Philology and Language Studies Benchmark](#)



Management of Review Files

In 2024, AQU Catalunya completed the development of an assessment file manager that allows immediate access to data from assessment files. It also helps to optimise and simplify the management of these files while at the same time ensuring the security and integrity of the information.

Appeals from degree programmes and institutions

With regard to the review processes for university degrees, in 2024, the Appeals Committee resolved six appeals relating to accreditation reports and issued two review reports on validation reports. The appeals and issued reports were as follows:

Table 15. Appeals and review reports submitted and resolved in 2024

	Submitted	Resolved
Appeals in 2024	6	6
Review reports in 2024	0	2

Table 16. Results of the appeals and review reports resolved in 2024

	Partially upheld	Dismissed	Percentage of appeals upheld (relative to appeals resolved)
Outcome of the appeal	0	6	0%
Outcome of the review report	0	2	0%

QUALITY OF TEACHING STAFF

Changes in the assessment procedures

Assessment activities

The assessment processes used by AQU Catalunya to assess university teaching staff in 2024 were as follows:

- > **Accreditation of teaching staff.** One of AQU Catalunya's functions is to assess research. This mandate allows us to certify that applicants meet a minimum threshold of quality and/or scientific experience and/or research output before they can apply for jobs at universities. This applies to each of the posts established in Catalonia (associate professor and full professor).
- > **Assessment of merits.** AQU Catalunya assesses teaching, research and management merits for remuneration purposes in the case of teaching staff at public universities.

As a result of the entry into force of the LOSU, in 2024, AQU Catalunya worked on developing new criteria for teacher accreditation. Thus, 2024 could be described as a transition year because the Agency maintained the accreditation programme established by Law 1/2003 of 19 February on Universities in Catalonia (LUC) but also worked on developing new criteria adapted to the LOSU.

Activity of the Research Assessment Commission (CAR)

In 2024, in addition to dealing with the various calls for accreditation and research merits within the established deadlines and in the prescribed manner, much of our work focused on the drafting of new LOSU-compliant criteria for teacher accreditation. To draw up the criteria, we set up a working group consisting of the presidents of the specific committees of the Research Assessment Commission, the president of the Commission, and the Agency's technical staff. This working group drew up a set of proposed criteria, which were approved by the Research Assessment Commission and made available for public consultation throughout the Catalan Higher Education System. Over 170 individual and collective contributions were received. At the end of the year, the Research Assessment Commission carried out a final review of the criteria.

The Research Assessment Commission also approved an agreement designed to guarantee equality and work-life balance in the assessment of teaching and research staff. This document sets out



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measures to adapt the accreditation and assessment processes for six-year research periods in the following cases:

- > Maternity and paternity leave.
- > Sick leave or absence due to illness.
- > Other justified personal circumstances (disability, caring for family members, gender-based violence, etc.).

During 2024, we implemented and consolidated the system of permanently open calls for accreditation, a measure that was well received by applicants. One notable aspect was the reduced volume of files resulting from the elimination of preliminary reports from lecturers and the expectation of changes in the new criteria.

The Agency also actively participated in the plan to strengthen the Catalan language within Catalonia's university and research system. This led to the inclusion of a specific reference to managing linguistic pluralism in the new accreditation criteria.

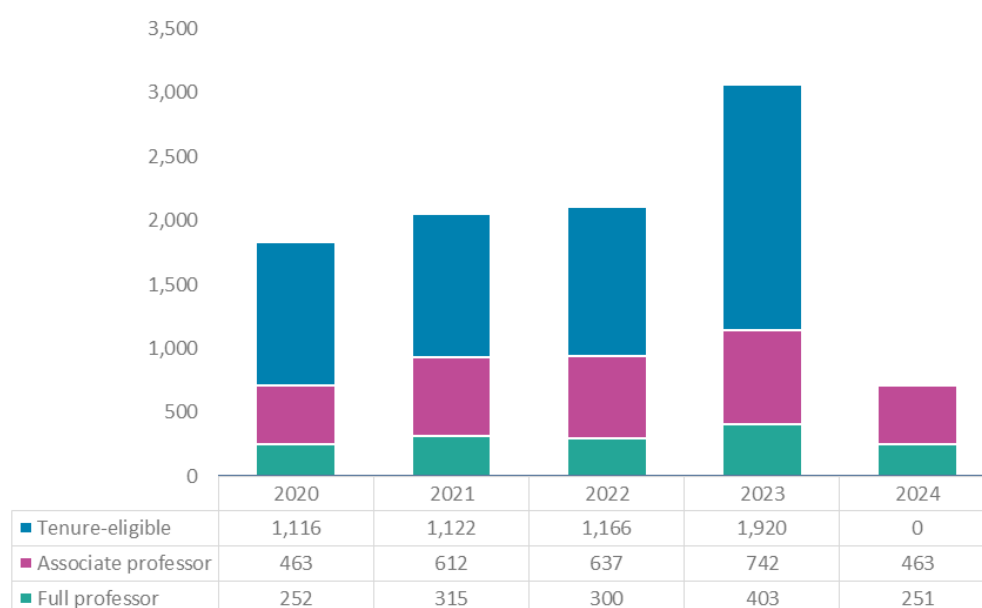
Assessment of teaching staff prior to university selection processes

To be eligible for the selection processes for recruiting teaching staff for Catalan public universities, candidates must obtain a research or advanced research accreditation for the categories of associate professor and full professor, respectively. Accreditation is the regulatory mechanism that enables AQU Catalunya to determine whether applicants meet a minimum threshold of quality, scientific experience and/or research output before they can apply for jobs at universities. Accordingly, accreditations are not used to rank or order individuals, nor do they guarantee employment contracts.

In 2024, 714 applications were received, representing a decrease of 76.7% compared to 2023 due to the fact that reports for tenure-eligible lecturers are no longer issued. However, there was also a 38% decrease in the number of applications for research and advanced research accreditation, most likely due to the changes in the criteria.

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Graph 11. Evolution of applications for associate and full professor accreditation (2020–2024)



Reports on tenure-eligible lecturers

2023 was the last year in which AQU Catalunya opened calls for the issuing of lecturer reports, as this practice was discontinued with the entry into force of the LOSU. In 2024, we processed the applications submitted in the second call for tenure-eligible lecturers, as well as those of applicants applying through the Serra Húnter Programme.

Results

The results of the second call for assessment in 2023 were as follows:

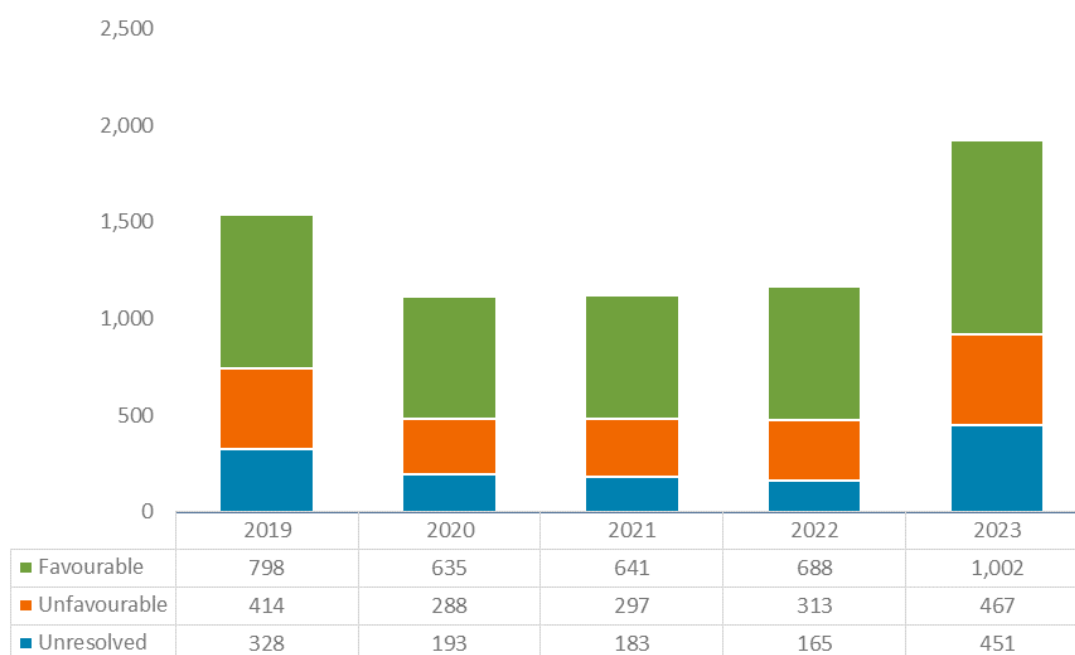
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Table 17. Second 2023 call for tenure-eligible lecturers and those applying through the Serra Húnter Programme. Results

Field of knowledge	T	NA	F	D	RP	RE	RD	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	166	31	95	26	0	4	10	99	36	73.3%
Social Sciences	337	77	164	63	1	7	25	171	89	65.8%
Sciences	140	41	68	25	0	1	5	69	30	69.7%
Life Sciences	109	33	53	16	1	0	6	53	23	69.7%
Medical and Health Sciences	93	14	53	17	0	0	9	53	26	67.1%
Engineering and Architecture	123	20	62	30	0	0	11	62	41	60.2%
Total	968	216	495	177	2	12	66	507	245	67.4%

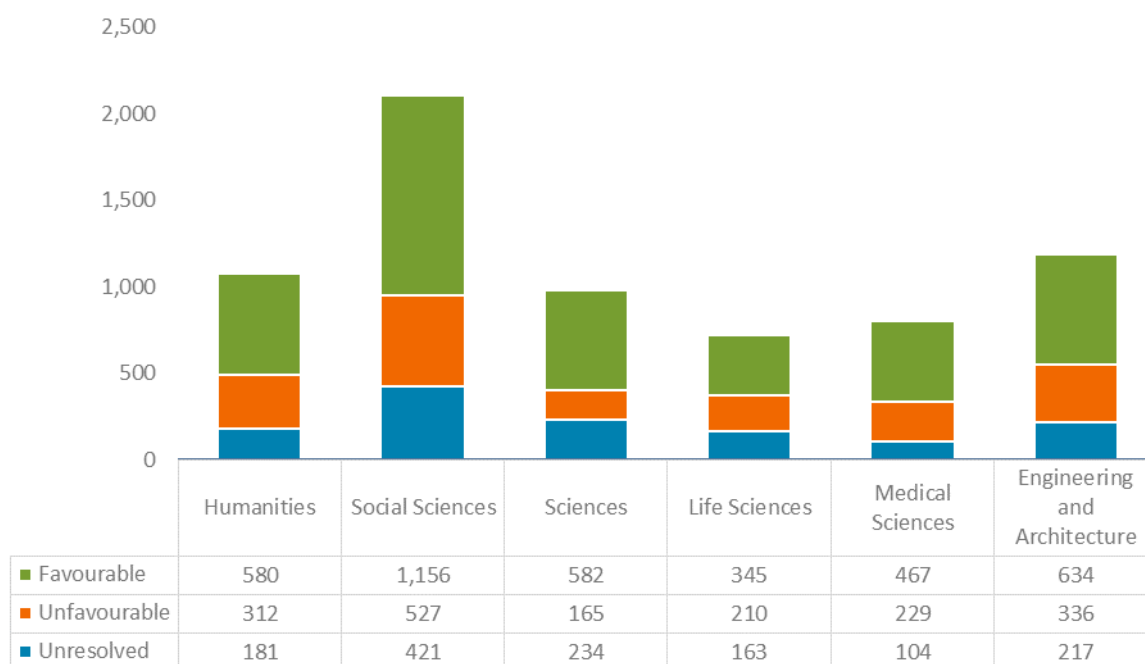
T: total applications; NA: not assessable; F: favourable; D: unfavourable; RP: appeals pending; RE: appeals upheld; RD: appeals dismissed; TF: total favourable; TD: total unfavourable; % F: overall percentage of favourable applications.

Graph 12. Evolution of applications for tenure-eligible lecturer (2019–2023)



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Graph 13. Applications from tenure-eligible lecturers by field of knowledge (2019–2023)



Report for Serra Húnter Programme temporary teaching staff

The [*Report for Serra Húnter Programme temporary teaching staff*](#) is designed for Catalan public university staff who have a contract as a tenure-eligible lecturer under the Serra Húnter Programme.

In order to apply for this report, applicants must meet two requirements. First, they must have a valid contract as a Serra Húnter Programme tenure-eligible lecturer, and secondly, they must have been issued a favourable research accreditation report by AQU Catalunya.

The call for applications for this report remained open throughout the year. The total number of applications submitted was 56, of which 27 were deemed suitable, 4 were deemed unsuitable, 21 were closed without assessment, and 4 are still being assessed.

Accreditation of research and advanced research

Access to the university as a permanent contracted doctoral professor is possible in the categories of associate professor, which implies proven teaching and research capacity, and full professor, which implies having a consolidated teaching and research career.

In order to be eligible for these selection processes, candidates must hold, among other things, a [research accreditation](#) for access to the category of associate professor or, for access to the category of full professor, an [advanced research accreditation](#).

Since 2003, AQU Catalunya has assessed 15,127 applications for research and advanced research accreditations.

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The calls for research and advanced research accreditation remained open throughout 2024.

Results

In 2024, the applications submitted in the second calls for assessment of the previous year were resolved. The results of these calls were as follows:

Table 18. Second 2023 call for research accreditation and Serra Húnter Programme research accreditation. Results

Field of knowledge	T	NA	RE	RD	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	45	8	2	1	28	8	75.7%
Social Sciences	92	7	2	8	63	22	74.1%
Sciences	28	3	1	1	21	4	84.0%
Life Sciences	34	4	2	1	24	6	80.0%
Medical and Health Sciences	65	8	0	8	24	33	42.1%
Engineering and Architecture	54	9	0	7	29	16	64.4%
Total	318	39	7	26	189	89	67.7%

T: total applications; NA: not assessable; RE: appeals upheld; RD: appeals rejected; RP: appeals pending; TF: total favourable; TD: total unfavourable; % F: percentage of favourable.

Table 19. Second 2023 call for advanced research accreditation. Results

Field of knowledge	T	NA	RE	RD	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	13	1	0	1	10	2	83.3%
Social Sciences	54	10	1	8	22	22	50.0%
Sciences	19	1	0	1	15	3	83.3%
Life Sciences	14	2	0	0	9	3	75.0%
Medical and Health Sciences	17	2	0	0	11	4	73.3%
Engineering and Architecture	45	6	2	5	19	20	48.7%
Total	162	22	3	15	86	54	61.4%

T: total applications; NA: not assessable; RE: appeals upheld; RD: appeals rejected; TF: total favourable; TD: total unfavourable; % F: percentage of favourable.

The results of the assessed 2024 research accreditation calls were as follows:

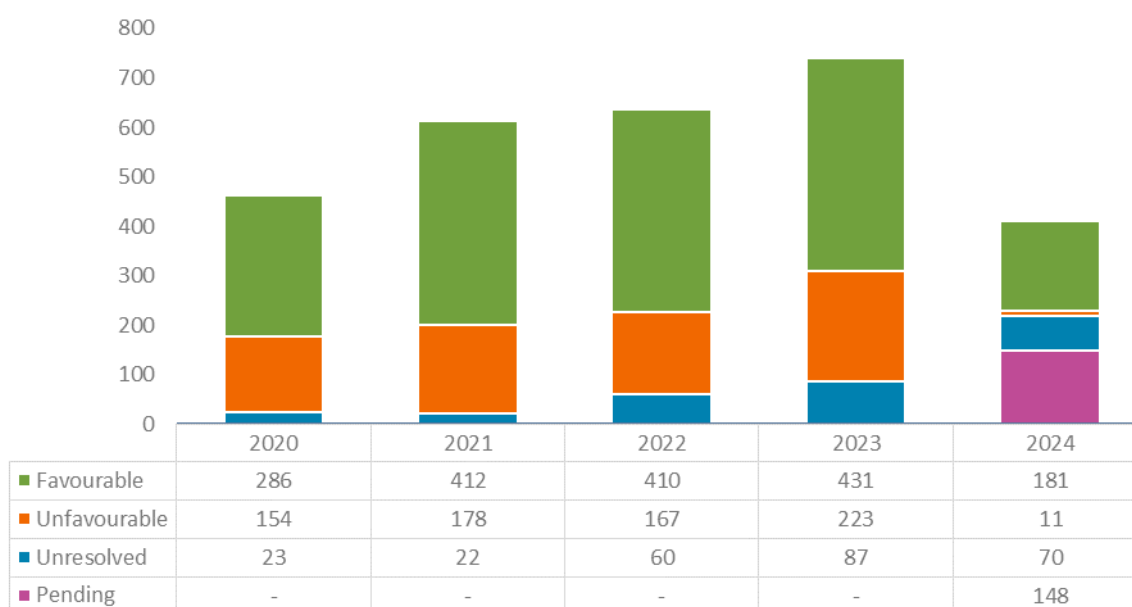
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Table 20. 2024 call for research accreditation and Serra Húnter programme research accreditation. Results

Field of knowledge	T	NA	RP	TF	TD	% F	PD
Humanities	71	13	2	28	9	48.3%	19
Social Sciences	142	20	3	66	17	54.1%	36
Sciences	48	7	1	17	2	41.5%	21
Life Sciences	23	1	0	8	5	36.4%	9
Medical and Health Sciences	91	19	2	32	20	44.4%	18
Engineering and Architecture	88	10	2	30	11	38.5%	35
Total	463	70	10	181	64	46.1%	138

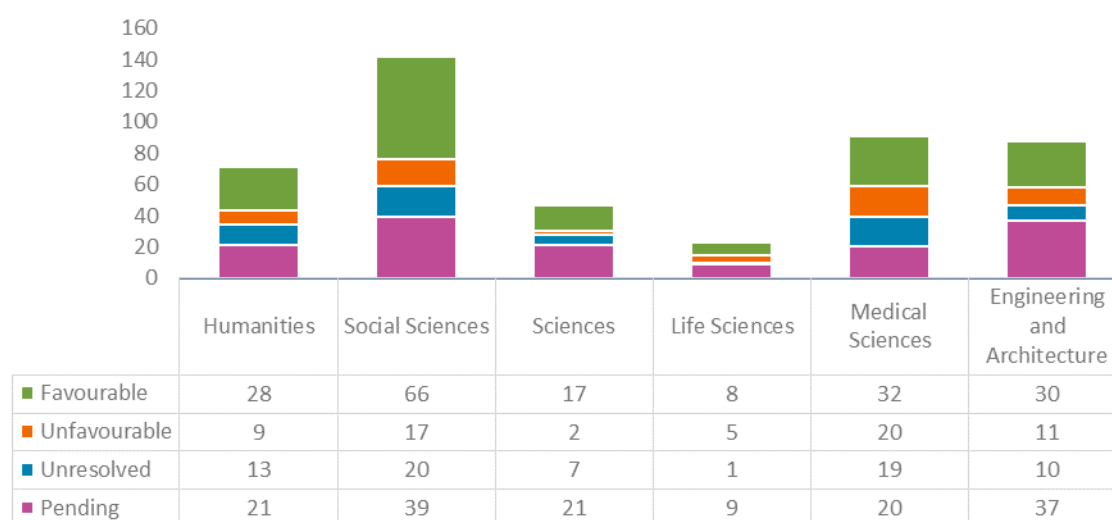
T: total applications; NA: not assessable; RP: appeals pending; TF: total favourable; TD: total unfavourable;
 % F: overall percentage of favourable; PD: applications pending decision.

Graph 14. Evolution of applications for research accreditation (2020–2024)



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Graph 15. Applications for advanced research accreditation by field of knowledge (2020–2024)



In 2024, the results of the assessed calls for advanced research accreditation were as follows:

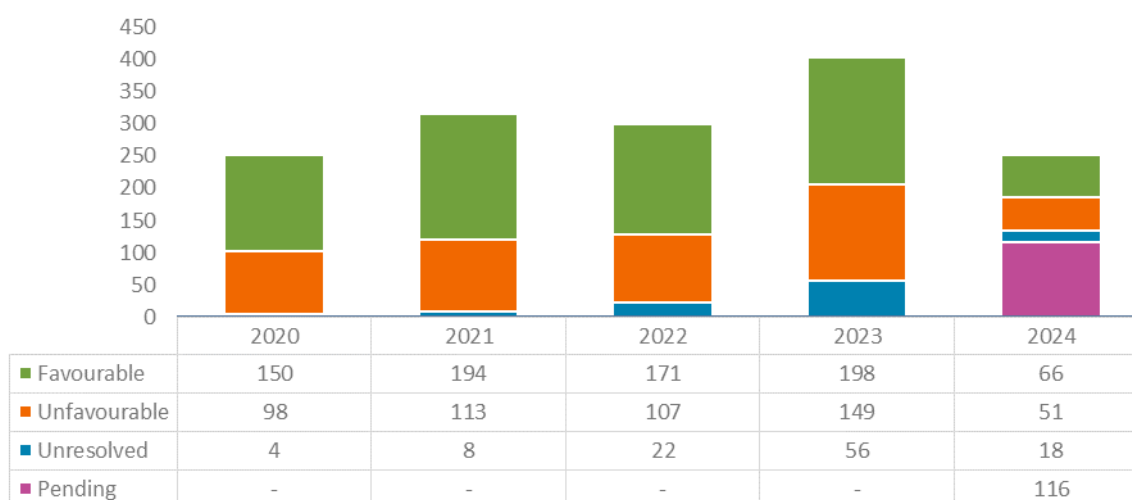
Table 21. 2024 call for advanced research accreditation. Results

Field of knowledge	T	NA	F	D	RP	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	29	2	8	4	3	8	8	29.6%
Social Sciences	103	9	25	10	6	26	21	27.7%
Sciences	29	0	10	1	1	10	2	34.5%
Life Sciences	11	2	2	4	0	2	4	22.2%
Medical and Health Sciences	39	2	9	5	0	9	6	24.3%
Engineering and Architecture	40	3	10	4	5	11	10	29.7%
Total	251	18	64	28	15	66	51	28.3%

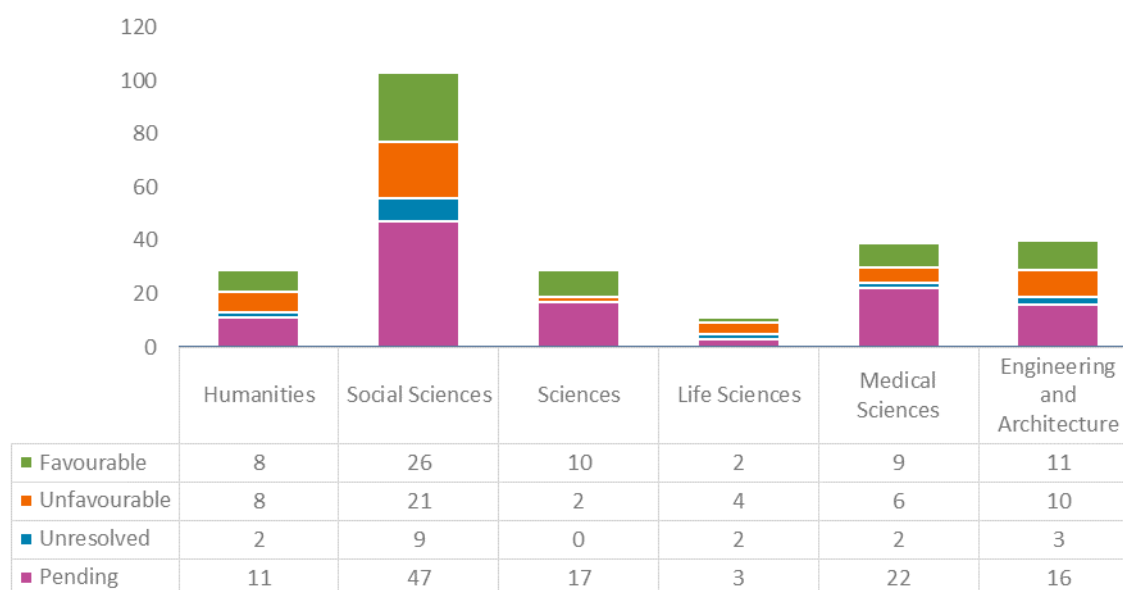
T: total applications; NA: not assessable; F: favourable; D: unfavourable; RP: appeals pending; TF: total favourable; TD: total unfavourable; % F: percentage of favourable applications.

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Graph 16. Evolution of applications for advanced research accreditation (2020–2024)



Graph 17. Applications for advanced research accreditation by field of knowledge (2020-2024)



Assessment of research, teaching and management merits

The allocation of salary supplements to civil servant and non-civil servant teaching and research staff in Catalan public universities is linked to the assessment of individual merits in research, teaching and management. When assessing teaching and management merits, AQU Catalunya certifies that the universities have applied the assessment process as stipulated. When it comes to

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sexennials, it recognises the previous assessments carried out (in the case of civil servants) and carries out the assessment itself (in the case of non-civil servants).

Research merits

AQU Catalunya directly assesses the individual research merits of its non-civil servant teaching and research staff in line with the established procedure and criteria and recognises the assessments carried out by the National Research Activity Assessment Committee (ANECA-CNEAI) for civil servant university teaching staff who request it to do so.

Applicants were able to automatically fill in the contributions to be assessed using a web form that allows them to be uploaded if they are available on the Open Data portal of the Government of Catalonia, using the information that the various current research information systems (CRIS) of the universities send to the Catalonia Research Portal. This service allows applicants to upload their scientific publication information semi-automatically through their ORCID, while also enabling the validation of bibliometric information. which, in turn, simplifies the application process for applicants and makes the applications easier for the commissions to assess. A total of 3,300 people have used the service since it was launched, including 629 in 2024.

Results of the call for civil servant teaching and research staff

In 2024, a call for applications for the recognition and assessment of research merits was issued for civil servant teaching and research staff. A total of 487 applications were submitted, which represents an increase of approximately 10.2% compared to the previous year. Among these, 399 applications were for recognition, and 88 were for assessment. All completed applications for recognition were successfully recognised.

Table 22. 2023 call for recognition for civil servant teaching and research staff from public universities. Results

Field of knowledge	T	NA	TF
Humanities	44	1	43
Social Sciences	117	6	111
Sciences	67	7	60
Life Sciences	24	0	24
Medical and Health Sciences	42	5	37
Engineering and Architecture	105	7	98
Total	399	26	373

T: total applications; NA: not assessable; TF: total favourable.

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Graph 18. Call for recognition for civil servant teaching and research staff from public universities (2023–2024)

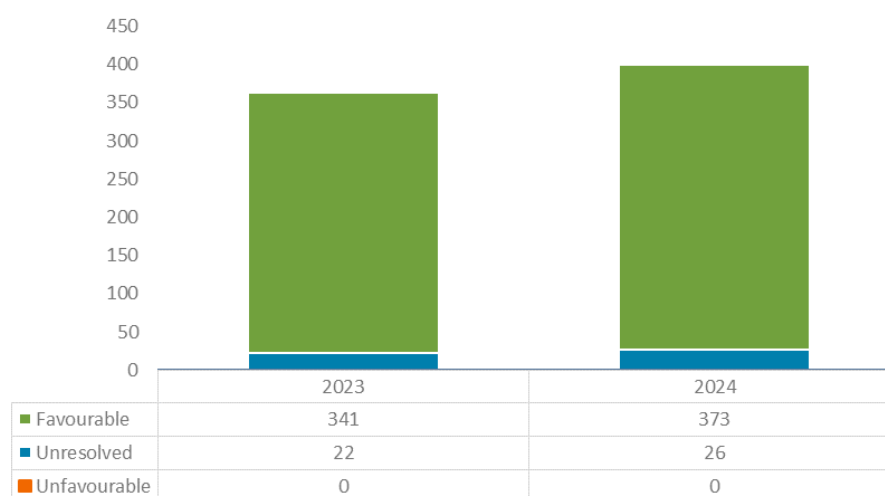


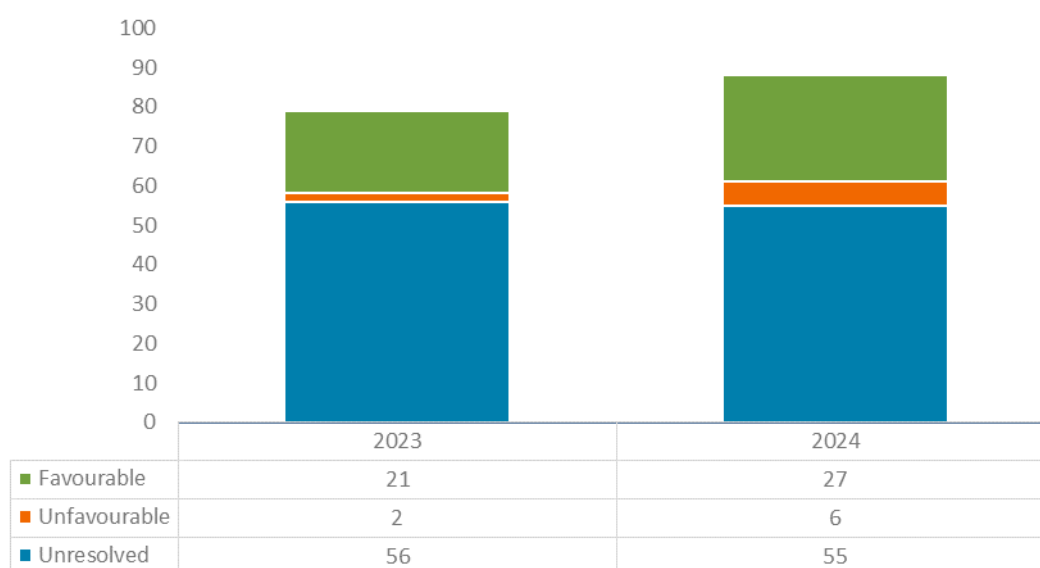
Table 23. 2024 call for assessment of civil servant teaching and research staff from public universities. Results

Field of knowledge	T	NA	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	7	4	3	0	100.0%
Social Sciences	29	19	9	1	90.0%
Sciences	10	9	1	0	100.0%
Life Sciences	8	5	3	0	100.0%
Medical and Health Sciences	13	7	6	0	100.0%
Engineering and Architecture	21	11	5	5	50.0%
Total	88	55	27	6	81.8%

T: total applications; NA: not assessable; TF: total favourable; TD: total unfavourable; % F: overall percentage of favourable without counting the non-assessable applications.

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Graph 19. Call for assessment of civil servant teaching and research staff from public universities (2023–2024)



Results of the call for non-civil servant teaching and research staff

With regard to contracted non-civil servant teaching and research staff, AQU Catalunya opened a call for applications using the simplified procedure that distinguishes between applications for assessment and applications for the recognition of research merits. In 2024, 1,230 applications were received for the assessment of six-year research periods for contracted, non-civil servant teaching and research staff, approximately 10.4% more than in 2023. In addition, 72 applications for recognition were submitted.

Table 24. 2024 call for assessment of civil servant teaching and research staff from public universities. Results

Field of knowledge	T	NA	F	D	RE	RD	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	172	39	114	8	0	11	114	19	85.7%
Social Sciences	323	78	197	22	5	21	202	43	82.4%
Sciences	191	35	137	9	5	5	142	14	91.0%
Life Sciences	116	17	98	1	0	0	98	1	99.0%
Medical and Health Sciences	126	27	91	6	1	1	92	7	92.9%
Engineering and Architecture	302	47	216	26	2	11	218	37	85.5%
Total	1230	243	853	72	13	49	866	121	87.7%

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T: total applications; NA: not assessable; F: favourable; D: unfavourable; RE: appeals upheld; RD: appeals dismissed; TF: total favourable; TD: total unfavourable; % F: overall percentage of favourable applications without counting those deemed non-assessable.

Graph 20. Call for assessment of civil servant teaching and research staff from public universities (2023–2024)

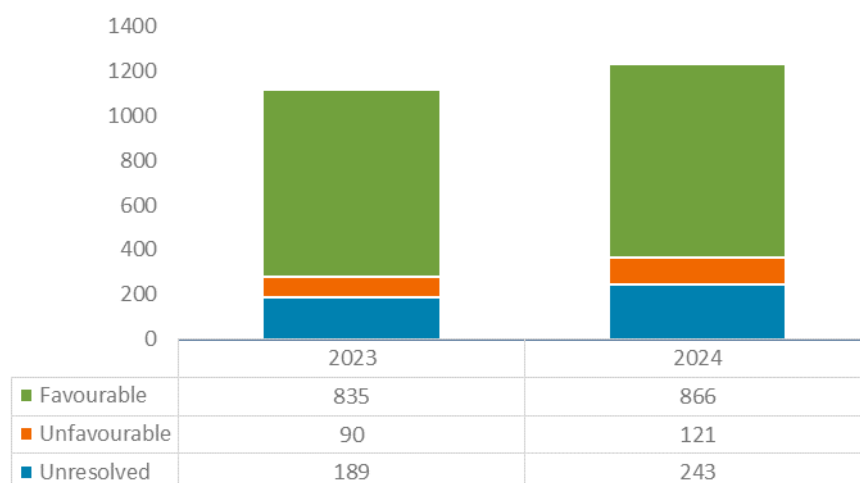


Table 25. 2024 call for recognition for civil servant teaching and research staff from public universities. Results

Field of knowledge	T	NA	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	5	4	1	0	100.0%
Social Sciences	17	8	9	0	100.0%
Sciences	11	6	5	0	100.0%
Life Sciences	5	0	5	0	100.0%
Medical and Health Sciences	10	9	1	0	100.0%
Engineering and Architecture	24	14	10	0	100.0%
Total	72	41	31	0	100.0%

T: total applications; NA: not assessable; TF: total favourable; TD: total unfavourable; % F: overall percentage of favourable without counting the non-assessable applications.

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Assessment of research periods under agreements

AQU Catalunya has signed various agreements to assess the research activity of teaching and/or post-doctoral research staff at private Catalan universities and of research staff at the Technical University of Catalonia, the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the following affiliated centres:

Table 26. Affiliated centres with an agreement for the assessment of the research periods completed by their teaching staff

University	Centre
UB	CETT - University School of Hotel Management and Tourism EISJD - Sant Joan de Déu School of Nursing
UB and UdL	INEFC - National Institute of Physical Education of Catalonia
UAB	EUSS - Salesian University School of Sarrià EINA - Barcelona University School of Art and Design Health Management Foundation of the Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau EUIT - Terrassa University School of Nursing and Occupational Therapy
UPC	EUNCET University Business School CITM - Centre for Image and Multimedia Technology
UPF	BSM – Barcelona School of Management ESIM - Hospital de Mar Higher School of Nursing TecnoCampus Foundation Mataró-Maresme IBEI - Barcelona Institute of International Studies ESCI - Higher School of International Commerce
UdG	ERAM - University School of the Arts EU Mediterrani – Mediterranean University School EUSES – University School of Health and Sport
URV	CESDA – Centre for Advanced Studies in Aviation EUSES-TE – University School of Health and Sport ESIC Business & Marketing School
UVic-UCC	BAU - Barcelona University School of Art and Design ESERP – Barcelona School of Business and Social Science EADA - School of Senior Management and Administration

The criteria and procedures are the same as those used to assess the research activity of civil servant and non-civil servant teaching and research staff at Catalan public universities.

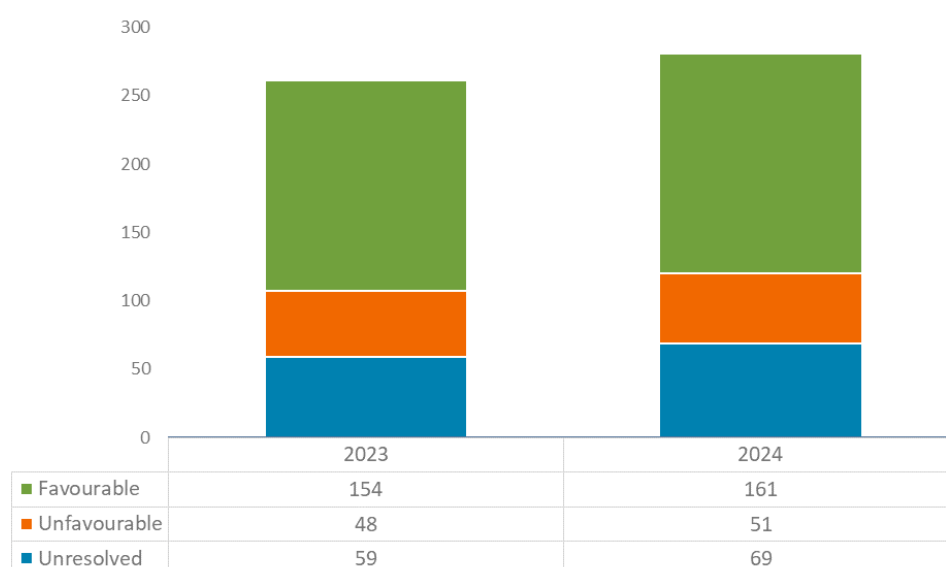
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Table 27. Assessment of the research periods carried out by teaching staff at institutions with which an agreement has been signed. 2024 results

Institution	T	NA	P	RP	TF	TD	% F
Private universities and affiliated centres	276	67	0	18	158	51	75.60%
Research staff from the UPC and the UAB	5	2	0	0	3	0	100%
Total	281	69	0	18	161	51	76.2%

T: total applications; NA: not assessable; P: pending; RP: appeals pending; TF: total favourable; TD: total unfavourable; % F: overall percentage of favourable without counting the non-assessable applications.

Graph 21. Graph showing the evolution of applications for assessment of research merits submitted by civil servant teaching and research staff at private universities and affiliated centres and by research staff at the UPC and the UAB (2023–2024)



Assessment of Ramón y Cajal and Beatriz Galindo research personnel

AQU Catalunya has signed an [agreement](#) with the public universities in Catalonia under which it agrees to issue reports recognising the research activity (for periods of six years) of Ramón y Cajal and Beatriz Galindo research staff. The assessment criteria applied are the same as those used to assess the research merits of civil servant and non-civil servant teaching and research staff at Catalan public universities.

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Results

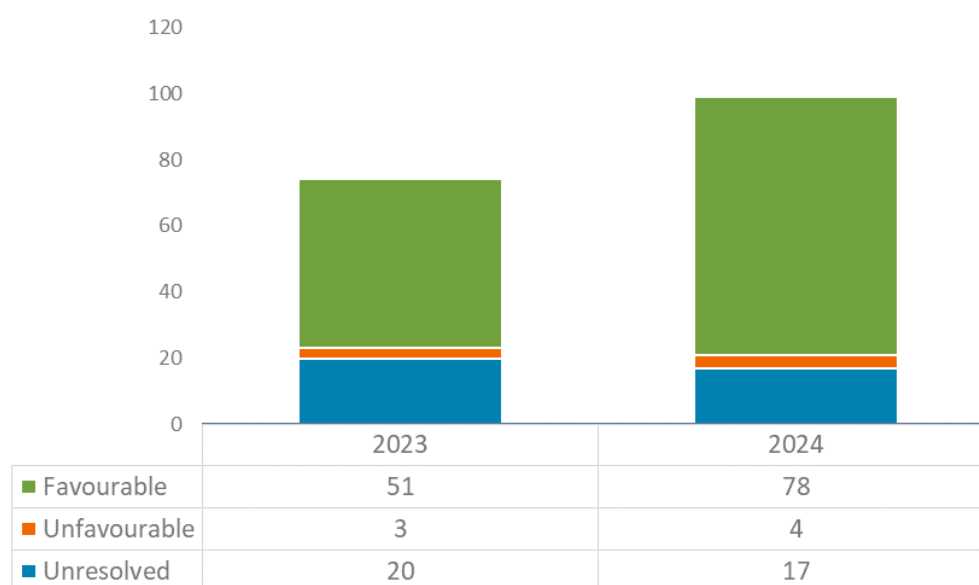
The results of this call were as follows:

Table 28. Results of the 2024 call for the assessment of Ramon y Cajal and Beatriz Galindo research personnel at public universities in Catalonia

	T	NA	P	RP	TF	TD	% F
Ramon y Cajal and Beatriz Galindo research personnel at public universities in Catalonia	99	17	0	1	78	4	95.1%

T: total applications; NA: not assessable; P: pending; RP: appeals pending; TF: total favourable; TD: total unfavourable; % F: percentage of favourable.

Graph 22. Graph showing the evolution of applications for the assessment of research merits submitted by Ramon y Cajal and Beatriz Galindo research personnel at public universities in Catalonia (2023–2024)



Certification of teaching merits

In order to assess the teaching activity of teaching and research staff, Catalan universities apply their respective AQU Catalunya-accredited teaching assessment handbooks. The universities then send their teaching assessment reports to the Agency, where the Specific Commission for Teaching and Management Activity certifies that the assessments have been carried in accordance with these handbooks.

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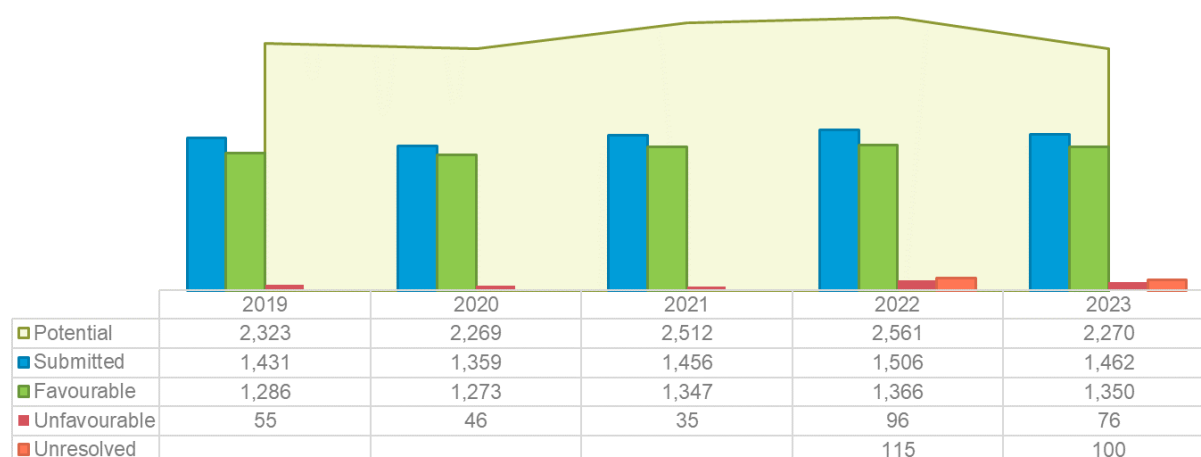
Results

In 2024, we certified the following teaching merits for civil servant teaching staff at Catalan public universities:

Table 29. Results of the 2023 call for teaching merit assessment certification

Potential applicants ⁸	Total applicants	Percentage of applications	Favourable	Unfavourable	Percentage favourable/ applications	Percentage favourable/ potential
2270	1462	64.4%	1350	76	92.4%	64.4%

Graph 23. Evolution of the assessment of teaching merits (2019-2023)



Teaching activity assessment certificates

Teaching activity assessment certificates (CAAD) are intended for teaching staff who have received research and/or advanced research accreditation from AQU Catalunya.⁹

The certificate recognises that the teaching carried out by the applicant meets pre-established teaching requirements and may be considered by universities in their competitive selection processes.

In 2024, 10 applications were submitted, of which 8 were resolved favourably and 2 were concluded without assessment.

⁸. The number of potential applicants includes teachers from previous calls with the option to participate in the 2022 call.

⁹. Resolution UNI/1239/2004, of 26 April, and Resolution UNI/3130/2005, of 28 October.

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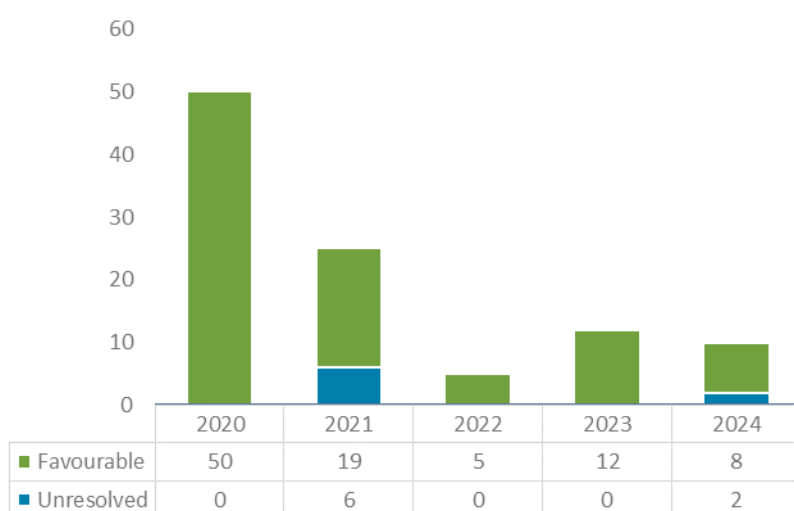
Results

The following table shows the certificates of teaching issued between 2020 and 2024.

Table 30. Certificates of teaching (2020–2024)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Favourable	50	19	5	12	8
Not assessable	-	6	-	-	2
Pending	-	-	-	-	-
Total applications	50	25	5	12	10

Graph 24. Evolution of teaching activity assessment certificates (2020–2024)



Assessment of management merits

Catalan universities assess the individual management merits of their civil servant and non-civil servant teaching and management staff, applying the instructions approved by AQU Catalunya and the Directorate General for Universities for this assessment. Once the teacher has been assessed, the university sends the assessment reports to the Agency to certify that the assessment follows the aforementioned instructions.

Results

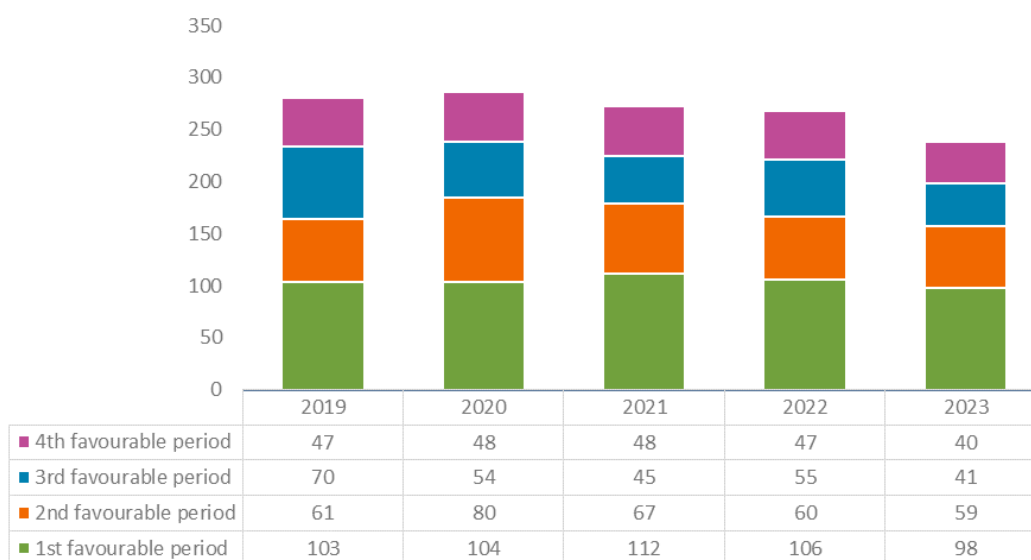
In 2024, AQU Catalunya certified the assessment of the following periods from the 2023 call:

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Table 31. Results of the 2023 call for the certification of the assessment of management merits¹⁰

Periods assessed	Favourable	Unfavourable	1st period	2nd period	3rd period	4th period
247	238	9	98	59	41	40

Graph 25. Evolution of the assessment of management merits (2019–2023)

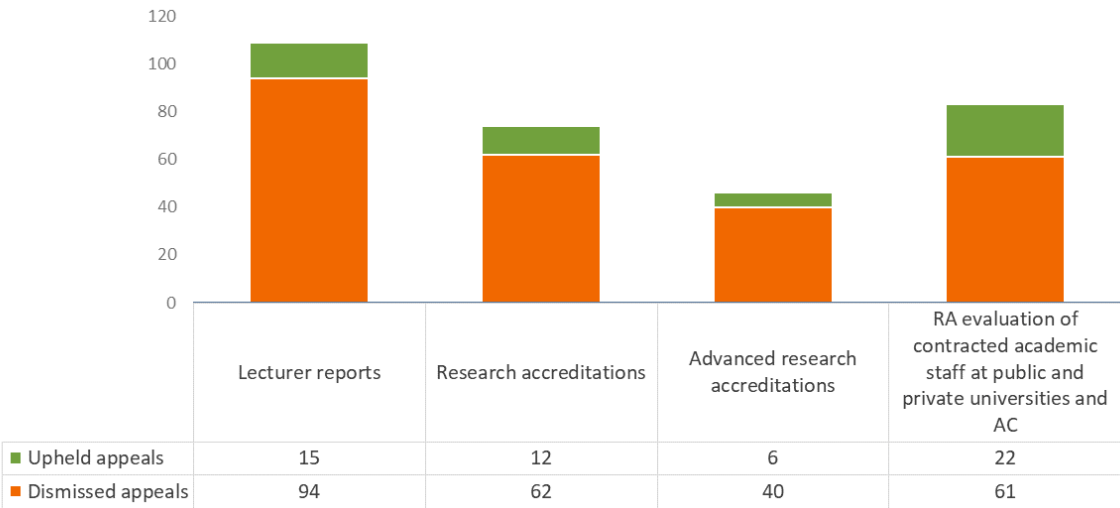


¹⁰. The information provided in the table refers to assessed periods, not to individuals.

Appeals in teaching staff assessment processes

A total of 239 appeals related to university teaching staff assessment processes were lodged in 2024 for closed calls. The Appeals Commission upheld 17% of them.

Graph 26. Appeals resolved in 2024 under calls closed in 2023, by type



RA: research activity; AC: affiliated centres.

KNOWLEDGE GENERATION

Surveys and indicators of the Catalan Higher Education System

Employment outcomes of university graduates in higher arts education

AQU Catalunya has been coordinating this study every three years since the year 2000. Currently, all Catalan universities, both public (through their social councils) and private affiliated centres and higher arts education centres in Catalonia, participate to obtain data and benchmarks in regard to the quality of their students' employment outcomes.

In 2024, work commenced on the ninth edition of the study. This involved defining the graduate years and degrees to be included, estimating the population to be surveyed, and preparing and managing over fifty agreements and various other administrative documents. In this ninth edition, the Agency will survey bachelor's degree and arts degree graduates who completed their studies in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years (with the exception of medical students, who were included if they completed their studies in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020); university and art master's graduates who completed their studies in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022; and doctoral degree graduates who defended their theses in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. A total of 94,518 graduates from Catalan universities will be invited to participate in the study, either electronically or by telephone. At the end of the fieldwork, more than 46,000 responses are expected, which will make it one of the most widely answered surveys in Catalonia.

Finally, in 2024, we also reviewed the questionnaires that will be used in this edition.

Employment outcomes of university graduates. Idescat population study

The Business Climate Survey ([CLEM](#)), which is designed and managed by the Statistical Institute of Catalonia (Idescat) and in which AQU Catalunya collaborated in the preparation of the business news module, offers a general yet representative overview of the region, drawing on the opinion of representatives of Catalan establishments with regard to economic trends and expectations. This survey's business news module for the second quarter of the year complements the information in the AQU Catalunya Employers study.

In 2024, Idescat continued working to implement the method that has been studied since it began collaborating with AQU Catalunya. The goal is to estimate employment rates and other relevant indicators using administrative registration data.

Employment outcomes from the employers' point of view

Since 2014, AQU Catalunya has been conducting a three-yearly study on employers' opinions in regard to the university education of recent graduates. This study, together with the employment outcomes survey and the satisfaction survey, provides information on the employability of the degrees taught in Catalonia. In the context of this project, employability is understood as the capacity of universities to enable the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences required by a dynamic labour market.

In addition to surveying employers, the Employers project produces sectoral reports that analyse the employability profiles of degree programs or groups of disciplinarily related degree programmes and conducts participatory conferences and workshops with academic representatives, employers, and *alumni* to facilitate the development of proposals for improving degree programmes. The aim is to enable universities to develop policies to improve the university system in terms of the academic offer and training programmes, and thus bring university education and the labour market closer together.

In 2024, the Employers project completed its analysis of the results of the third edition of the project, which began in 2020, and launched a new edition. With the results of the third edition of the Employers project, AQU Catalunya carried out the following activities:

- > Drafting of reports on the [Law and Advocacy](#) sector, which have been published on the AQU Catalunya website, and on the Education sector (secondary school teachers), which will be released in 2025.
- > Transfer of data to research staff at the Open University of Catalonia's Forecasting and Analysis Unit.

And, with regard to the fourth edition, the following activities took place:

- > Review of the survey and approval by AQU Catalunya's Technical Survey Committee on 17 September 2024.
- > Survey fieldwork: electronic survey conducted from 18 November to 20 December 2024. It was sent to 26,000 contacts, with 3 reminders issued and 1,411 responses obtained.

Satisfaction survey of bachelor's, master's and higher arts education graduates

The satisfaction survey provides insight into students' satisfaction with the teaching-learning process, with the services and facilities, and with the results they achieved while at university. The aim is to provide comparable indicators so that it is easier to pinpoint a university degree's strengths and areas for improvement.

In 2024, AQU Catalunya finished analysing the results of the survey of graduates from the 2022-2023 academic year (satisfaction 2023), which included 15,588 graduates of bachelor's, master's

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and higher arts education degrees. The project involved the 12 public and private universities in the Catalan system, 47 affiliated centres and 11 higher arts education centres. Of the participants, 26.7% had graduated with bachelor's degrees, 25.8% with master's degrees, 37.4% with higher arts education degrees (EAS) and 33.5% with EAS master's degrees.

The data from the 2023 degree satisfaction survey was added to the [EUC Data](#) portal, where the aggregated results of the last three graduate cohorts surveyed can be consulted, with a sampling error equal to or less than 15%. In this context, the indicators for bachelor's and master's degrees were also updated in the degree files in the [EUC Studies](#) portal, and for the first time, the data for higher arts degrees and masters was uploaded.

Furthermore, in 2024, we reviewed the questions in the undergraduate and master's degree questionnaires, taking into account international benchmarks for studying the satisfaction of university graduates. This review, approved by the Technical Committee for Surveys on 30 April 2024, has allowed us to update and adapt the questions to the current context. A total of 17 questions were added, and an additional module that will be used to address a topical issue each year was included. The first module will address the gender perspective.

Finally, in December 2024, fieldwork began for the tenth satisfaction survey of bachelor's degree graduates and the eighth satisfaction survey of master's degree graduates from all universities in Catalonia, both public and private, as well as the sixth survey of graduates from higher arts education centres.

Via Universitària survey

Via Universitària is a project based on the Eurostudent survey. It aims to provide information about the profile and experience of university students in order to establish policies that fit their needs. The key theme of the project is equity. In other words, ensuring that students can access the educational experience regardless of their social background, age, gender or any other factor.

The Vives Network of Universities is the driving force behind this project, and this is the third edition in which AQU Catalunya will lead its technical management. The Andorran Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and the Government of Catalonia also collaborate on the project.

The fieldwork for the study began in February and March of 2024, during which 45,572 responses were collected. Following the validation and filtering of the information collected, the project's research team began a detailed analysis and extracted the main results for the dissemination reports. The research team consists of more than twenty researchers from different universities in the Vives Network of Universities.

Indicators of the Catalan university system

AQU Catalunya is aware of the importance of having indicators to help in decision-making, both for improving degree programme assessment processes and for analysing specific areas of the Catalan

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Higher Education System. To this end, the Agency, in collaboration with the Ministry of Research and Universities, provides universities with the indicators that are required for the processes of monitoring and accrediting recognised university degrees, which are also derived from the surveys it coordinates.

In 2024, AQU Catalunya continued to update the data system and various tools that make it possible to use this repository of assessment indicators. Specifically, we incorporated the data from the 2023 employment outcomes survey (higher arts education degrees and master's) and the data from the satisfaction survey for the class of 2022-2023.

In addition, a significant effort was made to increase data entry efficiency by harmonising the indicators (code, description and categories) in the variable catalogues, databases and data store, as well as by developing scripts and programming tools to streamline data integration and entry processes.

Lastly, we developed a draft set of concise comparative indicators that identify the weaknesses, risks and strengths of institutions undergoing institutional accreditation by allowing a comparison between the values of these indicators with the benchmark values of the Catalan Higher Education System. This initiative is currently undergoing testing and validation before being incorporated into the assessment process.

Database transfers

AQU Catalunya makes the databases containing the data from the studies on the employment outcomes of Catalan university graduates and from the Employers' project available to the academic community. In 2024, we received and processed four requests for database transfers.

Studies and reports

AQU Catalunya is responsible for promoting knowledge generation and providing public information on the quality of the study programmes and quality assessment processes in universities and higher education institutions, in addition to information on the services they offer, in order to make them accountable to society. For this reason, each year, the Agency prepares reports on the data it obtains from its surveys and external assessment processes of degree programmes, institutions and teaching staff.

The Agency is also responsible for promoting and fostering research and innovation in the models and processes used for the assessment, certification and accreditation of quality.

In 2024, it produced the following reports and studies:

Equity in the Employment Outcomes and Social Mobility of Graduates from Catalan On-campus Universities

At the end of 2022, AQU Catalunya initiated a project with the aim of carrying out a diagnosis of the equity of access to the Catalan Higher Education System and subsequent entry into the labour market. The motivation for this project is AQU Catalunya's assumption of the mandate set out in the [Rome Communiqué](#), in which the ministries responsible for higher education in the European Higher Education Area agreed that external quality assurance systems should address, where possible, "how the social dimension, diversity, accessibility, equity and inclusion are reflected in the institutional missions of higher education institutions, while respecting the principle of institutional autonomy". In this context, AQU Catalunya hopes to contribute, through this project, to providing universities with evidence that will enable them to put forward proposals for improvement from the perspective of equity.

In 2024, we achieved the following milestones in relation to this project:

- > Completion of the primary deliverables: 1) the catalogue of indicators to measure equity in the Catalan Higher Education System (SUC); 2) the report on equity in the employment outcomes of SUC graduates; 3) the proposed dashboard to measure equity in the SUC.
- > The report on equity in the employment outcomes of SUC graduates was presented to the [AQU Catalunya Governing Board on 10 December 2024](#).
- > A plan was drawn up for disseminating the project's deliverables in 2025.

Reports on the results of the study on employment outcomes from the employer perspective

In 2024, as part of the Employers project, AQU Catalunya produced the following report on the opinion of this collective in regard to the education received by graduates in the field of Law:

- > [*Employability and University Education in the Field of Law*](#)

Relevance and impact of scientific publications in Catalan

Within the framework of the plan to strengthen the use of the Catalan language in the Catalan university research system, AQU Catalunya completed its work on an internal document for the assessment commissions that analyses and assesses the current status of Catalan in specialist journals (scientific and scholarly) based on the available reports.

- > Report *Incorporating the relevance and impact of scientific publications in Catalan into the concept of quality within AQU Catalunya's accreditation criteria*

The report analyses and evaluates the current status of the Catalan language in specialist journals (both scientific and scholarly) based on existing reports. Additionally, it assesses the relevance and impact of the presence of Catalan in these journals. It also proposes a series of recommendations

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that may help to highlight the quality of publications in Catalan in the format deemed most appropriate.

Analysis of the use of artificial intelligence in degree programme accreditation

This study constitutes a preliminary exploration of the use of artificial intelligence in university degree quality assessment processes. Through this analysis, AQU Catalunya assessed the effectiveness of using this technology to predict the results of degree quality accreditation.

- > [Preliminary analysis of the use of artificial intelligence in degree programme accreditation](#)



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KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Knowledge transfer

EUC Portal (University Studies in Catalonia)

EUC Studies

EUC Studies disseminates the results of the quality assessment processes of the recognised bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programmes taught at Catalan universities, as well as the latest results of surveys on the employment outcomes and satisfaction of recent graduates.

The website also displays quality seals issued to degree programmes and those issued to the centres that have been granted institutional accreditation.

This year, AQU Catalunya introduced [a new dynamic tool](#) that makes it easy for prospective university students to check a range of employment indicators for various degree programmes. This tool provides quick access to information such as average salary, time taken to secure a job, and working hours after three years. The aim is to offer students a realistic view based on verified data, avoiding subjective perceptions. The information comes from the 2023 employment outcomes survey, which polled more than 20,000 respondents, making it highly reliable.

During the year, the portal received 85,796 visits from 69,398 users who consulted a total of 360,924 pages. These metrics show a similar trend to previous years.



EUC Data

The [EUC Data](#) website displays the results of the surveys carried out by the Agency to gather information on university graduates' employment outcomes and the satisfaction of recent

graduates in relation to the degree programme they have just completed. The indicators can be consulted by type of study programme and subject.

During the year, the portal received 18,068 visits from 15,354 users who consulted a total of 23,209 pages. These metrics show a similar trend to previous years.

EUC Reports

The [EUC Reports](#) website contains all the reports resulting from the quality assessment programmes carried out by the Agency on the degree programmes offered by Catalan universities and on the higher arts education courses under the remit of the Catalan Ministry of Education. The reports from this portal are available on the new EUC portal.

During the year, we began to design the integration of this portal into the structure of the EUC Studies portal for reasons of technological obsolescence and simplification.

In terms of indicators, in 2024 the website contained 9,470 reports, representing an increase of 7.6% on the previous year, and received 13,204 visits (77% more) from 10,119 users (132% more) who visited a total of 34,348 pages (17.5% more).

Workshops and webinars

The workshops and webinars hosted by AQU Catalunya, which are mainly aimed at the Catalan university community and Catalan government agencies, are opportunities for knowledge exchange, reflection and discussion. The aim is to promote and reinforce the culture of quality and continuous improvement in the Catalan university system.

In 2024, the Agency organised three workshops.

Qualitative assessment of research: challenges and experiences. 2 July 2024

This workshop, which could be followed live online and later viewed on the AQU Catalunya YouTube channel, took place in the context of changes to the teacher accreditation criteria. The objectives were as follows:

- > In the context of debate around new approaches to research assessment, the event sought to explore qualitative assessment methodologies in greater depth.
- > Gain insight from two specific cases involving qualitative assessment methodologies.

A total of 665 people registered for the workshop.



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Monitoring and renewal of institutional accreditation: an initial experience. 21 July 2024

This workshop, which could be followed live online and later viewed on the AQU Catalunya YouTube channel, was held in the context of institutional accreditation for centres. The objectives were as follows:

- > Share the results of the evaluation of the first monitoring reports from institutionally accredited centres and the first institutional accreditation renewal process carried out in the early months of 2024 as a pilot test.
- > Gain a deeper understanding of institutional accreditation and its methodology.
- > Learn first-hand about the experience of the Pere Tarrés Faculty of Social Education and Social Work at Ramon Llull University, the first centre to be institutionally accredited and also the first to undergo the institutional accreditation renewal process.

A total of 279 people registered for the workshop.



Research assessment: indicators and challenges for local research and research in Catalan. 18 September 2024

This workshop, which was held in person in the Chapel Hall of the Historic Building of the Faculty of Philology and Communication at the University of Barcelona and can be viewed on the AQU Catalunya YouTube channel, was framed within the debate on new approaches to research evaluation, particularly with regard to the assessment of university teaching staff and the need to rethink the issue, approaching it with a more qualitative focus and taking social impact into account. The objectives were as follows:

- > Raise awareness of the debate surrounding new approaches to research assessment.
- > Reflect on the challenges associated with establishing criteria and indicators related to local research results and research publications in Catalan.

A total of 689 people registered for the workshop.



University quality assurance training for students. 23 November 2024

This training session, organised by AQU Catalunya and the Catalan University Student Council (CEUCAT), took place at the headquarters of AQU Catalunya and falls within the context of the student body's participation in higher education institutions. Students who attended the session and completed an independent project afterwards received a certificate certifying 25 hours of dedication, which they can submit to their universities in order to obtain a free-elective credit if the regulations of their schools allow it.



The objectives of the training were as follows:

- > Familiarise the students with university quality assurance.
- > Equip the students with useful tools to help them participate in their universities' internal quality assurance processes and in the external assessment processes carried out by AQU Catalunya.
- > Offer an overview of the latest developments in quality assurance from both international and local perspectives.
- > Provide resources that will enable the students to interpret the quality assessment data provided by the higher education system.

A total of 31 people registered for the training.

Publications

AQU Catalunya put out a total of 53 publications, 21 of which were original texts. Of these publications, 21 were published in Catalan, 19 in Spanish and 13 in English (see Annex 3).

One of the publications was the update of the AQU Catalunya Services Catalogue, which has been revised in line with the Agency's Code of Ethics, incorporating the values that guide its work: independence, impartiality, integrity, innovation, public service, diversity, equity, trust, transparency, cooperation, efficiency, internationalisation and competence.

Communication tools

AQU Catalunya has the following tools at its disposal to disseminate its activities: firstly, the AQU Catalunya corporate website and the specific EUC Studies, EUC Reports and EUC Data websites; and secondly, its quarterly newsletter, a YouTube channel, an X account and a LinkedIn account. It also has contacts with the media.

Website

The AQU Catalunya corporate website is the primary vehicle used by the Agency to communicate its activities.

In 2024, the alerts and calendar for calls for applications for university teaching staff were brought in line with the new model of permanently open calls.

Furthermore, throughout 2024 we continued our work to review and update the content and structure of the web's main pages, in order to improve both the user experience and access to information.

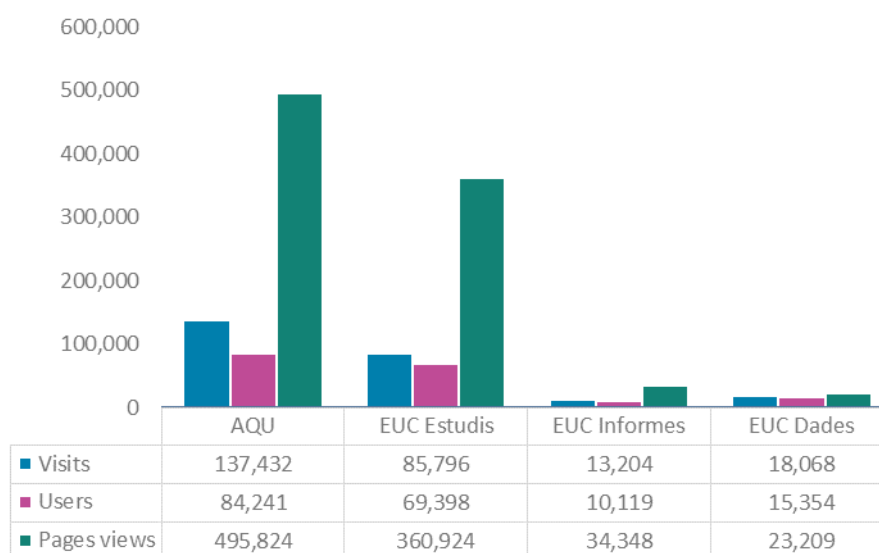
The website is available in three languages (Catalan, Spanish and English) and it has a responsive design, i.e. it adapts to different mobile devices.

In 2024, we changed the tool used to measure traffic to the Agency's corporate website and collected the following indicators: the website was visited by 84,241 users, received 137,432 visits and had 495,824 page views. These metrics show a similar trend to previous years.

For the other websites managed by the Agency, the number of visits, users and page views were as follows:



Graph 27. Number of visits, users and page views for AQU Catalunya websites (2024)

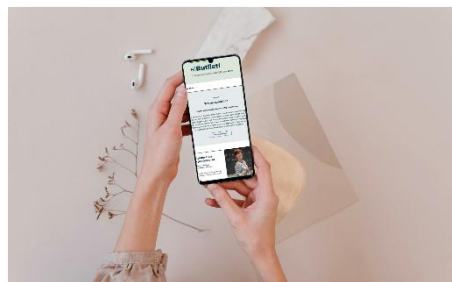


elButlletí

Four editions (issues 112 to 115) of *elButlletí*, AQU Catalunya's periodical publication, were produced. The publication aims to provide further information on the activities and projects it carries out and to reflect the opinions of the people involved.

The newsletters were sent to 19,830 subscribers, reflecting a 3.8% increase over last year's subscriptions.

In terms of traffic indicators, over the year it received 7,883 visits from 6,606 users, who visited a total of 10,082 pages. There was a notable 110% increase in newsletter visits, likely due to the communication improvements made throughout the year to promote it.



Videos

This year, AQU Catalunya updated its [corporate presentation video](#) with the aim of providing a concise overview of the functions and role of the Agency both within and outside Catalonia, particularly for those who are not familiar with it. It explains the organisation's main tasks and highlights its links with international networks. It also draws attention to the ethical and methodological tools and human resources that underpin the quality of its work.



With the aim of making information more accessible to the public, in 2024, AQU Catalunya also began recording and publishing video news bulletins. These included:

- > [*Research assessment: indicators and challenges for local research and research in Catalan*](#) (18 September), in which Jaume Valls, director of AQU Catalunya, invites viewers to participate in the workshop.
- > [*Students from the field of Education at the University of Barcelona visit AQU Catalunya*](#) (20 November).
- > [*University quality assurance training for students*](#) (23 November), as part of the student training course in university quality assurance.
- > [*AQU Catalunya Governing Board*](#) (10 December).

In addition, the three workshops organised by AQU Catalunya were broadcast live so that anyone interested could follow them:

- > [*Qualitative assessment of research: challenges and experiences*](#) (2 July).

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- > [*Monitoring and renewal of institutional accreditation: an initial experience*](#) (12 September).
- > [*Research assessment: indicators and challenges for local research and research in Catalan*](#) (18 September).

X network

AQU Catalunya has a corporate X account that it uses to post more directly about its activities, and also to share information from other agencies and organisations related to quality in higher education, employment outcomes and other issues considered of interest to its followers. This network is used to reinforce and expand on the information disseminated through the corporate website.



By the end of 2024, AQU Catalunya's X account had 2,960 followers, representing an increase of 2% compared to the previous year.

YouTube

AQU Catalunya has a YouTube channel that it uses to disseminate its activities and, where necessary, to train experts. This channel has also been used to live-stream webinars.

In 2024, the Agency published 8 videos on its YouTube channel (almost double the number published during the previous year) which collectively received a total of 7,626 views, bringing the overall count to a record-breaking 59,511 views.

The most viewed video of the year was the [*Tutorial on how to complete the application for assessment and the abridged curriculum vitae*](#), which garnered 2,927 views. In second place was the webinar titled [*Qualitative assessment of research: challenges and experiences*](#), of 2 September, with 621 views. The third most viewed video was [*Research assessment: indicators and challenges for local research and research in Catalan*](#), of 18 September, with 415 views.

LinkedIn

AQU Catalunya has a LinkedIn account that it uses to post about the results of its studies and some of its projects.

In 2024, there was a significant increase in the number of posts featuring selected content that appealed to the LinkedIn community, resulting in an exponential rise in interactions. The interactions surged by



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over 1,200%, climbing from 1,666 to 21,947. Additionally, the number of followers grew substantially (up by 36%), rising from 660 to 899.

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STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Strategic management

Assessment according to European standards and guidelines

If quality assurance agencies operating in Europe want their decisions to be recognised by other European countries, they must pass an external review every five years to verify that the assessment processes they carry out are compliant with the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#) (ESG, 2015).

In 2024, AQU Catalunya approved the 2024-2027 Action Plan within the framework of the ESGs and defined 29 actions. During the year, 36% of the actions included in the plan were implemented.

The Agency also participated in a seminar organised by ENQA, Targeted Reviews' Follow-up Seminar: Impact and Lessons Learnt, as a follow-up to the evaluation carried out in 2022.

Strategic Plan

In 2023, AQU Catalunya's Governing Board approved the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#), which is structured into five corporate social responsibility commitments comprising 12 strategic objectives and 34 actions to be carried out up to December 2026.

In 2024, the Agency continued to roll out the plan, implementing 71% of the actions envisaged for the year. Overall, 41% of the Strategic Plan has now been implemented.

Governing, assessment and advisory bodies

Governing and assessment bodies

Governing Board and Standing Committee

The Governing Board is the senior governing body of AQU Catalunya. In 2024, it met three times, with all three meetings being held in a hybrid format (virtual and in person). At the meetings, the Governing Board oversaw the Agency's actions and approved, among other things, the following documents: the *2023 Activities and Corporate Social Responsibility Report*; the 2023 end-of-year financial statement and inventory; the preliminary draft activities and budget plan for 2025; the planning for external visits to centres offering official university degrees in 2025; the AQU Catalunya Catalogue of Services; the modification of the list of positions for the purpose of adjusting the remuneration and special nature of two positions; the modification of the criteria for the appointment of the director of AQU Catalunya; the public offer of employment for 2025; and the appointment of members to the assessment and advisory bodies of AQU Catalunya. The Governing Board also ratified the agreements entered into and signed by the Agency during the year and the multi-annual expenditure committed.

Institutional and Programme Review Commission (CAIP)

The Institutional and Programme Review Commission (CAIP) oversees the correct application of the set of quality assurance instruments and processes that AQU Catalunya uses at institutional and programme level. The work of the CAIP can be grouped into two main areas: the quality of teaching and the quality of institutions. The CAIP met four times in 2024, three times virtually and once face-to-face, to approve the following:

- > **Methodological materials:** *Guide to the Accreditation of Joint Programmes Using the European Approach; Guide to the Assessment of Foreign Institutions; Guidelines for the preparation of the student report for degree programme and centre accreditation; the model for preparing the student report for degree programme accreditation and the model for preparing the student report for centre accreditation.* It also reviewed the procedures relating to the assessment processes for the accreditation of doctorate degrees and the accreditation of joint international degrees using the European Approach.
- > **Support documents:** *Benchmark in Nursing; Benchmark in Industrial Engineering; Benchmark in Biosciences; Benchmark in Philology and Language Studies.*

Research Assessment Commission (CAR)

The Research Assessment Commission (CAR) is in charge of issuing research and advanced research accreditations for university teaching staff, as well as evaluating research, teaching and

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management merits. The CAR met three times, once in person and twice virtually, to approve: the first version of the LOSU-adapted general criteria for the accreditation of permanent teaching staff; the criteria for assessing the research activity of contracted teaching and research staff and civil servant teaching and research staff for 2025; the procedure for assessing the research activity of civil servant and contracted teaching and research staff for periods ending no later than 31 December 2024; Resolution REU/4680/2024, of 23 December, publicising the procedure and certification of the evaluation of the individual teaching and management merits of civil servant and contracted teaching and research staff at Catalan public universities, accrued up to 31 December 2024, for the allocation of additional remuneration; and measures to ensure equality and work-life balance in the evaluation of teaching and research staff.

Furthermore, during the year, the members of the Research Assessment Commission, who are also the chairs of the specific assessment commissions, as well as the specific assessment commissions themselves, met on several occasions to discuss and agree on the accreditation criteria for associate professors and full professors, in line with the provisions of the LOSU.

Appeals Commission

The Appeals Commission is responsible for resolving appeals filed against the decisions taken by the Research Assessment Commission, the Institutional and Programme Review Commission and the other evaluation, certification and accreditation commissions referred to in Article 11 of Law 15/2015, of 21 July, of the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency. Its decisions exhaust administrative channels. The Appeals Commission is also responsible for issuing review reports of other acts issued by the commissions when this is established in the assessment and certification processes.

The Appeals Commission, which met nine times in 2024, continued to issue review reports on the decisions issued by the assessment commissions and resolved any appeals involving assessment processes for university teaching staff.

During 2024, in the appeals process for degree programmes, four students participated in the drafting of the proposed degree resolutions and took part in the meetings of the Appeals Commission.

Advisory bodies

Advisory Commission

The Advisory Commission is the advisory body that assists the Agency by advising on strategies, defining and improving procedures and drawing up proposals for action in order to guarantee the quality of AQU Catalunya's activities in accordance with international benchmarks.

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In 2024, the Advisory Commission met once in a face-to-face format to discuss the review of the teaching assessment handbooks in the new legal context and within the institutional accreditation assessment framework.

Committee of Vice-Rectors for Quality Assurance and Academic Organisation

AQU Catalunya meets periodically with the vice-rectors responsible for quality and academic organisation in the Catalan university system. In 2024, four meetings were held, the first of which was a single-topic session to discuss the new VSMA Framework. The other sessions addressed the following topics, among others: The European Approach; the guidelines for preparing student reports for the accreditation of degrees and centres; the templates for preparing student reports for the accreditation of degrees and centres, and the process for assessing the accreditation of doctoral programmes. The meetings also introduced the *Benchmark in Nursing*, *Benchmark in Industrial Engineering*, *Benchmark in Biosciences*, and *Benchmark in Philology and Language Studies*.

Committee of heads of technical quality units

AQU Catalunya coordinates the application of the assessment procedures and methodologies with the heads of the technical quality units of the Catalan universities.

In 2024, this Committee met four times to discuss the same issues that were presented to the Committee of Vice-Rectors responsible for quality and academic planning. One of the face-to-face meetings dealt with the new VSMA Framework.

Technical Committee for Surveys

Composed of technical survey experts from Catalan universities, the function of this committee is to coordinate the content and implementation of the surveys and the use of the data.

In 2024, it met three times virtually to plan the 2026 labour market survey, approve the new questionnaire for the 2024 employer survey, evaluate the 2023 recent graduate satisfaction survey, plan the implementation of the 2024 survey, and review the questionnaires and additional modules for the 2024 survey.

Student Advisory Committee

This committee works to broaden and systematise student participation in AQU Catalunya's assessment activities, advises the Agency on projects that have a direct impact on students and participates in the preparation of studies of interest to this group.

In 2024, the Committee held four meetings to gather proposals on the renewal of the VSMA Framework, to follow up on the draft student report for the accreditation of degree programmes and institutions, and to promote the quality assurance training programme for university students.

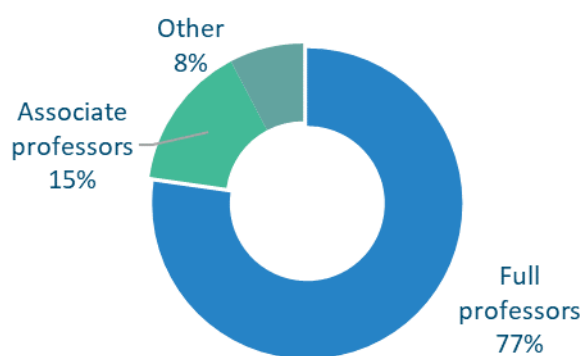
Experts

Experts are people of recognised academic and/or professional prestige, as well as students, who take part in AQU Catalunya's assessment processes. They must be independent and objective and have no conflicts of interest. They must also meet the ability and merit requirements previously established by the assessment commissions.

AQU Catalunya is in contact with the European Students' Union (ESU) within the framework of the agreement signed with a view to recruit international students as experts in the quality assurance processes organised by AQU Catalunya. In 2024, various contacts were maintained and a student was formally appointed, who participated in a European Approach evaluation process in the same year.

In 2024, AQU Catalunya's pool of reviewers received 379 new CVs: 214 from people in academia, 98 students and 67 professionals. In addition, 754 experts participated in AQU Catalunya activities. Of these, 371 were involved in institutional and degree programme assessment processes, and 401 in teaching staff assessment processes. The gender distribution was 53% male and 47% female, thereby maintaining gender parity in the assessment commissions. In terms of the internal experts, 49.7% came from outside the Catalan Higher Education System. More than two thirds of the academic experts were full professors.

Graph 28. Experts according to academic category (2024)



In 2024, all new experts received specialised training, either face-to-face or virtually, before participating in the assessment processes. To ensure the proper functioning of the external assessment committees and consistency in the application of the criteria, we organised several training courses on the different assessment processes:

- > Degree programme accreditation:
 - External Assessment Committees: 9 virtual training sessions, attended by 48 people.
 - External Assessment Committees - Basic Medical Standards of the World Federation for Medical Education: 2 virtual training sessions, attended by 8 people.

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- > IQAS certification:
 - External Assessment Committees: 3 virtual training sessions, attended by 27 people.
- > European Approach:
 - External Assessment Committees: 3 virtual training sessions, attended by 14 people.

With regard to the specific degree and institutional assessment commissions, a total of 12 individuals were trained in 2024 to ensure their knowledge remains current. Within this framework, the Agency also organised a virtual seminar on monitoring and renewing institutional accreditation, which was attended by 279 people. In addition, a face-to-face training course on university quality assurance was organised for students, which was attended by 31 people. These training courses allow us to expand the pool of experts available for future assessment processes.

Additionally, all experts initiating university teaching staff assessment processes underwent virtual training.

The experts were also invited to the workshops organised by AQU Catalunya to update their knowledge of the Catalan Higher Education System and the activities undertaken by the Agency.

INTERNAL ORGANISATION

Internal accountability and quality

Accountability and transparency of actions undertaken

AQU Catalunya pursues its activities on the basis of an annual plan that is approved by the Governing Board. This document outlines the Agency's strategic plan in terms of activities and projects. The activities undertaken and the results achieved are detailed in the annual activity report, which is also approved by the Governing Board. In 2024, the *Activities and Corporate Social Responsibility Report* for 2023 was finalised, approved, and published.

The Agency also responds to requests for information, fosters transparency and keeps the [AQU Catalunya Transparency Portal](#) up to date, in compliance with [Law 19/2014, of 29 December, on transparency, access to public information and good governance](#).

In 2024, AQU Catalunya's internal alert system went live. The aim of this whistleblowing system is to safeguard anyone who reports suspected breaches of regulations or corruption within the scope of the Agency.

Legal activity

AQU Catalunya draws up agreements, reports, resolutions and announcements that are necessary for the proper functioning of the Agency's activities (see the regulatory compilation in Appendix 5). During 2024, AQU Catalunya signed 14 collaboration agreements.

Table 32. Agreements signed in 2024, by type

Type of agreement	No.	Percentage
Research activity	3	21.4%
Collaborations with quality agencies and national and international universities	1	7.2%
Collaborations with the Administration and institutions	3	21.4%
Collaborations with universities	7	50%
Total	14	100%

The legal service ensures and monitors the legality of AQU Catalunya's activities.

Administrative procurement

In 2024, AQU Catalunya managed minor and, for the first time, non-minor contracting through the GEEC (electronic procurement file manager) of the Government of Catalonia.

In 2024, AQU Catalunya opened 119 minor and 16 non-minor procurement files, as well as 60 expenditure resolutions. Most of these files relate to the provision of general services at the AQU Catalunya headquarters building, followed by the IT services needed to manage AQU Catalunya's activities.

Information quality and security management system

In 2024, AQU Catalunya's information quality and security management system remained robust and successfully passed the external follow-up certification audit in accordance with ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 27001:2023. It is important to note that AQU Catalunya successfully passed the audit for the new versions of the standards (ISO 27001:2023 and ISO 27002:2023). These updated standards include several significant changes compared to the previous version, such as new controls related to threat intelligence and information security in service use.

The scope of the certification covers all of AQU Catalunya's processes, including its strategic planning processes, operational university quality assessment processes (both degree programme and institutional assessment), the assessment of teaching staff, the generation and transfer of knowledge and internationalisation, and the support processes, such as the management of HR, information and communication technologies (ICT), experts, etc. Internally, all the procedures that define the way the Agency operates are periodically updated, with an annual update rate of 30%.

With regard to the information security system, efforts to reduce risks and achieve a high level of compliance with the controls outlined in the ISO 27002 standard have continued. Notably, significant work has been conducted on risk analysis and management, following the annual Risk Handling Plan and the internal activity plan. This year, work was carried out to implement the new ISO 27002 controls.

Over the course of 2024, we initiated 149 improvement actions based on findings from internal and external audits, as well as from the internal self-assessments related to various projects and areas, including the Equality Plan. To measure process management, AQU Catalunya continued to strengthen its scoreboard, adding an internal data processing and management tool. This tool manages 410 indicators. This year, the number of indicators calculated automatically from various internal applications has increased again, making data collection quicker and more reliable. Currently, they account for nearly 70% of all the indicators.

In relation to AQU Catalunya's external users:

- > We received 80 expressions of satisfaction, mainly from universities but also from the faculty members assessed and the members of the commissions, who expressed their gratitude for the support offered by the Agency.

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- > Additionally, 290 queries were received through the various general communication channels provided by AQU Catalunya, such as the user service portal on the website and corporate e-mails like experts@aqu.cat, in addition to the queries handled by the AQU Catalunya departments.
- > External users were attended to by telephone, and also through responses to enquiries made directly to the corporate e-mails of the different departments.

Information and communication technologies

In the field of information technology, AQU Catalunya deployed the following actions:

- > **File manager for degree and institutional assessments (Talassa):** completion of the development and implementation of the application. Institution-related files (IQAS, accreditation and monitoring of institutional accreditation) were incorporated, as well as functionality for institutional visits and automatic planners for managing these types of files. The automatic indicators for institutional files were programmed. Appeal management was incorporated into Talassa. The automatic sending of final reports to the EUC Reports portal was set up.
- > **Open calls for teaching staff:** developments are underway to implement the system of year-round open calls for the issuance of research and advanced research accreditations, which commenced in April. The necessary adjustments were made to adapt the expert invoicing process and all the evaluation views on the extranet to the open call process.
- > **Technological update of the teacher assessment system:** a project was launched to update the teacher and billing modules and their associated libraries in order to avoid technological obsolescence, ensure the continuity of the application, and take advantage of any functional, technical or visual benefits deemed appropriate, as well as to incorporate new features. The project framework was created, and the accreditation application import screen was migrated.
- > **E-administration:** we developed and implemented a series of improvements to the abridged curriculum and added a series of fields related to contributions. We restructured the form used to apply for assessment and recognition of research activity into tabs and added the academic staff type “IRAR tenure-track”. We started adapting the associate and full professor accreditation application form to include the new criteria set out in the LOSU.
- > **EUC Studies, EUC Data and EUC Reports:** we worked on incorporating the final reports on assessment activities into EUC Reports. We also reviewed and cleaned up the historical reports to standardise publication criteria and ensure the integrity of the information published. Lastly, we continued to work with the Ministry for Research and Universities to establish mechanisms for the automatic exchange of data between AQU Catalunya and the Ministry.
- > **Venus:** we made ongoing improvements to the data model and app features to make it easier for the Internationalisation and Knowledge Generation Department to manage

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surveys and indicators. Support was provided for the creation of the quality assessment data cube for the generation of Power BI reports. The incorporation and validation of data from different information sources, such as the ROC or the RUCT, were supported.

- > **Internal quality:** we developed and implemented new automatic indicators, particularly in the field of quality assessment (indicators for IQAS certification and monitoring and renewal of institutional accreditation). We developed a set of indicators for staff absenteeism at AQU Catalunya. We adapted the action and skills assessment modules to incorporate the new personal goal-tracking system.
- > **Management applications for teaching staff assessments and the experts:** we made continuous improvements and extended the existing functionalities in the different internal application modules to improve the management of teaching staff assessment activities and the experts who work with AQU Catalunya and the groups. Among other things, we updated the assessment and resolution templates, expanded and improved the queries and worked on reviewing and correcting the entities.
- > **ISO 27002:** we worked towards and obtained the certificate for the new version of ISO 27001 (ISO/IEC 27001:2022), focusing especially on compliance with the new information security controls specified in the standard. We responded to the corrective measures identified in the system vulnerability test. The risk management plan was implemented: we conducted a vulnerability analysis of the extranet, migrated all files from the main application databases to a file system, implemented a cloud backup system (email, SharePoint, OneDrive, and Teams), established criteria for the types and validity of application logs, standardised the application error pages, improved network security and implemented a certificate for the delivery and return of IT equipment to staff, among other actions related to information security.
- > **Infrastructures:** we made the necessary acquisitions and purchased the upgrades required to keep the technological infrastructures fully updated, secure and dimensioned. Of particular note is the acquisition of a new storage cabinet and the upgrade of portable equipment. The printing equipment was also upgraded and resized to meet new needs and space requirements. All the IT equipment was relabelled with the new inventory codes, Wi-Fi access points and offices were wired, and the network within the AQU Catalunya offices was restructured and improved, among other infrastructure-related actions.
- > **Support for AQU Catalunya users (incidents, queries and requests):** 941 requests were resolved via the IT applications mailbox and the systems mailbox.

Financial and accounting management

The 2024 financial year was executed with the carryover budget from the 2023 financial year as established by Decree 222/2023 of 19 December, which sets out the criteria for applying the carryover of the Government of Catalonia's budget for 2023 until the 2024 budget comes into force.

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In 2024, a financial audit for the 2023 fiscal year was conducted, which showed no irregularities in AQU Catalunya's accounts. Additionally, the compliance audit for 2022 confirmed that AQU Catalunya generally adhered to the relevant regulations. Both reports were presented at the Governing Board meeting on 16 April 2024.

Furthermore, over the course of 2024, the transversal auditing processes undertaken by the General Audit Office of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia to analyse minor procurement and the variable remuneration for staff in 2022 were concluded. The Agency also participated in a process driven by the Ministry of Finance to review the Government of Catalonia's current fees and charges.

The Agency has periodically submitted its accounts to the Directorate-General for Financial Policy, the General Audit Office, the Directorate-General for Universities and the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Economy and Knowledge, as well as to the Court of Auditors.

The year-end of 2024 is as follows:

Budget execution

Table 33. Revenue 2024

Recognised revenue. Income	Initial budget	Final budget	Net recognised revenue
Fees, sales of goods and services	€ 290,634.30	€ 405,011.03	€ 394,725.44
Current transfers	€ 5,058,792.01	€ 4,497,440.05	€ 4,359,299.51
Revenue from assets	€ 0.00	€ 0.00	€ 398.65
Change in financial assets	€ 132,346.09	€ 882,197.02	€ 132,346.09
Total	€ 5,481,772.40	€ 5,784,648.10	€ 4,886,769.69

COMMITMENT TO GOOD GOVERNANCE

Table 34. Expenditure 2024

Recognised expenses. Expenses	Initial budget	Final budget	Net recognised expenses
Staff remuneration	€ 3,149,497.17	€ 3,171,222.55	€ 3,116,732.38
Expenditure on goods and services	€ 2,193,969.14	€ 2,472,194.46	€ 1,970,933.26
Financial expenses	€ 150.00	€ 555.00	€ 353.40
Current transfers	€ 5,810.00	€ 8,330.00	€ 6,169.80
Capital expenditure	€ 132,346.09	€ 132,346.09	€ 132,306.16
Total	€ 5,481,772.40	€ 5,784,648.10	€ 5,226,495.00

The 2024 budget outturn must be corrected by the adjustments arising from the positive and negative deviations of the final projects. Thus, the budget outturn for the 2024 financial year is as follows:

Table 35. Forecast 2024 budget outturn

Item	Amounts
Budget outturn for the 2024 financial year	€ -339,725.31
(+) Expenditure financed from cash surplus for general expenses	€ 0.00
(+) Negative financing deviations for the financial year	€ 132,493.05
(-) Positive financing deviations for the financial year	€ -92,858.92
Adjusted budget outturn	€ -300,091.18

It should be noted that, in accordance with Article 14.6 of Law 2/2023, dated 16 March, regarding the budget of the Government of Catalonia for 2023, which was extended by Decree 222/2023 on 19 December, the General State Comptroller has withheld current transfers for 2024 totalling 561,351.96 euros. This withholding follows the criteria established for carrying over the budget of the Government of Catalonia into 2023.

The expenditure for each of the strategic areas and the hours that have been allocated to them are as follows:

COMMITMENT TO GOOD GOVERNANCE

Table 36. Final expenditure and hours allocated by staff, by strategic area (2024)

Strategic area	Amount in euros	Hours allocated ¹¹
Institutional quality	€ 560,622.11	18154.5
Teaching staff quality	€ 415,542.25	9720.5
Knowledge generation and transfer	€ 10,943.46	7979.5
Internationalisation	€ 27,744.53	2169.0
Strategic management	€ 134,535.70	9212.5
Internal organisation	€ 4,077,106.95	37326.0
Total	€ 5,226,495.00	84562.0

General services

Register

In 2024, the AQU Catalunya register, an official government registry, recorded a 46% decrease in entries and an 12% increase in removals compared to 2023. Most entries and removals are recorded electronically. However, 92 entries and 2 removals were made in person and had to be digitised.

Table 37. Evolution of activity in the S@rcat registry (2020–2024)

Year	Entries	Removals	Total number of records	Total number of in-person records	Percentage of in-person records out of the total
2019	17434	4238	21672	6574	30.3%
2020	13086	4027	17113	245	1.4%
2021	13743	4734	18477	102	0.6%
2022	16295	5066	21361	89	0.4%
2023	20955	5969	26924	59	0.2%
2024	11227	5228	16455	94	0.6%

11. Source: AQU Catalonia workload data.

Management of facilities

AQU Catalunya has been responsible for managing the general services of its current headquarters building since 2020, as it occupies the majority of the space. In 2024, the lease was extended for the third time, now running until 2025.

The general services provided have included important measures for business coordination, particularly to ensure appropriate safety conditions at work and to prevent risks. During the year, we set up first response and first aid teams on a quarterly basis to cover all areas every day of the week.

Also during 2024, various supplies and services were managed to keep the building in optimal condition.

COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIPS



RELATIONS WITH SOCIAL PARTNERS IN CATALONIA

Catalonia's higher education system

AQU Catalunya has held several meetings with representatives of the various bodies that make up the Catalan higher education system, with the aim of coordinating the Agency's activities. The most significant actions in 2024 were as follows:

Ministry of Research and Universities

The Agency met regularly throughout the year with the Directorate-General for Universities to report on issues related to the deployment of the Agency's activities (quality, teaching staff, surveys, etc.) and to collaborate when necessary. It should be pointed out that, as in previous years, at the beginning of the year, we worked alongside the Directorate-General for Universities to prepare reports on the principal quality assessment processes carried out by AQU Catalunya in Catalan universities that have submitted proposals for new degrees to be included in the programme for the 2025-2026 academic year.

AQU Catalunya formed part of the monitoring committee for the Plan to strengthen the Catalan language in Catalonia's university and research system and presented the conclusions of the report entitled *Incorporating the Relevance and Impact of Scientific Publications in Catalan into the Concept of Quality in AQU Catalunya's Accreditation Criteria*.

At the end of 2024, AQU Catalunya met with the Directorate-General for Knowledge Transfer and Society to discuss the issue of transfer indicators within the framework of the work to define new criteria for the assessment of contracted university teaching staff.

Furthermore, in 2024, the Government of Catalonia's Ministry for Research and Universities published the report [*Dual Training in the Catalan Higher Education System*](#), which was co-authored by AQU Catalunya.

COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIPS

Several working meetings were held with the Directorate-General for Research and the Directorate-General for Universities as part of the preliminary work to implement the Strategic University Plan for Excellence in Research.

Inter-University Council of Catalonia

AQU Catalunya participates as a guest in various committees of the Interuniversity Council of Catalonia (CIC). It assists, with voice but no vote, in those committees that deal with issues directly or indirectly related to the Agency: the Academic Planning and Organisation Committee, the Academic Staff Committee, the University Teaching Policy Committee, the Women and Science Committee, and the General Conference.

Particular mention should also be made of the work initiated in 2024 with the University Teaching Policy Committee within the framework of defining new criteria for the accreditation of contracted university teaching staff.

Lastly, AQU Catalunya participated in the assessment panel for the M. Encarna Sanahuja Yll awards for 2024.

Catalan universities

AQU Catalunya gave various talks at Catalan universities on a range of topics, including gender perspective, teacher accreditation, teacher assessment, the presentation of employment outcomes, etc. It also welcomed a group of education students from the University of Barcelona who visited the Agency to learn more about its work.

Catalan University Student Council

AQU Catalunya kept in touch with the Catalan University Student Council (CEUCAT) to update the appointment of student representatives in the Agency's various governing and assessment bodies and took part in a conference at which its collaboration was requested.

Networks

AQU Catalunya participated in meetings and interacted with networks such as the Catalan Association of Public Universities, the Coordinator of University Studies in Communication in Catalonia, the TECNIO Association, and the Vives Network of Universities.

Government of Catalonia

AQU Catalunya worked with the following Government of Catalonia bodies:

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Ministry of Education

AQU Catalunya collaborates with the Ministry of Education to articulate the assessment and improvement of higher arts education. Throughout 2024, regular meetings were held to manage and improve the assessment processes for higher arts degrees, as well as the satisfaction and employment outcome surveys. The results of the satisfaction and employment outcome surveys were published through the EUC portal.

Ministry for Equality and Feminism

AQU Catalunya met with officials from the Ministry for Equality and Feminism to present the Agency's Equality Plan.

Ministry for Culture

AQU Catalunya collaborated with the National Council for Culture and the Arts in preparing a study on the professionalisation of higher education music students in Catalonia.

Social agencies

Employers project

Within the framework of the Employers project, AQU Catalunya collaborated with the organisations listed on the [project website](#), including professional associations and chambers of commerce, with the aim of publicising the survey and, in some cases, designing the questionnaire for some of the specific sectors included in the study.

NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

Relations with the State

AQU Catalunya is a founding member of the [Spanish Network of University Quality Agencies](#) (REACU). This network held four online meetings and one in-person meeting in Zaragoza. During these meetings, the minimum standard criteria established by the LOSU for teacher accreditation were approved.

The network also coordinated two meetings with the Secretary-General for Universities of the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, which addressed topics of mutual interest, such as the new procedure for teacher accreditation, the accreditation of micro-credentials and the establishment of standardised criteria for institutional accreditation renewal.

Furthermore, AQU Catalunya met with the Coordinator of Student Representatives at Public Universities (CREUP), the statewide coordination body for university students.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

International institutional relations

The main international organisations with which AQU Catalunya maintains institutional relations are listed below:

INQAAHE

The [International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education](#) (INQAAHE) is an international association of more than 300 organisations working in quality assurance in higher education, most of which are quality assurance agencies.



AQU Catalunya has been a member of this network since 1998 and served as its secretariat from October 2013 to 2021. In February 2022, Barcelona was effectively made the permanent home of the INQAAHE secretariat.

AQU Catalunya is represented on the INQAAHE Board of Directors by Ms Anna Prades, head of the Internationalisation and Knowledge Management Department, who was appointed treasurer on 20 October 2021 for a period of three years. In 2024, Ms Anna Prades was re-elected to the board for a second three-year term and served as treasurer until December of that year.

COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIPS

As a member of this association, AQU Catalunya contributes to various initiatives, including the second [Global Study on Trends in Quality Assurance](#), which will be published in 2025.

In 2024, the Agency took part in the INQAAHE biennial forum in Bucharest (Romania), where it led a workshop on promoting equity through quality assurance (Bridging the Gap to Quality Education for All: Sharing Ideas and Practices to Enhance Equity in Tertiary Education), and another workshop called Building a Scope for Organizational Quality Enhancement Continuum.

ENQA

AQU Catalunya has been a full member of the [European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education](#) (ENQA) since its foundation in the year 2000.



The Agency participated in the ENQA Members' Forum held in Hanover (Germany) from 17 to 19 April 2024, where, among other issues, presentations were made on the agencies' approach to artificial intelligence and cross-border assessment. AQU Catalunya also participated in the general assembly held from 23 to 25 October in Malta. During this assembly, the ESG review calendar was presented, which is expected to be approved in 2027. Additionally, a report was shared that analysed the various modalities and purposes of institutional assessments, along with research assessments. In November, AQU Catalunya took part in the Targeted Reviews Follow-up Seminar: Impact and Lessons Learnt, as a follow-up to the prior evaluation.

Since 2021, Dr Esther Huertas has been a member of the ENQA Agency Review Committee, a position she was reappointed to in 2023. And since 2020, Ms Núria Comet has been a member of the ENQA Appeals and Complaints Committee.

EQAR

To be eligible for inclusion on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), agencies must undergo an international external review to demonstrate their compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance. AQU Catalunya has been registered on the EQAR since 4 March 2008, making it one of the first three agencies to be included.



The Agency has collaborated with EQAR to develop and consolidate the [Database of External Quality Assurance Results \(DEQAR\)](#), which is a repository of quality assurance reports from all EQAR registered agencies. Throughout 2024, AQU Catalunya remained diligent in uploading reports from the assessment processes conducted under the VSMA Framework (*validation, modification and accreditation*) and the reports on the certification of quality assurance systems and institutional accreditation. In 2024, the DEQAR database contained more than 4,697 reports issued by AQU Catalunya.

COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIPS

GAIN

The Global Academic Integrity Network (GAIN) is an international consortium that brings together university quality agencies to combat academic fraud during the educational process. Its mission is to protect students, qualifications and the integrity of university systems. AQU Catalunya has been a member of the network since July 2024. As a member, the Agency is duty-bound to share information about fraudulent commercial services, to explore general approaches to disrupting and preventing these practices, and to highlight the reputational risk they represent.

International projects and assessments and exchange

International projects

AQU Catalunya carries out its activities following international benchmarks and promotes joint actions with higher education institutions and other national and international agencies and organisations. The international projects in which the Agency was involved in 2024 are detailed below:

REMOTE (Complex) (ongoing, started in 2023)

REMOTE (Assessing and evaluating remote learning practices in STEM) is a project funded by the Erasmus+ programme, within the framework of cooperation partnerships in the field of higher education, and led by the University of Girona, with the participation of AQU Catalunya and five other partners: the International University of Catalonia; the Politecnico di Torino, Italy; the Universidade do Minho, Portugal; the Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca, Italy; and the Agencia de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior, Portugal.

The project has three goals: 1) to provide a detailed overview of the distance learning and evaluation practices that higher education institutions (HEIs) in Southern Europe —Spain, Italy and Portugal— currently apply in STEM disciplines; 2) to provide, with the support of European quality assurance agencies, easy-to-apply guidelines and benchmarks so that HEIs and other stakeholders (professors, programme coordinators, etc.) can use them to study and implement successful distance evaluation methodologies; 3) provide a roadmap and sustainability plan that directly addresses how regulatory measures need to be implemented.

During 2024, we surveyed teachers and students to gauge their experience of distance teaching, learning and assessment. We also participated in the interviewing of experts on the future of education and how technology will affect teaching and learning practices. Based on the surveys and interviews conducted, a report was produced that analyses the challenges and opportunities involved in assessing distance learning in STEM disciplines. Additionally, guidelines were developed for both quality assessment agencies and higher education institutions in order to enhance the quality of distance teaching, learning, and assessment.

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QADoc – Capacitation pour l'Évaluation et Assurance Qualité des Formations Doctorales et de la Recherche (ongoing, started in 2023)

QADoc (*Capacitation pour l'Évaluation et Assurance Qualité des Formations Doctorales et de la Recherche*) is a project funded by the Erasmus+ programme with the overall objective of strengthening high-quality university research capacity in three African countries: Senegal, Guinea Conakry and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The project is led by the Cellule Interne de Assurance Qualité, the technical quality unit of the Université Cheikh Anta Diop, which accounts for more than 70% of Senegal's students and almost the same percentage of its teaching and research staff.

Each country is represented by its ministry in charge of higher education, its university quality assurance agency and two universities. In the case of Senegal, the quality assurance agency involved is the Agence Nationale d'Assurance Qualité (ANAQ), which is part of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). For Guinea Conakry, it is the Autorité Nationale d'Assurance Qualité Guinée, and on behalf of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Agence Nationale d'Assurance Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire. The project also has European partners. The participating universities are the Rovira i Virgili University, the Université de Liège (Belgium), and the Université de Montpellier (France). The Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior (A3ES) in Portugal and AQU Catalunya also participate in the project.

In 2024, AQU Catalunya actively participated in the preparation of the following methodological documents for the project: *Guide d'évaluation externe des formations doctorales*, *Guide d'évaluation externe des structures de recherche*, *Référentiel pour l'évaluation des formations i Écoles doctorales et référentiel pour l'évaluation de la recherche*. The Agency also participated in the project launch meeting in Dakar, which was organised by the ANAQ.

Additionally, preparations began for the training of the representatives from the African institutions who will implement the developed benchmarks. The training sessions will take place at AQU Catalunya, Rovira i Virgili University and the University of Montpellier in April 2025.

International reviews

Assessment of foreign institutions in Catalonia

In accordance with the Law on Universities in Catalonia, teaching institutions wishing to offer courses leading to degrees awarded by institutions in other countries must be assessed by the Agency before being authorised by the Catalan ministry responsible for universities.

AQU Catalunya has a specific methodology for conducting assessments of these institutions, the [*Guide to the assessment of institutions offering foreign degree programmes in Catalonia*](#), which has the dual objective of adapting to the requirements of the new Royal Decree 640/2021 and

COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIPS

harmonising with the institutional assessment processes being followed by other universities in Catalonia.

With regard to the assessments, in 2024 a favourable report was issued for the Toulouse Business School. Assessments of a further five centres also got underway: of these, two have withdrawn and three will receive an external visit in 2025.

International assessment – Iceland

AQU Catalunya has been authorised by the Icelandic government and the WFME to carry out the accreditation of medical degrees in Iceland. In 2023, AQU Catalunya signed an agreement with the University of Iceland to assess its Faculty of Medicine. In 2024, the document *Distinctive features of the Icelandic context applicable to the accreditation of Medical study programmes according to the AQU Catalunya standards and the WFME global standards for quality improvement: basic Medical education* was prepared. This document incorporates aspects of the AQU Catalunya guide to the accreditation of medical study programmes, which must be adapted to the Icelandic context (e.g. Icelandic regulatory and legislative frameworks).

International assessment – Colombia

In 2024, the Agency signed an agreement with the Cooperative University of Colombia to assess the design of its internal system for quality assurance (IQAS). Throughout the year, expert training and external visits were carried out in virtual format.

Exchanges

AQU Catalunya actively participated in meetings, forums and projects that were deemed to add value to the Catalan Higher Education System as a whole, and which allow the Agency to learn about and disseminate activities in the international arena, in order to keep abreast of developments in the field of quality. These activities can be consulted in Annex 2.

COMMITMENT TO EMPLOYEES



INTERNAL ORGANISATION

Human resources

As of 31 December 2024, the Agency’s staff consisted of 58 people –42 women and 16 men– including the director. The average age is 44.7 years. Of the Agency’s employees, 53 are on permanent contracts, 1 is on an interim contract pending permanent recruitment, 1 is on an interim replacement contract and 2 are on temporary contracts to meet production requirements. Among the staff, 71.93% perform technical work.

With regard to permanent contracts, AQU Catalunya has advertised and allocated the following posts:

Table 38. Announcements and posts filled by category (2024)

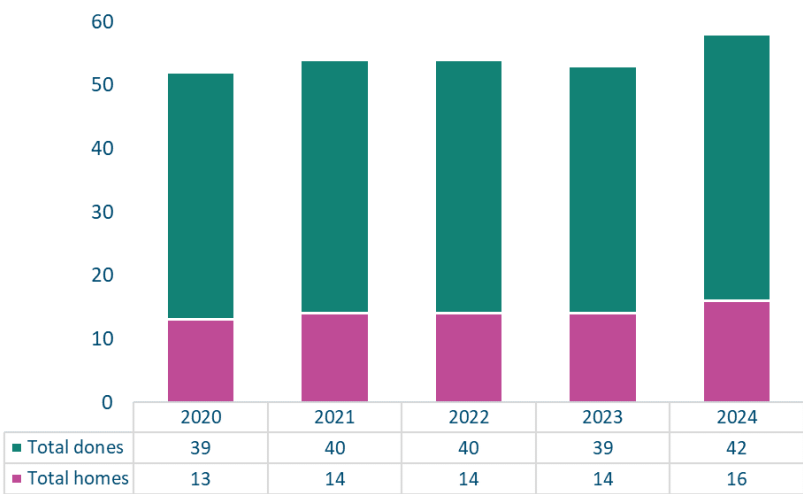
Category	Total
Senior technologist	1
Management	4
Administrative	4

We have been working to ensure compliance with the regulations affecting the public sector, specifically the regulation of temporary employment contracts set out in Royal Decree Law 32/2021 of 28 December, on urgent measures for labour reform, the guarantee of stable employment and the transformation of the labour market, as well as the stabilisation processes, the ordinary employment rate and the temporary employment rate laid down in Law 20/2021 of 28 December, in addition to data on absenteeism, data collection on the number of public sector workers employed by the Government of Catalonia, and the validity of resolutions on the compatibility and remuneration of senior management.

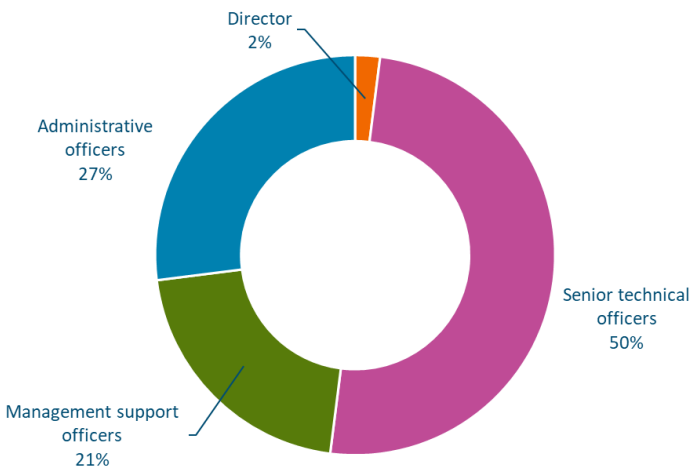
COMMITMENT TO LABOUR MARKET

The Governing Board has also approved the public offer of employment for 2025. The public offer of employment was published in the Official Gazette of the Government of Catalonia (DOGC) on 20 December 2024.

Graph 29. Evolution of the AQU Catalunya workforce (last five years)



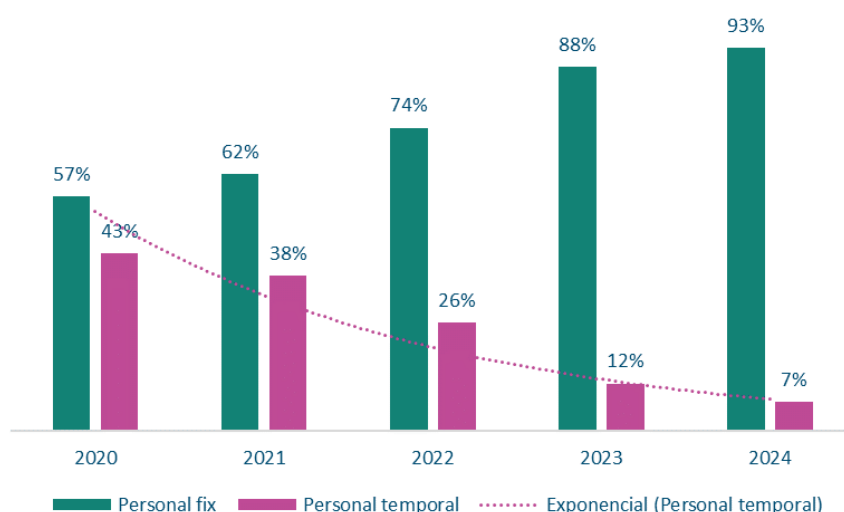
Graph 30. AQU Catalunya workforce according to employment category (31/12/2024)



The evolution of the conversion of temporary contracts to permanent contracts since 2018, the year in which these regularisation processes began, is as follows:

COMMITMENT TO LABOUR MARKET

Graph 31. Evolution of hiring by type of contract (last five years)



In regard to the 7% of the workforce on temporary contracts, as of 31 December 2024, this consists of one temporary contract until permanent cover is found and three other temporary contracts, two of which are due to production circumstances and one due to the replacement of an employee on leave.

The Agency has followed the provisions of the Government Agreement of 13 June 2017 on criteria for the formalisation of appointments and contracts for temporary staff in the Administration of the Government of Catalonia and its public sector, as well as the employment regulations set out in Royal Decree-Law 32/2021 of 28 December on employment and urgent measures for the labour market.

The Agency has also adhered to the provisions of Law 20/2021, enacted on 28 December, which implements urgent measures aimed at reducing temporary employment in the public sector to below 8% across all administrations. As of 31 December 2024, AQU Catalunya had achieved a temporary employment rate of less than 2%.

In terms of temporary contracts, the following temporary contracts were signed in 2024 (by type):

Table 39. Type and number of temporary contracts (2024)

Type	Total
Interim for substitution	2
Production circumstances	2
Higher grade position due to substitution	0
Temporary position until permanent replacement is found	2

We did not sign any agreements with universities or educational centres to offer work placements for students in 2024.

COMMITMENT TO LABOUR MARKET

Remuneration

With regard to remuneration, in February, AQU Catalunya applied Article 25 of Law 2/2023 of 16 March on the budget of the Government of Catalonia for 2023, which provided for a 0.5% increase in each of the remuneration concepts, with effect from 1 January 2023, with respect to the amounts in force on 31 December 2022 if the nominal GDP growth target for 2023 was met.

Similarly, in July, AQU Catalunya applied the 2% salary increase for 2024, with respect to salaries in 2023, as regulated by Article 6 of Royal Decree-Law 4/2024 of 26 June, extending certain measures to address the economic and social consequences of the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East and adopting urgent measures in relation to taxation, energy and social matters, with retroactive effect from 1 January 2024.

Finally, pursuant to Article 28.3 of Law 2/2023, of 16 March, on the budget of the Government of Catalonia for 2023, which was extended to 2024, the Agency's staff received productivity-related remuneration corresponding to 9% of their base salary and position supplement for the 2024 financial year. In 2024, we reviewed and amended the structure of personal goals for AQU Catalunya staff.

Training and knowledge generation

We began designing the new AQU Catalunya staff training plan to respond to the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and adapt it to new methodologies, trends, and training and knowledge generation methods. We also initiated processes to simplify the procedures and IT applications used to manage training at the Agency.

In 2024, we continued to adhere to the 2019-2022 policy and Training Plan, and in accordance with section 12 of this plan, carried out several strategic activities from the training catalogue, including the following:

- > We encouraged analysis and reflection on new trends in assessment processes. In 2024, a total of 92 people participated in training related to this topic, spread across 31 courses, which together totalled 220.5 teaching hours.

Internal training activities were offered to all staff, including:

- The accreditation process.
 - The IQAS certification process.
 - Webinar presenting the *Industrial Engineering Benchmark*.
- > Training on information security continued to be promoted. In 2024, 10 people were trained in a total of three courses, which amounted to 29 teaching hours.
- > Training on equality, gender perspective and the prevention of harassment was promoted, with the participation of 70 people in a total of seven courses, which amounted to 321 teaching hours.

COMMITMENT TO LABOUR MARKET

In addition, a total of 141 training activities were carried out, 2 more than the 139 in 2023 and 16 more than in 2022. This year has been particularly noteworthy for the significant increase in the number of participants in specific training courses, with a total of 321 trainees, the highest figure recorded to date. Of these activities, 110 were conducted online and 31 in person, confirming the trend towards distance learning.

Incorporation of the gender perspective in human resource management

AQU Catalunya began to roll out its 2024-2027 Equality Plan. Specifically, the 10 actions planned for the year were successfully implemented, representing 100% of the planned measures and 21% of the total measures set out in the plan. To this end, the following measures were implemented:

- > Gender parity was maintained in the collegiate bodies, whose appointments and nominations depend exclusively on AQU Catalunya.
- > Social clauses on equality were added to non-minor contracts, and companies hired by AQU Catalunya are now required to have their own equality plan approved if they meet the relevant legal conditions.
- > Criteria on inclusive language were developed and added to AQU Catalunya's language usage guide.
- > The annual salary register was drawn up.
- > A visually identifiable direct link to the Protocol for Handling Sexual and/or Gender-Based Harassment was added to the Agency's document management system to make it easily accessible to staff and raise awareness.
- > We organised training courses on topics such as incorporating gender perspectives into public administration, which was compulsory for all staff.
- > The staff medical analyses were improved with the addition of specific tests: iron deficiency anaemia analysis for women and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) screening in serum for men.

The Agency continued raising awareness around the Protocol for the prevention and handling of sexual and gender-based harassment approved by AQU Catalunya. Specifically, the protocol was explained to new recruits, as provided for in the Welcome and Induction Plan for new employees joining AQU Catalunya. AQU Catalunya staff took part in training organised by external bodies to learn about equality and gender perspective. Specifically, they attended 5 external courses on specific topics, with a total of 16 employees taking part.

Prevention of occupational risks

During the year, the following occupational risk prevention measures were implemented:

COMMITMENT TO LABOUR MARKET

- > Risk assessment for AQU Catalunya's work positions, carried out by the occupational risk prevention technician.
- > Quarterly review of the configuration and distribution of emergency equipment (first response equipment and first aid equipment) throughout AQU Catalunya's headquarters.
- > Specific training for employees on occupational risk prevention for their position. (Art. 19 of Law 31/1995 —LPRL—). It was provided for all new employees in 2024.
- > Visit to assess the effectiveness of the integration of occupational risk prevention into the company's general management system and to review documentation in accordance with Article 23 of the LPRL. In this 2024 assessment, it was determined that the level of integration is high.

Finally, measures were taken to monitor the health of Agency staff, including, as mentioned in the previous section, the addition of new specific tests to the range of routine analyses already made available.

Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya

July of 2025 · AQU-8-2025-EN



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