



ACPUA

AGENCIA DE CALIDAD Y PROSPECTIVA
UNIVERSITARIA DE ARAGÓN

ACPUA PROGRAMME FOR PERIODIC EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INSTITUTES (URIs)

Framework Document

Approved by the Commission for Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation (CECA)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Legal framework

Law 5/2005, of 14 June, on the Organisation of the University System of Aragon (LOSUA), establishes in Article 15 that "the Government of Aragon is responsible for the creation, suppression and assignment of University Research Institutes. This decision may be taken at the initiative of the Social Council or of the Department responsible for university education with the agreement of the Social Council. In any case, it must have the prior report of the Governing Council of the University and of the University Quality and Prospective Agency of Aragon".

On the other hand, the third paragraph of the aforementioned article 15 of the LOSUA states that "**the work of the University Research Institutes must be submitted to a report by the University Quality and Prospective Agency of Aragon every five years.** In the event of a negative report, the Government may agree to the suppression of the Institute or grant a period of time to correct the errors or inadequacies detected".

1.2. Aim of the document

The purpose of this document is to present to the agents involved in the process (University of Zaragoza, IUIs, researchers, administration and other interested groups) both the procedure to be followed for the periodic evaluation of IUIs and the aspects that will be assessed in the evaluation protocol.

2. ACPUA PROGRAMME PERIODIC EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INSTITUTES

2.1. Objectives

The purpose of the periodic evaluation is to assess the quality of the activities carried out by the Institute in the period since the last evaluation, evaluating its scientific, technical, artistic, cultural, social and economic trajectory and interest. **The external view of the expert evaluators**, integrated in the corresponding panels, in addition to ensuring the correct fulfilment of the evaluation criteria, provides **recommendations** for improvement that may be useful for the development of the IUIs.

The evaluation is based on the **Institute's own reflection on its activity in the 5 years since the agency's last evaluation.** This reflection should include the main milestones, the challenges faced by the Institute and the main changes made. It should be a reflection that takes into account the last evaluation carried out on the Institute by the Agency and should respond to the recommendations contained in the evaluation report, explaining the actions carried out and the results obtained or explaining why the recommendations have not been taken into account.

2.2. Periodicity and scope

The ACPUA will carry out this evaluation every five years (as stipulated by LOSUA) on all university institutes .¹

The evaluation shall be included in the ACPUA's annual planning of activities for the corresponding financial year, and the dates of the evaluation shall be agreed with the University.

2.3. Evaluation bodies

Periodic evaluation will be carried out by the ACPUA through the Subcommittee on Research Evaluation (SEI) and an evaluation panel of experts in the field appointed by the Commission for Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation (CECA).

The panel will be made up of 3 experts in one of the areas of activity of the IUIs, who carry out their activity outside the Autonomous Community of Aragon, including a researcher in training. As far as possible, one of them will be a foreigner. In addition, one of the evaluators should have experience in the management of research institutes. Whenever possible, an attempt will be made to maintain at least one of the evaluators participating in the previous evaluation.

The panel will also include an ACPUA technician who will act as secretary of the panel, with voice but without vote.

All evaluators shall comply with the requirements defined in the "ACPUA Evaluator Selection Procedure" published on the Agency's website.

The rules of procedure and the composition of the SEI are published on the ACPUA website. Both the members of the SEI and the panel of evaluators shall sign the Agency's code of ethics.

¹ In the case of IUIs created between two periodic evaluations, those that have been in operation for more than three years will be included in the evaluation. In this case, the evaluation period shall be the period between the date of start-up as an IUI and the evaluation, and the baseline report shall be that of the establishment of the IUI.

If the IUI was created in the two years preceding the periodic evaluation, it will not be evaluated until the next periodic evaluation.

3. EVALUATION CRITERIA

In order to carry out the process described above, the panel of evaluators must check compliance with the following criteria aligned with the "Criteria and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG 2015):



For each dimension, the criteria to be assessed are described below, indicating the standard of compliance, its breakdown into guidelines and, finally, the proposed evidence that could be used to support the analysis of compliance with each dimension. These evidences may or may not be provided by the institute, which may substitute them for those it considers more appropriate to its context.

STRATEGIC DIMENSION

Criterion 1.1: Strategic definition of the IUI.

Standard:

The IUI has a clear strategic orientation of its activity, which it reviews periodically, ensuring that its interest for the Autonomous Community and the generation of synergetic effects in the environment are maintained.

Guidelines:

- The Institute has an External Advisory Council.

- The Statutes, regulations, etc. of the Institute ensure an appropriate framework for its management, the necessary internal coordination and proper functioning.
- The Institute has a procedure for the establishment, communication and review of its strategic definition.
- The Institute has a current strategic definition, broken down into mission, vision and strategic objectives, which is known to IUI staff.
- In the period under evaluation, the Institute has worked on the basis of its strategic planning, keeping it in force and reflecting on the period:
 - the relevance, opportunity and scientific-technical-artistic interest of its field of activity for the Autonomous Community and for the entities, groups, etc. linked to it and for its sponsors,
 - social and/or economic interest,
 - the synergetic effects it generates in its environment.
- The Institute maintains an organisational chart and structure that is appropriate to its size and activities.

Evidence:

- Framework documentation for the management of the IUI (statutes, operating regulations, organisation chart, etc.).
- Documents relating to the procedure for creating, communicating and monitoring the strategic definition of the IUI. Evidence of its implementation.
- Documentation relating to the strategic planning in force, as well as that in force in the evaluation period.
- Information on the Institute's website.

Criterion 1.2: Lines of research.

Standard:

The IUI deploys its strategic definition through the development of different lines of research consistent with this strategic definition. The contribution of the different lines of research to maintaining the validity of the IUI's strategic definition is periodically analysed.

Guidelines:

- The Institute has a procedure for the deployment of its strategic definition through the establishment and revision of its lines of research so that they contribute to the achievement of the strategic objectives.
- The Institute has clearly defined lines of research.
- During the period under evaluation, the Institute has periodically analysed the contribution of the defined lines of research to the achievement of the strategic objectives and proposed actions where necessary.

Evidence:

- Documentation relating to the procedure for defining and reviewing the validity of the lines of research. Evidence of its application.
- Documentation where the current lines of research are collected (IUIs website / activity reports / activity plan...).

Criterion 1.3: Objectives.

Standard:

The IUI deploys its strategic objectives in a series of measurable scientific, knowledge and technology transfer or care objectives that are regularly monitored.

Guidelines:

- The Institute has a procedure for the deployment of the strategic objectives in scientific, transfer and care objectives. It also has a procedure for monitoring and reviewing them.
- The Institute has clearly defined scientific, transfer and care objectives.
- The objectives are known to the research staff.
- The different lines of research have a clear contribution to make to the achievement of the different objectives.
- The defined objectives are regularly monitored.

Evidence:

- Documentation relating to the procedure for defining, monitoring and reviewing objectives. Evidence of its implementation.
- Documentation relating to the process of communicating objectives to staff.
- Documentation where the definition of objectives is stated (IUIs internal documentation / activity reports).
- Indicators for monitoring objectives (scorecard).

Criterion 1.4: Activities.

Standard:

The IUI deploys a series of activities in line with its strategic definition, objectives and lines of research. These activities are planned and reviewed periodically.

Guidelines:

- The Institute has a procedure for the planning of activities.
- The activities are consistent with the objectives, organisation and resources of the IUI.
- Planned activities are monitored on a regular basis.

Evidence:

- Documentation related to the activity planning procedure. Evidence of its implementation.
- Planning of activities currently in force, as well as those relating to the period under evaluation.
- Follow-up of the activities carried out (activity reports for the period).

RESOURCES DIMENSION

Criterion 2.1: Research staff.

Standard:

The IUI has a research staff structure in line with its strategic definition. The number and quality of research staff is adequate to achieve the objectives defined by the IUI.

Guidelines:

- The research staff as a whole has a research profile that is clearly in line with the Institute's lines of research.
- The Institute has a balanced and well-balanced team of people, including research and technical staff, senior researchers and trainees, etc.
- The research activity of the research staff is mainly carried out within the Institute.
- The research staff as a whole shows quality research activity (according to the parameters established by the scientific community for the area of knowledge of the IUIS) during the period under evaluation.
- The Institute is not a mere aggregation of researchers, on the contrary, there is a regular collaboration between the members of the Institute which results in joint research projects and/or R&D contracts, publications, etc. of high quality.
- The development of research staff is adequate, and it is evident that the Institute promotes research carried out by women, as well as the training of young researchers.

Evidence:

- Table showing the evolution of research staff in the period under evaluation.
- Indicators of the quality of the research activity of the research staff.

Criterion 2.2: Budget and infrastructure.

Standard:

The IUI has sufficient resources for its operation which it raises through different funding sources.

Guidelines:

- The Institute has sufficient resources for its operation.
- The Institute has the capacity to raise external funding from different sources beyond possible grants from the Government of Aragon.
- The Institute monitors its budget to ensure an adequate level of budget execution, expenditure and investment.
- The Institute has its own premises or access to the infrastructure and equipment necessary to carry out its functions and objectives.
- The institute's premises, infrastructure, etc. comply with safety conditions.

Evidence:

- Evolution of the budget in the period under evaluation.
- Current budget including details of external funding obtained in the period under evaluation.

DIMENSION RESULTS

Criterion 3.1: Academic research results.

Standard:

The IUI achieves academic research results (scientific publications, participations in conferences, supervised theses) consistent with its strategic definition and defined objectives.

Guidelines:

- The Institute has a procedure for the monitoring and analysis of academic research results.
- The academic research results achieved in the period are of recognised quality and consistent with the objectives and activities of the IUI.

Evidence:

- Indicators of research results.
- Documents analysing the results of academic research and identifying actions for improvement.

Criterion 3.2: Knowledge and technology transfer results.

Standard:

The IUI achieves transfer results consistent with its strategic definition and defined objectives.

Guidelines:

- The Institute has a procedure for monitoring and analysing the results of knowledge and technology transfer.

- The transfer results achieved in the period are consistent with the objectives and activities of the IUI.

Evidence:

- Knowledge and technology transfer performance indicators.
- Analysis of the results of knowledge and technology transfer and identification of improvement actions.

Criterion 3.3: Internationalisation performance.

Standard:

The IUI achieves internationalisation results consistent with its strategic definition and defined objectives.

Guidelines:

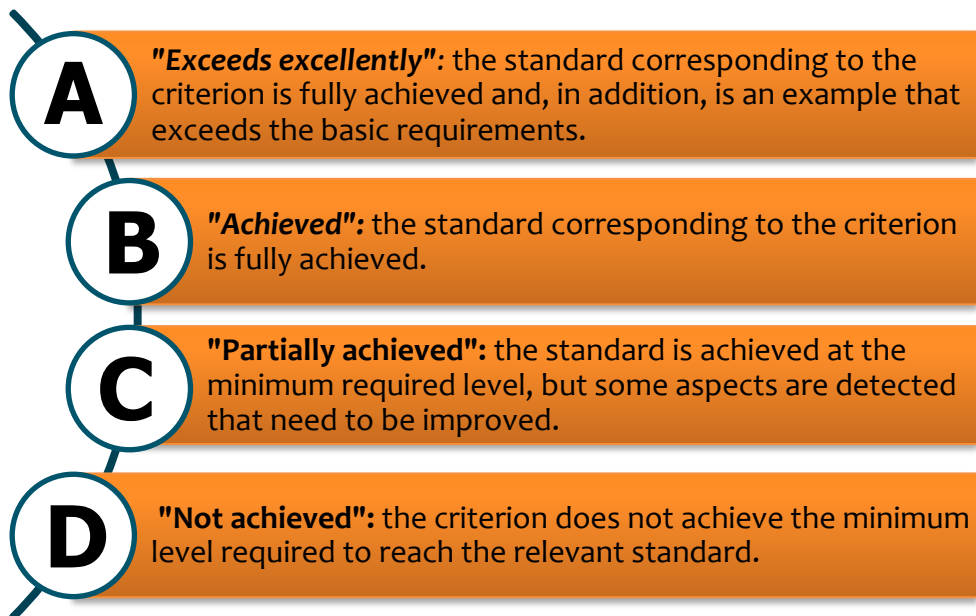
- The Institute has a procedure for monitoring and analysing the results achieved in internationalisation.
- The internationalisation results achieved in the period are consistent with the objectives and activities of the IUI.

Evidence:

- Internationalisation performance indicators.
- Analysis of internationalisation results and identification of improvement actions.

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE CRITERIA

Each of the above assessment criteria and guidelines will be assessed at four levels:



5. EVALUATION PROCESS

5.1. Planning the evaluation

The ACPUA will include in its annual planning of activities the process of periodic evaluation of the Institutes. Once the planning of activities has been approved by the Governing Board, the ACPUA will inform the Institutes concerned of the deadlines for carrying out the evaluation.

5.2. Documentation on which the assessment is based

The expert panels, for the assessment of the criteria and guidelines described in the previous section, will be based on the following information:

- Self-evaluation report prepared by the IUI² (following the template published by ACPUA).
- Preliminary establishment and/or periodic evaluation reports issued by ACPUA.
- Institute website.

² The template provided by the ACPUA will be used for this purpose. The institute will base its self-evaluation on the evidence it considers appropriate, and it is not compulsory to include any of the evidence presented in the section on 3.Evaluation criteria of this document.

- Indicators provided by the University of Zaragoza.³

5.3. Appointment of evaluation panels

The ACPUA Directorate appoints the members of the evaluation panels of the Institutes on the proposal of the Agency's Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation Commission (hereinafter referred to as ECAC).

The proposal of experts shall be sent to the Institute, which shall have ten calendar days to submit a reasoned appeal against the panel.

Once their members have been appointed, the composition of these committees shall be made public on the Agency's website.

5.4. Virtual tour of the Institute

The panel will make a virtual visit to the Institute in order to complete and corroborate in situ the information and assessments included by the Institutes in their self-reports.

The visit is estimated to last half a day. The evaluators will hold interviews with the Institute's management team, and at least one representation of researchers (which should include researchers in training) and one representation of technicians or administrative staff.

5.5. Proposed Report

The evaluation panel will issue a visit report which, together with the previous documentation, will be submitted to the Research Evaluation Subcommittee, which will be responsible for issuing the proposal for the evaluation report.

5.6. Review of allegations

The IUI will have 15 working days to submit comments on the proposed report.

The allegations will be reviewed by the SEI, which may request the evaluation of the panel members if deemed necessary.

5.7. The final report

After reviewing the allegations, the SEI will issue the corresponding final evaluation report.

The final report issued by the sub-committee must be reasoned and conclusive, and may include the identification of strengths, areas for improvement and recommendations.

The possible assessments of the final report are as follows:

- FAVOURABLE.
- UNFAVOURABLE.

³ The University of Zaragoza will make available to the IUIs the indicators used to monitor their funding. This set of indicators will be used as a primary source of information for the analysis of the fulfilment of the evaluation criteria.

In the event of a favourable report that includes aspects for improvement, the institute must submit an improvement plan during the allegation period, after which the SEI may determine the need for follow-up, within the deadlines it deems appropriate.

The final report shall be sent by the Directorate of the ACPUA to the Institute, the University of Zaragoza and the Directorate General of Universities of the Government of Aragon for their knowledge and effects.

Finally, the Agency will publish the results of the evaluation on its website.

5.8. Meta-evaluation of the process

The ACPUA will close the evaluation process by collecting information about the satisfaction of those involved in the process.

The information collected and the results of the experts' evaluation will be forwarded to the ECSC to close the meta-evaluation process, proposing, if necessary, improvements to the evaluation procedure.

5.9. Complaints and appeals

Of any complaint or appeal that the ACPUA becomes aware of in connection with this evaluation process, the management will refer it to the Agency's Committee of Guarantees for its knowledge and effects.

Information related to the Guarantees Committee and the Procedure for handling appeals, complaints and claims in the case of monitoring can be found on the ACPUA website.

6. ANNEX I: Background information on IUIs

Financing of the IUIs of the University of Zaragoza

The IUIs constitute, together with the Departments and the recognised Research Groups, the **primary research structures in the universities according** to Art. 46 of the LOSUA. However, this article does not establish any precept in relation to the promotion policy, which the LOSUA does establish for Research Groups: *"The Government of the Autonomous Community will develop a policy to promote the activity of Research Groups, will promote the fields of knowledge of science, humanities, technology, arts and culture and will develop the necessary actions to promote the creation of technologically innovative companies, favouring the creative activity of university teaching and research staff"* (Art.48.2 LOSUA).

In relation to the financing of IUIs, Art.8.1 of the framework regulation of University Research Institutes of the University of Zaragoza establishes that **"the University Research Institutes will be financed with the resources they attract or generate, after deducting their contribution to the general expenses of the University, without prejudice to the financing and resources that the University of Zaragoza may allocate to them, exceptionally, in their start-up period or for the improvement and maintenance of their facilities and equipment"**. Similarly, in the case of mixed IUIs, the contribution to the general expenses of the other participating entities must be deducted and the funding and resources that they may provide must be included in their budget.

It is also relevant to point out that: *"The budget of the University shall include that of the IUIs and any other contribution of the University of Zaragoza"* (Art. 9 - Framework Regulation) and that *"in general, these (the IUIs) shall receive a percentage of the indirect costs generated by their research projects, agreements and contracts"* (Art. 10 - Incentives).

Financial resources and legal personality of IUIs

	OWN (Art. 16)	MIXED (Art. 29)	
OWNERSHIP	<p>The University of Zaragoza is the owner of the economic resources it has to execute its objectives, programmes and projects.</p> <p>In its research activity it may collaborate with institutions or companies, by means of the corresponding collaboration agreement.</p>	<p>The creation agreement must specify the financial resources foreseen (to implement the objectives), programmes and projects of the Institute and its contribution to the overhead costs of the UZ and other participating entities shall be established.</p> <p>The budgetary accounts must clearly distinguish all assets and entitlements owned by the UZ.</p>	<p>OTHER TYPES, according to the Framework Regulation, but not applicable to UZ or to the periodic evaluation of ACPUA:</p> <p>Inter-university (Art. 30. same case as mixed IUIs)</p>
MANAGEMENT	<p>Through the units, services or structures created or participated by the UZ that it implements in its management model.</p>	<p>The agreement shall indicate how it is to be managed academically and financially.</p>	<p>Assigned (Art. 31 and following. Can be assigned to UZ by agreement)</p>
LEGAL PERSONALITY	<p>They are part of the organic structure of the UZ and therefore have no legal personality of their own.</p>	<p>They have no legal personality of their own.</p>	

Staff

Regarding the staff of the IUIs, the UZ IUI Framework Regulations refer to the operating regulations of each IUI. "**The regulations of the University Research Institute shall specify the rules of admission and the categories of its staff, as well as the effects arising therefrom**". (Art. 5.5 Framework Regulation).

"The own, mixed and inter-university IUIs may request from the University of Zaragoza or from the other participating entities the contracting of researchers in the modalities that do not imply permanent and indefinite contracts, and technical personnel or administration and services personnel in accordance with the provisions of the labour regulations in force, always charged to their own resources, in the manner indicated in their budget". (Art. 11 Framework Regulation).

With regard to the members and minimum number of members of IUIs (own and, similarly, mixed) we can distinguish the following figures, contractual relationships and type of dedication:

PERSONNEL FIGURES	CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP	DEDICATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching staff Research staff Research staff in training Technical research support staff Other administrative and service staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UZ contract staff Staff under contract from other public or private bodies (participating entities) as established. For example, CSIC. Staff for the development of specific projects: with UZ contract and financed by the IUI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Partial
<p>The minimum number of members must be 25. At least 10 must be from university teaching bodies and at least 15 must be doctors.</p> <p>NOTES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a member of a university research institute belongs exceptionally to another institute, whether its own, a joint inter-university or an affiliated institute, or if he/she is part-time, in order to compute the minimums of the previous section, he/she will count as 1/2. Mixed IUIs: A balance will be sought in the number of members from the participating Universities and entities. 		

Governing and administrative bodies

The governing and administrative bodies of the university's own, mixed and inter-university research institutes are, at least, the Institute Council, the Director, the Secretary and the Deputy Director or Deputy Directors, whose maximum number shall be determined by their regulations (Art. 5 Framework Regulations):

OWN IUIs

- Council** (Art. 17 Framework Regulations): This is the governing body of the University Institutes. Composed of: a) The Director of the Institute, who will chair it; b) All the doctoral members of the IUI; c) Three members from among the rest of the members of the Institute, appointed by election; d) Two representatives of the administrative and service staff assigned to the Institute, appointed by election.

- **Director** (Art. 19 Framework Regulation): He/she exercises the functions of ordinary direction and management of the Institute and represents it. He/she is elected by the Board and has a 4-year term of office.
- **Deputy Directors** (Art. 23 Framework Regulation): They are responsible for the management and coordination of their areas of competence and the other functions assigned to them by their regulations or delegated to them by the Director. Appointed by the Rector, at the proposal of the Director of the IUI. The maximum number shall be determined in accordance with the rules established for this purpose by the Governing Council.
- **Secretary** (Art. 24 Framework Regulations): Appointed by the Rector, at the proposal of the Director of the IUI, from among the full-time lecturers assigned to the Institute.

MIXED IUIs

- **Monitoring Committee** for the agreement establishing the IUI (Art. 28 Framework Regulation): The composition and functions will be determined by the Monitoring Committee.
- **With regard to the governing and administrative bodies**, the UZ IUI framework regulation does not establish any requirements for mixed IUIs.

Document history

Rev.	Date	Amendments made
0	06/04/2018	Approval of initial document.
1	09/04/2018	Referral to the University of Zaragoza and to the Directorates-General for Universities and Research and Innovation of the Government of Aragon.
2	24/04/218	Consideration of the contributions made and final approval by the ECSC.
3	31/01/2025	Update of the programme after listening to stakeholders (IUIs, DGU, DGII).