SITE VISITS IN THE ACCREDITATION OF UNDERGRADUATE AND MASTER’S DEGREES IN THE CATALAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

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METHODOLOGY
# Evaluation standards

## EVALUATION STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

1. QUALITY OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME
2. RELEVANCE OF THE PUBLIC INFORMATION
3. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM
4. SUITABILITY OF THE TEACHING STAFF ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME
5. EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING SUPPORT SYSTEMS
6. QUALITY OF THE PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

### 7. ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS (OPTIONAL)

- Professional development and recruitment
- Interaction between research and teaching
- Internationalisation
- Sustainability of the faculty’s programmes
- Added value of the faculty’s programmes

*These do not condition the outcome of programme accreditation.*
Accreditation indicators

http://www.aqu.cat
New indicators for accreditation

Survey on the labour market outcomes of graduates
- The findings of the 5th survey were released in July 2014.
- Master’s programmes are to be included for the first time (at the end of 2014).

Student satisfaction survey
- An agreement was reached with all of the universities and a pilot test carried out.
- The surveys are being analysed.

Employers survey (placement/work experience and employment)
- Currently in the design stage (to be launched at the start of 2015).

Teachers survey
- The design for a joint survey is being discussed (launch 2015).
ORGANISATION & PLANNING
A sustainable model that is faculty-focused

• During the 2013-14 academic year ≈ 900 degrees offered

It is not viable to carry out an external review for each degree, even on the basis of a six-year cycle, as this would mean 900/6= a total of 150!

• In Catalonia there are 150 faculties

For this reason, it is more feasible to organise an external review at faculty level. On the basis of a six-year cycle, this results in 150/6= a total of 25.
Aim:
1. To ensure that the site visit is carried out with full safeguards in place.
2. Agreement on the timetable and organisational details for the site visit.
The process of issuing accreditation

10. External review report

Subject-specific committee: External review panel’s site visit report + validation + monitoring + indicators

11. Preliminary site visit report

12. Supporting arguments

13. Final report

GenCat + Universities Council (CU) + Ministry + Universities

14. Accreditation decision

Spanish Universities Council (CU)
Experience with the preliminary site visits (1/2)

Positive aspects

1. Improvements in the quality of the self-assessment report and evidence. Involvement of the external review panel in these improvements and enhancement.

2. Initial contact between the external review panel (moderator and secretary) and the faculty: this creates a good work atmosphere and mutual trust.

3. Agreement reached on important aspects concerning the site visit:
   a. Timetable
   b. Composition of the focus groups
   c. Deadlines for submitting any new documentation
Experience with the preliminary site visits (2/2)

Risks

1. Tendency of the external review panel to point out aspects and/or problems that go beyond what is purely formal or content-related.

2. Tendency of the faculty to justify weak evidence and/or problems in the running of degree programmes.

3. Delays in submitting all of the required evidence: in some cases not all of the evidence is submitted initially as the faculty knows it has time after the preliminary visit to do so (thereby gaining time to produce the evidence).
RESULTS
Outcomes of the site visits (1/2)

Assessment according to the standards
(first six months of 2014)
Outcomes of the site visits (2/2)

The external review panel’s proposal as regards accreditation

- Acreditado en progreso de excelencia: [PERCENTAGE] (2)
- Acreditado: [PERCENTAGE] (7)
- Acreditado con condiciones: [PERCENTAGE] (2)
- Reverificación: 0%
Thanks very much for your attention
General framework (1/2)

Regulatory framework


Characteristics of the CUS

Guide to the accreditation of recognised undergraduate and Master’s degree programmes and awards

International practice

REACU agreement
General framework (2/2)

1. Quality assurance of the study programme and learning outcomes.

2. Ensure the process of continuous improvement, with recommendations and suggestions.

3. Comply with international accreditation standards.

4. The faculty as the unit of reference. Reduce as much as possible the pressure on both the university system and the QA agency.
Anticipated number of degree programmes to be accredited

Programmes and site visits 2014-2017

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87 degrees  265 degrees  367 degrees  106 degrees
The “AQU-accredited” brand

- **Recognition and enhancement** of the work carried out in university faculties and schools in Catalonia.

- Students are assured they will receive a **quality education**.

- Quality assurance of education and training for citizens and **competent professionals**.

- It undergirds **transparency** and **accountability**.

- It reinforces **the universities’ role of leadership** in society.