



SECOND ACCREDITATION RENEWAL OF OFFICIAL
DEGREES OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF ARAGON

**A GUIDE FOR COMPLETING THE SELF-REPORTS
AND INFORMATION ON THE VISIT OF THE PANEL
OF EXPERTS**

[Document approved by the ACPUA Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation Commission,
17 July 2020].

1. NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Royal decree 1393/2007, of 29 October, establishing the organisation and planning of official university education.
- ORDER IIU/969/2017, of 23 June, which regulates the procedure for the implementation, monitoring, modification, renewal of accreditation and suppression of official university teaching in the Autonomous Community of Aragon. ORDER IIU/1242/2018 of 11 July, establishing the measures and deadlines for applying, in the second half of 2018, for the renewal of the accreditation of official university degrees in the Autonomous Community of Aragon.
- REACU protocol: "Evaluation criteria and guidelines for the accreditation of official Degree, Master and Doctorate degrees [Revision approved by REACU meeting 8-9 May 2014]".
- ACPUA accreditation renewal programme. Framework document of 6 July 2014.

2. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This document will apply to those official university degrees that must renew their accreditation for the second time. Consequently, applications for the renewal of the accreditation of diplomas already accredited by ACPUA and included in the Annex to ORDER IIU/1242/2018 of 11 July referred to above must already comply with the provisions of this Guide.

This document was approved by the ACPUA Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation Commission, on 29 August 2018.

3. JUSTIFICATION

Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29 October, which establishes the organisation of official university education, defines, as is well known, a cyclical system of verification, monitoring and renewal of accreditation of degrees, the aim of which is to supervise the effective execution of teaching and inform the society of the quality of the same. The Quality Agencies, according to the same Royal Decree, apply the following evaluation process to ensure the external quality assurance of higher education in Spain:

Phase I – Verification: Ex-ante evaluation of the design of new degrees (and subsequent modifications).

Phase II – Follow-up: Follow-up of the adequate implementation of the study plans, verifying that the commitments of the positively evaluated degree project are being respected.

Phase III - Accreditation (renewal): Ex-post evaluation of the results of the implementation of the curriculum that includes the visit of an external panel to the university centre (with the presence of at least one student). In this evaluation process, in Aragon ACPUA identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the degree and formulates recommendations that should be considered by the degrees in their improvement plans.

To date, the University System of Aragon (hereinafter SUA) has practically completed the first renewal for the accreditation of its official degrees, following the corresponding ACPUA evaluations.

This enables having, at present, a large volume of information on the official degrees that form part of the SUA. Logically, all this information has to be taken advantage of and taken into account now that it is necessary to undertake the second renewal of the accreditation (since it will be four years since the first official master's degrees were accredited in Aragon):

This information should be used in this new process to facilitate the completion of self-reports and the accreditation dossier, making the process simpler.

Likewise, and following the ESG (European Standards & Guidelines), the same information already available on the quality status of degrees when they first renewed their accreditation must be taken into account in order to focus now primarily on the most critical aspects of each degree and the improvements introduced as a result of any recommendations made at the time by ACPUA.

The degrees accredited for the first time have already demonstrated that their implementation has been correct and that the provisions of their corresponding verification report have been complied with. This second accreditation renewal is therefore an opportunity to demonstrate the progress in Student-Centred Learning (SCL) demanded by ESGs, ensuring the expected learning results.

Consequently:

- In this second accreditation renewal, the evaluation will, of course, be based on the criteria set out in the abovementioned reference standard framework.
- Notwithstanding the foregoing, the results obtained in the first accreditation renewal, as well as the information resulting from it (including follow-up reports) logically simplify the new evaluation process for the second renewal since it can focus on analysing the following:
 - The improvement plans launched by the degree in response to the possible recommendations included in the previous evaluation report for the accreditation renewal (or in the recommendations included in the possible modification reports issued during the period).

- The specific actions established to alleviate the weaknesses and to enhance the strengths identified in these reports. The learning results.
- The programme and content of the visits of the panels of experts who will participate in this second accreditation renewal will be adapted to that stated above (see section 5).

4. SELF-EVALUATION

4.1. Accreditation Dossier

In order to proceed with the evaluation, it is necessary to have an accreditation dossier made up of the following documents:

To be presented by the degree:

- Self-report and evidence to enable assessment panels to certify compliance with the criteria.
- Last version of the verification report.

To be included by ACPUA:

- Evaluation report for the previous accreditation renewal.
- Evaluation reports for the modification (if they exist from either ACPUA or ANECA).
- Follow-up reports (if they exist).
- Visit report (to be drafted by the corresponding panel) for the current accreditation renewal.

4.2. Self-report

The format of the self-assessment report does not present any formal (or structural) changes with respect to that used in the first accreditation renewal. The important thing is that the degree reflects on the degree of fulfilment of the evaluation criteria in this second period of life of the accredited degree.

For all criteria:

If the previous ACPUA report for the accreditation renewal contained recommendations and/or improvement plans, the self-report must provide a response to the follow-up and execution of the same (including the results obtained).

If the previous ACPUA report for the renewal of accreditation highlighted strengths and/or weaknesses, the self-report should contain a reflection on them, providing the necessary evidence.

If there have also been other changes (for example, based on indications from other reports that form part of the dossier or on the initiative of the degree itself), these should be included in the self-report, including a description and assessment of these changes.

If there have been no changes since the previous accreditation renewal report, this will be stated in the self-report.

However, as explained in section 3 of this document, this reflection must be made in the light of the contents of the report on the renewal of the previous accreditation and the other reports that form part of the dossier.

Specifically:

Criterion 1. Organisation and development

Changes that affect the conditions for authorising the implementation of the degree in terms of the academic management of the training programme, including aspects such as, where appropriate, teaching as a double degree, the incorporation of new teaching methods, changes in the development of the syllabus or changes in the number of new students, are considered to be of special importance and should therefore be clearly identified and assessed in the self-report.

Criterion 2. Information and transparency

Provided that there are no recommendations or weak points regarding the previous accreditation renewal report (and the degree has not developed its own public information in addition to that marked by the institution as compulsory for all degrees), the degree may state in the self-report that the information follows the standard of its university, with no need to include more information.

Criterion 4. Teaching staff

It is recalled that a rating of "not achieved" (D) in this standard implies that the degree evaluation report will be unfavourable [vid REACU protocol].

Therefore, in this second accreditation renewal this section of the self-report will be the subject of special attention by the ACPUA visiting panel.

This standard must be completed and updated by the degree demonstrating its sufficiency and appropriateness in this second period, proceeding to a self-evaluation "ex novo" of the criterion.

Criterion 5. Support staff, material resources and services

It is recalled that a rating of "not achieved" (D) in this standard implies that the degree evaluation report will be unfavourable [vid REACU protocol].

In the event that changes have occurred that affect the type of degree, the number of places offered, the change of physical location or the specific infrastructures necessary for the development of the degree, an "ex novo" self-evaluation of the criterion must be carried out.

Criterion 6. Learning results.

It is recalled that a rating of "not achieved" (D) in this standard implies that the degree evaluation report will be unfavourable [vid REACU protocol].

Therefore, in this second accreditation renewal this section of the self-report will be the subject of special attention by the ACPUA visiting panel.

This standard must be completed by the degree analysing the evolution of the results in the evaluation period, and of course, responding to the recommendations or weak points identified in previous evaluation reports. The self-evaluation of the criterion will be "ex novo".

5. VISIT OF THE PANEL OF EXPERTS

The evaluation procedure for this second accreditation renewal will be the same as for the first, governed by the instruments indicated in section 1 (Regulatory reference framework and evaluation criteria).

In accordance with the ACPUA Programme for the renewal of accreditation, Framework document of 6 July 2014, the following is specified for this second renewal:

REGARDING THE COMPOSITION OF THE PANEL

As far as possible, an expert who has already participated in the first renewal of the accreditation of the degree in question will be part of this panel.

REGARDING THE VISIT OF THE PANEL

The visit will be scheduled according to the number of titles to be evaluated. In view of the specific guidelines that for this second accreditation renewal are introduced in this document, the visit of the panel of experts to the degree will include as a minimum:

- Interview with the coordinator.
- Visit to the facilities.
- Review of subjects and interview with the teachers who teach them:
The teachers responsible for the selected subjects (minimum 5 subjects plus the TFG or TFM) will be asked to attend the interview with the panel of experts, making the appropriate evidence (exams, papers, etc...) available to the panel during the interview.
- Interview with a significant group of students, in which, among other issues, their opinion will be collected on criterion 2 related to the degree.
- Interview with PAS members (in case the self-report indicates changes in criterion 5).
- Open Hearing, so that all interested people who have not participated in the interviews and have something to comment on can present it to the panel of experts.

Process for creating and reviewing this guide

Nº Rev.	Date	Modificaciones introducidas
0	27/08/2018	Creation of the document approved by the CECA.
1	17/07/2020	Update of the document and approval by CECA.