

Code of Ethics



ACPUA
AGENCIA DE CALIDAD Y PROSPECTIVA
UNIVERSITARIA DE ARAGÓN

Document approved by the Commission of
Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation.
12 /02/2015

Index

Preamble	2
Mission	3
Vision	3
Values	3
Code of Ethics	4
Criteria for the application of the Code of Ethics	5
References	6
Process for the creation and revision.....	6

Preamble

The ACPUA is the official agency for the evaluation of higher education in the Autonomous Community of Aragon (Spain). It was created in 2005 by the Law of the Courts of Aragon. Its legal status is that of an autonomous body (Public Law entity), with own legal personality and its own assets and capacity to attain its objects. It performs its functions objectively, impartially and independently, recognised and guaranteed by law. It is governed by its own bylaws, approved in 2006 (Decree 239/2006, of 4 December).

The ACPUA Code of Ethics is the reference document that governs the performance of all the personnel working for the entity, both permanent staff, evaluators and collaborators in any process or project. Its objective is to guarantee an ethical and responsible performance in the development of the activity of the agency, even beyond the obligatory fulfilment of the law, and to define the values and standards that guide the action and relations with the environment and all the stakeholders of the entity and all its personnel. It therefore represents the hallmarks of ACPUA, and guarantees the fulfilment of its values and commitments in order to strengthen the confidence of the society.

The ACPUA requires all its members and collaborators to perform their duties in accordance with the highest ethical standards established in this document and in the current regulations, as well as the highest levels of independence, equity, professionalism and integrity. Likewise, for ACPUA it is absolutely a priority to maintain an adequate work environment and mutual cooperation in the exercise of the activities, as well as guarantee attitudes of tolerance and non-discrimination in all circumstances. ACPUA's commitment to these principles is materialised in the adhesion of the Agency to the Declaration of Luxembourg and the Corporate Sustainability Global Compact.

The openness and international dimension of ACPUA are also stated in this document, directly inspired by the values, criteria and standards of the international higher education institutions, taking into account the specificity of the activity of the Agency in Aragon, within Spain, and within the framework of the European Higher Education Area.

The compliance with this Code of Ethics is a requirement for ACPUA, so that all the people who provide their services, work, evaluate, collaborate or act on their behalf must know, respect and enforce it. Likewise, the Agency guarantees the existence of a procedure to deal with complaints and claims that may be filed in relation to the application of this Code.

The approval of this document guarantees the firm commitment of ACPUA and all its members and collaborators in the promotion and assurance of a work dynamic resulting from the ethical principles of the professional performance defined herein.

Mission

The ACPUA has the aim of guaranteeing and promoting the quality of the university system of Aragon. Part of this task is the development of useful links between the university, the socio-productive fabric, the institutional decision-making bodies and the whole of the society of Aragon, 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, ACPUA mainly carries out technical evaluation, certification and accreditation tasks. This public service activity is completed with study and foresight tasks and activities to promote a quality educational culture of higher education within the territory.

Vision

The ACPUA intends to be an agile and efficient agency; to become essential in the area thanks to the seriousness and good operation of its activity. By providing the added value of quality assurance, we will be an essential reference for all institutions and agents with educational responsibilities in the region.

We aspire to become a qualified agency outside Aragon and a known interlocutor on university quality and assessment in the European scene.

To achieve this vision, the ACPUA has to be governed in all its procedures and actions by the European standards and guidelines (ESG). With transparency, independence of criteria and commitment to accountability, we support reflection, continuous improvement and creativity.

Values

- Independence, autonomy and objectivity.
- Social responsibility and transparency assuring public access to reliable, timely, clear and precise information.
- The establishment of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms for the continuous improvement of the processes in order to ensure their effectiveness and efficiency.
- The development of relations with all the stakeholders (university, administration, business world, society of Aragon) by promoting dialogue to ensure their satisfaction.
- The promotion of the students' participation in the Agency's activity and in the quality assurance processes.
- The cooperation with agencies and national and international higher education networks.

- The commitment to a high quality work on behalf of the Agency's staff and its collaborators, associated to professionalism and honesty.
- Teamwork based on respect and cooperation to achieve the best work environment

Code of Ethics

1. **COMMITMENT.** ACPUA's staff and collaborators are committed to respecting the internal quality and ethics policy of the evaluation contained in this Code of Ethics, in the current legislation, and in the Agency's different protocols and procedures.
2. **PROFESSIONALISM AND INTEGRITY¹.** ACPUA's staff and collaborators will act and develop their functions and activities with the utmost professional rigor and integrity, avoiding using the position or contacts derived from their activity in the Agency for their personal interests or benefits. Likewise, all the staff that works and collaborates with ACPUA will respect and ensure the harmony of the good work environment, developing their tasks according to the principles of responsibility, honesty, collaboration and teamwork.
3. **INDEPENDENCE.** ACPUA's staff and collaborators will always act with independence, objectivity and impartiality, abstaining from participating in processes or decisions in which they themselves, their families or persons and entities with which they share interests may benefit.
4. **CONFIDENTIALITY.** ACPUA's staff and collaborators will respect the confidentiality of the information they work with, in accordance with current regulations on the matter, not disclosing any details of the evaluation processes or their results without the express approval from the Agency, as well as of all the information that is delivered or sent in relation to the exercise of their tasks.
5. **COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION.** The opening towards the environment and proactivity occupy a central place in ACPUA's activity, with the international dimension and the integration of the Aragon university system in the EHEA priority work lines. The ACPUA, all its staff and collaborators will promote the exchange, dialogue and collaboration, establishing as priority lines of action the performance of agreements with other agencies, the participation in cooperation projects and international seminars, among others, with the aim of increasing the value it offers to the society of Aragon.
6. **TRANSPARENCY.** Firmly committed to the principle of institutional transparency, the ACPUA will systematically inform the public of its activities, ensuring the dissemination and accessibility of this information to all stakeholders, through a variety of channels

¹ The performance of ACPUA collaborators who participate in evaluation processes will be assessed in compliance with section 8.4 of the ISO 9001:2015 standard regarding "control of processes, products and services supplied externally". This assessment will be carried out by the technical secretary of the panel, commission, sub-commission or committee and, where appropriate, by the ACPUA Commission of Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation, analysing the following aspects of the provision of services: ability to collaborate in a multidisciplinary team, compliance with deadlines, technical competence and level of quality of the deliverables.

(web page, news, social networks, emails, seminars, public acts, etc.) and formats. Likewise, the ACPUA will guarantee the traceability and publicity of its actions, protocols and decisions.

7. **FLEXIBILITY AND INNOVATION.** The public interest guides all the Agency's actions. For this reason, the ACPUA will consider the interests of all the institutions and users with whom it relates, being receptive and responding quickly to changes in the environment, to new realities and social demands. The members and collaborators of the ACPUA will face their work proactively, promoting creativity to achieve the maximum quality and effectiveness of their actions.
8. **COMMITMENT TO IMPROVEMENT.** The ACPUA will regularly initiate internal meta-evaluation processes leading to the adoption of improvement actions. The personnel, evaluators and collaborators of the Agency commit to participating in them, when this form of contribution to the improvement of the activity is requested.
9. **USE OF RESOURCES.** ACPUA's staff and collaborators are committed to respect the Agency's facilities and resources and keep them in good use and to use them exclusively for the functions they are intended for.
10. **RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROMOTION OF HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE.** ACPUA's staff and collaborators will respect and promote respect for human rights, diversity and tolerance, non-discrimination for reasons of birth, race, colour, sex, language, religion, opinion, origin, or any other condition or personal and/or social circumstance, not tolerating work harassment or harassment in any of its forms.
11. **RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.** The ACPUA and all its members and collaborators will be respectful with the environment and promote its protection through good practices such as efficient use of resources, recycling, etc., respectfully and responsibly managing their activity and the consequent economic, environmental and social impacts.
12. **COMPLAINTS, CLAIMS, SUGGESTIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT.** The ACPUA will have a clearly defined and adequately communicated procedure for processing any complaint, claim, suggestion or improvement proposal related to the content and application of this Code of Ethics.

Criteria for the application of the Code of Ethics

Writing and approval. The Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation Committee (CECA) is the body in charge of preparing the Agency's Code of Ethics, the Governing Board being the competent body for its approval.

Publication. The Code of Ethics will be published on the Agency's website.

Compliance guarantee. This Code of Ethics will be assumed and signed by ACPUA's staff, evaluators and collaborators. Likewise, there must be documentary evidence that they know the criteria for its application.

In the event of the occurrence of any conflict of interest, direct or indirect, the person affected will immediately inform the Director of the Agency or the person presiding over the evaluation commission in which he/she has to intervene, so that the appropriate measures can be taken for that purpose.

The filing of complaints, claims, suggestions or proposals for improvement related to the content and application of this Code of Ethics shall be contemplated in ACPUA's "Procedure for handling complaints and claims".

This "Procedure for handling complaints and claims" of ACPUA, after its approval by the Governing Council of the entity, will be published and duly communicated to the interested parties.

References

The Code of Ethics and this document are inspired by the principles stated in:

- Sustainability framework of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) <https://www.globalreporting.org>
- European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
- Law 19/2013 of 9 December, on transparency, access to public information and good governance.

The ACPUA is a member of the Global Business Sustainability Compact <http://www.pactomundial.org/> and the Declaration of Luxembourg https://www.insst.es/documents/d/portal-insst/declaracion-de-luxemburgo_2018.

Process for the creation and revision

Rev. no.	Date	Modifications introduced
0	12 /02/2015	Approved by the CECA.
1	26/03/2018	Update of logo/corporate image and introduction of requirement 8.4 of ISO 9001:2015 referring to "control of processes, products and services supplied externally" (page 4). Revision of PR 208 Management of Assessors.
2	04/03/2024	Luxembourg Declaration link update .