



ACPUA

AGENCIA DE CALIDAD Y PROSPECTIVA
UNIVERSITARIA DE ARAGÓN

Proposal for
Plan of Activities

2020

Approved by the Board of Directors
in session of 22 January 2020

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Mission, Vision and Values

For the ACPUA, it is a priority to ensure compliance with the Quality Policy incorporated into the Agency's Mission, Vision and Values as a guarantee of the quality of the activities carried out by the Agency. Every year, the Quality Policy is reviewed to ensure that it remains valid and, on the basis of this review, the Agency's Objectives and Annual Activity Plans are defined.

Mission

The ACPUA's mission is to guarantee and promote the quality of the Aragon Higher Education System. This mission includes both the development of useful links between the university, the socio-productive fabric, the institutional decision-making bodies and Aragon society as a whole, and the promotion of the exchange of experiences, not only with other national and international university systems but also with other educational levels (secondary education, vocational training, etc.).

To achieve this mission, the ACPUA mainly carries out technical evaluation, certification and accreditation tasks. This public service activity is complemented by study and foresight work and activities to promote a quality educational culture in higher education within the territory.

Vision

The ACPUA aims to be an agile and efficient agency, which is essential in the territory due to the seriousness and operationality of its performance. By providing the added value of quality assurance, we will be an indispensable reference for all institutions and agents with educational responsibilities in the region.

We aspire to become a qualified agency outside Aragon and a recognised interlocutor in the European area of university quality and assessment.

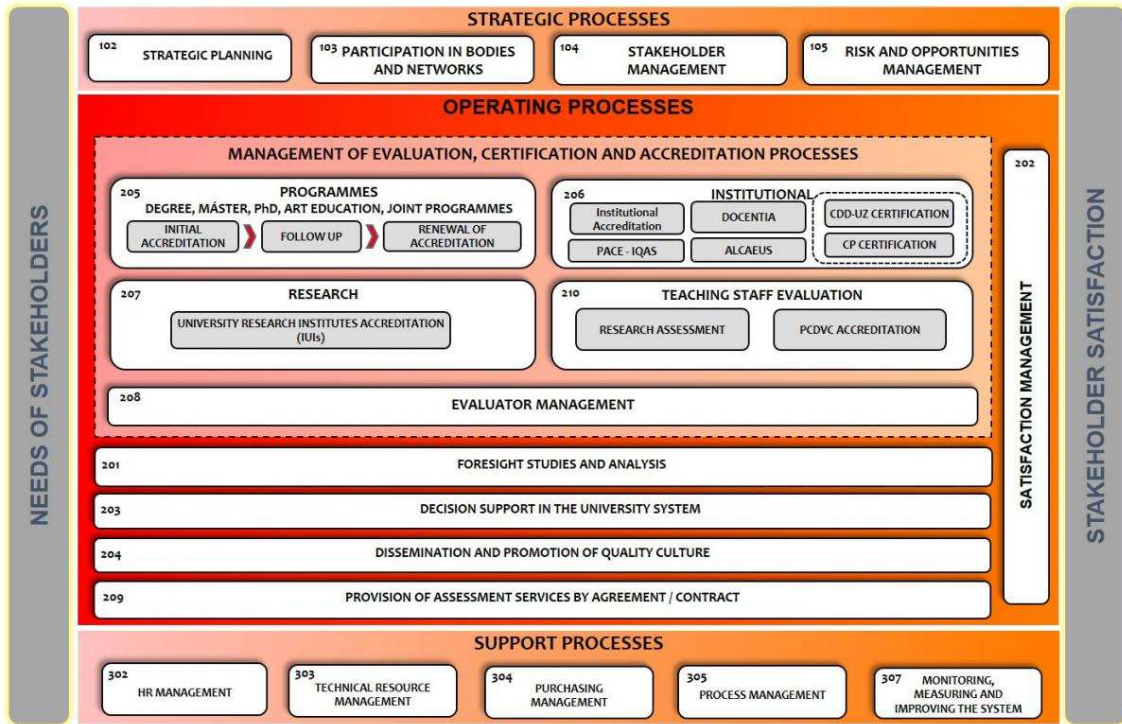
To achieve this vision, the ACPUA must be guided in all its procedures and actions by the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). With transparency, independence of judgement and commitment to accountability, we support reflection, continuous improvement and creativity.

Values

- Independence, autonomy and objectivity.
- Social responsibility and transparency by ensuring public access to reliable, timely, clear and accurate information

- *The establishment of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms for the continuous improvement of processes in order to ensure their effectiveness and efficiency.*
- *The development of relations with all stakeholders (university, administration, business world, Aragon society) through the promotion of dialogue to ensure their satisfaction.*
- *The promotion of student participation in the Agency's activity and in the quality assurance processes.*
- *Cooperation with national and international higher education agencies and networks*
- *The commitment to a job well done by the Agency's staff and its collaborators, associated with professionalism and honesty.*
- *Teamwork, based on respect and collaboration to achieve the best working environment.*

NEW PROCESS MAP (from 13/07/2018)



ACPUA'S STRATEGIC LINES 2019-2022

- 1. INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AND ITS IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE**
- 2. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN TEACHING & LEARNING ASSESSMENT**
- 3. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**
- 4. “VISION PROSPECTIVA”: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE, STRATEGIC EVALUATIONS AND THEMATIC ANALYSES**
- 5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF QUALITY**
- 6. OPENNESS TO STAKEHOLDERS**
- 7. INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE AGENCY AND OPENING UP TO OTHER UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS**
- 7+1. ADAPTATION OF THE AGENCY'S STRUCTURE TO NEW TRENDS IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA**

STRATEGIC LINE 1 - INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AND ITS IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE

A1.1. Assessment for Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) certification

In 2018, the ACPUA approved its PACE - SGIC Programme for the certification of the implementation of internal quality assurance systems in university centres. This programme includes the criteria and guidelines established by the General Conference on University Policy (in turn incorporated as an annex to the "Resolution of 7 March 2018, of the General Secretariat for Universities", which gives instructions on the procedure for institutional accreditation of public and private university centres). By virtue of the provisions of Royal Decree 420/2015, of 29 May, the certification of a centre through this PACE Programme is an essential requirement to be eligible for institutional accreditation in Aragon.

The PACE - SGIC Programme can be applied at any time of the year, at the request of the Aragon universities. In 2020, **therefore, the evaluation for the certification of the Internal Quality Assurance System will be carried out for those centres that request it.**

A1.2. Institutional accreditation

In 2015 institutional accreditation was formally introduced in Spain (R.D. 420/2015). It is an initial accreditation, granted by the Council of Universities provided that there is a favourable report from the competent Agency and after verification that the applicant centre already has a certified IQAS and that at least half of the programmes taught there have already been renewed.

In direct connection with action A1.1, in 2020 the ACPUA **will proceed to evaluate the applications for institutional accreditation submitted by the universities in Aragon.** Applications can be made at any time during the year, as there is no time limit for each call.

The effective implementation of the institutional accreditation system logically affects the calendars and campaigns of the programme for the Study Programme Accreditation, since the accreditation of an institution automatically entails the accreditation of the degrees taught there that were pending renewal of accreditation.

A1.3. Development of protocols for Follow-up and Institutional Accreditation renewal

In developing and improving its protocols and evaluation activities, the ACPUA always seeks effective interaction with national and international networks committed to new trends in higher education quality assurance. To this end, ACPUA actively participates in the activities, meetings, workshops and projects of the Spanish Network of Higher Education QA Agencies (REACU) in order to improve and perfect the institutional accreditation model. In fact, the ACPUA is one of the agencies that make up REACU's Working Group 4 on Institutional Accreditation. This working group was set up at the end of 2017 to jointly analyse the implementation and development of institutional accreditation in the different Spanish

university systems and its repercussions on other degree evaluation processes. At the beginning of 2020, a first protocol for the renewal of university accreditation is expected to be submitted for approval by the REACU directors' conference and subsequently sent to the Ministry, in which the criteria for drawing up the re-accreditation reports are explicitly aligned with part I of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

Based on this continuous experience of collaboration with the other Spanish agencies, and therefore within REACU, **in 2020 the ACPUA proposes to develop its own Follow-up and Renewal institutional accreditation protocol.** Given, on the one hand, the unquestionable potential of institutional accreditation as a model for quality assurance at universities and, on the other, the undoubted need to make assessment systems and procedures simpler and more efficient so as not to overload the system, this action 1.3 is of great importance at the present time: it could advance the development of a more sophisticated model of institutional accreditation than the initial one, while at the same time establishing efficient connections with pre-existing procedures for assessment of programmes (Initial Accreditation and Accreditation programmes).

In the meantime, and following follow-up practices implemented by the most advanced European agencies, **in 2020 the ACPUA will launch a programme of meetings with all the Aragon universities called Dialog Meetings.**

A1.4. Teaching staff evaluation system audit (Universidad de Zaragoza)

At the end of 2018, the Government of Aragon signed both a new Agreement and a new programme contract with the Universidad de Zaragoza for the allocation and financing of additional salary complements to the individual merits of the teaching and research staff of the Universidad de Zaragoza during the period 2019-2023 (*"ORDER IJU/2095/2018, of the 27th of December, publishing the Agreement of the 3rd of December 2018, of the Government of Aragon"*).

Therefore, within this new framework of action for the period 2019-2023, **in 2020 the ACPUA will continue to carry out the annual certification of results and the evaluation of the process followed by the Universidad de Zaragoza to assess the merits of its teaching and research staff in terms** of receiving the corresponprofesoradoding regional salary complements.

A1.5. DOCENTIA Programme

The DOCENTIA Programme is a programme developed by ANECA in collaboration with the other Spanish quality agencies whose aim is to support universities in designing their own mechanisms for assessing the quality of their teaching staff activity.

The twoACPUA's participation in the programme is twofold:

On the one hand, the ACPUA is part of the DOCENTIA Commission responsible for the development and follow-up of the programme. This committee is made up of technicians

from the agencies responsible for the programme and meets several times a year.

On the other hand, the ACPUA is evaluating the implementation of DOCENTIA in the universities of the Aragon Higher Education System. Specifically:

- Universidad San Jorge is in the implementation follow-up phase and has the system ready to be presented for certification.
- The Universidad de Zaragoza obtained in 2018 a positive evaluation of the design of its DOCENTIA system. The Universidad de Zaragoza is therefore proceeding to implement its design, from which the results of the application will have to be presented for two years.

A1.6. Assessment of teaching staff merits (Universidad San Jorge)

Inspired by the state regulations on university teaching staff remuneration, last year Universidad San Jorge launched a procedure aimed at the recognition of its teaching staff through the evaluation of teaching merits by 5-year periods (five-year periods of teaching excellence). Under the terms of the current addendum to the framework agreement signed between Universidad San Jorge and the ACPUA, **a technical committee of experts appointed by the ACPUA will be responsible for assessing the applications submitted by USJ teaching staff to their university in 2020.** *This activity is carried out by the ACPUA through an agreement with Universidad San Jorge.*

STRATEGIC LINE 2 - CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

A2.1. Initial Accreditation and modification of curricula

The Study Programme Initial Accreditation is the process of ex-ante evaluation of a new degree in Spain. The ACPUA has been acting as an initial accreditation agency since July 2017 (after achieving its registration in the European Register of Agencies EQAR at the end of 2016). This process is the first step in the birth of a new degree, and requires universities to write a study plan that includes the project for a degree.

The ex-ante assessment of the degrees evaluates the suitability of the degree project, the coherence of the curriculum and the adequacy of the resources with which the degree will be endowed. Once the study plan has been approved by the competent agency (and the implementation of the degree has been authorised by the regional government), this document becomes "the contract" signed by the universities with society and becomes the reference document for subsequent assessments.

It is in this process that the justification, timeliness of the degree, the curriculum, the learning outcomes to be obtained and the material and human resources to be put at the service of the degree are approved.

This activity of the ACPUA is always open, attends to all the requests that arrive from the Council of Universities and complies with the deadlines and procedures established by "ORDER IJU/969/2017, of 23 June, which regulates the procedure for the implementation, follow-up, modification, renewal of accreditation and suppression of official university education in the Autonomous Community of Aragon".

As a guideline, regarding the number of study plans that are expected to be evaluated for initial accreditation or accreditation in 2020, it should be noted that in 2019, 50 requests for initial accreditation or accreditation were received from Aragon universities (twice as many as in 2018, which, for the time being, implies a very significant increase in the Agency's workload).

Given the saturation and consequent technical problems that the ANECA's VSA platform has posed in 2019 (especially in the second half of the year), which the ACPUA, like the other Spanish agencies, must use to carry out this accreditation activity, **in 2020 the Agency will actively participate in the initiatives promoted within the REACU to simplify procedures, improve and eventually replace this technical tool.**

Likewise, **during 2020, the ACPUA will continue to promote the improvement of its evaluation protocols for the initial accreditation or accreditation processes, paying special attention to the incorporation of specific guidelines for the evaluation of blended and distance learning.** In this regard, the ACPUA plans to collaborate with REACU in this area and to **approve its own guidelines document** which will also include the programmes using on-line methodologies.

A2.2. Ex – ante evaluation and follow-up Arts

The regulations that currently govern the teaching of artistic education in Spain condition the authorisation of master in this field to the passing of an ex-ante evaluation process, called "homologación", carried out by the higher education quality agencies.

The ACPUA will keep this ex – ante evaluation programme open for the accreditation of artistic education masters throughout the year 2020. Given the idiosyncrasies of this type of studies and centers, the ACPUA systematically accompanies centers that intend to launch new master.

A new feature of this subject in 2020 is the development of the follow-up activity for the three masters in higher education in the Arts that have already been introduced (and which will have to renew their accreditation from 2021):

- Official Master's Degree in Artistic Education in Strategies of Spatial and Graphic Creativity in Ephemeral Installations by ESDA (Escuela Superior de Diseño de Aragón).
- Official Master's Degree in Artistic Education in Contemporary Music from the CSMA (Conservatorio Superior de Música de Aragón).
- Official Master's Degree in Artistic Education in Ensemble Music from the CSMA.

In order to prepare this activity properly, the ACPUA will meet at the beginning of 2020 with the heads of the centers concerned. The Follow-up Programme is the one that the ACPUA already applies to official university education and which is published on the agency's website.

A2.3. Study Programme Follow-up

The Study Programme Follow-up is being reviewed at national level within the REACU. The reason for this review is based on the understanding that the nature and scope of the monitoring of a degree varies depending on whether the degree has already been accredited or whether it has not yet been submitted for renewal of accreditation, as well as on the outcome of the renewal of accreditation. In addition, and as mentioned above, with the implementation of institutional accreditation the degree tracking protocol should be revised to align it with this process.

The ACPUA will therefore closely follow the progress made within REACU in designing an efficient, friendly but effective model for programmes follow-up.

In line with the above, the ACPUA carries out annual follow-up of those programmes whose renewal of accreditation has been favourable but conditional on the presentation of an improvement plan. In this case, the follow-up protocol requires a site visit report.

Consequently, in this year 2020 there **will be a follow-up with a site visit of the Degree in Architecture by Universidad San Jorge** (which will have to renew its accreditation in 2024).

In addition, work will continue in 2020 to **review and improve the procedure for follow-up programmes**, connecting it, for reasons of consistency and efficiency in evaluation, to institutional accreditation follow-up (see A1.3 above).

In addition, the **creation of a specific technical sub-committee of the ACPUA named “Follow Up Committee”**, is planned, and will be responsible for the follow-up of all programmes, except those that require a follow-up visit.

Within this activity, it is worth mentioning that in 2020 the **45 PhD programmes of the Universidad de Zaragoza and the 2 PhD programmes of the Universidad San Jorge** will be monitored, given that they are benefiting from an official moratorium and consequently have to renew their accreditation from 2021.

A2.4. Study Programme Accreditation

Two Study Programme Accreditation (renewal accreditation) campaigns will be carried out in 2020, as provided for in "Order CUS/1710/2019, of 13 December, approving the 2020 call for renewal of accreditation of official university programmes in the Autonomous Community of Aragon".

This Order affects the following programmes:

Universidad San Jorge	Master's Degree in Advanced Software Technologies for Mobile Devices
Universidad San Jorge	University Master's Degree in Pharmaceutical Care and Pharmacotherapy
Universidad San Jorge	Graduate in Early Childhood Education - Infant Education
Universidad San Jorge	Graduate in Primary Education - Primary Education
Universidad San Jorge	Master's Degree in Health Science Research
Universidad de Zaragoza	Master's Degree in Law
Universidad de Zaragoza	Degree in Information and Documentation
Universidad de Zaragoza	Degree in Social Work
Universidad de Zaragoza	Degree in Philosophy
Universidad de Zaragoza	Degree in Food Science and Technology

STRATEGIC LINE 3 – QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

A3.1. Development of the Research and Innovation Act of Aragon

The preamble to the recent Act 17/2018, of 4th December, on Research and Innovation in Aragon, states that "the evaluation of research activity is currently an essential element in guaranteeing the quality of the Aragon RDI System and the accountability of the agents that make it up. In this sense, and although Act 9/2003, of 12th March, has yet to be implemented, the creation and regulation of an autonomous body specifically responsible for carrying out the evaluation and accreditation of this research activity, the truth is that our Autonomous Community already has a public law entity, the Agency for Quality and Prospective University Studies of Aragon (hereinafter ACPUA), which Law 5/2005, on the Organisation of the University System of Aragon, established as an instrument to promote the improvement of the quality of the Aragon Higher Education System (...). In 2016, the Agency has also obtained European recognition by becoming a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) (...) For this reason, and with the aim of providing our RDI system with its own instrument for the evaluation, accreditation and certification of its agents, this new function of the ACPUA is fully incorporated, giving it this new role in the Aragonese RDI System". And in its operative part (first final provision) the new Law modifies article 85.1 of the LOSUA in order to add to the functions of the ACPUA established therein those of "**evaluation, accreditation and certification of the agents of the Aragon RDI System included in the Research and Innovation Act of Aragon**".

In accordance with the above, and given that we are at the beginning of a new legislature, it is appropriate to address in 2020 the **delimitation and specification of this new and important function that** the Aragon legislator attributes to the Agency.

A3.2. Junior Academic Research Activity Evaluation (sexenios)

By virtue of the aforementioned Agreement and Contract-Programme between the Government of Aragon and the Universidad de Zaragoza (*see above, A1.4*), the ACPUA carries out the evaluation of the research activity of the contracted teaching staff of the Universidad de Zaragoza aimed at obtaining the research supplement.

From 2011 onwards this evaluation process was gradually opened up to other groups of researchers that carry out their work in Aragon: CUD Zaragoza, CITA, EUPLA, IACS, ETUZ (in a different call to that addressed to the contracted teaching staff of the Universidad de Zaragoza to obtain the aforementioned supplement).

This is an individualised evaluation of the research activity carried out by the aforementioned teaching and research staff over a period of six years of their research activity (sexenio), applying the same criteria as those used at national level for civil servants by the CNEAI and by an annual call for applications.

This activity will continue in 2020.

A3.3. Evaluation of University Research Institutes

Evaluation for creation

According to article 15 of the LOSUA, the Government of Aragon is responsible for the creation, suppression and assignment of the University Research Institutes, following a report from the ACPUA. Consequently, **the Agency will start this evaluation procedure in case the Government of Aragon requests the issuance of this mandatory report during 2020.** Initially the evaluation of a new IUI of the Universidad de Zaragoza in the field of Social Sciences is planned.

Periodic evaluation every 5 years

Article 15.3 of the LOSUA establishes that the ACPUA will evaluate the existing University Research Institutes in Aragon every 5 years. Having carried out the second periodic evaluation of these Institutes in the previous two years, no activity in this area is planned for 2020.

A3.4. Assessment for the accreditation of contracted teaching staff with clinical links

Decree 206/2018, of 21 November, has introduced the figure of the Professor Hired Doctor with Clinical Connection (PCDVC) to the Aragonese Public Health System (SALUD) in Aragon. This new contracting figure establishes, among other prerequisites, the possession of a positive previous evaluation by the ACPUA.

In 2019, in close collaboration and coordination with the Directorate General of Universities, Health and the Universidad de Zaragoza, the first work was undertaken by the ACPUA to draw up the corresponding protocol. This year, 2020, **the evaluation protocol will be completed and approved**, which will enable the ACPUA to begin the evaluations.

A3.5. Collaboration with other bodies and entities

As in previous years, and as far as we are able, the ACPUA will provide technical assistance (such as the indication of evaluator profiles from our Pool of Reviewers) to authorities and organisations that request it (DGII of the Government of Aragon, the Secretariat for Quality and Teaching Innovation of the Universidad de Zaragoza, the Social Council of the Universidad de Zaragoza, the ARAID Foundation, the Antonio Gargallo Foundation, etc.).

STRATEGIC LINE 4 – “VISION PROSPECTIVA”: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE, STRATEGIC EVALUATIONS AND THEMATIC ANALYSES

A4.1. Development of the "Impulse of Excellence" programme

In 2015, and based on both a recommendation of the ACPUA Committee of Experts and the conclusions of a study carried out by ENQA on "The concept of Excellence in Higher Education", both formulated in 2014, the Board of Directors approved a document entitled "Boosting Excellence". It encouraged the Agency to take steps in this direction, taking the quality of qualifications and institutions as a reference. Furthermore, the document stated that, using the most advanced programmes in this field (such as those of NVAO or AQU Catalunya), an initiative in this sense by the ACPUA could be completed with the inclusion of additional distinctive criteria, not contemplated in the accreditation renewal procedure but of strategic interest to the University System of Aragon (such as, by way of example, internationalisation, entrepreneurship or student satisfaction and attention, etc.).

Nearly five years later, and at a time when there has already been a lengthy process of both follow-up and assessment the university system, which has attracted almost all the ACPUA's attention, **the Agency intends to resume and develop this "Boosting Excellence" programme.** Specifically, and in close collaboration with the universities, in 2020 criteria and tools will be designed to make the system's excellence visible, to highlight it and to compare it internationally.

A4.2. Thematic analysis

What in the European language of quality are called thematic analyses (i.e. second-order studies, beyond the mere legal effects of accreditation or certification, and which are undertaken by agencies on the basis of the data or results obtained in their assessments) is an area of activity that is of particular concern to the Agency, especially when we are dealing here with compliance with a European standard (ESG 3.4) on which an ENQA recommendation has fallen: "The panel encourages the Agency to sustain its efforts for different thematic analysis and to allocate resources to these activities as these may contribute to enhance the relevance and legitimacy of its role in promoting awareness and informed policies about quality assurance".

The following thematic studies will therefore be undertaken in 2020:

- Technical study on the quality of the programmes taught in Aragon, including the comparative analysis of results obtained by similar programmes, as well as possible correlations with comparable data from national and international rankings.
- Continuation of the joint work undertaken in this area by the Spanish Network of Higher Education QA Agencies (REACU). Specifically, the ACPUA forms part, together with ANECA, AQU, ACSUCYL and Unibasq, of the REACU working group (Working Group 1) which aims to develop these lines of analysis: A) Results obtained by the

agencies in the evaluations for the first renewal of programmes, paying special attention to the recommendations set out in the reports (and especially those concerning academic staff, learning results and/or material and service resources); B) Data resulting from the reports on the IQAS of universities and centres. C) The state of public information and levels of transparency, particularly in relation to effective follow-up and reporting to students; and D) The sustainability of particular programmes (with the enrichment of the analysis with expert, professional and student opinion).

- Collaboration with the Universidad de Zaragoza (Secretariat for Teaching Quality and Innovation) in the identification of good teaching practices based on teaching accreditation renewal reports.

A4.3. ACPUA university quality seminars

This relevant activity of the ACPUA, an interdisciplinary place of encounter and exchange of knowledge, methods and experiences around the great theme of quality in higher education in Aragon, is constituted as an open forum of communication with society and participation of the entire university community. **It will continue in 2020**, expecting to hold between two and five events throughout the year, both in Zaragoza and outside the capital of Aragon, organised either exclusively or in collaboration with the Government of Aragon, universities of Aragon and other national and international quality agencies. In the cycle of university quality seminars for this year 2020, an attempt will be made to accommodate new national and international trends, such as dual university training, on-line teaching evaluation, comparative visions, the social dimension of quality or advances in mutual recognition of qualifications at a European level (European universities).

A4.4. Studies on labour insertion: graduate follow-up project

Among the functions of the ACPUA entrusted by Law 5/2005, of 14 June, on the Organisation of the University System of Aragon, is that of "monitoring the labour market insertion of graduates". With this objective, in 2015 a Framework Agreement was signed to promote and carry out the development of a systematic project to monitor the labour market insertion of university graduates in the Aragon Higher Education System (SUA). Subsequently, due to the low response rate of an initial online survey with a low response rate, the institutions involved proceeded to sign the corresponding Addendum to the agreement. This work has allowed the development in 2018 of the Survey on labour insertion of graduates of the Aragon Higher Education System (2013/2014 cohort) with a sample of 1,651 questionnaires, which at a global level presents a confidence level of 90% and a margin of error of 1%. This survey was used by the Aragonese Institute of Statistics (IAEST), and subsequently allowed the study of the main variables analysed by the DGU and the ACPUA.

In 2020 it is planned to continue with the activity, developing these lines of action: A) Graduate survey (cohort of graduates in the academic year 2014-2015); B) Launch of the survey of Master's graduates.

A4.5. Participation in the University Programming Follow-up Committee

At the proposal of the Government of Aragon, the ACPUA Directorate is part of this Commission, which is chaired by the Director-General for Universities. If required, during 2020 **the Agency will continue to participate and provide technical support for its work**, as it has done in previous years, especially in relation to the monitoring of programmes that are in low demand.

A4.6. Technical reports

This section includes those specific technical reports of a non-evaluation nature (e.g., the affiliation or viability of affiliated centres, which were the subject of reports in previous years) and which are prepared at the request of the Government of Aragon.

STRATEGIC LINE 5 -DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF QUALITY

A5.1. Agenda 2030: the ALCAEUS programme

During the previous two years, and in collaboration with the Andorran agency AQUA, the ACPUA actively participated in the international project S&QSHE (Sustainability & Quality in Higher Education). This was a pioneering initiative that received support and funding from the global network of university quality agencies INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education). This project ended in the third quarter of 2019 and its main result was the preparation of a proposal for indicators that would help universities to introduce sustainability criteria, connecting this proposal with institutional evaluation processes.

The participation in this international project not only allowed the universities of Aragon to go hand in hand with the dynamisation of the university's commitment to the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). It also encouraged the agency to draw up its own programme, also unprecedented and pioneering at both national and international level, for the accompaniment and certification of university centres according to their level of commitment to the SDGs and Agenda 2030. This programme, which was presented to the REACU agencies within the framework of a conference organised by the ACPUA and to foreign agencies through the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA), has been called ALCAEUS. It constitutes, as far as ACPUA's knowledge goes, the first concrete contribution to SDG in Europe from the sector of external quality assurance for universities.

For this reason, and taking a significant step forward, **an evaluation pilot programme will be designed and implemented in 2020 in accordance with the ALCAEUS protocol.** This evaluation is voluntary, will take place during the second half of the year and, in this pilot phase, is aimed at Aragon university centres that are already accredited. At the end of the year, the corresponding meta-evaluation will take place, which in this case is very important for improving and offering the ALCAEUS tool in general to all universities and centres that may be interested, not only in Aragon.

A5.2. Gender mainstreaming and respect for sexual diversity

Within its scope of action, the ACPUA has already been working for a number of years in favour of gender equality opportunities, the reduction of the gender gap in higher education and the introduction of the gender perspective. It has been maintaining dialogue with associations and groups such as AMIT-Aragón (Association of Women Researchers and Technologists of Aragon), EUFEM (University Platform for Feminist and Gender Studies) or the Chair on Equality and Gender at the Universidad de Zaragoza.

From the specific point of view of the introduction of the gender perspective, it has exchanged methodologies and information on diagnostic elements and evaluation indicators with Spanish agencies especially committed to equality issues, such as AQU Catalunya and Unibasq.

Since 2018 it has included in its Activity Reports a report on gender parity and equality in the composition of committees and panels of the Agency. And in 2019 the evaluation perspective of this commitment to equality has been strengthened thanks to the already mentioned ALCAEUS Programme for the certification of centres according to Agenda 2030.

In 2020, the aim is to give a considerable boost to this commitment to equality, which, moreover, is already required by both national and regional legislation. In a double direction:

- On the one hand, and taking into account the emerging methodologies in the EHEA, a framework document will be developed to provide guidelines and indicators on the gender perspective for their subsequent introduction in assessment protocols, both for programmes and for research activity.
- Together with this, progress will be made in the design of a basic table or portal of indicators that will make it possible to promote and make visible the commitment of the centres that make up the Aragon Higher Education System to respect sexual diversity and the recognition and protection of the gender identity that each person feels.

STRATEGIC LINE 6 - OPENNESS TO STAKEHOLDERS

A6.1. Programme ACPUA + ESTUDIANTES

This programme, launched at the end of 2014 and executed at a good pace during the previous years, aims to culminate the active integration of students and their point of view in the agency's daily work through three axes: their participation in the different bodies and panels, their training in quality assurance and active communication with the student body by the ACPUA through an online forum and other means.

In 2020, work will continue on the training of students, on their collaboration with the ACPUA and on their participation in activities related to evaluation and quality. Therefore, the training sessions on the process of quality assurance of university qualifications in Spain will continue this year, with special emphasis on the criteria of *Student Centred Learning* (SCL, part I of the ESG), the centre certification programme and institutional accreditation and in close collaboration with the Student Council of the Universidad de Zaragoza and equivalent student representation bodies of Universidad San Jorge.

A specific training action will focus on the ALCAEUS programme on the implementation of SDG in universities, in order to train students as reviewers of this new dimension.

Communication efforts within the network and meetings with student representatives and associations will also be intensified.

In addition, over the last few years the ACPUA has been welcoming students as part of the curricular practices of the Degree in Law of the Universidad de Zaragoza. In 2020, these internships will continue to be offered, eventually joined by students from the Master's in Quality Assessment and Management in Higher Education at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC).

As a novelty in 2020, the ACPUA will collaborate with the Government of Aragon's Directorate General for Open Government and Social Innovation and the Aragonese Youth Institute in the new Social Impact Academy initiative, "a training school aimed at channelling the initiatives and concerns of young people between 18 and 25 years of age who are willing to change the world in response to global challenges".

A6.2. ACPUA + SOCIEDAD programme

This programme was designed in 2017 to respond to recommendations 3.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 made in the ENQA review report of 2016, as they all pointed out the need to increase the participation of external stakeholders (mainly in evaluation panels and committees and in the design of protocols and procedures).

Progress in implementing this programme will be made in 2020 as follows:

- Incorporation of professionals and/or external stakeholders into the panels and technical committees for the evaluation of programmes and centres of the ACPUA.
- Incorporation of external stakeholders into the Agency's consultative bodies (Committee of Experts) and approval of methodologies and protocols (Commission of Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation, CECA).
- Consultation with external stakeholders in the design phase of protocols and evaluation procedures related to programmes and centres.
- Accountability before the Parliament of Aragon (appearances before the Parliamentary Committee on Science, University and Knowledge Society), as a relevant stakeholder (legislator).
- Generation of communication spaces with representatives from the job market and business in Aragon (periodic management meetings with economic clusters in Aragon, social agents, etc.).

STRATEGIC LINE 7 - INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE AGENCY AND OPENING UP TO OTHER UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS

A7.1. International assessment of the ACPUA

Following its reform in 2015, and in order to comply with current European standards (ESG), the LOSUA provides that the ACPUA must undergo an international assessment every 5 years. This evaluation requires to prove by means of a visit the compliance of each and every one of the ESG, it is conducted by ENQA and only if the resulting report is favourable can the registration be obtained in the official EQAR Agencies Register that certifies the condition of accredited European agency. At the same time, being registered with EQAR is an indispensable condition for exercising all the competences that Spanish legislation grants to regional agencies in matters of university quality and evaluation.

The ACPUA passed its first international assessment by ENQA in 2016, so **the Agency's main international action during 2020 will be the drafting of the self-assessment report and the preparation of the second international assessment visit.** Although ACPUA's European accreditation does not expire until December 2021 (5 years after the date of registration in the European Register), the visit of the ENQA evaluation panel is in principle scheduled for December this year.

A7.2. ACPUA + INTERNACIONAL

The ACPUA+INTERNACIONAL programme includes and strategically systematises the Agency's internationalisation actions.

The actions planned for 2020 are as follows:

- Active participation by the Agency (attendance at forums and general assemblies plus involvement in projects) in the international university quality bodies and networks of which it is a member: ENQA, EQAR, INQAAHE, ECA, EQAF.
- ACPUA's proactivity in participating in relevant European projects.
- Training in international quality of the Agency's staff and exchanges with other foreign agencies
- Availability of the ACPUA's technical body to take part in international review panels.
- Participation of the management or technical body of the ACPUA as a member of the selection committees of international bodies and networks.
- Gradual incorporation of foreign evaluators into the ACPUA panels and committees.

A7.3. DEQAR project

In 2018 the ACPUA began to participate for the first time in its history in a funded European project, being the second Spanish agency to do so and one of the first 14 in the entire EHEA. This is a European Union project (Erasmus+, 2871/001) which coordinates the European Register of University Quality Agencies EQAR. Its aim is to put into service a European database of university education based on the results and content of external evaluations conducted by various agencies in several European countries. Over these two years the DEQAR database has grown exponentially and is now a reference document repository on university quality for the European Union.

Until December 2019, the ACPUA had introduced more than a hundred evaluation reports on programmes of Aragon into this database, and it is worth noting that it has disseminated the results of the project throughout the territory (this has been reported on the website of the European Registry EQAR).

In 2020, all final programmes and centre evaluation reports issued by the Agency will be sent for publication in DEQAR, and this will be expressly stated in the text of our reports.

A7.4. Evaluation of official programmes for the Andorra Agency (AQUA)

This international review is the result of collaboration with the Andorran agency AQUA, which began in 2017. **The following evaluations will be completed in 2020** (under the coverage of the International Memorandum of Collaboration signed between the two agencies in 2019 and with the participation of Aragon experts)

- Bàtxelor in Catalan (ex-ante assessment)
- Bàtxelor in computer science (ex-ante evaluation)
- Bàtxelor en dret (ex ante evaluation).
- Bàtxelor in humanitats (ex-ante evaluation).
- Bàtxelor in business administration (ex ante evaluation)
- Master in MBA (ex-ante assessment)
- Master in Humanities (ex-ante evaluation)
- Doctorat programme (ex-ante evaluation)
- Bàtxelor en ciències de l'educació (follow-up evaluation)

A7.5. Evaluation of research activity (six years) for the Universidad de La Rioja

The Universidad de La Rioja has asked the ACPUA to review the research activity of its teaching and research staff under a management contract in 2018. This service to a university on the Iberus Campus was carried out in both 2018 and 2019. **This activity will continue in 2020.**

The deadlines for this evaluation, as in 2019, will be in line with those established in the next ACPUA six-year evaluation call, in order to optimise resources and facilitate the task of the agency's technical and administrative team.

A.7.6. Certification of the merits of the teaching staff of the Universidad de Cantabria

In 2018 and 2019, the Universidad de Cantabria and the ACPUA signed contracts under which the agency has evaluated and certified the salary complements of the teaching and research staff of the Universidad de Cantabria corresponding to the years 2018 and 2019. Specifically, the merits of 756 and 754 professors were certified, respectively.

At the request of the Universidad de Cantabria, this collaboration will be maintained in 2020. Therefore, after signing the new contract, the ACPUA will evaluate and certify the merits of the Universidad de Cantabria's teaching staff for 2020.

A7.7. Training schools accreditation

ACPUA's powers in the area of monitoring and accreditation of official university education enable it to ensure the proper development of the internships offered in its curricula.

In this sense, the university training of teachers includes in the different curricula the carrying out of compulsory curricular practices in educational centres. For this reason, the Government of Aragon has developed agreements with universities so that university students can carry out work experience in the programmes in Early Childhood Education and Primary Education and in the Master's Degree in Teaching.

In order to consolidate a stable network of educational centres where students can carry out their internships, **and if requested by the competent educational administration, the ACPUA will continue in 2020 with the activity of certifying schools** that successfully host university interns, which began in 2014.

STRATEGIC LINE 7+1 - ADAPTATION OF THE AGENCY'S STRUCTURE TO NEW TRENDS IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

A7+1.1. Adapting panels and committees to the Agency's new activity

The growing activity - in quantity, quality and diversity of processes and actions - obliges the ACPUA not only to renew the members of its committees but also to periodically reconsider the number and composition of these committees. The aim is always to be in a position to meet our obligations more effectively and efficiently. **The actions planned for this year in this area are:**

- Strengthening of the sub-commissions and evaluation panels with the incorporation of professional and international members and expert members of Agenda 2030 (see supra A5.1, A6.2 and A7.2).
- Creation of the ACPUA Follow Up Committee (Comisión de Evaluación del Seguimiento -CES- at the same level as the Evaluation Committees by field of knowledge & PhD (CERs), but transversal to all the evaluation processes and therefore reporting to the corresponding Evaluation Sub-Committees).
- Creation of a Sub-Committee for the Evaluation of Persons (SEP) competent to issue reports in processes of evaluation of sexennia and accreditation of PCDVC.

A7+1.2. Adaptation of the Quality Management System to Standard 9001:2015

During 2019, the adaptation of the Quality Management System to the ISO 9001:2015 Standard was completed. Carrying out Phases I, II and III of the project in collaboration with Qualitas Management of which are detailed below. **Phases IV and V are expected to be carried out during 2020.**

Project phases:

- Phase I: Initial diagnosis and planning of the adaptation project
- Phase II: Project development
- Phase III: Implementation of changes and development of new processes
- Phase IV: Internal Audit
- Phase V: External Audit

GLOSSARY

- ACSUCYL: Agency for the Quality of the University System of Castilla y León
- ACSUG: Agency for Quality Assurance in the Galician University System
- ANECA: National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation
- ANEP: National Agency for Evaluation and Prospective
- AQU: Agency for Quality Assurance in the Catalan University System
- AQUIB: University Quality Agency of the Balearic Islands
- ARAIID: Aragonese Agency for Research and Development
- AVAP: Valencian Agency for Assessment and Foresight
- CECA: the ACPUA's Commission of Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation
- CGPU: University General Policy Conference
- CNEAI: National Commission for the Evaluation of Research Activity
- CONEAUPA: National Council of Evaluation and Accreditation of Panama.
- CUD: Centro Universitario de la Defensa
- CURSA: University Commission for Follow-up and Accreditation
- DEVA-AAC: Evaluation and Accreditation Department - Andalusian Knowledge Agency
- ECA: European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education
- EHEA: European Higher Education Area
- EFQUEL: European Foundation for Quality in e-Learning
- ENQA: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
- EQAF: European Quality Assurance Forum
- EQAR: European Quality Assurance Registry
- ESG: European Standards and Guidelines
- ESU: European Student Union

EUA: European University Association

EURASHE: European Association of Institutions in Higher Education

FCM: Foundation for Knowledge madrimasd (Section for the Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation of Quality in Higher Education)

INQAAHE: International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

IUI: University Research Institute

LOSUA: Law 5/2005, of June 14th, on the Regulation of the University System of Aragon

LOT: Law 4/2009, of 22nd June, on the Territorial Organisation of Aragon.

PCDVC: Professor Hired Doctor with Clinical Linkage.

REACU: Spanish Network of Higher Education QA Agencies

RRSS: Social Networks

RUCT: University Register of Universities and Centres

SEC: The ACPUA Institutions Evaluation Committee

SEI: The ACPUA Research Evaluation Committee

SET: The ACPUA Programmes Evaluation Committee

IQMS: Internal Quality Management System of ACPUA

ISIS: Integrated University Information System

SUA: Aragon Higher Education System

UNIBASQ: Agency for the Evaluation of the Quality and Accreditation of the Basque University System

USJ: Universidad San Jorge

UZ: Universidad de Zaragoza