



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

AQU CATALUNYA 2015 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT



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AQU CATALUNYA

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

AQU CATALUNYA, 2016



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Universitari de Catalunya**

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First edition: September 2016

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INTRODUCTION

This document is a summary of the AQU Catalunya 2015 Annual Report, which describes the main activities carried out by the Agency over the course of the year, the most important of which are described below.

First and foremost was the passing of legislation by the Catalan Parliament dealing with the Agency (**Act 15/2015, 21 July, concerning the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency**). New legislation was necessary in order for AQU Catalunya to adapt to the recommendations of the international external review carried out by ENQA and to upgrade the Agency's functions and provide it with the necessary flexibility to easily adapt to the challenges facing the higher education system as a whole in Catalonia.

As regards the quality assurance of institutions and programmes, 2015 saw the **consolidation of the accreditation procedure**: 246 degree programmes were reviewed externally – 208% more than in 2014 – by 59 external QA panels that visited 55 institutions (faculties, schools and institutes). As a result of the site visits carried out in 2014 and 2015, the first 210 accreditation reports were also issued.

Also of note was the Agency's endorsement of the *Guide to the certification of IQAS¹ implementation*, an important step in furthering institutional autonomy as regards quality assurance procedures. A pilot project was launched in 2015 to test the methodology, in which two faculties at two universities were involved.

In teacher quality assessment, the new development in 2015 was the carrying out of a **pilot project involving the evaluation of research work being carried out at departmental level in the universities**. The objective of the approved methodology is to contribute to the consolidation of the universities as high-level research organisations at international level.

With regard to knowledge generation, the Agency completed the data analysis of the **survey of the employment outcomes of Master's degree graduates**. In addition to this survey, the results of the **Employers survey** were also released. This

¹ Internal quality assurance system

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study, which was carried out in cooperation with Obra Social “la Caixa”, complements the survey of graduate employment outcomes carried out in Catalonia once every three years, the purpose of which is to make information available to the universities on the perceptions of employers regarding the employability and skills of recent graduates in Catalonia.

As regards **internationalisation**, in addition to participating in and maintaining its commitments to various international projects and efficiently maintaining management of the Secretariat of INQAAHE (the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education), greater impetus was given to the review and quality assurance of the dimension of internationalisation in procedures leading to the accreditation of degree programmes. The corresponding methodology was also developed.

The full Annual Report for 2015 is available (in Catalan) at: http://www.aqu.cat/doc/doc_16377907_1.pdf

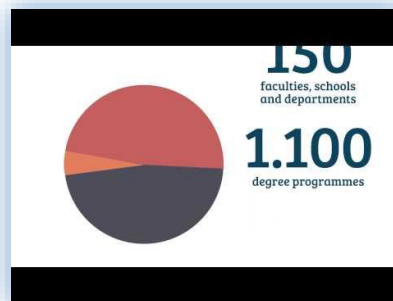


QUALITY ASSURANCE OF INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMMES

1. Framework for the validation, monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised degree programmes (VSMA)

Full implementation of the VSMA Framework in 2015 led to a 37% increase in the number of programmes reviewed compared to 2014 and a 199% increase compared to 2011.

Video 1. The VSMA framework



2. Accreditation

During 2015, 59 external review panels were convened and a total number of 55 site visits made to higher education institutions (HEIs) to evaluate and review 246 degree courses. Out of this total and in relation to additional dimensions, 14 requested the evaluation of research-teaching linkages; 14 requested the evaluation of internationalisation and 8 requested the evaluation of career development, employability and recruitment.

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Results: issuance of the first accreditation reports

2015 saw the issuance of the first accreditation reports on recognised programmes, which in total were 210, with the corresponding site visits having been made in 2014 and 2015. As to the results, accreditation was only withheld in the case of one programme; all of the others were given a favourable accreditation report. 10% of the total number of programmes were awarded accreditation on track to excellence, while accreditation was conditional (with prescription/conditions) in the case of 7%. In the case of the latter, a monitoring progress report must be submitted at the end of two years to show that any shortcomings detected in a programme have been resolved.

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

	Accreditation withheld	Accreditation with prescription/conditions	Accreditation	Accreditation on track to excellence	Total	Accreditation on track to excellence (as a %)
Arts and Humanities	0	1	24	4	29	14%
Social and Legal Sciences	0	11	81	8	100	8%
Experimental Sciences	0	0	20	1	21	5%
Health Sciences	0	1	19	3	23	13%
Engineering and Architecture	1	1	31	4	37	11%
Total	1	14	175	20	210	10%

Quality assurance of institutions and programmes

In order for the procedures involved in accreditation and the site visits to be better understood, two explanatory videos have been produced.

Video 2. The guide to programme accreditation



Video 3. The role of the site visit in accreditation



294 applications for accreditation were received from universities in 2015. Accreditation reports are subsequently referred to the corresponding national and regional authorities for the administrative processing of programme accreditation.

Following issuance of the accreditation report, AQU Catalunya produces the certificates and quality labels that are awarded to programmes and institutions as an instrument of distinction that serves to inform society at large that they have successfully undergone accreditation.

Quality label



Seal of excellence



Seal of excellence (including additional dimensions)



3. Validation, modification and monitoring

The main purpose of validation (ex-ante accreditation) is quality assurance in the design of proposals for undergraduate, Master's and doctoral programmes, prior to their introduction, through a process that targets continuous improvement and enhancement.

An agreement was signed between the Agency and the Government of Catalonia's Ministry of Education to include within this same procedure the review and quality assurance of higher studies leading to recognised (degree) awards in the Visual and Performing Arts.

A total of 122 proposals for the validation of recognised degrees were submitted by HEIs in Catalonia during the year: 34 for Bachelor programmes (85% favourable), 87 for Master's (97 favourable) and one for a doctoral/PhD programme (100% favourable). In terms of numbers compared to 2014, there was a significant drop (47% compared to 2014), due to the fact that the review of all new doctoral programmes took place in 2013 and 2014. In terms of the type of validation, 49% were programme revalidations and 51% new programme validations.

With regard to applications for the **modification** of programmes already introduced, 150 proposals were submitted in 2015: 80 for undergraduate programmes (98% favourable), 69 for Master's programmes (99% favourable) and 1 doctoral/PhD programme (100% favourable). These figures represent an increase of 43% compared to 2014, which was due to the fact that the universities made use of the accreditation process to update their programme specifications and introduce what were considered to be important changes.

In relation to **monitoring**, AQU Catalunya issued the monitoring reports of 10 undergraduate programmes and 1 Master's programme in the Visual and Performing Arts. In 2015 the Agency also produced the document titled *Teaching indicators for the delivery and analysis of programmes in the Visual and Performing Arts*, a tool for calculating teaching indicators for programme monitoring in the Visual and Performing Arts.

The *Guide to the monitoring of recognised doctoral programmes* was also published in 2015.

4. Certifications (*quality labels and seals*)

In accordance with the *Framework for the positioning of AQU Catalunya regarding subject-specific quality labels* (2014), support was given to the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC) and the University of Lleida to jointly carry out reviews of both programme accreditation and evaluation for international EUR-ACE® and Euro-Inf® certification by the Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Engineering, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Mathematics (ASIIN).

5. The Agency's position regarding the 3+2 structure of study programmes

At the request of the Agency's Governing Board, a committee was set up to provide input based on the Agency's experience regarding recent legislation (Royal Decree 43/2015, in amendment to Royal Decree 1393/2007) allowing for the introduction of 3-year undergraduate programmes.

The result of this committee's work was the report entitled *The position of AQU Catalunya regarding Royal Decree 43/2015, in amendment to Royal Decree 1393/2007*.

6. Internal quality assurance systems (IQAS)

IQAS certification programme

In 2015, AQU's Quality Assurance Commission (CAQ) endorsed the *Guide to the Certification of IQAS Implementation*, the purpose of which is to establish the preconditions for institutions (faculties) to apply for certification of IQAS implementation, provide faculties with the details of the certification procedure and ensure that the same benchmarks are used by those in charge of IQAS implementation, on the one hand, and the evaluation of IQAS implementation, on the other.

A specific committee was also set up to deal with IQAS implementation and certification, and a pilot project launched to test the methodology, which involved two HEIs, the Rovira i Virgili University and the Ramon Llull University.

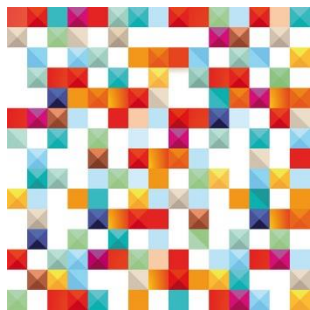
AUDIT-EAS programme

Institutions should have a formally established and publicly available policy together with an internal quality assurance system for all programmes that they run. In this regard, the Government of Catalonia's Ministry of Education and AQU Catalunya worked on the AUDIT-EAS programme for guidance and the evaluation of IQAS design for institutions running programmes in the Visual and Performing Arts.

In 2015 AQU Catalunya issued favourable final reports following IQAS design review and evaluation at 11 institutions running programmes in the Visual and Performing Arts.

7. Students

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) recognises students as full members of the university community and provides for their involvement in institutional organisation and the quality assurance of educational content andbut activities in other higher education institutions. Students have participated in AQU Catalunya's external review panels for more than ten years and the Agency actively promotes the training of students in QA procedures.



QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHING

1. Ex-ante accreditation of university teaching staff

In 2015 AQU Catalunya cooperated with the Government of Catalonia's Executive Council (*Govern*) in the call for applications to recruit faculty staff at universities in Catalonia under the Serra Hùnter programme, for which there was a significant increase in the number of applications for tenure-track lecturing staff posts and in research.

Reports for tenure-track lecturing staff

There was a 54% increase in the number of applications to the call for the recruitment of faculty staff at universities compared to 2014. The results of the calls processed in 2015 were as follows:

Table 1. Second call for applications in 2014 - tenure-track lecturing staff²

Field of knowledge	TS	TSR	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	47	0	32	15	63.8%
Social Sciences	81	7	43	31	55.4%
Experimental Sciences	26	2	24	0	100.0%
Life Sciences	15	0	11	4	73.3%
Medicine and Health Sciences	33	4	20	9	69.0%
Engineering and Architecture	38	1	32	5	86.5%
Total	240	14	162	64	69.9%

Table 2. First call for applications in 2014 - tenure-track lecturing staff

² TS: total applications; TSR: applications closed with no final decision; TF: total favourable; TD: total unfavourable; % F: favourable as a % of the total (excluding applications closed with no final decision); RP: appeals pending.

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Field of knowledge	TS	TSR	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	43	4	32	7	82.1%
Social Sciences	66	3	43	20	66.7%
Experimental Sciences	14	2	10	2	83.3%
Life Sciences	20	0	13	7	65.0%
Medicine and Health Sciences	33	2	19	12	58.1%
Engineering and Architecture	35	6	23	6	75.9%
Total	211	17	140	54	70.6%

Table 3. A second extraordinary call for applications in 2015 - tenure-track lecturing staff

Field of knowledge	TS	TSR	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	26	2	15	9	62.5%
Social Sciences	73	8	38	27	58.5%
Experimental Sciences	26	5	19	2	90.5%
Life Sciences	50	6	31	13	70.5%
Medicine and Health Sciences	24	5	16	3	84.2%
Engineering and Architecture	44	5	23	16	59.0%
Total	243	31	142	70	67.0%

Table 4. Third call for applications in 2015 - tenure-track lecturing staff

Field of knowledge	TS	TSR	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	41	1	28	12	70.0%
Social Sciences	85	6	52	27	65.8%
Experimental Sciences	15	1	9	5	64.3%
Life Sciences	18	1	9	8	52.9%
Medicine and Health Sciences	36	5	24	7	77.4%
Engineering and Architecture	40	1	36	3	92.3%
Total	235	15	158	62	71.8%

Quality assurance of teaching

Accreditation of research and advanced research

2015 saw a 45% increase in the number of applications submitted in the calls for applications from associate professor and full professorial staff compared to 2014. The results of the calls processed in 2015 were as follows:

Table 5. Second call for applications in 2014 - associate professorial staff

Field of knowledge	T	TSR	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	30	0	15	15	50.0%
Social Sciences	67	3	36	28	53.1%
Experimental Sciences	14	2	8	4	66.7%
Life Sciences	8	0	6	2	75.0%
Medicine and Health Sciences	26	1	11	14	44.0%
Engineering and Architecture	34	2	23	9	68.8%
Total	179	8	99	72	56.1%

Table 6. First call for applications in 2015 - associate professorial staff

Field of knowledge	T	TSR	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	46	8	23	15	60.5%
Social Sciences	117	20	53	44	54.6%
Experimental Sciences	56	12	34	10	77.3%
Life Sciences	56	7	26	23	53.1%
Medicine and Health Sciences	65	5	34	26	56.7%
Engineering and Architecture	50	7	32	11	74.4%
Total	390	59	202	129	61.0%

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Table 7. Second call for applications 2015 - associate professorial staff. Applications received

Field of knowledge	Associate professor
Humanities	33
Social Sciences	52
Experimental Sciences	10
Life Sciences	18
Medicine and Health Sciences	48
Engineering and Architecture	30
Total	191

Table 8. Second call for applications in 2014 - full professors

Field of knowledge	T	TSR	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	3	0	2	1	66.7%
Social Sciences	20	1	13	6	68.4%
Experimental Sciences	3	0	3	0	100.0%
Life Sciences	5	0	4	1	80.0%
Medicine and Health Sciences	5	0	3	2	60.0%
Engineering and Architecture	13	0	11	2	76.9%
Total	49	1	36	12	72.9%

Table 9. First call for applications in 2015 - full professors

Field of knowledge	T	TSR	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	12	0	5	7	41.7%
Social Sciences	29	1	14	14	50.0%
Experimental Sciences	6	1	4	1	80.0%
Life Sciences	7	1	6	0	100.0%
Medicine and Health Sciences	10	1	7	2	77.8%
Engineering and Architecture	23	0	12	11	52.2%
Total	87	4	48	35	57.8%

Quality assurance of teaching

Table 10. Second call for applications in 2015 - full professors. Applications received

Field of knowledge	Professor
Humanities	7
Social Sciences	16
Experimental Sciences	11
Life Sciences	5
Medicine and Health Sciences	19
Engineering and Architecture	27
Total	85

Teaching assessment certificates

One application was received during 2015, the assessment of which was favourable.

2. Assessment of merits in research, teaching and management

Provision of additional salary allowances to public service and contract teaching and research staff at public universities in Catalonia is based on the assessment of individual merits in teaching, research and management.³

Merits in research

Table 11. Results of the 2015 call for applications from public service teaching and research staff at public universities

Field of knowledge	T	TSR	F	D	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	85	10	74	1	74	1	98.7%
Social Sciences	122	9	112	1	112	1	99.1%

³ Decree 405/2006, 24 October, which established additional salary allowances for both public service (civil servant) and contract teaching and research staff at public universities

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Experimental Sciences	114	2	111	1	111	1	99.1%
Life Sciences	59	0	59	0	59	0	100.0%
Medicine and Health Sciences	87	8	73	6	73	6	92.4%
Engineering and Architecture	128	5	122	1	122	1	99.2%
Total	595	34	551	10	551	10	98.2%

Table 12. Results of the 2015 call for applications from contract teaching and research staff at public universities

Field of knowledge	T	TSR	TF	TD	% F
Humanities	49	3	31	15	63.0%
Social Sciences	71	10	51	10	83.6%
Experimental Sciences	59	3	50	5	83.9%
Life Sciences	40	0	33	6	82.5%
Medicine and Health Sciences	46	2	32	12	72.7%
Engineering and Architecture	103	11	79	13	82.6%
Total	368	29	276	61	79.1%

Agreements dealing with the evaluation of six-year periods of research and the award of research premiums

AQU Catalunya entered into different agreements to review and evaluate research work carried out by teaching staff and researchers at private universities in Catalonia, research staff at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC) and the following affiliated institutions: the Catalan Institute for Physical Education (INEFC), affiliated with the University of Barcelona (UB) and the University of Lleida; the TecnoCampus Foundation (Mataró-Maresme), affiliated with the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC) and the Pompeu Fabra University; the EUSS School of Engineering, affiliated with the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB); the EUSES School of Health and Sport, affiliated with the University of Girona; and the EEI School of Engineering (Igualada), affiliated with the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC). The criteria and procedures are the same as those used in the review and evaluation of research work by public service and contract teaching and research staff at public universities in Catalonia.

All review and QA procedures dealing with this area of the Agency's activities were brought online in 2015 via the on-line applications website of the Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya).

Quality assurance of teaching

Table 13. Agreements with institutions for the evaluation of six-year periods of research and the award of research premiums

Institution	TS	TSR	TF	TD	RP
Catalan private universities	98	2	71	25	5
Affiliated institutions	35	1	24	10	1
Total	133	3	95	35	6

Merits in teaching and management

Merit-based evaluation of teaching: teaching quality assurance handbooks

An agreement to modify condition one in the accreditation renewal reports that were issued in 2014 was formalised in 2015 by AQU's CEMAI committee (which assesses the individual merits and activities of teaching staff) in order to specify the terms and conditions of full and part-time faculty staff assignment.

The CEMAI committee also published a resolution in the Official Journal of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia (DOGC) announcing the accreditation of the handbooks used in private universities that successfully complete the monitoring stage, meaning that private universities in Catalonia that successfully pass accreditation have completed the cycle of design-implementation-accreditation of procedures involving the quality assurance of teaching.

In addition and as a result of the passing and publication of Act 15/2015, 21 July, concerning the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency, the activities of the CEMAI committee now come under AQU's Research Assessment Commission.

During 2015 the Agency also certified the assessment reports on the merits of academic staff in teaching issued by public universities in Catalonia according to the model set out in their respective teaching quality assurance handbooks.

Table 14. Results of the 2014 call for certification of the merit-based evaluation of teaching

Potential applicants	Total applicants	Applications percentage	Favourable	% favourable/ applications	Unfavourable	% favourable/ potential
2,263	1,261	55.7%	1,178	93.4%	40	52.1%

The number of potential applicants includes teaching staff from previous calls for applications with the option to participate in the 2014 call for applications 2014.

Merit-based evaluation of skills in management

Table 15. Results of the 2014 call for certification of the merit-based evaluation of skills in management

Assessed periods	Favourable	Unfavourable	1st period	2nd period	3rd period	4th period
329	329	0	135	84	56	54

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

3. Pilot project for the evaluation of research at departmental level

AQU Catalunya developed a methodology for evaluating research work being carried out at departmental level in higher education institutions. This methodology is a pioneer development in Spain and a pilot project was run, involving all of the departments in one university (Pompeu Fabra University).

The objective of the methodology is to contribute to the consolidation of the universities as high-level research organisations at international level. The method provides an instrument that can be used to improve policies for research, better understand the type of research being developed and identify areas and contexts for research that are more dynamic. The methodology is applicable to all fields of knowledge.

The methodology is now prepared for roll out of the project to all other departments in the Catalan university system.



KNOWLEDGE GENERATION

1. The Catalan university system

Graduate employment outcomes

The fifth survey of the employment outcomes of the graduate population in Catalonia was carried out in 2014. The survey covered graduates of pre-Bologna undergraduate and doctoral degrees and, for the first time, graduates of Master's degrees. The results and findings of the survey of undergraduate and doctoral degree holders were released in 2014 while those of the Master's survey were released in 2015.

The survey and study of **Master's degree** holders analyses the employment outcomes of 7,647 people out of a total number of 16,218 who completed their studies in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, or 47% of the graduate population and a sample error of 0.81%.

Several of the main conclusions are as follows:

- A Master's degree is the most flexible degree in terms of Master's graduates being able to better adapt than other graduates to the needs and requirements of the labour market as well as new trends in knowledge generation. Another important aspect is that they are a lifelong learning tool and provide for the acquisition of work-related skills important for promotion and retraining (74% of Master's graduates were already in some form of employment prior to taking a Master's degree)
- 86% of Master's graduates were in employment two to three years after completing their Master's degree. The employment rate was 8 per cent higher for Master's graduates who were already in employment prior to taking their Master's degree than for those who were not (88% compared to 80%).



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- The main reasons for taking a Master's degree were: professional career advancement, the pursuit of a specialist area of interest and better job prospects. In addition, Master's graduates were of the opinion that a Master's programme served mainly as a way of reinforcing and obtaining more in-depth knowledge and training (rated at 7/10) and to establish contacts (6/10).
- Master's programmes attract students from outside Catalonia: 30% of the Master's graduates interviewed had taken a previous degree either at a university either elsewhere in Spain (16%) or abroad (14%).
- 35% of Master's graduates earned a higher annual salary than before taking a Master's, with 34% in the professional category.

A full analysis of the data is published in *The employment outcomes of Master's degree holders from universities In Catalonia. Survey of the employment outcomes of the population of Master's degree graduates from Catalan universities.*

Employers survey

By way of an agreement with the Government of Catalonia/Generalitat de Catalunya, Obra Social "la Caixa" cooperates with AQU Catalunya in the compilation of a detailed study of graduate employment outcomes and the perception of employers concerning graduate employability. The purpose of the study is to give universities real-world insight into perceptions in the labour market about the training received by graduates during their studies at university and the skills profiles they acquire.



The project consists of three stages:



Knowledge generation

Stage 1: Employers survey (quantitative stage)

Published in 2015, the report entitled *Employers' perceptions of the employability and skills of recent graduates in Catalonia* provides information on the perceptions and needs of employers regarding the skills and education level of recent graduates based on the analysis of a survey carried out on 1,325 enterprises and institutions operating in Catalonia.

Another report, titled *The employability and skills of new teachers. The opinion of preschool, primary and secondary education institutions*, sets out the results and findings of the survey carried out of teachers at preschool, primary and secondary education institutions in Catalonia. The purpose of the study is to provide information on the skills and training of new contract teaching staff at both public, private and subsidised institutions in Catalonia.

Table 16. Summary of the quantitative stage. Survey carried out during 2014 and 2015

Survey	Population	Response	Response rate	Sample error	Results
Generic	16,757	1,325	7.91%	2.64%	<i>Employers' perceptions of the employability and skills of recent graduates in Catalonia</i>
Public service	66	11	16.67%	27.74%	Available on the AQU Catalunya website
Education	2,822	281	9.96%	5.66%	<i>The employability and skills of new teachers. The opinion of preschool, primary and secondary education institutions</i>
Medicine	606	90	14.8%	9.7%	Release 2016
Nursing	520	112	21.5%	8.4%	Release 2016

Stage 2: discussion groups (qualitative stage)

The series of discussion groups with employers and professionals from different sectors of economic activity were held in June and July. A total of ten groups were held in which more than sixty employers from different sectors took part. The purpose of these meetings was to follow up and discuss in greater depth the quantitative results of the first stage and provide programmes with specific information on the match on between the employability and skills of recent graduates and the demands and requirements for skills in the labour market.

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Following the analysis of the discussions in the discussion groups, a series of short reports is being drawn up for the faculties concerned as evidence of skills requirements in the labour market and the corresponding match with the profile of their graduates. During 2015, the first two reports on the field of education were produced: *The employers survey: a qualitative analysis. The opinion of school principals regarding the training of preschool and primary school teachers*, and *The employers survey: a qualitative analysis. The opinion of school principals regarding the training of secondary school teachers*.

Stage 3: research grants

In October, AQU Catalunya in cooperation with Obra Social “la Caixa” launched a call for applications for research grants to the value of €50,000 to fund research based on the findings of the Employers project. The results of the call are expected to be published in the first quarter of 2016.

Graduate satisfaction survey (undergraduate/Bachelor degrees)

The main objective of this project is for a **survey** to establish a series of common indicators on the satisfaction of the graduate population and provide course managers and the university system across Catalonia with the necessary information for the quality enhancement of programmes.

A pilot test was carried out in 2014 to try out the instrument designed by the work group that consists of the group of universities and which is coordinated by AQU Catalunya. Following completion of the estimation and analyses of reliability and validity and the incorporation of the required improvements, the survey was definitively endorsed in 2015.

AQU Catalunya also signed an agreement with the public and private universities as a whole to promote the annual launch, management, exploitation and dissemination of the results of surveys on the satisfaction of graduates of Bachelor programmes delivered in Catalonia. Data on graduates from the University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia were used for the pilot test.

AQU Catalunya also set in motion the necessary steps to produce the survey of the level of satisfaction of **Master's** degree graduates (Master's graduate satisfaction survey). The search for and analysis of the instruments used by universities in Catalonia and in international contexts was undertaken in 2015.

Knowledge generation

Cross-disciplinary assessment report on the Master's degree in Teacher Training

Working on the basis of a cross-disciplinary approach and in accordance with the chairpersons of the external review panels, the Agency's subject-specific committee that deals with the Social Sciences and Law produced and endorsed the *Cross-disciplinary assessment report on the Master's degree in Teacher Training for compulsory secondary education and upper secondary education/baccalaureate, vocational training and language teaching*, a document aimed mainly at the public education authorities and management and authorities in Catalan universities, in which the main results and conclusions of quality assurance are set out, together with possible courses of action aimed at improving and enhancing secondary education teacher training in Catalonia.



Indicators of the university system in Catalonia

AQU Catalunya recognises the importance of indicators for decision-making in the review and quality assurance and enhancement of programmes and the analysis of specific areas of the university system.

The Agency accordingly worked on upgrading and improving the WINDDAT website, which displays teaching indicators used in programme delivery and analysis. In addition to updating the information with data from the 2014-2015 academic year, the number of available indicators according to programme and university was increased in order for more information to be made available on the new EUC viewing environment. The idea behind the EUC portal is to make information on the quality of degree courses run at institutions in Catalonia available to society in a way that is easy to access and understand, with both descriptive information on courses, the results of programme QA procedures (validation, monitoring, modification and accreditation) and indicators of access and admission, programme delivery and satisfaction.



2. Workshops and events (including media events)

The opinion of employers regarding the skills and training of university graduates: results, findings and challenges

CosmoCaixa, 13 May 2015

The workshop had the twofold aim of presenting the results and findings of two surveys, one of the employment outcomes of Master's graduates and the other of private sector employers, and of discussing ways to reinforce synergies between universities and industry.

A media event was organised on the same day as the workshop to present the findings.

Programme accreditation certificates award ceremony

La Pedrera, 21 May 2015

Accreditation certificates were awarded to the first sixty-five programmes to successfully undergo review and evaluation by AQU Catalunya during the 2014-2015 academic year.



Programme accreditation as a tool for internationalisation

Palacio de la Magdalena, Menéndez Pelayo International University, 9 and 10 September 2015

This course was organised by AQU Catalunya, together with ANECA, for the Menéndez Pelayo International University Summer School, and highlighted the opportunities and implications of programme accreditation in the context of internationalisation.

The meeting began with various international experts putting forward their position concerning the global importance of accreditation. Various experts from Europe then discussed the trend towards the internationalisation of accreditation in the EHEA.

Knowledge generation

Improving teacher training

Pompeu Fabra University, 26 October 2015

The objectives of this workshop were:

- The presentation and discussion of the findings and results of the education survey with officials from primary and secondary education institutions (281 surveys, 10% response rate).
- The presentation and discussion of the results and findings of the discussion/focus groups with primary and secondary education institutions.
- To discuss and specify ways to improve teacher training.

A media event was organised on the same day as the workshop to present the findings.



INTERNATIONALISATION

1. Supporting internationalisation in the Catalan university system

Having identified the internationalisation of degree programmes as one of the areas that give most impetus to excellence in higher education and as a way of implementing this dimension of excellence, AQU Catalunya designed a protocol that anticipates how the internationalisation of a study programme will unfold, how the internationalisation of teaching staff will unfold and the results that can be obtained from internationalisation.

The dimension of internationalisation in programme accreditation, which 5 undergraduate/Bachelor and 15 Master's programmes applied for, is to be analysed in 2016 by an international panel of experts appointed by AQU Catalunya. This team of experts will analyse the position of each programme in relation to the criteria specific to the dimension, as well as adjust and adapt the methodology proposed by AQU Catalunya in accordance with international benchmarks.

2. Institutional relations

INQAAHE

The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) is a world-wide association of over 200 organisations active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education, the great majority of which are quality assurance agencies. **AQU Catalunya has hosted the association's Secretariat since October 2013, and this role was renewed until 30 June 2018.**



Internationalisation

The activities of the Agency in hosting the Secretariat focus mainly on the **management of annual calls and projects, support for the Board of Directors, support to the members** of the network and **economic management**.

ENQA

AQU Catalunya further cooperated with ENQA in the ASEAN-QA and SHARE projects for the development of the regional area for quality assurance in higher education for countries in South-East Asia.

It also cooperated in the organisation of the ENQA Workshop on QA and E-Learning, held in Barcelona on 10 and 11 December 2015.

As a result of the workshop meeting, Workshop Report 23, Analysis of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) in External Review Reports: System-Wide Analysis, Resources, and Independence was published.



EQAR

AQU Catalunya has been an independent member on the EQAR Register Committee since 2015.

ECA

AQU Catalunya coordinated the ECA working group on programme accreditation and joint programmes. The group analyses ways to implement the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.⁴

AQU Catalunya was also represented on the ECA Board.



⁴ <https://www.eqar.eu/fileadmin/documents/bologna/02_European_Approach_QA_of_Joint_Programmes_v1_0.pdf>.

3. International projects

During 2015 AQU Catalunya participated in the following international projects:

- In the field of the **internationalisation** of the university system in Catalonia: CeQuInt, a cooperation agreement with ASIIN and ERANET-MUNDUS/ERANET-PLUS
- In the field of **innovation**: TeSLA (An Adaptive Trust-based e-assessment System for Learning), IMPALA (Lifelong Learning Programme) and the ENQA Working Group on the Impact of QA,
- In the field of **cooperation**: ISLAH, PACAgro and EQTeL, ASEAN-QA
- In the field of **benchmarking**: ENQA Quality Procedures project (4th edition).

3. Other activities

The Agency also participated in 10th European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF) and cooperated with other ECA agencies and ENIC-NARIC centres.



STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Catalunya

1. The passing of new legislation dealing specifically with AQU

New legislation dealing with AQU Catalunya (the AQU Catalunya Act) was passed by the Parliament of Catalonia on 8 July 2015 under Act 15/2015, 21 July, on the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency and promulgated on 23 July 2015 with publication in the Official Journal of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia (DOGC). There was broad consensus among the parliamentary groups regarding the bill, which was passed with 87 votes in favour and 40 abstentions.

The new legislation, which contains 26 articles, saw the repeal of 17 articles that referred to AQU Catalunya in the Catalan Universities Act (LUC) of 2003. The main new developments were the setting up, on the one hand, of a advisory body of a consultative nature for matters dealing with strategies and procedures and, on the other, of an appeals body in charge of reviewing and ruling on appeals filed against decisions by the Agency's QA and review panels. Representation on the Agency's Governing Board (formerly the Board of Management) and its Standing Committee was also extended to include all rectors of Catalan universities, student representatives and labour organisation representatives. Pursuant to the new legislation, AQU's CLiC committee, which deals with tenure-track and collaborating teaching staff, was absorbed into the Research Assessment Committee (CAR).

Act 15/2015 strengthens the Agency's position as the main instrument for the assurance and enhancement of quality in the university and higher education system in Catalonia, with its functions upgraded, a more flexible structure and improved compliance with the European standards in terms of its independence. It also gives the Agency impetus in the sphere of internationalisation and establishes a system for the appointment of the Agency's director by way of an open and competitive process, amongst other things.

2. Strategic Plan 2015-18

AQU Catalunya began implementation of its Strategic Plan for 2015-2018, the details of which are specified in the activities endorsed on an annual basis by the Governing Board. The Plan underpins the technical quality of the Agency's activities, takes into account and incorporates where possible international best practices, increases the involvement of the universities in the Agency's activities and enhance the visibility of AQU Catalunya to the various different stakeholder groups, while maintaining its rigorous standards.

3. Communication

Publications

During 2015 AQU Catalunya published 27 **publications**, which included the reports with the results and findings of the graduate employment outcomes survey and the Employers project; methodological materials designed for the Agency's various different QA procedures; the Strategic Plan 2015-2018; and the Annual Report 2014. Four issues (numbers 76 to 79) of AQU's online newsletter (elButlletí) in Catalan, Spanish and English were also produced.

Website

The **Agency's QA reports portal**, an online application for the publication of external review reports on study programmes and institutions currently provides access to 2,018 reports (an increase of 25% compared to 2014). The objective of this application is compliance with the standards for transparency and public availability set out in the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ENQA, 2015).

Progress was made during 2015 in the development of the **EUC website**, the purpose of which, in accordance with ENQA standards, is to ensure the visibility of the results of site visits and programme accreditation. The launching of the new website is envisaged for the first half of 2016.







Internal organisation

YouTube

In 2015 AQU Catalunya started a YouTube channel to increase its social media presence and disseminate the activities it undertakes.



The channel opened with the publication of four animated videos (in Catalan, Spanish and English) that illustrate what the Agency is and what it does. More specifically, they deal with:

- The institutional presentation of AQU Catalunya 
- The VSMA Framework for programme validation, monitoring, modification and accreditation 
- The guide to programme accreditation 
- How an accreditation site visit works 

Twitter

By the end of 2015 AQU Catalunya's Twitter account had 640 followers (an increase of 73% compared to 2014) and 190 tweets had been created. There were also 358 mentions of @aqucatalunya and 8,200 profile visits.





INTERNAL ORGANISATION

During 2014, AQU Catalunya addressed key aspects of accountability and optimisation in the allocation of human and physical resources to the different projects and activities undertaken by the Agency. Implementation of ISO 27001 (for information security) was completed and compliance fulfilled with prevailing legislation dealing with the protection of personal data (Organic Law 15/1999, LOPD). ISO 27001 certification by the Spanish Association for Standardization and Certification (AENOR) was achieved in May 2015, and the external audit required pursuant to the LOPD was undertaken by APDCAT (the Catalan data protection authority). The EUC portal was designed and developed and will come on line in 2016, statistical analysis and data mining systems were developed and all IT systems and programmes were improved and upgraded.

Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya

September 2016 · AQU-28-2016



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