SUPORT PROGRAMME. FINAL REPORT

December 2011

Generalitat de Catalunya

INDEX

1. INTRODUCTION

European universities are currently rethinking their structures in order to carry out the necessary reforms to develop into knowledge management centres and also the main facilitators whereby this knowledge allows for greater mobility and broader career outcomes for graduates.

The targets of the Bologna process and the Lisbon strategy have to be met by higher education institutions. The assurance of quality made implicit in the Bologna Declaration takes on special relevance as the Ministers meet every two years to measure the progress and define medium-term objectives, and this aspect has grown in importance in policy objectives, particularly between 2003 and 2007.

- The Berlin Communiqué (2003) recognised the primordial role of higher education institutions in the monitoring of quality and called on quality assurance agencies, students and higher education institutions to develop the set of "standards, procedures and guidelines" on quality assurance.

- The Bergen Communiqué (2005) adopted three groups of standards and guidelines for quality assurance, one applicable to higher education institutions, and two others applicable to quality assurance agencies.

- The London Communiqué (2007) included the proposal to create a European register of quality assurance agencies, which was presented by the E4 Group.

In addition, the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy made quality the central aspect of European competitiveness, stemming from the modernisation agenda of higher education institutions.

Consequently, one of the strategic actions being undertaken by universities is the setting in place of an internal quality assurance system (IQAS) that gives them control over the processes and, at the same time, the management of continuous enhancement. An IQAS with these characteristics will need to be thorough enough to account for the running of processes and the achievement of set objectives, as well as being flexible enough so that it can adapt to a setting that is in constant change, and one that is also competitive and globalised, in which all universities now find themselves involved. An IQAS must also comply with European standards.

AQU Catalunya has accordingly developed and set in motion various programmes, the main objective of which has been to guide and advise the universities in adapting to these changes. IQAS designs have undergone ex-ante assessment since 2007 within the framework of the AUDIT programme. An added value of ex-ante assessment for the universities is the evaluation of the design of IQAS by a panel of experts according to a European standards-based programme, which enables them to obtain useful recommendations for improving IQAS and their subsequent implementation.

The SUPORT programme was launched in 2009 as a result of this experience. Its main objective was for the members of quality units and those involved in quality issues to gain first-hand knowledge of how universities in Europe are resolving the issues that are most pressing

for them. It was thus necessary for AQU Catalunya to inquire into which European universities are best dealing with these concerns.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

As explained above, one of the main objectives of the SUPORT programme was to disseminate the knowledge and understanding of how universities in Europe are resolving current issues to university quality units in Catalonia and promote good practices that are being carried out at European level.

There are two dimensions to the internal quality systems of higher education institutions: 1) an internal dimension, in which the IQAS has to take into account the institution's characteristics and organisation and, with the information generated by the IQAS, be able to monitor the university's objectives in an efficient and effective way; and 2) an external dimension, which calls for an IQAS that is as flexible as possible and which can adapt to continuous social and economic change and the needs imposed by globalisation.

The establishing of channels of communication between different higher education institutions so that good practices can flow quickly and easily can thus be seen as a strategic issue. Ways of dealing with situations that are common to many institutions can be a source of inspiration and innovation for others. It is therefore very important to know about good practices which, adapted to the characteristics and setting of each university, can enable situations that are of concern to those in charge of quality units to be handled with a certain guarantee of success.

Within the framework of the SUPORT programme, AQU Catalunya accordingly initiated a study of European universities that produce models for quality management that could be considered as being exemplary, or leaders in the field. Advice on the survey was sought from different European quality assurance agencies:

- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

- Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA)

- Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT)

- Swedish National Agency of Higher Education (HSV)

- Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO)

- Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC)

- Evaluationsagentur Baden-Württemberg (EVALAG)

A number of Catalan universities also put forward proposals for universities that they considered to be leaders in the field.

In the search for these leading universities, the Catalan universities were asked what their main concerns were. These can be grouped as follows:

- Stakeholder participation: specific training in quality for the stakeholder groups, guidance and participation in quality management processes.

- To understand how units responsible for quality management are organised, and the functions assigned to them.

- To understand how institutional and programme reviews are carried out.

- To understand the organisation and key features of information systems.

- To understand mechanisms for student assessment.

For the first selection of universities, a study was made of the IQAS of universities that had been recommended using the information already published on their respective websites. Data were also gathered on the number of students, type of organisation (centralised or federal), sector (public or private) and academic subjects.

The universities that finally participated in the programme were:

Universitat de Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain)	Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (Basque Country, Spain)
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain)	Universitetet i Oslo (Norway)
Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (Catalonia, Spain)	Helsingin Yliopisto (Finland)
Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Catalonia, Spain)	University Hallam Sheffield (UK)
Universitat de Girona (Catalonia, Spain)	Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (Galicia, Spain)
Universitat de Lleida (Catalonia, Spain)	Wageningen UR (Netherlands)
Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Catalonia, Spain)	University of Central Lancashire (UK)
Universitat de Vic (Catalonia, Spain)	Universidad Miguel Hernández (Elche, Spain)
Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Catalonia, Spain)	Open University (UK)
Universitat Ramon Llull (Catalonia, Spain)	University of Highlands and Islands (UK)
Universitat Abat Oliba CEU (Catalonia, Spain)	Universidad de Navarra (Navarra, Spain)
Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (Catalonia, Spain)	Queen Margaret University (UK)
AQU Catalunya	Nottingham Trent University (UK)

A presentation of the SUPORT programme was sent to the European universities that were selected, which explained the main objectives of the programme, what was expected from their participation, the main characteristics of the university that would visit them and the issues that they were most interested in finding out about. Each Catalan university then arranged the details of the site visit with the host university.

Each Catalan university drew up a report in which a description was given of the activities that were undertaken over the various days of the visit (stay), the main aspects of the quality system and the good practices that they encountered.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Implementation of good practices

The participating universities assessed the SUPORT programme as being very satisfactory. One of the main reasons for this was that it was beneficial to all parties involved. The exchange of experience between universities generated synergies between those responsible for quality-related matters. As a consequence, the SUPORT programme has helped to reinforce the links between quality management units all over Europe.

From the point of view of Catalan universities, the most important impact on their daily activity has been the opportunity to discover new ways of dealing with the issues they are most concerned about. While most good practices have had to be adapted to the situation and specific requirements of each university, all of them have been an important source of inspiration.

The experiences with the SUPORT programme served as the starting point for the development of various different projects and the review of different aspects of quality enhancement and assurance.

Projects and actions that have stemmed from the SUPORT programme are as follows:

- **Peer review**. One university plans to start developing the processes for the peer review of a study programme. The university's quality unit is currently developing the process to define the outcomes and responsibilities. A pilot scheme is to be launched next year with one programme, and the intention in the medium term is to extend this practice to all of the university's programmes.

- **Student involvement**. One university's quality unit is designing a training programme that will be compulsory for all student representatives and optional for all students. This will be a generic activity in all study programmes, with a number of assigned credits. The content covers a basic understanding of the university's organisation and structure, the awareness of quality management and the importance of monitoring, and ways and channels through which to participate.

- **Priority to improving quality**. The site visit provided another university's quality unit with broader criteria that enable it to focus its work on what is really important for quality enhancement. This means involving all of the stakeholders in quality management and showing them the impact of these actions on their daily work and how improvements to the process will create less work for them in a medium term perspective.

- **Decentralised quality management**. Following the site visit, one quality unit gained a better understanding of the importance of involving each faculty or school's management team. It is important above all to involve the stakeholders, the management team, the teaching staff and service staff. For this, the quality unit's staff organised meetings with all faculties and schools to explain what is expected of them, their required level of

involvement, how they can participate in quality management, what their responsibilities are, etc. A project was also set in motion to train programme coordinators and academic staff in quality management.

- **Simplification of the monitoring process**. As a result of the site visit, the Quality Unit is leading a project to streamline all of the monitoring processes and analyse the data and actions with an added value for collection and implementation purposes.

- **Redesigning the process of producing a study programme**. The Quality Unit analyses the stages, stakeholders, functions and responsibilities. It is also working on how to define the data in order to establish whether information is public and has to be published or if it is confidential.

- **Defining a student data model**. The Quality Unit is developing a project to study how to integrate all data on the student body that are currently dispersed in various databases. The main objective is to provide a database with the studies taken by students and the pathway and personal data of each student. In addition, the regulations regarding access to this data are being defined so as to determine who can process them and how.

3.2. Results one year later

One year later, the Catalan universities were asked which projects were finally carried out following on from their experience in the SUPORT programme. In the majority of cases the experience has had a considerable impact on the way in which they perform their functions. Projects implemented during the year were as follows:

- **Peer review**. The Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (UIC) has put this practice in place following the recommendations of the CADU (University Teaching Assessment Commission) in its reports on teaching assessment. It was made compulsory for four teachers to be observed by a colleague, who then recommended this practice to another teacher. The corresponding dean is responsible for establishing who the teacher is who carries out the observation. The results of the observation are confidential.

  The Innovation and Educational Quality Service (SIQE) has established guidelines that are very similar to those of Queen Margaret University for the effective implementation of this practice, and it offers the necessary support to teaching staff so that it is developed satisfactorily.

  The benefits of this practice for the quality enhancement of teaching are substantial, especially when the observation takes place between one experienced teacher and an inexperienced one, and also between teachers of the same level. In a medium term perspective, the possibility of establishing a stable peer observation system would be a very powerful tool for the quality enhancement of teaching.

- **Simplification of the monitoring process and student involvement**. The Universitat de Lleida (UdL) started the following projects:

  a) **Annual internal monitoring of programme outcomes based on internal standards**

In November 2010, the Universitat de Lleida defined a series of internal standards for the monitoring of its Bachelor and Master's degrees. The university's Quality Assurance committee, which is responsible for the annual monitoring of new programmes, selected a series of indicators and decided on the values for monitoring the introduction and outcomes of study programmes. At the start of the monitoring process each year, the outcomes are reviewed, discussed and assessed. The objective is to set in place an early warning system to alert the university of situations that call for review and/or improvement. Internal standards-based assessment has already been used to monitor the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years.

b) **Training programme for students who participate in the university's administration and management bodies**

Since the 2010-2011 academic year, the Universitat de Lleida has been organising a training course for all students who participate as student representatives in the university's various different management and administration bodies. Although the course is not compulsory, it was designed with many incentives to encourage all of the representatives to take it. The response was very favourable and it is expected to be run again this year (2011-2012) at the beginning of the second term.

The course is worth 2 ECTS credits and is seven days long. The aims of the course are:

- To inform the student body about the university's organisation and its governing and representative bodies.

- Training in core competences associated with the work of student representation (team work, discussion, assertiveness, etc.).

- To present successful experiences with student representation at the Universitat de Lleida, in Spain and Europe (AQU Catalunya was involved).

- To provide the necessary tools for students to successfully participate in monitoring of the quality of new EHEA-compliant programmes.

- To make known the framework and context of the Student Statutes.

▪ **Priority to improving quality**. The stay was useful to the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) for organising the concepts regarding quality, prioritise them according to importance and understand that a very significant aspect of quality management is how it relieves the pressure of work on all areas and stakeholders and helps them to improve the way in which tasks are managed, as well as ultimately having an impact on the university itself. The experience also served to understand the specific impact of quality management on a particular faculty/school.

The current stage involves a pilot phase of version 0 (pending version 1) of software for managing the quality system (based on the AUDIT programme) of a faculty/school. This tool was indirectly influenced by what was learned during the stay.

▪ **Decentralised quality management**. The aim of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) was to obtain information first hand on the running of the quality system of a

European university similar to the UAB, with experience in programme monitoring. The primary interest was to understand how the information flows required for monitoring are managed, the role of the different actors involved and the tools available for monitoring quality.

They were impressed by the level of decentralisation in quality assurance, and what this means for the dean's office and faculty and school management in general. The Programming and Quality Office is currently working on introducing the university's own internal quality system, with the same level of decentralisation. In this regard, it is rolling out the IQAS at the faculty/school level in the UAB, with certain difficulties but at the same time clear results as regards the development of key processes in the IQAS: programme monitoring, teaching guides, public information, the assessment of stakeholder satisfaction – surveys on the graduate population concerning courses and teaching – and document management. Particular mention is made of the implementation of two tools: the data repository for monitoring programmes at the UAB and the document management system, with a pilot phase for implementation in two of the university's faculties/schools to monitor the 2010-2011 academic year, which should be operative in the entire university for monitoring purposes in 2011-2012.

3.3. Benefits for the host university

At the end of the stays, the host universities were asked to collaborate and share their opinions on the SUPORT programme. A series of interviews were held in which they were asked to express their degree of satisfaction. It is worth mentioning that all of the universities interviewed agreed to repeat the experience.

The positive aspects of the experience were as follows:

- The preparation of the visit represents an important moment for reflection and for understanding why things are done in a certain way. The way that outsiders see the organisation and its daily or "obvious" aspects also leads one to rethink the way in which things are done.

- The flow of information and different ways of seeing the same problem was very worthwhile.

- The site visit is considered to be a source of motivation for the team in that it represents recognition of the work that has been carried out.

4. GOOD PRACTICES

Good practices have been classified according to five different groups. For each of these groups there is a chapter which groups together the good practices of each of the universities visited.
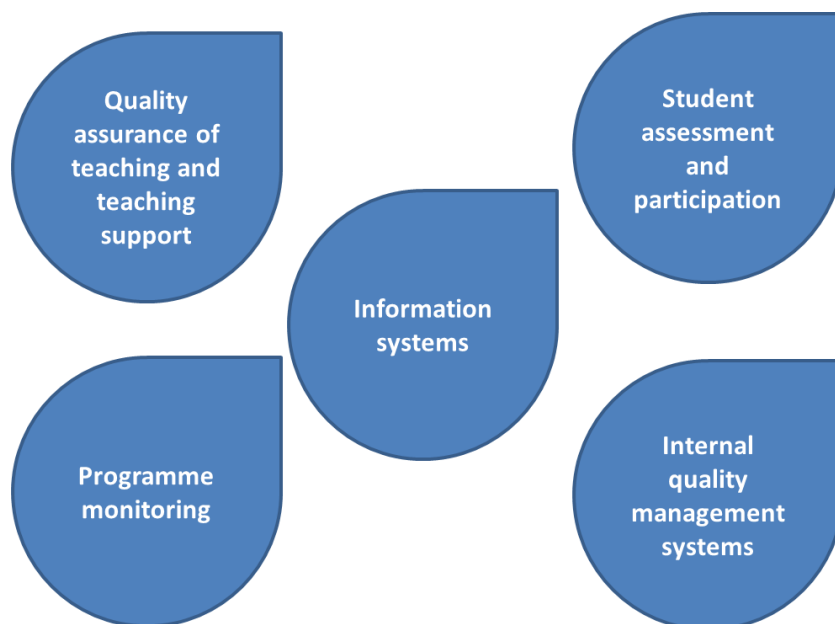
4.1. Quality assurance of teaching staff

4.1.1. Queen Margaret University

Peer observation

Peer observation provides a **good opportunity for personal reflection on teaching and it stimulates discussion** on ways to enhance student learning. Peer observation is a collegial process that offers the possibility of reciprocal learning, in which the observer often learns more than the tutor (person being observed).

Although it is the dean who is responsible for establishing and supervising the practice, the outcomes do not necessarily need to be communicated to him/her. These outcomes remain **strictly confidential between the observer and the tutor**. This point is particularly important for the practice to work well, as it thus remains within a context which encourages mutual respect and trust.

There are three different stages in the sequence of this practice:

1. *The pre-observation meeting*

It is important for the tutor and observer to spend the necessary amount of time so that the observer can understand the situation he/she will be observing. It is preferable that this takes place in the form of a meeting in person, although if this is not possible it can be replaced by an e-mail conversation/chat. In the meeting, the tutor explains the context of the session that will be under observation, which can include comments on:

- The time and place of the observation and the feedback session afterwards,

- The type and scope of the session (seminar, workshop, practicals, etc.),

- The level and prior knowledge of the students,

- The content and its context in the curriculum,

- The objectives and the learning outcomes for the session,

- The potential difficulties, and

- Relevant aspects to be observed.

2. *The observation*

The students need to be informed beforehand that there will be an observer in the session. **The objective of the observation is to contribute to the tutor's professional development, and the observer does not intervene in the session**. On the day of the session, the tutor mentions the presence of the observer and while working with the students ignores his/her presence. The observer should remain inconspicuous, although with a good vantage point from which both the tutor and students can be seen.

The observation focuses on the teaching and learning process more than on the content of the session and **takes into account the salient aspects agreed in the pre-observation meeting**. The observer pays close attention to the methodologies, the response of the students and whether the objectives for the session are achieved.

3. *Post-observation feedback meeting*

This session begins with the tutor having the opportunity to reflect on the practice. He/she explains how the session went for them and the positive aspects of the learning situation. This is an excellent time for detecting good practices that can be of use to other colleagues.

The observer can then describe what he/she has observed, beginning with the positive aspects. It is worth noting that the purpose of the practice is to provide food for thought and is non-judgmental. This is followed by comments about aspects that the observer feels were problematical or unsatisfactory. **This feedback must be constructive** and should focus on what the tutor did or did not do, and not on him/her as a person.

The tutor is invited to reflect on the comments and maintain a constructive dialogue. The observer acts as a facilitator and asks questions that lead to a better understanding, such as:

- What were you trying to achieve with this point?
- Is there any other way you could have achieved your objectives?
- How involved were the students at the time of the survey?
- At what times did the students need to think?
- How is this point associated with the students' prior knowledge?
- How can you show you achieved your objectives?
- What aspect are you most content about?

Lastly, the observer helps the tutor to establish alternative strategies for the future and necessary actions so they can be carried out.

The benefits of this practice for enhancing teaching quality can be very considerable when the observation takes place between an experienced teacher and an inexperienced one, and also between teachers of the same level. In a medium term perspective, a stable peer observation system would be a very powerful tool for the quality enhancement of teaching.

4.1.2. Sheffield Hallam University

The quality assurance of teaching from the point of view of the teaching staff

A positive aspect of the quality assurance of teaching from the point of view of the teaching staff is that **it gives a different view of the way in which both the class and the module are being run**. It also provides teachers with a more positive and assertive view of teaching assessment as to the more punitive point of view that it can acquire if it just involves the students. **The quality assurance of teaching** at Sheffield Hallam University **is carried out by**

the teachers themselves in the form of a survey. The results are commented on and analysed by the teaching staff in specific meetings, where they share their experiences and the teachers can learn from each other. This system of assessment boosts the levels of confidence and understanding among the teachers.

A positive aspect of the application of an integral assessment of teaching in which the teaching staff itself participates is that the approach is less coercive than if assessment is made solely on the basis of the students' opinions. **The involvement of teaching and research staff in the quality assurance of teaching gives them a say and enhances the procedure, in addition to facilitating a cooperative approach to bringing about improvements in teaching.**

Such practices would be applicable in the medium-term perspective. Firstly, careful thought needs to be given to any changes, bearing in mind the initial situation, the situation and model for assessment that are sought after, and a route map drawn up according to the initial situation and point of arrival. The fact that a partial reform is necessary of the structure of the assessment units so that they can plan, design and coordinate but do not directly carry out the assessment in order for the practices to be applied, calls for time. And even more time is required to prepare teams of teaching and research staff in each faculty to carry out the process.

4.2. Monitoring of study programmes

4.2.1. Open University

Identification of three key moments in programme reviews

The Open University (OU-UK) has been carrying out periodic reviews of its programmes since 2001, in accordance with the requirements of the QAA.

A well-defined objective has by now been established for each type of review, together with a systematic approach to the procedure and supporting documentation to be used in each process.

The post-launch review, which covers all aspects of the programme, quickly shows the aspects in which the programme is not in line with objectives that have been set out or aimed at the right target group; changes can thereby be made to the approach without having to wait for results and outcomes for all elements in the cycle. Changes that are considered are usually of minor importance, although these modifications can lead to a better match between the objectives and the students' expectations.

The annual review by the programme's team is more internal, and is for establishing whether there are any deviations from the initial objectives and applying preventative measures to ensure everything runs properly. Accountability to the faculty board through the corresponding report enables the dean to annually monitor the running of programmes in the faculty.

The in-depth programme review once every six years provides a complete overview of the cycle. An evaluation is made of aspects linked to curriculum design, outcomes, assessment, teaching and learning, student guidance, learning resources and quality assurance systems. The panel's final report is approximately fifteen pages long, in which an assessment is made of each section, with good practices and recommendations to enhance the programme and the institution.

4.2.2. Wageningen University

Composition and functions of the programme committees

A programme committee consists of between six and ten members, half of which are staff and the other half students. Among these members there is a director, a vice-director and a secretary.

An executive committee is also appointed, which has three members: one student, one teacher and the programme committee director.

The functions of the programme committee are as follows:

▪ Once every three years, to submit proposals to the university on curriculum content regarding the competence profile, the demands of the professional market and the students' expectations.

▪ Once a year, to make recommendations to the university on curriculum organisation.

▪ Once a year, to assess the quality of teaching and make recommendations for teaching enhancement, with support being given to the programme director so they can be carried out.

Each programme committee needs to assess whether it is necessary to set up an external committee made up of industry and professional practitioners in order to be permanently in contact with and aware of the needs of different contexts (labour market, professional field, etc.).

The interesting perspective of this good practice lies in the following aspects:

1. The content of a study programme is systematically reviewed once every three years on the basis of developments in the professional field and from the perspective of the student. The advantages in this are that:

   ▪ It limits the need for constant review, which in the case of certain programmes is necessary on an annual basis, and stabilises a programme, which can be offered for at least three years.

   ▪ It ensures that programmes that are more well-established and resistant to change are reviewed.

- It ensures that developments in the professional world are taken into consideration, and even more so if the external committee is set up, which can be of considerable value to the study programme and its staying abreast with developments.

- It gives credibility to the student's opinion regarding the kind of studies that he/she would like to take. The student is considered to have a personal criterion that is far removed from the viewpoint of academia, although precisely because of this it should be taken into consideration.

2. The programme committee makes an annual assessment of teaching and makes specific recommendations for specific modules on the basis of internal standards. The advantages of this measure are:

- The annual assessment of each programme obliges the committee to make a detailed analysis of all outcomes.

- The internal standards define a clear framework for identifying where more attention needs to be paid and what needs to be reviewed in detail. These standards are set out in the following section.

There is potentially a high degree of transferability in the short-term perspective of this good practice to Catalan universities. It merely calls for a decision to do so within the framework of the internal management systems. There are no impediments in the current structure of the governing boards of universities that would make it difficult to implement this practice. The functions of the programme committees could be incorporated into the functions of the current studies committees. The setting up of external committees with industry and professional practitioners is also considered to be easy to implement in Catalan universities; this structure actually already exists in some faculties and schools, with outcomes that are very good in terms of education-job match (the match between study programmes and the requirements of the world of work).

Annual internal monitoring of programme outcomes based on internal standards

Wageningen University has set a series of internal standards for programme outcomes that identifies cases (subjects/modules) on the basis of which a detailed analysis and enhancement measures/corrective actions are necessary. These standards are:

- 45% or more of the students are dissatisfied with an item in the survey (an assessment of 1 or 2 out of 5). If the percentage is between 25-45%, the enhancement measures/corrective actions are merely desirable.

- The student achievement rate is below 70%.

Advantages of this practice:

- The university decides the levels of outcomes that it wants and focuses attention on necessary actions to ensure these levels are achieved. This does not mean lowering the levels, in order for example to achieve a certain student achievement rate, in part because there are the exam committees (see the following section).

- A reassessment is made of the result obtained in the student surveys and once again emphasis is put on the importance of the student's point of view as an indicator of the quality of teaching. The student is thereby considered to be a stakeholder with the ability to act in his/her own learning process and give feedback that is highly useful for assessing the quality of the same. The student thereby also perceives that his/her opinion is important and student involvement in the entire process becomes enhanced.

There could be a high degree of transferability in the short-term perspective of this good practice to Catalan universities. Each university can identify these standards or "alerts", at least according to subject areas.

Existence of exam committees

There are four exam committees in the university (according to subject areas), which have a role goes in tandem with the internal monitoring of quality. They are responsible for annually reviewing the assessment methodologies used in all programmes and making proposals for changes to the assessment process and the tests (exams, projects, etc.) developed in each programme. These committees are totally independent of the Education Institute, where the teaching of Bachelor and Master's degrees is organised, and they have a special position in the university.

Advantages in the existence of these committees:

- The role of these internal committees is very interesting with regard to the supervision of the assessment methodologies applied to each programme and whether the university considers they are suitable in relation to the students' acquisition of the competence profile.

- They can act as external reviewers in the same university and, in this respect, help to set the desired level of standards for the quality assurance of learning outcomes and competence acquisition.

- They can moderate (reduce) extreme outcomes in cases of bottlenecks or extremely good outcomes, in that they advise on methodologies, assessment methods (projects, exams, etc.) and criteria.

The degree of transferability of this good practice to Catalan universities is questionable, given that a committee with characteristics of this type could possibly be accused in certain cases of interfering in academic freedom. This is therefore a matter of university culture and as a result it may not be possible for it to be introduced in all universities in Catalonia at present or in the medium term perspective.

4.2.3. Universitetet i Oslo

At Universitetet i Oslo (University of Oslo, UiO) there are the posts of **external course supervisor** and the **external programme review panel**. These posts oblige departments and faculties to keep a database of people – academics from the same university, academics from other universities, professionals, former alumni, students – who are willing to participate as external supervisors (either individually or in a group). The benefits of this good practice lie in

the necessary move by the UiO to open up to outside points of view and the opinions of people who, while not forming part of its academic structure, give their sincere impressions of the running of a module or study programme.

Another good practice is the **presence in each faculty of a quality assurance adviser** from the administrative and service staff for programme monitoring, who provides support to faculties and departments for organising monitoring activities, which includes searching for data, organising data, setting the timetable of activities and monitoring its compliance. A member of support staff involved in faculty and department monitoring facilitates the organisation of flexible central units and the decentralisation and distribution of responsibility in a more localised way. Under the instructions of the faculty's dean's office, **the person in this post helps academic staff carry out their responsibilities regarding quality assurance of the degree studies offered in each faculty**.

The different people working on monitoring and quality assurance in faculties network with each other and the central QA team in the Office of Academic Affairs. Meetings are periodically organised between faculty members and staff from the central office.

Specific mention is also made of the fact that internationalisation processes are included in the quality assurance system, the purpose being to control the quality of the different inter-university agreements on mobility. There is a network of mobility coordinators (who are members of the administrative and service staff) in each faculty.

One key aspect to be taken into consideration is the meeting-seminars that are periodically held between academic staff and staff involved on the different levels of the QA system.

4.2.4. University of Central Lancashire

External reviewers

For the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) external reviewers are considered to be a very important part of the quality assurance process for ensuring the comparability of the quality of all its degrees with those of other universities in the UK. Reviewers are involved in external ex-ante assessment processes and they also:

- Have appropriate responsibility for a certain course (or courses) and designated modules.
- Analyse the assessment requirements.
- Sit on the Review Boards that decide the awarding of degrees.

The **appointment of external reviewers is the responsibility of the Heads of School**, who must show that reviewers who have been proposed have the necessary standing and experience. In order to safeguard the impartiality of reviewers, they must have had no recent connection with the school, plus any reciprocal agreement between the reviewer and the school is forbidden.

All proposals must be made on the UCLan's standard proforma. When the proposal clearly complies with the published criteria, the AQaSU (Academic Quality and Standards Unit) then

formally announces the appointment. Reviewers are normally appointed for a period of four years.

Reviewers receive an extensive document where they are informed of their duties and responsibilities and they are invited to attend an annual meeting that is held for all new external reviewers. As part of their contract with the UCLan, reviewers are expected to report annually on a series of issues associated with the level of the course (or courses) for which they are responsible. They are given a briefing about the types of issue on which the UCLan wishes to receive feedback. The reports are reviewed by the school, and the Head of School is responsible for ensuring that replies to questions are given within an appropriate time period.

As part of the annual monitoring process, the course leader is required to make comments on opinions that have been expressed, recommendations made and good practices identified by the reviewers in their report, and on all measures that have been adopted.

The Quality Units annually prepare a report for the Academic Standards Committee in which it points out the essential concerns and responses to these concerns, in addition to generic issues stemming from other recommendations and good practices.

The reviewers' comments are shared with the students through the student associations or their equivalent.

The innovative perspective of this process lies in the **specific training that takes place at the university itself and the commitment in the form of a "contract"**. It is also important to mention that individuals who have been reviewers are at an advantage in terms of professional promotion.

This has a high potential level of transferability in the medium term, although it will always be subject to economic and operational rationale. For example, it could begin with a certain type or level of programme, in certain faculties/departments/schools, etc. The introduction of this process **would be of great benefit in that external benchmarks of a continuous nature would be available**, which would bring prestige and trustworthiness to the review process (the obligation to take opinions and contributions into account).

Annual monitoring

The objective of the Annual Monitoring Process is to **ensure that courses being run are evaluated and that enhancement proposals/corrective measures are defined**.

The process is led by the faculties and the **results referred to the Academic Standards Committee** at a special meeting held in March. The Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee identifies and controls the progress of institutional issues (an innovative good practice).

Each course is reviewed annually as part of the UCLan's annual monitoring process. The objective of the process is:

- To evaluate and enhance the quality of the course.

- To offer the best experience possible to the student, given the available resources.

- To ensure that appropriate measures are adopted to remedy any identified shortcomings.

- To identify and disseminate good practices.

- To have available all necessary information for the periodic evaluation process and external reviews.

An improvement plan is drawn up annually for each level of responsibility (course/subject, school partner college, faculty, university), which sets out the proposals resulting from the evaluation process.

This has a high potential level of transferability in the short-term perspective, given that all Catalan universities are working on this type of monitoring. Developments that are observed will help to better specify the objectives and anticipated results of internal monitoring.

This is considered to be a good practice in that the monitoring process focuses on enhancement and dealing with issues that are essential. Reports are simplified as much as possible, with just a few, well-selected indicators. The resulting reports are simple and highly operational, with proposals for specific improvements distributed according to levels of responsibility. They also contain the updated version of the improvement plan for the previous academic year and sections on issues aimed at central services, the university, the faculty, etc.

4.2.5. UHI Millennium

Doctorate student monitoring programme

As this programme was introduced subsequent to the setting up of the university, it was decided by the faculties that it would be coordinated by central services. There is a specific unit, made up of two people, that is responsible for developing this project. **The basic idea of this practice is to carry out a complementary parallel monitoring of the progress of doctoral students.** This means that, aside from the more academic type of monitoring by the thesis tutor/director, this programme proposes the monitoring of the competences that these students need to acquire. In addition, this project includes an element of student guidance **as a result of this monitoring. The students are obliged to make an annual assessment** (using a self report and other instruments) that enables them to assess their learning achievements in their doctorate studies, **reorientate them if and where necessary** and, also very important, make an analysis of how the programme itself is running so that any shortcomings can be detected and improvements proposed for the future.

This programme is highly interesting in that, given the particular characteristics of doctoral studies, it is necessary, on the one hand, to consider specific monitoring procedures for quality assurance and, on the other, to support the students taking PhD studies and also guarantee that they have a good student guidance service.

4.2.6. Nottingham Trent University

The good practice as regards monitoring is, firstly, the strong link that exists between the schools and the Centre for Academic Development and Quality (CADQ). In each school there

are two people who coordinate with the CADQ, the quality manager and the learning teaching coordinator. These two work together with the school's academic staff and are on different committees, where they can share experiences with quality managers from other schools, with the necessary support being provided by the CADQ. In addition, the documentation that is produced is meant to be accessible to all staff, and for this the **monitoring checklist** is a good practice. This guides the monitoring of the study programme, which assesses the outcomes and the way in which the programme is delivered. Examples are as follows:

Aims and learning outcomes

Monitoring points are likely to be:

- The continuing relevance of the programme aims.

- The appropriateness of learning outcomes every year and for each module.

- Consistency between the programme aims and the module outcomes.

- The relationship of programme aims and outcomes to the university's awards framework.

Curriculum design, content and organisation

Monitoring points are likely to be:

- The curriculum content and its capacity to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

- The currency and relevance of the curriculum content.

- The accessibility of the curriculum in terms of students with disabilities.

- The role of the placement/work-based experience (where applicable) and its integration within the curriculum.

- The effectiveness of the means by which students are informed of the programme content and organisation.

- The effectiveness of the ways in which the programme is planned, designed and approved.

Assessment strategy and practices

Monitoring points are likely to be:

- The design and planning of the assessment tasks across the programme and their relationship to the intended outcomes at module and programme levels.

- The variety of assessment methods in use and their relative merits in enabling students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes.

- The clarity of assessment criteria for students, internal/external examiners.

- Feedback to students on their assessments and the formative function of assessment in developing student abilities.

- The design, variety, clarity and operation of assessments of placement/work-related learning.

- The appropriateness of the assessment methods for students with disabilities.

Achievement of students

Monitoring points are likely to be:

- How well students at the end of each level have achieved the outcomes.

- How far the graduating students have met the minimum expectations for the award, as measured against the relevant subject benchmark(s) and NTU's award framework.

- The achievement of students in securing employment/further study.

- How students from different backgrounds have achieved.

Teaching and learning

Monitoring points are likely to be:

- The overall teaching and learning strategy in relationship to the programme aims and outcomes.

- The variety of teaching methods in use and their capacity to support students in the achievement of the learning outcomes.

- The participation by, and engagement of, students in their learning.

- The effectiveness of the teaching support materials used by staff.

Student progression, academic guidance and support

Monitoring points are likely to be:

- An analysis of the performance of students from different ethnic backgrounds, those with disabilities and by gender: to explore the reasons for any differences and strategies to improve any deficiencies.

Learning resources

Monitoring points are likely to be:

- The suitability, availability and deployment of the collective expertise of the staff team to deliver the curriculum and the teaching.

- The strategy for the planning, acquisition and deployment of physical learning resources.

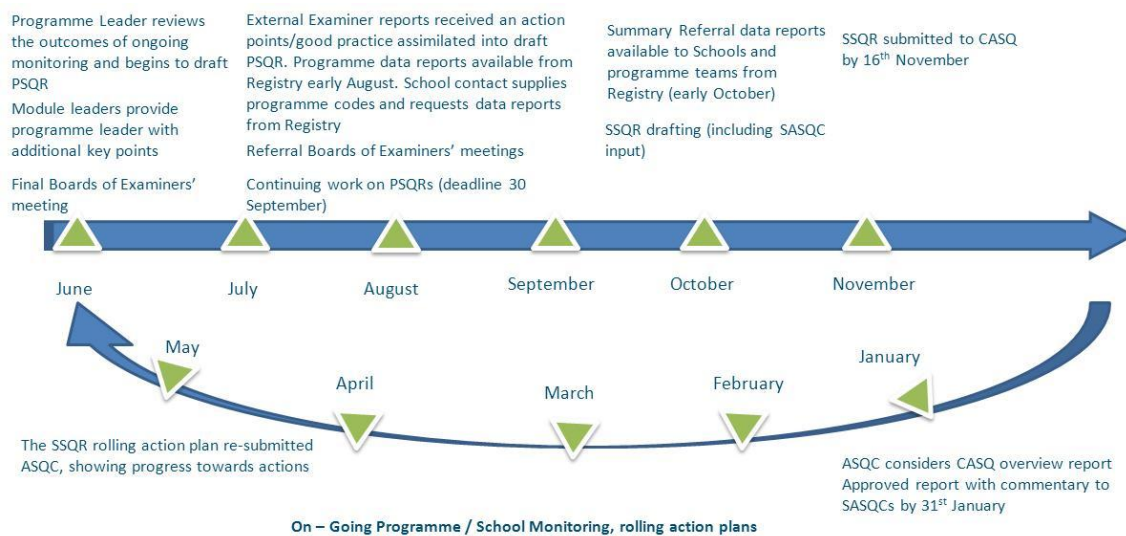- The appropriateness, availability and accessibility of library materials and IT facilities.

Quality management

Monitoring points are likely to be:

- Programme and module team meetings and discussions and their impact on programme development.

- The impact of the work of quality management and enhancement committees.

This good practice is easily transferable to the present-day reality of Catalan universities. Firstly, because it provides an outline of the main aspects that need to be dealt with for each programme and encourages commitment on the part of staff responsible for teaching, as their engagement is necessary regarding the proposal of improvements, the detection of good practices and their dissemination to the other teachers. Secondly, of particular note is the way in which the university's management team has to reflect on the appropriateness of both human and physical materials to achieve the programme aims, and the way it affects how measures are taken to overcome shortcomings.

The diagram below shows the development of programme monitoring during the academic year.

Programme Leader reviews the outcomes of ongoing monitoring and begins to draft PSQR
Module leaders provide programme leader with additional key points
Final Boards of Examiners' meeting

External Examiner reports received an action points/good practice assimilated into draft PSQR. Programme data reports available from Registry early August. School contact supplies programme codes and requests data reports from Registry
Referral Boards of Examiners' meetings
Continuing work on PSQRs (deadline 30 September)

Summary Referral data reports available to Schools and programme teams from Registry (early October)
SSQR drafting (including SASQC input)

SSQR submitted to CASQ by 16th November

June   July   August   September   October   November

May   April   March   February   January

The SSQR rolling action plan re-submitted ASQC, showing progress towards actions

ASQC considers CASQ overview report
Approved report with commentary to SASQCs by 31st January

On – Going Programme / School Monitoring, rolling action plans

4.3. Quality assurance and participation

Participation of stakeholders

Whereas the participation of staff and students is one of the key principles in developing both a quality culture and QA processes, nearly half of the respondents do not have a committee responsible for QA. Committees are more likely to be found in HEIs having worked for longer in QA. HEIs with a longer history in QA are also more likely to give importance to the influence of students about the follow – up of QA activities they participated in. While the involvement of academic in formal QA processes, student involvement is not as widespread.

Figure 8: The involvement of stakeholders in formal quality assurance processes
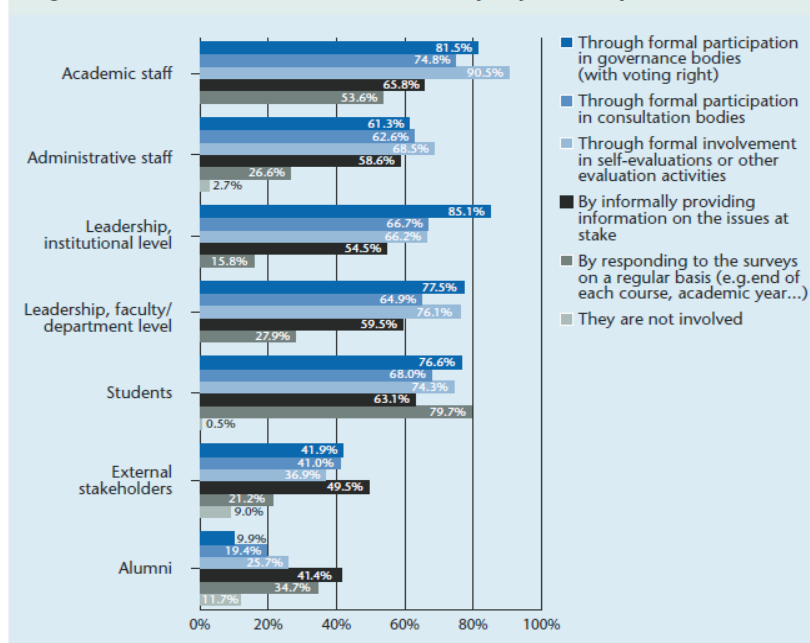
External stakeholders

External stakeholders (e.g. employers, experts) have been involved in QA processes from the beginning. However, their participation level varies: around 80% of the HEIs include them in different ways in their decision making: through governance bodies, consultation bodies or as sources of information, among others, while roughly 20% of the HEIs do not consult or involve them at all.

External stakeholders are more likely to be involved in preparing a curriculum (for instance as members of working groups) when the ultimate decision on the curriculum is made by a body external to the HEI. However, the results indicate that their role is usually that of information providers rather than decision makers.

4.3.1. Open University

Institutional strategy for the shared responsibility for the quality of learning and processes between the different teams

The Quality Office is small in size, although it maintains direct and continuous contact with the different teams that have to assure the design, introduction, monitoring and assessment of

programmes of study. The Quality Office coordinates the procedures for quality assurance, it provides the guidelines and it carries out the monitoring and follow-up.

The Associate Dean is responsible for delegating quality assurance in the different units and faculties and has the duties of coordinating and ensuring that quality assurance criteria and procedures are applied in all processes. The different Associate Deans for Quality coordinate with each other and periodically meet with the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Learning, Teaching and Quality to study the criteria and procedures that need to be applied. This methodology has been in use for the last ten years and despite initial difficulties and the workload for the Associate Deans, the procedures that are now established enable more sound decisions to be made. The Associate Deans point out that this work methodology has helped them to:

- Organise the provision.

- Create a circle of enhancement and promote the culture of enhancement among the different stakeholders.

- Enter into a process of reflection prior to the design of the programme, and to focus on the objectives.

- Identify good practices and share them.

- Detect the weak points and have grounds for modifications, improvements, investments, etc.

- Understand their ability to organise themselves.

4.3.2. Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea

Commitment and engagement of the faculties and schools: setting up of the Innovative Management Centres Network (Red de Centros de Gestión Innovadora, or RCGI) and an increase in their regular budget in return for participation

Not all faculties and schools in the Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (UPV/EHU) can belong to the RCGI, as they must comply with a series of criteria that predispose them to a strong commitment. These requirements are:

- To have carried out a self-evaluation (PEI, EFQM, etc.) and/or implemented an ISO quality system.

- To have activated a quality assurance plan subsequent to the self-evaluation (PEI, EFQM, etc.), the existence of quality enhancement teams and the implementation of an ISO quality system.

- To appoint, preferably from among the members of the management team, a person in charge of quality and a quality committee delegated by the faculty board.

- An express commitment by the Faculty Management and Board to quality management, which states their intention to take the necessary steps to apply the EFQM model.

- For all of the management team to receive training in quality management.

As was gathered from the experience, this involvement was highly positive in terms of transferring the experience to other faculties and schools at the UPV/EHU.

This involvement and commitment are not gratuitous, and a faculty's regular budget can be increased as a result of its involvement and the results that are obtained.

The commitment and involvement of faculties and schools: use of the Unikude management software

The engagement of faculties and schools that have an effective strategic plan, whose day-to-day management is process-based, that measure all of the aspects linked to university life in the faculty/school, that compare themselves with other faculties and schools and evaluate and review their day-to-day activities in order to establish corrective actions has been enhanced with the availability of the Unikude management software, which is used to manage and run all of these processes, from records management to controlling enhancement measures and corrective actions that stem from the analysis of results and outcomes.

The commitment and involvement of people

Individuals who collaborate with the Chair in Quality (Cátedra de Calidad) are required to be semi-professional. For example, in order to belong to the Network of Collaborators (RC3), the following requirements must be complied with:

- To have attended training seminars and activities organised by the Chair in Quality.

- To have participated as a member in improvement teams or working groups supervised by the Chair in Quality for at least six months.

- To have collaborated in activities of the Chair in Quality in promoting, facilitating and/or coordinating teams continuously over the last two years.

- To have collaborated in dissemination activities organised by the Chair in Quality (Europe Week, training courses, presentation of team results, summer courses, etc.).

These requirements ensure the dissemination of good practices developed at the UPV/EHU.

From the faculties and schools' point of view, a brief mention is made of two good examples of experience with reinforcing the organisational culture based on the principles of total quality: one at the Escuela Universitaria de Enfermeria Donostia-Sant Sebastián (Donostia-Sant Sebastián School of Nursing) and the other at the Facultad de Ciencia y Tecnología de Leioa (Faculty of Science and Technology, Leioa).

These two faculties have a consolidated EFQM excellence model. Their management teams exercise strong leadership, and participation in the AUDIT programme definitely led to food for thought and questions regarding all of the processes that make up their management system.

Escuela Universitaria de Enfermeria Donostia-Sant Sebastián / Donostiako Erizaintzako Unibertsitate Eskola

Founded in 1997, the School has set up, documented and implemented an internal quality assurance system (IQAS), which complies with the requirements of UNE-EN ISO standard 9001:2008, the criteria laid down by the Spanish National Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (ANECA) and the EFQM management model.

The School planned the design and implementation of the quality system and compliance with all of the requirements in different stages. The IQAS documentation comes in the form of the *Quality handbook*, which sets out the School's quality policy and the organisation needed to achieve the quality assurance objectives for the service being provided.

The running of the School is led by a management team made up of the director, two assistant directors, an academic secretary and an administrator.

The School was selected by the UPV/EHU's Deputy to the Rector's Office for Quality and Teaching Innovation, on the occasion of the first call of the AUDIT programme by ANECA, as being one of the university's representative schools and faculties to participate in the call (2007).

Participation in the programme called for thought and consideration concerning all of the processes that make up its management system, and it also raised various issues. The processes are subdivided into different sub-processes which are documented by way of **thirty-one procedures**, which cover the guidelines of the AUDIT programme and UNE-EN ISO standard 9001, according to which the School has been certified since 2001.

http://www.kalitate-katedra.ehu.es/p211-content/es/contenidos/informacion/grupos_de_trabajo/es_como/adjuntos/Guía%20Gestión%20DEFINITIVA%20-%20Servicio%20de%20Publicaciones%20UPV.pdf

http://www.enfermeria-donostia.ehu.es/p226-content/es/contenidos/informacion/euenfss_audit/es_audt/programa_audit.html

Facultad de Ciència y Tecnología / Zientzia eta Teknologia Fakultatea

In 2002, the Dean's Office of the Faculty analysed the type of management being used to run the faculty, and it came to the conclusion that the EFQM model blended well with the philosophy that, up until that time, had been guiding the running of the FCT/ZTF. This led the Dean's Office to request and receive from the UPV/EHU's Chair in Quality the introductory training course on the EFQM model and the basics of an EFQM assessment for its application in the faculty. The training course was the start of a training process that linked up with the faculty's first self-evaluation and the defining of a series of enhancement measures, both of which were the starting point for the FCT/ZTF's first Management Plan.

The first strategic review was made in 2005 and involved a large number of people in different working groups representing the different groups within the faculty. As a result of the broad discussions that took place, the Dean's Office drew up the Strategic Plan for 2005-2010. At the same time the faculty's first process map was established, which documented all of the

procedures being followed in the various different activities being undertaken in the organisation.

Since then, the Faculty has aligned its values and organisational culture with the principles of total quality, it uses the EFQM Excellence Model as reference and directs its management according to a vision based on a five-year strategic plan. In recognition for its work, the faculty was awarded the Silver Q for Excellence in Management by the Basque Government in December 2006.

There was a change in the Dean's Office in February 2007. In terms of the quality policy, the governing programme of the new Dean's Office was one of continuity, based on two fundamental mainstays: development of the Strategic Plan for 2005-2010 and a management model based on criteria of continuous improvement.

Important advances have consequently been made in this sphere, such as the setting up of a Quality Assurance Commission (2007) and the revising, updating and improvement of the Process Map (2009).

https://zabaldu.ehu.es/web/ztfzabaldu/audit-ztf

4.3.3. Helsingin Yliopisto

Interaction with society

One of the basic objectives of the Helsingin Yliopisto (University of Helsinki, UH) is interaction with society (on the same level as teaching and research).

This is a clear sign that the institution has internalised the university's impact on society. The UH is committed to being a responsible actor within the community, an advocate of knowledge and a valued partner in all forms of cooperation. It does this by:

- Strengthening community responsibility:
    o Specifying the principles for community responsibility.
    o Recognising the community's research and education needs.
    o Strengthening the innovation system.
    o Improving communication with society and the advocacy of science and scholarship.
    o Promoting the use of knowledge in society.
- Leadership in societal interaction:
    o Clarifying management responsibilities and roles in the area of societal interaction.
    o Specifying the principles of partnership.
    o Developing a monitoring and evaluation system for societal interaction.
    o Implementing a stakeholder register and service.

- o Executing a fund-raising campaign.

- The University's partnerships:

  - o Strengthening relationships with the business world.

  - o Stimulating the cooperation with the region and higher education institutions.

  - o Increasing the impact of alumni activity.

  - o Improving cooperation with Swedish-speaking stakeholders.

  - o University adult education: the Open University and continuing education.

  - o Increasing education exports.

The willingness to enhance the university's engagement with society is not a new aim and the majority of universities have policies that include social engagement. What is fundamental in practice in order for this to take effect is that it be given the same importance as teaching and research.

This importance is reflected on two different levels. In terms of teaching, amongst other actions, university campuses and services become more available to society in general. In terms of research, importance is given to research in areas that is of particular relevance to society, business and industry. This enables students to more easily recognise the connection between university and the world of work and to enter employment with the belief that they are prepared.

Programme for societal interaction; key areas for development and actions 2010–2012
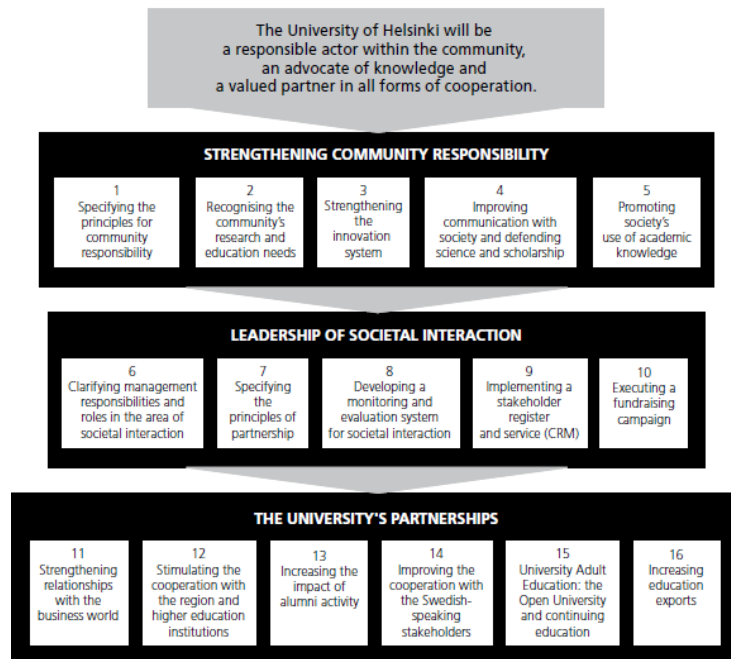
The UH studied the different forms of societal interaction and for each action defined:

- The development area that it is associated with,

- The schedule for the action,

- Where the responsibility lies for it to be carried out,

- The implementation indicators, for measuring the degree to which the action is accomplished,

- The necessary resources, and

- The cost (effects) of implementation.

There are two main advantages in transferring this good practice to the UPC/Technical University of Catalonia: the majority of the actions are low cost and some of them can be implemented in the short-term perspective. Nevertheless, its application implies a decision at policy level in the university regarding active participation.

4.3.4. Wageningen University

Training programme for students who participate in management and administration bodies

The university organises a training course for all students who participate as student representatives in the university's different management and administration bodies, especially for students that participate in programme committees. The course is not compulsory, although it is highly recommended. The duration of the course is one half-day and, as a way of helping students to attend, the course is programmed four times throughout the year, at different times in the day and on different days in the week. **Information on the course is widely disseminated by way of all means of contact with the students**.

The course content addresses different aspects of the university:

- The structure of the university's organisation.

- The vision and aims of the university.

- Who is in charge of what (posts).

- Monitoring and control of quality (internal and external).

- Functions of the programme committees.

Advantages of this practice:

- It helps students to be involved in the participatory bodies.

- It offers a clear and summarised view of the objectives and what is expected of them.

- It encourages students to relate and interact with others and to share their experiences and discuss problems.

The fact that students understand what the university is makes their participation in the different bodies more effective and efficient.

This good practice is highly transferable to Catalan universities and it can be done quickly, with clear advantages as pointed out above.

4.3.5. Sheffield Hallam University

A system of student guidance that involves teaching staff

The practice of teaching staff advising and giving guidance to the students is a good initiative in that it enhances the relationship between teaching staff and students, at the same time that it **facilitates the two-way exchange and sharing of information and experience. It helps the students to feel more involved in the university and stimulates them in their studies, which is reflected in their academic outcomes**. Guidance and advice helps students in their academic studies, from choosing the courses that are most appropriate to their curriculum and skills to advice on different pathways.

The implementation of guidance and the closer relationship between the students and teaching staff means it is likely there will be more interrelationship between them, which in turn implies that teaching staff will have more resources and information with which to fine-tune the curriculum and course design while the students will have more information on what is expected of them in each module. It would also supposedly lead to a reduction in the student drop-out rate.

4.3.6. University of Central Lancashire

Competence-based assessment

- The importance of learning outcomes in the assessment process lies in the fact that each learning outcome has to be assessed and the levels must be taken into account.

- The descriptors for courses (modules) are available to the students via the intranet, where all of the necessary information is provided, plus the intended learning outcomes that are necessary to pass the course.

- A student's guide to the assessment is published, which is produced by the students themselves.

- The students fill out a survey questionnaire at the end of each module, and each student is invited to participate in an evaluation of the module using an assessment questionnaire. The process involves a standard series of questions, and the teachers of the module have space to include three appropriate questions on their own modules in the section on qualitative information. This information is then analysed and the teachers of each module prepare and implement an appropriate action plan. Any issues raised or measures adopted are included in the annual monitoring process. The teacher of the module is also responsible for ensuring that feedback is given to the students.

A clear and well-defined competence-based assessment is basic for acquiring the right indicator for student progress.

4.3.7. Universidad Miguel Hernández

Incentive system

In order to stimulate and acknowledge the effectiveness and concern for quality enhancement in university management within the context of Universidad Miguel Hernández (UMH), incentive programmes were set up for the following:

1. Innovation and continuous enhancement

2. Involvement and effectiveness

3. Recognition of quality

The amount allocated for each of the three incentive programmes is set annually by the Academic and Social Council on proposal from the University's governing body, with Management, all services and all administrative units being subsequently informed.

The innovation and continuous enhancement incentive programme

One simple strategy that enables organisations to be successful is to fully exploit the knowledge of the people who make up the organisation as a result of their activity, experience and training. Ideas, solutions and innovations, which are the product of knowledge, are a kind of capital that opens up enhancement opportunities. Within the framework of the Second Master Plan for quality in management, two independent yet complementary strategies were initiated, the first, a prize for the best suggestion, and the second, incentives for the results achieved by the enhancement teams.

1. Best suggestion

An annual award was set up for the best suggestion for making significant improvements to customer service, reducing work time, cost saving, environmental protection, improving EFQM scoring, etc. The award seeks to encourage improvements in processes and outcomes through people's creative ability and ultimately increase quality in the university through greater effectiveness, efficacy, accessibility and ease in accomplishing tasks.

All members of the university community can participate. Once a year, a jury made up of representatives from all of the professional groups associated with the UMH and renowned professionals from other institutions and enterprises assesses the proposals and gives the award, which is ratified by the UMH's Quality Committee.

2. Enhancement teams

The aim is to promote innovation and continuous enhancement in the processes and activities that take place in the field of management. Incentive is given to training and action by the enhancement teams. The basic idea is that there is no-one better to improve processes than the people who are directly involved. The idea essentially focuses on the fact that the capacity

for innovation lies with the professionals who daily take on the responsibility of managing processes and administrative activities.

Enhancement teams, which are regulated by the UMH's Regulation that governs bodies with quality-related competences, provide the opportunity for thought to be given to the practice of quality enhancement. The objective is to analyse, in a short space of time, an activity, process or result/outcome that calls for improvement, put into practice the solutions that have been developed and check their degree of effectiveness. The composition of the enhancement teams can include administrative and service staff, faculty teaching and research staff, students and individuals from outside the university (experts in specific matters). The number of team members can vary. While the duration of a team's work may be subject to variability, it should not exceed nine months.

Proposals for innovation or enhancement identify the area for improvement to be dealt with, enhancement alternatives that are being proposed, the method selected to be put into practice and the assessment of the outcome of the practice.

A maximum incentive is established for each enhancement team, which is shared out according to the criterion of the team members, with a maximum for each participant. Non-attendance to 85% of the working group meetings or absenteeism (due to any cause) registered in the attendance control system of eight days during the year constitute grounds for not receiving this incentive.

The amount allocated to the team depends on the resulting advantages in terms of added value: customer service (satisfaction), efficacy (improvements in outcomes), efficiency (cost and time saving) and ease in accomplishing tasks. The incentive is received once the proposal (or proposals) is implemented and its performance has been evaluated.

The minimum number for a team is set at three participants. Team members may not participate in more than two enhancement teams during any one year.

Involvement and effectiveness incentive programme

The Third Master Plan extended the system of incentives to the different units and professional profiles on the basis of the strategy agreed to in the Quality Pact, which essentially seeks to promote continuous enhancement in all areas of administrative and service staff activity.

These incentives seek to acknowledge the involvement and efficacy of the people who actively participate in putting into practice the administrative processes that are conducive to the development of teaching and research excellence. The putting into practice of a system that acknowledges these people is the result of the policy of creating a framework in which impetus can be given to administrative management that is thoroughly professional and in which the lines of work conform to programmed objectives. At the same time, the aim is to increase everybody's active participation.

Based on the recognition of people's responsibility and of the importance of their contribution and creative ability, one of the premises of this system of incentives lies precisely in conferring authority so that individuals can exercise their skills as freely and responsibly as possible.

It is voluntary for staff in the different services and units to participate in this incentive system and they can opt for an annual payment incentive (in April). The amount received as an incentive is set each year.

In the case of individual incentive, the level of a person's absenteeism (for whatever cause) recorded in the attendance control system must be no more than eight days a year. In the case of the group incentive, absenteeism of more than eight days in a year must be justified, with a maximum of thirty days a year for the whole group.

The basis for estimating the individual incentive is established annually according to the maximum amount of incentive agreed to with Management. The incentive corresponding to a service or administrative unit for applying the objectives-based management system is thus distributed between people in the service or administrative unit at the beginning of the year, so that everybody knows what the objectives to be achieved are, together with the maximum incentive that can be achieved in the current year.

Recognition of quality incentive programme

The recognition of quality in management by agencies and institutions outside of the UMH entails greater dedication and commitment towards the quality assurance and enhancement of activities that are carried out and an approach to management that seeks to maximise effectiveness, efficiency and client/customer orientation. In addition to the social and professional recognition that this external recognition represents, there is the incentive to have the quality of work recognised by institutions and/or agencies outside of the UMH.

The staff who participate in quality certification processes can opt for an annual payment incentive (in December), which is maintained over the three years following certification, provided that certification is maintained:

- 45% of which is for all of the people directly involved in the certified activity.

- 25% if responsible for any key certified processes.

- 20% according to the results in the performance indicators for certified processes in which an active part is played (estimated time dedicated to the process above 35%).

- 10% with certified training in quality (a minimum of 15 hours in the previous two years) associated with the current certification.

Programme for handling complaints and suggestions

The Office for Quality Management and Control (OGCC) is responsible for dealing with non-academic suggestions sent in by stakeholders via a centralised on-line suggestions box. Suggestions are recorded with the OGCC, which guarantees a reply as long as a reply address has been provided and referral to the individuals and/or bodies involved so they are resolved within a reasonable time scale.

In order to encourage stakeholders to participate in the process, a prize is awarded once every term for the best suggestion. At the end of the academic year, a selection is made of the best

two suggestions for the award of the best annual suggestion. This is an innovative practice in that the entire process is run simply and efficiently with specific software; the introduction of incentives in the form of a prize so that stakeholders become more involved in the process is also interesting.

In addition, the fact that non-academic suggestions are centralised and collected at one sole point using software makes it easier to control all suggestions that are received, it prevents information from being duplicated and it helps ensure that all inputs received are handled efficiently. In this context, the Quality Unit at the Universitat de Vic (UVic), which already uses similar software applications to those being used at the UMH, is studying the possibility in either the short or medium term of using a centralised system for receiving suggestions to ensure they are all processed properly, disseminated to the relevant recipients and resolved within a reasonable time scale. In the long term, and depending on available resources, the possibility is being studied of introducing a system of incentives to encourage participation based on prizes for the best suggestions.

4.4. Quality management systems

Internal quality processes

Quality processes must be orientated toward improvement and linked to both the institutional strategic cycle and the external evaluation cycle in order to reduce the financial burden and the time spent on these processes. In particular, it is essential to ensure good data collection and analyses at the mainframe level so that an overall picture of the institution can be obtained and to reduce the burden of these quality processes on individual units.

Internal quality processes need to be comprehensive and can be used to track progress with Bologna and ensure the quality of the learning environment.

Quality assurance structures

Quality assurance processes most commonly cover teaching and learning activities, which is quite understandable, as the focus of the process of building of the European Higher Education Area – and the ESGs as an integral part of it – has been on this part of the mission of HEIs. 98.2% of the respondents to our survey stated that their quality assurance processes cover teaching and learning, while student support services, which are closely related to teaching and learning, are covered in only 75.7% of HEIs. The other activities mentioned by 6.7% of the respondents cover areas as diverse as artistic activities and equal opportunity policies.

Trends 2010

4.4.1. Universitetet i Oslo

A good practice is the **presence in each faculty's administrative and service staff of a technical support officer**, who is responsible for programme monitoring, and who **provides support to faculties and departments for organising monitoring activities**, which includes data research and organisation, setting the activities schedule and monitoring its compliance. A technical support officer for monitoring in each faculty or department enables flexible central

units to be set up and facilitates decentralisation and the more localised distribution of responsibility. Under the guidelines of the Dean's Office, the technical support officer helps academic staff to develop their responsibilities regarding quality assurance of the study programmes offered by the faculty.

The different people who **work in monitoring and quality in faculties and departments network with each other and the Office of Academic Affairs' central quality assurance team**. Meetings between faculty members and staff at the central office are organised on a regular basis.

Specific mention is also made of the fact that internationalisation processes are included in the quality assurance system, the purpose being to control the quality of the different inter-university agreements concerning mobility. There is a network of mobility coordinators (who are members of the administrative and service staff) in each faculty.

Another significant aspect is the meetings-seminars that take place periodically between academic staff and staff on different levels of the QA system.

4.4.2. Helsingin Yliopisto

MANAGEMENT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

AUDIT – Design, monitoring and development of the internal quality assurance system (IQAS)

The work processes followed by the department begin with the description and improvement of key core processes and continue with assistance for activities that are developed by the department. Each unit can define its own processes; most of these processes are common to the majority of units. At the University of Helsinki, more than 100 different process models had been defined up until the time of the visit.

The activities to be carried out by the unit in each process are defined, together with the role of the university.

Use is made of the QPR process guide to describe the processes. All processes that are set up must comply with the guide.

Users are given a short training course to familiarise themselves with the QPR process.

An operational handbook for the university was produced using the QPR process guide.

In this way, the quality unit uses the same interface as the unit administrators to consult the evidence for each process, analyse the outcomes and, where applicable, detect possible enhancement measures.

Assigning the management of the quality system to the universities, which in turn assign it to the units, results in a system that is flexible and adaptable to circumstance. With the support of the Quality Office, the units design their own systems. Moreover, with an IT interface for the whole

university, systems management is versatile and centralised, and faculties can also develop their own actions and consult the evidence rapidly.
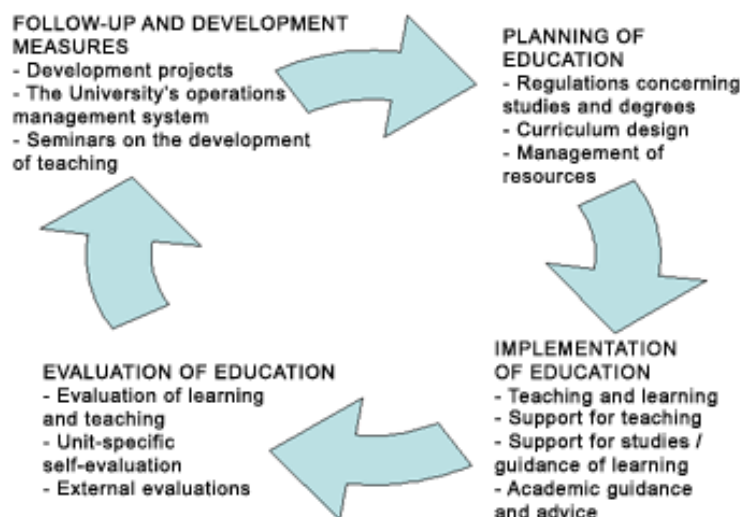
Preparing the audits

In order to prevent the universities from becoming tied down with their quality systems, as little material as possible is called for in auditing processes:

- A short description of the organisation (number of students, staff). Maximum: 1 page.

- A short description of the quality system. Maximum: 3 pages.

- The university's quality handbook.

- A short description of how the quality system has been developed.

- A short description with links on how the quality system is managed. Maximum: 1 page.

- DAFO analysis of the quality system.

- A summary of the main objectives set for the quality system and the enhancement measures that are currently under way. Maximum: 1 page.

For carrying out the monitoring of enhancements recommended **in the auditing processes and to assist the development of the quality systems, FINHEEC organises seminars for universities**. One of the objectives of these seminars is to provide feedback on the work of developing the quality systems. This feedback is usually given three years after the last audit.

The seminars also serve to foster the sharing of experiences and good practices in quality. The seminars are open to all higher education institutions.

The lightweight auditing process defined by FINHEEC ensures that the system is simple to manage and overcomes the need for large amounts of evidence, which can overload the system and its management.

AUDIT - Composition of the auditing group

The group is made up of five people: three university representatives, one student and one QA expert. The university representatives must be different types of staff member (administration, teaching staff, management, etc.).

The group members must also have university experience in auditing, review processes and quality assurance, and also participated in training courses given by the quality assurance agency.

Strategic planning: a single system of indicators

The UH's strategic plan represents the institution's position regarding the over-riding issues and the ways of strengthening its main objectives: teaching, research and interaction with society. The strategic plan is based on five policies and programmes dealing with:

- Research (policy).

- Teaching and studies development (programme).

- Interaction with society (programme).

- Human resources (policy).

- Support leadership and services (programme).

Specific actions, responsibilities and the necessary resources for achieving the abovementioned strategy objectives are specified in the policies and programmes. Each unit establishes its own action plans, which are based on the strategy, policies and programmes.

The strategy is implemented by UH staff and students. A prerequisite for the success of this is that the staff and students recognise the strategy as being their own and that they are committed to the activities that they have to carry out.

Given that strategic planning has a direct impact on all spheres of university activity, the UH has, as far as possible, linked the indicators to all of the processes, such as planning and the AUDIT programme.

It has thus managed to:

- Simplify the university's management systems.

- Reduce the number of indicators that make up the university's indicators system (and thereby speed up the process of obtaining indicators).

- Standardise different university management processes for unit administration.

Obtaining multi-purpose indicators for different university management processes is not an easy task. Despite the initial cost in terms of the time to adapt processes to the new requirements, the benefits of this process of simplification are considerable and improvements are evident in different spheres:

- A reduction in the work time of people involved in the different processes.

- A reduction in work time to obtain the indicators.

- A reduction in work time in data processing.

- A reduction in the time to interpret the indicators.

There therefore implies a reduction in the economic cost of the internal quality management system.

This is a good practice that can be perfectly exported to the UPC. Knowing about this experience is an added motivation for working with this objective, in that new processes that appear in the university are often perceived as being an additional work load as to a change in the mind-set of university management.

http://www.helsinki.fi/evaluation/quality_of_learning.html

http://www.helsinki.fi/evaluation/responsibility.html

4.4.3. Nottingham Trent University

The quality management system integrates learning experience, quality assurance and quality enhancement. It is divided into different modules, with committees that are made up of academic staff, administrative and service staff and expert quality management staff, which enables there to be constant dialogue and the sharing of points of views. The main aspects of the system and its objectives are described below.

Strategy regarding standards, quality management and enhancement
- To advise the Dean on the development of strategy relating to the maintenance and enhancement of the standards and quality of the School's academic programme.
- To promote and monitor the achievement of the School's Learning and Teaching Enhancement action plan.
- To evaluate the impact of research, consultancy and professional activities on School provision.

Programme monitoring and annual reporting
- To take responsibility for the continuing annual monitoring and enhancement of programmes of study according to the University's requirements.
- To review student intake, progression, completion and employment/further study data across all programmes.
- To receive and monitor annual programme reports and action plans within them.

Student assessment
- To monitor the effectiveness, appropriateness and implementation of regulations on student assessment on programmes.

Student evaluation of programmes and teaching

- To monitor the mechanisms for student feedback on programmes and teaching.

External examining

- To receive external examiners reports and to establish and monitor procedures for analysing in detail external examiners' action points and ensuring that they are acted upon and result in quality enhancements.

Programme development

- To consider and approve proposals for modifications to programmes of study and ensure they are consistent with the faculty's academic strategy.

Collaborative provision

- To ensure that programmes provided in collaborative with external partners are monitored and developed according to the same procedures as those which apply to internal programmes.

Programme committees

- To be responsible, in name of the Academic Board, for the management, development, delivery, monitoring and enhancement of programmes, in accordance with the regulations laid down by the Academic Board, the procedures in the Quality Handbook and the validation agencies.
- To meet on a regular basis (at least twice a year) to review programme delivery, module development, teaching, assessment and learning strategy, guidance policies and regulations.
- To consider proposals for programme modifications and improvements.
- To keep programmes specifications up to date.
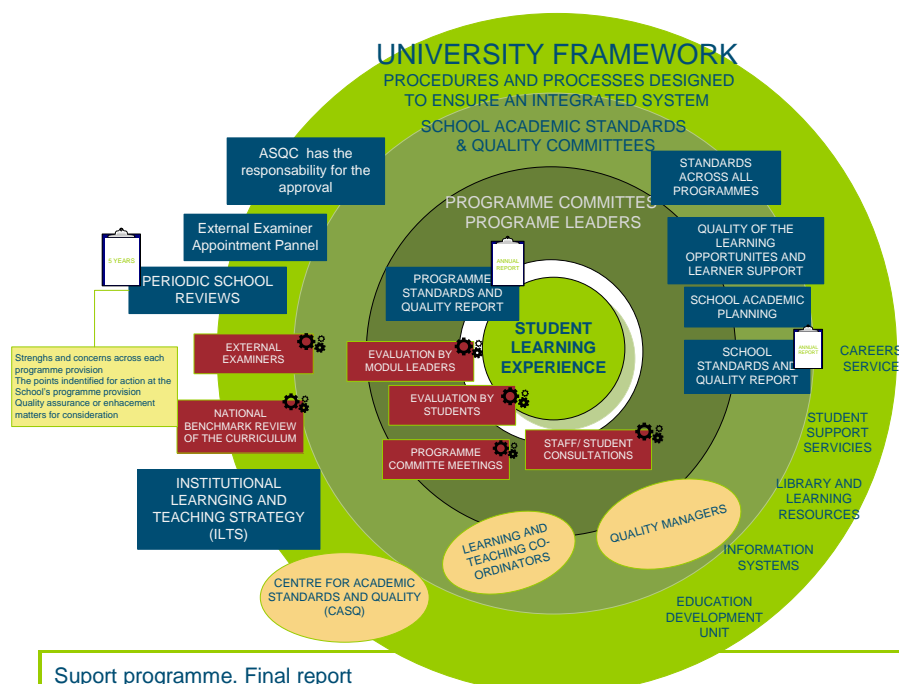
4.5. Information systems

> **The use of information**
>
> Practically all responding HEIs have an information system for monitoring their activities. Institutions tend to collect information about their profile and what they offer, but the information related to resources available to the students (such as library services, computer facilities, etc.) is more limited. Moreover, the information collected is not necessarily the one made public.
>
> The link between collecting information and informing the staff or students involved in this data collection is not obvious, as some information (such as teachers' performance) is typically considered as confidential or accessible only at leadership level.
>
> Data also show that institutions that have processes in place to oblige a teacher to improve his/her performance give more consideration to the results of student surveys. These institutions, again, are those with a longer history in QA.
>
> With regard to strategic management, in about two thirds of HEIs the institutional leadership conducts an annual evaluation to review the goals. However, only a little over half of the HEIs reported having formulated key performance indicators to monitor their progress.

4.5.1. Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

An easy to use and well laid out software application

All of the information is set out in a very visual way with the software application so users can get on with their work without having to spend much time to understand the application to find out how it works and what they have to do.

The first display shows unfinished business (tasks). Each task is assigned a date to be carried out, according to the pre-established timetable. Users just need to take a quick look at one display to know which tasks they have been assigned and which ones are still pending.

A lot of information in also provided by way of the colour scheme; for example, tasks in red are either still pending or indicator results that require justification.

One important feature is that users do not constantly need to re-open the application as whenever a new task is assigned, the user receives an e-mail with all of the relevant information.

The practice is not all that innovative, or at least it shouldn't need to be because all application software should be easy to use.

This is a transferable practice as many universities are now designing and implementing management systems. Bear in mind that the application for managing the IQAS has to be very simple so that users see it as a useful labour-saving tool and not as another job to do every day.

Special mention is made of the corpus of indicators (ninety-six in total) that are perfectly defined and connected with the procedures. The definition as well as the specified time for their calculation are given, with the date for extracted data, when they should be analysed, who should do this and the correct threshold values.

This aspect involved a considerable amount of preliminary work, although it greatly facilitates the monitoring of processes and their results. Depending on the values obtained, the application requests justification from the person in charge and the setting up of enhancement or corrective measures.

The Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (USC) has entered into collaboration agreements with other universities through which the USC assigns its application software. The application can be adapted to the requirements of each institution. In return, recipient universities are asked to inform the USC of any modifications they make to enhance the application so they can be incorporated into the original application.

Benefits in the medium and long-term

- Extending one IQAS out to all USC faculties and schools. This means that users working in different faculties and schools will use the same work procedure, and the mobility of administrative and service staff does not affect the way in which the IQAS is managed.

- By the time the application becomes necessary for day-to-day administration, a quality-based vocabulary and way of thinking will have gradually been introduced, with evaluation being progressively considered to be an inherent end to all processes. A system that requires the process to end with the closure of the entire Deming circle helps the need for feedback into the process to become internalised through the analysis of the results.

Transferability

This practice is perfectly transferable in that applications software should be tools that assist in IQAS management and make the work easier, not more complicated.

Catalan universities have a long tack record of working together, which will enable similar experiences to be set up.

4.5.2. Helsingin Yliopisto

ICT ORGANISATION

In 2008, the UH took the decision to make an organisational change in its ICT staff, all of whom were brought together under the Department of Information Technologies (IT), which forms part of the central administration services (Office of the Rector) and offers services to the entire UH.

The change was the result of both the growth in the university community (it offers services to more than 37,000 users) and the increase in communications networks.[1]

The department is divided into two divisions: IT Management and IT Services. IT Management is located in the Office of the Rector and comprises the director and head of administration, who

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[1] With around 23,000 network-connected machines (computers, printers, servers, etc.), it represents one of the largest telecommunications networks in the country.

are responsible for the running of the UH's information systems and controlling the computer architecture, the budget and information security.

IT Services, which also has a director and heads of in-house services, forms part of the university services and is divided into three branches:

- Technology services: databases, servers, networks, LAN services, user account management, etc.

- IT solutions: teaching and research support, project management, software production, information systems plan, Oodi[2], etc.

- User support: desktop services, workstation management, on-campus support staff (approximately two people on each campus).

The IT Department offers a catalogue of around forty services. Following the structural change, it now uses a centralised model whereby the university's services no longer have their own technical staff.

The IT Management division uses indicators and surveys of the computer services and equipment to measure the different branches involved in the university's computing environment.

The results are set out in monthly reports, and twice a year the quality of the service is measured to define the technological strategy, with compass reports that include indicators for costs (staff and technology), the number of staff, the number of internal and external users, satisfaction with the service, etc.

With the structural change the use of external programmes and services has progressively been dropped and trust increasingly placed in the division's own made-to-measure developments and free code products.

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[2] DataWareHouse. An application for accessing the student database.

5. OTHER PRACTICES OF INTEREST

5.1. Programme review

5.1.1. Universitetet i Oslo

This university has **external programme supervisors** and the **external programme evaluation panel**. These oblige departments and faculties to keep a database of people – academics from the same university, academics from other universities, professionals, former students, students – who are willing to participate as external supervisors (either individually or as a group).

The benefits of this good practice lie in **the necessary move by the UiO to open up to outside points of view and the opinions of people** who, while not forming part of its academic structure, give their sincere impressions of the running of a module or study programme

5.2. Monitoring and review of programmes of study

5.2.1. Sheffield Hallam University

External review, in the form of either exams or the **participation of external staff in decision-making by the university,** offers an independent and more objective viewpoint of processes and decisions. The participation of external reviewers also involves a greater transmission of knowledge, understanding and experience, it opens up the university more to the world of work, as well as to other universities, and it fosters the informal sharing of experience.

External reviews serve as a kind of certification of the good practices applied by the university. External review offers an independent point of view regarding work that has been done. On the one hand, it offers proof of good practices and serves as an independent certification of the university's outcomes and results, procedures and ultimately the assurance of quality. **On the other hand, and from an internal point of view, external review provides an outside viewpoint of the university's practices and processes;** this is first and foremost a neutral viewpoint that serves to detect shortcomings more easily and find solutions.

5.3. Student support

5.3.1. Open University

Student core competences

The OU-UK has systematised competences according to areas and three levels of study. The students, accompanied with relevant material and different people, record their achievements of

different competences and specify the activity in which they achieved the competence and/or how they can show that the competence has been acquired.

On the assumption that students at the OU-UK are people with professional experience, there is also material aimed at final year students, where guidelines are given for students to become aware of the competences they have acquired in their professional experience and during their studies, and how these competences can serve as a visiting card when looking for a new job.

The OU-UK also adapts the vocabulary used to describe the competences that students have acquired during their studies so they are intelligible for employers and they can see that what a student has learned gives added value to the curriculum when looking for a job, i.e. it goes beyond plain academic vocabulary to enter into the realm of professional jargon.

5.4. Stakeholder participation

5.4.1. Universidad de Navarra

The university has a system for analysing the satisfaction of the various stakeholders. This is a result of a prior analysis to identify these groups and how they participate in the university's processes.

The collection and analysis of the data is systematised, as can be seen from the timetable below. An IT tool is used for data collection.

For implementing this practice, the university recommends that a central unit establish the content of the questionnaires so that the data received from different areas in the university is uniform.
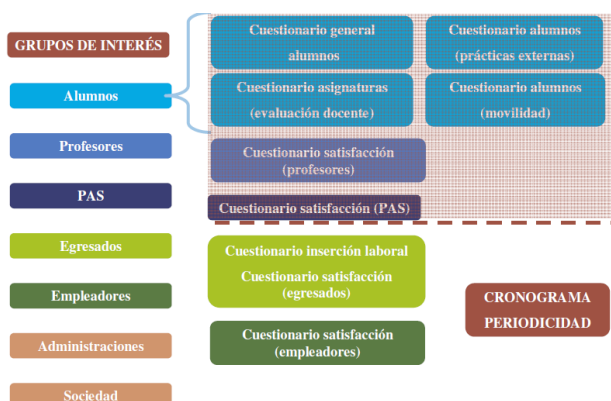
Stakeholders		
Students	General student questionnaire	Student questionnaire (work experience/placement)
	Course questionnaire (assessment of teaching)	Student questionnaire (mobility)
Teachers	Satisfaction questionnaire (teachers)	
Administrative and service staff	Satisfaction questionnaire (Administrative and service staff)	

Graduates	Employment questionnaire	
	Satisfaction questionnaire (graduates)	
Employers	Satisfaction questionnaire (employers)	Timetable regularity
Government authorities		
Society		

It is best to establish a timetable for the questionnaires process and for this to be included in the permanent timetable in the Secretary's Office.

In terms of frequency, the data on the satisfaction of teaching staff and administrative and service staff are analysed once every three years, student satisfaction every two years (second and fourth academic years); and modules once every four years, so that everything is assessed for one cohort of students.

Students		Teachers	Administrative and service staff	Graduates	Employers
First term	SEP				
	OCT				
	NOV				
	DEC			International Relations Service	
Second term	JAN				
	FEB				
	MAR				
	APR				
	MAY	Careers Advisory Service			
	JUN				
	JUL				
	AUG				

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		Alumnos	Profesores	PAS	Graduados	Empleadores
PRIMER CUATRIMESTRE	SEP					
	OCT					
	NOV					
	DIC				Servicio Relaciones Internacionales	
SEGUNDO CUATRIMESTRE	ENE					
	FEB					
	MAR					
	ABR					
	MAY	OSP				
	JUN					
	JUL					
	AGO					

6. OUTSTANDING ASPECTS OF THE DIFFERENT UNIVERSITIES

The main features of the IQAS at universities that were visited are described in this section. The reports drawn up by the universities set out the features considered to be the most interesting of the quality management systems, in addition to the structure and functions of the departments responsible for quality management.

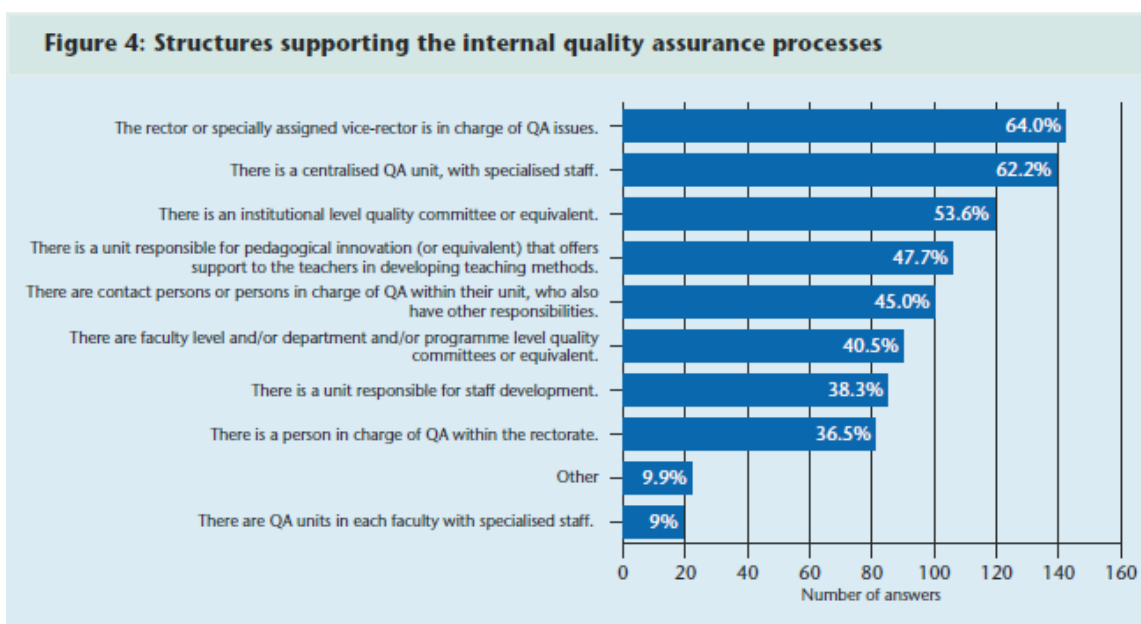The objective is to describe the framework in which good practices are developed and to describe the various scenarios in which quality is managed.

6.1. Organisation and functions

Most of the units responsible for quality management in the universities are dependent on governing bodies, an aspect which coincides with the trend pointed out in the Trends 2010 report.

Figure 4: Structures supporting the internal quality assurance processes

	Number of answers
The rector or specially assigned vice-rector is in charge of QA issues.	64.0%
There is a centralised QA unit, with specialised staff.	62.2%
There is an institutional level quality committee or equivalent.	53.6%
There is a unit responsible for pedagogical innovation (or equivalent) that offers support to the teachers in developing teaching methods.	47.7%
There are contact persons or persons in charge of QA within their unit, who also have other responsibilities.	45.0%
There are faculty level and/or department and/or programme level quality committees or equivalent.	40.5%
There is a unit responsible for staff development.	38.3%
There is a person in charge of QA within the rectorate.	36.5%
Other	9.9%
There are QA units in each faculty with specialised staff.	9%

Trends 2010: A decade of change in European Higher Education

"In 64% of surveyed universities the rector or vice-rector is in charge of quality assurance"

One factor common to all universities that were visited is that the unit responsible for quality management participates in designing the university's strategic plan and, in the majority of cases, is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the strategic plan.

In the case of **Helsingin Yliopisto**, the Strategic Planning and Development Office uses four basic processes for strategic planning and operational management: strategic formulation, strategic alignment, strategy implementation, and follow-up and assessment. As support, the UH uses a management system that is described in the University's operations manuals.

http://www.helsinki.fi/suunnitteluyksikko/planningunit/planning.html

In relation to the internal organisation of the units that are responsible for quality management, another factor that should be pointed out is the coordination between the quality units and the units that assess and advise academic staff on learning experience techniques and teaching methodology. In most cases they form part of the department itself, while in others they coordinate between each other.

In the case of **Nottingham Trent University**, the main objective of the Centre for Academic Standards and Quality (CASQ) is:

> "To support the university and its schools by providing a central resource for the introduction, maintenance and enhancement of programmes of study."

Each faculty is assigned a quality manager and a learning and teacher coordinator, who form part of the faculty's Academic Standards and Quality Committee and to whom the programme teams refer.

http://www.ntu.ac.uk/cadq/quality_assurance/index.html

The **Open University** and **Wageningen University** have a committee structure on various levels to coordinate the monitoring and assessment of quality management. In both cases, there is a structure
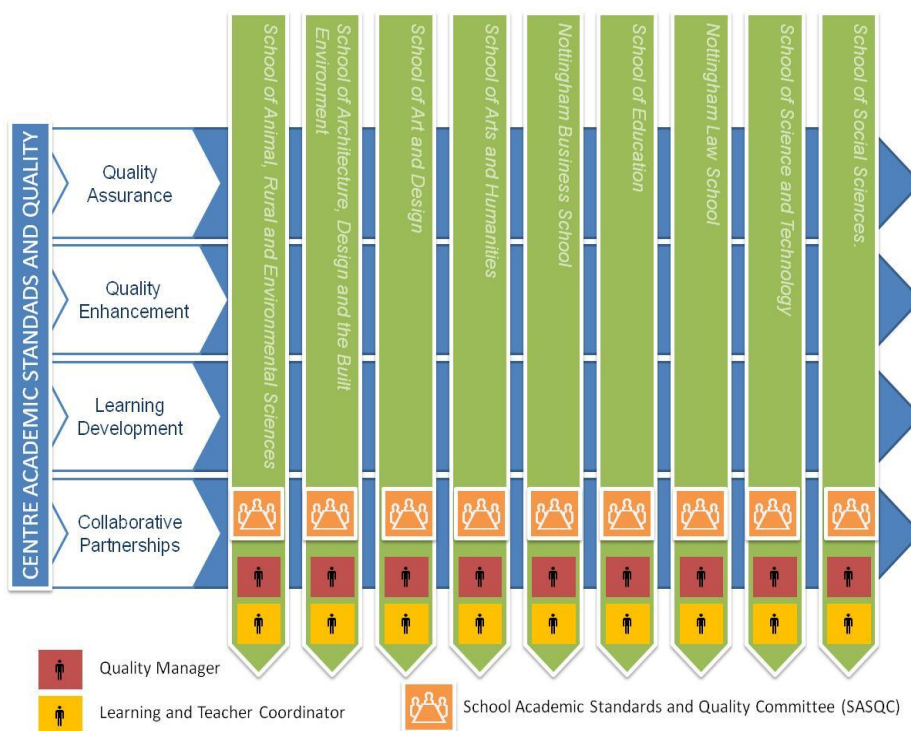
where a governing body annually reviews the implementation and outcomes of the enhancement measures proposed by committees and/or bodies in charge of programmes, who are responsible for the regular monitoring and making enhancement proposals.

The **Open University**'s quality management system, which is established by the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC), is managed and formalised through the

Strategy Unit Director and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality). The Vice-Dean acts as liaison between the Office for Quality and the schools and faculties and ensures that the criteria set by the Office are met. Special mention is made of the course team, whose responsibility it is to carry out periodic assessments of the programme and be instrumental in the monitoring of enhancement proposals agreed to by the school or faculty and validated by the programme committee. It is the programme committee that evaluates new degree courses.[3]

http://www8.open.ac.uk/about/main/admin-and-governance/executive-team/pro-vice-chancellor-learning-teaching-and-quality

In the case of **Wageningen University**, special mention is made of the Staff and Student Council, the consultative body that approves the university's policies and programmes, and the chair groups (of which there are eighty-five, similar to subject areas and each one led by a full-time teacher), which are in charge of actual teaching and organising research.

www.wageningenuniversity.nl/UK/about/organisationchart
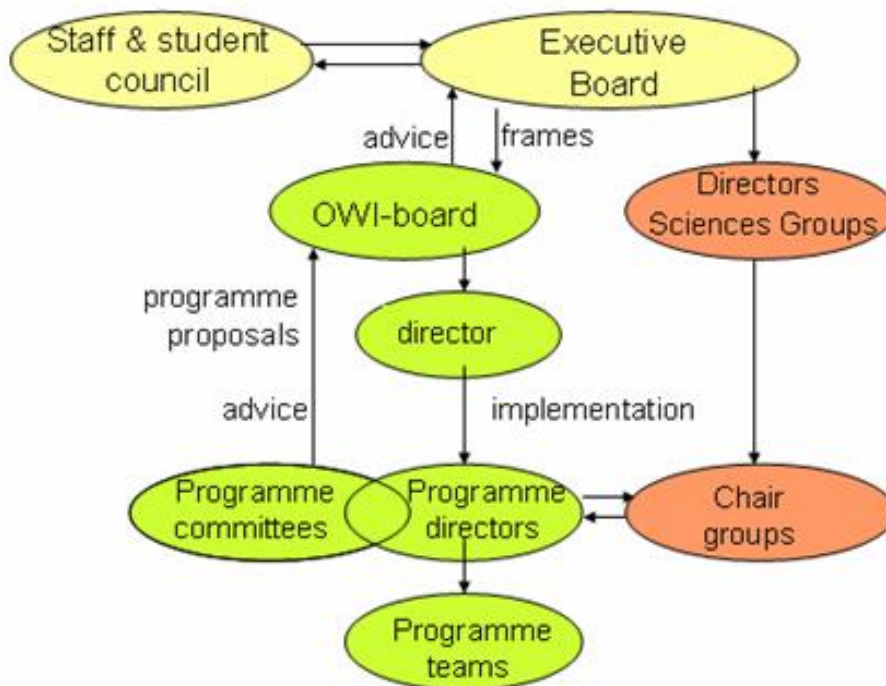
In contrast to this structure of committees coordinated by a quality unit, the organisation of quality management at **Universitetet i Oslo** is not assigned to any specific organisational entity (office or unit). However, within the Department of Student and Academic Affairs there is the

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[3] In the UK system, it is the university itself which evaluates new programmes of study.

Academic Affairs Office, the Student Administration and Information Office and the International Education Office.

The quality assurance system is organised around three areas: department (responsible for the monitoring of modules), faculty (responsible for the programme) and central level (the University Board's Studies Committee, the Student Support Advisory Board, the University Board, the Rector). The QA team of the UiO's Academic Affairs Office comes under this area. It should be noted that faculties and departments have the freedom to manage each course and programme.

www.jamk.fi/english/aboutus/quality

A good example of faculty/departmental involvement in quality management is that provided by the **Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea**. It uses a comprehensive university model for faculty and department management that focuses on five main areas: strategic planning, the process-based management of the faculty's activities, implementation of procedures adapted to each particular faculty or department, an indicators table and review of the management system.

In order to implement the system, the university developed various initiatives, including the following:

- **The involvement of faculties and departments:** the setting up of the **Innovative Management Centres Network (Red de Centros de Gestión Innovadora, or RCGI)**, made up of a group of faculties/departments that use the EFQM model for quality management as reference. The members of the network receive support for applying the EFQM model. The RCGI is a place of learning and knowledge exchange. Forming part of the network is also a condition for obtaining certain resources and support for improving management.

  www.kalitate-katedra.ehu.es/p211-content/es/contenidos/informacion/structure_organizativa/es_redcentr/ red_centros.html

- **Involvement of people:** the setting up of the **Collaborators Network (RC3)** with the Chair in Quality. This is a network of people who share the mission, principles and values that underlie and inspire the Chair. The members consist of the heads of Quality at the three UPV/EHU campuses and the heads of Institutional Review (SEI), Teaching Assessment (SED) and Educational Guidance (SAE).

  www.kalitate-katedra.ehu.es/p211-content/es/contenidos/informacion/structure_organizativa/es_redcolab/red_colaboradores.html

- **Involvement in training:** following on from the work of the RC3 and the practices of RCGI faculties and departments, a guidebook (*Guide to faculty and department process-based management*) was produced for the implementation of programmes that promote quality.

www.kalitate-katedra.ehu.es/p211-
content/es/contenidos/informacion/biblioteca_catedra_calidad/es_bibliokk/indice_biblioteca
_catedra_calidad.html

Training for action is given through an RC3 group to faculties by people who are specially qualified in quality management and recognised by Euskalit, the Basque Foundation for Excellence, as external reviewers who help university schools and faculties to implement quality programmes. Training in team building, which is given in another RC3 group, is based on the experience and supervision of the different management teams. RC3 has qualified advisers who give guidance on matters such as enhancement teams, 5s methodology, the Services Charter and Ekoskan.

Training in quality management has been used as a tool to involve the different stakeholders in the system. It is worthy of note that, at the **Universidad de Navarra**, training is offered to teaching staff and administrative and service staff in auditing, ex-ante assessment and monitoring.

The implementation of a university's strategy in operational objectives and actions is another aspect that needs to be taken into account, as the IQAS has to ensure that strategic objectives are achieved. A good example of this at the **Universidad Miguel Hernández** is that quality management measures are organised by way of quality plans and master plans. The objectives, standards, indicators and actions to be carried out during a specific period of time (normally four years) are set out in the UMI's **Quality Plan.**

3rd Quality Plan 2008-2012

Two strategies for the recognition and enhancement of quality in departments, faculties and schools apply to the two main areas of activity:

▪ The reward and recognition of enhancements that stand out for their level of compliance with quality standards (good practices in teaching and/or research).

▪ The Quality Pact, to foster opportunities for enhancement and the commitment to higher quality. In the case of teaching quality, there is an additional programme that the UMH uses to prepare for and ensure that it will satisfactorily comply with the requirements of national (ANECA) and international agencies (ENQA) concerning teaching quality. In this regard, a **panel of external auditors supervises the approaches to, processes and outcomes of the provision** (including recognised Master's programmes).

The 3rd Quality Plan is divided into five sections:

▪ The **UMH's process map**, which was redesigned on the basis of the UMH's strategic courses of action and on which the objectives and actions to be developed are based.

▪ The **objectives**, divided into **training, research and technological development, responsible management and corporate social responsibility**.

- The **indicator system for quality assurance and enhancement** in each of the Plan's areas of action, which covers Bachelor and Master's programmes, faculties, schools, departments, research institutes, management units and the university as a whole.

- The **commitment to quality to the clients**: what is done, when, how and what is being offered, what the institution's responsibilities are, what is to be achieved and how best to serve clients.

- The **system for the recognition of quality** to **motivate the achievement of good outcomes**, which continues to use the awards approach with units that are responsible for positive outcomes and promoting continuous enhancement in all units.

Third Master Plan

The objective of the Third Master Plan for quality in management is to optimise the UMH's commitment to the students, teaching staff, the local productive sector and ultimately with society, which funds the activities and expects and requires an effective response from the institution in its contribution to society's demands for the search for a higher quality of life.

The objectives of the 3rd Master Plan are defined as follows:

- To develop the framework that guarantees professional administrative management.

- To enhance the personal abilities of professionals.

- To make specific commitments to quality with the different users.

- To ensure that all services are accessible.

- To use process management as a means of increasing system effectiveness.

Follow-up plan for corporate partners

The objectives of this plan are as follows:

- To provide services according to clients' needs and expectations.

- To involve all of the organisation's staff in quality enhancement.

- To transmit a positive image of the UMH with an attractive range of services.

- To establish concerted quality actions.

In order to achieve these objectives, a follow-up plan for services was designed, together with the monitoring and drawing up of regular reports, audits and surveys.

This section of the UMH's quality system is based on four basic premises recognised by the institution:

- Services are basic requirements for the wellbeing of the university community.

- Accountability is necessary in all spheres.

- The UMH has a multi-campus structure.

- There has to be a commitment to the culture of total quality and it needs to be disseminated.

http://calidad.umh.es/

6.2. The quality assurance of teaching staff

6.2.1. The external examiner

The external examiner plays an important role in higher education in the United Kingdom. Contracted by the universities themselves, the external examiner's participation varies according to each institution.

In the case of **Queen Margaret University**, each **programme has an external examiner**, who attends the meetings in which the final qualifications are established. Each external examiner has to make an annual report on the curriculum, assessment management and the standards of the students' qualifications. The programme leader has to answer to this report. The QA unit produces an annual report that brings together all of the external reports.

A programme must be reviewed once every five years. The programme team has to draw up a report in which it responds to the reviews by the external examiners, includes the feedback of the students and describes any modifications that it considers should be introduced in the programme. The review process is similar to validation, although there is also a committee meeting with a group of students.

http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/qa/default.htm

In the case of **Sheffield Hallam University**, the external examiner is involved in the monitoring process. All courses are assessed by an external reviewer, normally a member of the academic staff from another university, who certifies that the standard of the course is appropriate. Persons from outside the university also participate in producing new Bachelor degrees, including staff from other universities, industry and professional associations.

http://www.shef.ac.uk/lets/design

The external reviewer is also important at both the UPV/EHU and the UMH, although with regard to **monitoring of the quality system**.

6.3. Ways to carry out programme monitoring

The stages in which programme monitoring at the **Open University** is structured are as follows:

- **Post-launch review**: The objective of this review process is to check that the programme complies with the academic requirements proposed at the outset and that the physical and technical resources cover the course requirements.

  This is carried out the first time that a course is run and the report is drawn up by an external reviewer. The report is based on learning and student satisfaction indicators, which

are compared with the outcomes of other programmes. The report is used by the programme director and programme manager to analyse the differences between the intended and real outcomes and introduce appropriate changes.

- **Annual review**: The objective of this review process is to produce a report that will help the team in charge of the programme to reflect on the running of the programme. It is one of the tools to promote the review and continuous enhancement of programmes and demonstrate the enhancement cycle.

  These reports are referred to the programme committee so that it is informed of the programme team's assessment and the changes they would like to make.

  The Student Experience Advisory Group (SEAG) makes an in-depth analysis of all comments in the annual reports. Its members are therefore informed of how programmes are running and the enhancement/corrective measures that have been proposed.

- **Life-cycle review**: Once every six years an in-depth review is made of how a programme is running to check that the programme complies with the academic requirements proposed initially, that it is in line with the university's strategic objectives and market opportunities, and that the physical and technical resources cover the course requirements.

  The resulting report is prepared by the programme director. Based on the annual review reports, reports by the staff involved and the specific indicators for this review process, the report describes and sums up the programme's development over the previous six years.

  A five-person panel is set up which consists of the panel chair (from the OU-UK), two OU-UK academic staff members (from the same subject area, but not specific to the programme), one senior external staff member (from another university who is familiar with the content, as an expert) and a coordinator from the Quality Office. The report thus includes both the internal and external points of view.

  The programme committee assesses the report and decides which proposed changes are necessary or appropriate; it can also make special mention of good practices that have been detected. Any changes in the context or situation are taken into account when the information is analysed.

- **Action plan**: Programme directors, programme committees and academic unit committees are responsible for defining the Action Plan to implement enhancement measures that have been agreed to. The plan is mainly designed after the life-cycle reviews, with the schedule and the person responsible for implementation being specified.

  The programme director is responsible for monitoring the Action Plan and periodically reports on the state of the different actions to programme committee.

A similar system is used by the **Universitetet i Oslo**. QA is operational through the annual monitoring reports:

- **Department reports**: A **mid-term report** monitoring **the running of modules** is drawn up by the person in charge of each module at the end of every academic year. Information is obtained directly from the students (meetings, surveys, etc.).

The different modules are reviewed by an external auditor on a rotating basis.

- **Faculty reports**: On the basis of the department reports and other information (quantitative and qualitative), programme reports are organised **on an annual basis**. A more comprehensive monitoring is carried out periodically (exactly when is decided by the faculties), with both internal and external participation (external panel of advisers).

  An in-depth review is necessary once every four years, with a self-report and an external report.

- **The UiO's core report:** Produced by the Office of Academic Affairs' quality team from the faculty reports and other relevant data. The report is discussed by the UiO Board's Studies Committee, which is made up of vice-rectors, deans, academic staff and students. The report is submitted to the Board.

Wageningen University handles programme monitoring in a similar way. Each programme committee annually draws up and endorses the proposals for the review of study programmes under its control. It is noteworthy however that the programme committees administer a budget for the organisation of teaching of their Bachelor and Master's programmes. They can ask the chair groups for a certain type of teaching, for example, in larger or smaller groups or with a certain methodology. Teaching staff are not contracted directly, and instead a certain type of teaching is "commissioned", with the chair group being paid for this type of teaching. Any budgetary surplus rolls over to the following year. There is a high level of satisfaction with the way in which this form of administration works.

The main sources of evidence for the annual monitoring of programmes are **academic achievement** and the **teaching surveys**. This information is used to monitor **each of the five two-month periods** that the academic year is organised into. A series of internal standards have been identified and corrective/enhancement measures are decided on for all subjects/modules that fail to comply with them. The same committees are responsible for implementing the measures. Each programme committee annually draws up and endorses the proposals for the review of study programme that are under its control.

At **Sheffield Hallam University**, there is a central unit that coordinates, manages and standardises the quality management system, while each of the four faculties has its own review unit, which is responsible for reviewing its study programmes. The review structure in each department has its own support team and management is the responsibility of the academic staff. In terms of the monitoring process, there is a **validation and review of study programmes every year**, together with the **annual quality review**, the **review round-tables** and the **external examinations**.

Validation and review, which is carried out by each faculty, are based on a **survey carried out by the teachers themselves of their impressions of the module** that they have taught. With these results a feedback session is held with the members of the department. This procedure takes place once a year for each module.

The annual quality review is based on the abovementioned survey and that of the **external examiners' review**. Using the data obtained, certain aspects of modules can be modified.

Guidance given by teachers to the students is one of the main sources of information. It enables teaching staff to get involved and understand much better the experience of the students.

In the case of the **University of Central Lancashire**, each course is reviewed on an annual basis, as part of the university's annual monitoring process. The aim of the process is to:

- Assess and enhance the quality of the course.

- Offer the best experience possible to the student, given the available resources.

- Ensure that appropriate measures are adopted to remedy any shortcomings that are identified.

- Identify and disseminate good practices.

- Have the necessary information for the periodic evaluation and external reviews.

Issues concerning services are discussed with the director/head of each school and faculty, and the corresponding services are informed so that replies and actions are circulated in the special annual monitoring meeting on academic standards and in the Quality Assurance Committee.
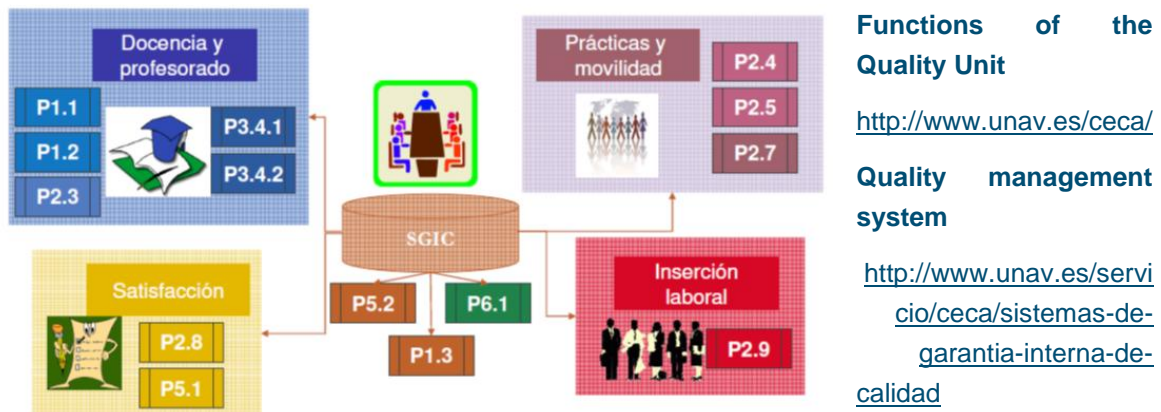
Annual monitoring of the 201__ academic year

Faculty of _____

PART A: COURSE MONITORING

1. Progress in achieving the actions and outcomes mentioned in the reports from the previous year. Enclose the Action Plan for the previous year.

2. Annual monitoring process. Describe and assess the Faculty's annual monitoring process.

3. Availability of the different actors to collaborate. Describe how collaboration in monitoring works through the Faculty (strengths, weaknesses, enhancement plans, etc.), if it is publicised, if validation is confirmed and whether it is approved.

4. Issues to be dealt with by the Faculty. Enclose the Action Plan.

5. Issues regarding the University.

6. Examples of good practices. Make a list of the actions that could be transferable.

PART B: ISSUES THAT REFER TO THE UNIVERSITY

7. Review of the School. Summarise the outcomes of the Faculty/School.

6.4. Information systems for monitoring quality management

Another important aspect is understanding how the tools that support all of the information produced by the information systems have been designed and are organised.

The **Universidad de Navarra** has a quality management system whereby each faculty works in a decentralised and autonomous way. The academic authorities, teaching staff and students are all very much involved in the running of the quality management system. The university has a software tool that gives exact, up-dated information on:

▪ processes,

▪ survey results, and

▪ the scorecard.

Functions of the Quality Unit

http://www.unav.es/ceca/

Quality management system

http://www.unav.es/servicio/ceca/sistemas-de-garantia-interna-de-calidad

Programme review

http://www.unav.es/servicio/ceca/evaluacion-de-titulaciones

Teaching and teaching staff		Work experience and mobility
	IQAS	
Satisfaction		Employment/Labour market outcomes

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was made possible by the participation and motivation of a large number of people who were involved in the project.

Agencies

- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)
- Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA)
- Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT)
- Swedish National Agency of Higher Education (HSV)
- Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO)
- Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC)
- Evaluationsagentur Baden-Württemberg (EVALAG)

Universities that opened their doors and received teams from Catalan universities

Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

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Francisco Colomer – Deputy executive administrator for Academic Affairs

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Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (Spain)

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Alfonso Davalillo – Coordinator, Chair in Quality

Jesús M.ª Hernández - Director of Quality, Bizkaia Campus

Esther Domínguez – Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology

Pilar Tazón – Director, School of Nursing, Donostia-San Sebastián

Helsingin Yliopisto (Finland)

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Gerd Merethe Andersen – Advisor, Department of Research Administration (PhD Programme)

Hanne-Gerd Nielsen – Director, International Education Office (IRO)

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Wageningen UR (Netherlands)

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Coco van der Wolk - Quality of Research and Education

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Tim Steele - Head of International Resources (International Office)

Louise Manley - Principal Officer in AQaSU

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University of Highlands and Islands (UK)

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Carmen Tomas - Learning and Teaching Officer for the e-assessment and feedback project

Wendy O'Neill - Learning and Teaching Officer

Helen Puntha - Research Officer for the working party for research informed teaching

Clarie Ward - Educational Projects Officer

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Rebecca Bell - Learning and Teaching Officer

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Active participation by Catalan universities

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Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC)

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