



**ACPUA**

AGENCIA DE CALIDAD Y PROSPECTIVA  
UNIVERSITARIA DE ARAGÓN

Activity Plan

2021

Approved by the ACPUA's Governing Council  
at its meeting of 18 February 2021

## MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

### Mission, Vision and Values

*It is a priority for ACPUA to ensure compliance with the Quality Policy incorporated in the Agency's Mission, Vision and Values as a guarantee of the quality of the activities carried out by the Agency. The Quality Policy is reviewed annually to maintain its validity and the Agency's Objectives and Annual Activity Plans are defined on the basis of this policy.*

#### Mission

*ACPUA's mission is to guarantee and promote the quality of the university system in Aragon. This mission includes both the development of useful links between the university, the socio-productive fabric, the institutional decision-making bodies and Aragonese 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.).*

*In order to achieve this mission, ACPUA mainly carries out technical tasks of evaluation, certification and accreditation. This public service activity is complemented by research and foresight work and activities to promote a culture of quality in higher education in the region.*

#### Vision

*ACPUA aims to be an agile and efficient agency; one that is essential in the territory due to the seriousness and operability of its service activity. Providing the added value of quality assurance, we will be an indispensable reference point for all institutions and agents with educational responsibilities in the region.*

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

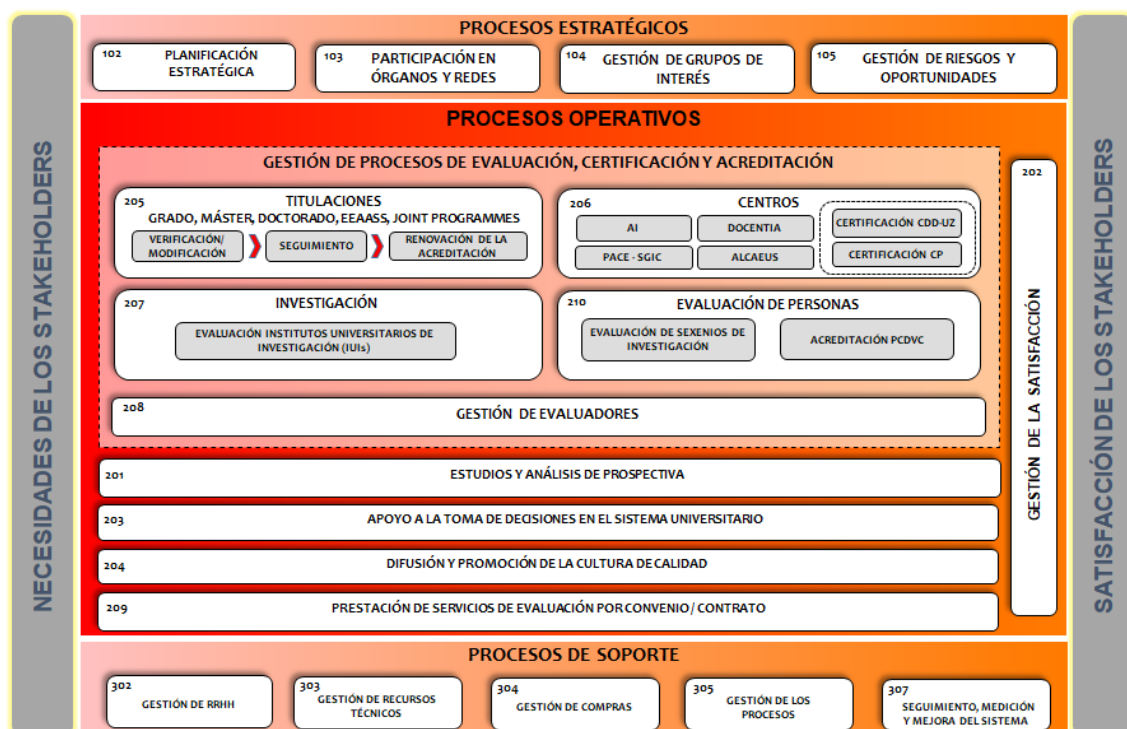
*To achieve this vision, ACPUA must be governed in all its procedures and actions by European standards and guidelines (ESG). With transparency, independence of judgement and commitment to accountability, we support reflection, continuous improvement and creativity.*

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

## PROCESS MAP



## STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022

### ACPUA'S STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

- 1. INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AND ITS IMPACT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE**
- 2. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHING EVALUATION PROCESSES**
- 3. Systematisation of R+D+i evaluation activities**
- 4. FORWARD-LOOKING VISION: PROMOTION OF EXCELLENCE, STRATEGIC EVALUATIONS AND THEMATIC ANALYSES.**
- 5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF QUALITY**
- 6. OPENNESS TO STAKEHOLDERS**
- 7. INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE AGENCY AND OPENNESS TO OTHER UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS**
- 7+1. ADAPTATION OF THE AGENCY'S STRUCTURE TO THE NEW TRENDS OF THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA**

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022

### ANNUAL OBJECTIVES 2021

No. of Line	Strategic Line	Annual target 2019	Annual target 2020	Annual target 2021
L1	INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AND ITS IMPACT ON UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE	Promoting Institutional Accreditation in Aragonese Universities	Promote Institutional Accreditation in Aragon Universities	To advance in the Institutional Accreditation of the University System of Aragon.
		Promote teaching evaluation programmes	To promote teaching evaluation programmes	Consolidate teaching evaluation programmes
		Develop institutional reaccreditation protocol	Develop institutional monitoring and reaccreditation protocols	Approve institutional monitoring and re-accreditation protocols
L2	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF DEGREE EVALUATION PROCESSES	Comply with the degree evaluation processes	Comply with the degree programme assessment processes.	Comply with degree programme assessment processes.
				Update assessment protocols and adapt them to new changes (COVID-19 impact).
L3	Systematisation of the R&D&I assessment activity	Reflect on those aspects of the Law on Science that can be developed by the Agency.	Reflect on those aspects of the Science Law that the Agency can develop.	To reflect on the evaluative challenges of R&D&I in Aragon.
		Comply with the assigned evaluation processes	Comply with the assigned evaluation processes	Comply with the assigned evaluation processes
		Develop the PCDVC accreditation protocol	Develop and validate the PCDVC accreditation protocol	Launch PCDVC accreditation assessment
Line No.	Strategic Line	Annual target 2019	Annual target 2020	Annual target 2021
L4	FORWARD-LOOKING VISION: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE,	Develop graduate integration studies	To develop graduate integration studies	Systematise and disseminate thematic analyses on the quality

	STRATEGIC EVALUATIONS AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS	Promote thematic analyses on the SUA	Promote thematic analyses on the SUA	and employability of the SUA.
			Promoting excellence and strategic evaluations	Raise the profile of the excellence of the OAS and its comparability with other systems.
L5	DEVELOPING THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF QUALITY	Defining indicators for the assessment of sustainability in HEIs	Development of a programme for the evaluation of the implementation of the 2030 agenda in the SUA	Implement the ALCAEUS Programme
		Incorporate equality criteria in the evaluation processes.	Promote the principle of equality and respect for sexual diversity.	Apply transversally the principle of real equality of opportunities (effective, material) between women and men.
				Contribute to the effective respect for the sexual diversity of all people in the SUA centres.
L6	OPENNESS TO STAKEHOLDERS	Increase the participation of Stakeholders in all Agency processes	Increase stakeholder involvement in all Agency committees and processes	Strengthen stakeholder participation in all Agency committees and processes
			Providing information and responding to the expectations of Aragonese society	Providing information and responding to the expectations of Aragonese society
				Establish a stable channel of communication with SUA students in order to know their needs and expectations. (impact COVID-19)
No. of Line	Strategic line	Annual objective 2019	Annual objective 2020	Annual target 2021
L7	INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE AGENCY AND OPENING UP TO	Increase the ACPUA's participation in the international sphere	Increase the ACPUA's participation in the international sphere	Strengthen ACPUA's participation in European and international projects

	OTHER SPACES AND CENTRES	Increase ACPUA's participation outside SUA	Increase ACPUA's visibility at the national level	Strengthen ACPUA's visibility and exchanges at national level.
L7 BIS	ADAPTATION OF THE AGENCY'S STRUCTURE TO THE NEW TRENDS OF THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA	Strengthening the Agency's structure	Strengthening the Agency's structure	Strengthening the Agency's structure
		Adapting the agency's management system to the new quality standards		

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

### A1.1. Assessment for centre certification

In 2018, the ACPUA approved its PACE - SGIC Programme for the certification of the implementation of the internal quality assurance systems of university centres. This programme includes the criteria and guidelines established by the General Conference on University Policy (incorporated in turn as an annex to the *"Resolution of 7 March 2018, of the General Secretariat for Universities"*, which issues instructions on the procedure for the 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 able to opt for institutional accreditation in Aragon.

The PACE - IQAS Programme can be applied at any time of the year, at the request of the Aragonese universities. In 2021, therefore, **the assessment for the certification of the Internal Quality Assurance System of the centres that request it** will be carried out.

Evaluations currently underway:

- Polytechnic University School of La Almunia de Doña Godina (EUPLA).
- Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences, Huesca campus (U. de Zaragoza)
- Polytechnic University School of Teruel (U. of Zaragoza).

Planned evaluations:

- Faculty of Science (U. of Zaragoza)

A meta-evaluation process of these four evaluations is planned for September.

### A1.2. Institutional accreditation

Institutional accreditation was formally introduced in Spain in 2015 (R.D. 420/2015). It is granted initially by the Council of Universities provided that there is a favourable report from the competent agency and after verifying that the applicant institution already has a certified IQAS (*action A1.2*) and that at least half of the bachelor's and master's degrees taught there have already renewed their accreditation.

Consequently, in 2021 the ACPUA **will evaluate the applications for institutional accreditation submitted by the Aragonese universities**. Applications can be made at any time of the year, and there is no set deadline for submitting applications.

The effective application of the institutional accreditation system logically affects the calendars and campaigns of the programme for the renewal of degree accreditation, since the accreditation of a centre automatically entails the accreditation of the degrees taught in it and which were pending renewal of accreditation.

### **A1.3. Development of protocols for the monitoring and renewal of institutional accreditation.**

In developing and improving its evaluation protocols and activities, the ACPUA always seeks effective interaction with national and international networks committed to new trends in the quality assurance of university education. In this sense, the ACPUA actively participates in the activities, meetings, work and projects of the Spanish network of quality agencies REACU in order to improve and perfect the institutional accreditation model. Proof of this is that the ACPUA is one of the agencies that make up REACU's Working Group 4 on Institutional Accreditation.

The pace of REACU's work on the preparation of these new common protocols on institutional reaccreditation was disrupted between March and September 2020 due to the pandemic situation, which had immediate and unforeseen effects on the way university teaching is delivered, forcing the agencies to focus their attention on quality issues at degree level. However, work resumed in the last quarter of 2020, so that in 2021 REACU will be in a position to finalise a first Protocol for the renewal of accreditation of university institutions, which aims at a clearer and more explicit functional alignment with Part I of the European Standards (ESG).

Based on this ongoing experience of collaboration with other Spanish agencies, **in 2021 the ACPUA plans to approve its own protocol for the monitoring and renewal of institutional accreditation.** Given, on the one hand, the undoubted potential of institutional accreditation as a model for university quality assurance and, on the other, the equally undoubted need to make the evaluation 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 an institutional accreditation model that is more refined than the initial one, while at the same time establishing efficient connections with the pre-existing procedures for the evaluation of teaching (verification and renewal of degree accreditation).

In the meantime, and following the monitoring practices implemented by the most advanced European agencies, **the ACPUA will continue in 2021 the programme of meetings with all the Aragonese universities called Dialog Meetings.**

### **A1.4. Certification of dedication and teaching merits (University of Zaragoza)**

At the end of 2018, the Government of Aragon signed both a new Agreement and a new

programme contract with the University of Zaragoza for the allocation and funding of the additional salary complements linked to individual merits of the teaching and research staff of the University of Zaragoza during the period 2019-2023 (*"ORDEN IIU/2095/2018, de 27 de diciembre, por la que se publica el Acuerdo de 3 de diciembre de 2018, del Gobierno de Aragón"*).

Therefore, already within this new framework of action for the period 2019-2023, **the ACPUA will continue to carry out in 2021 the annual certification of results and the evaluation of the process followed by the University of Zaragoza for the evaluation of merits of teaching and dedication of its teaching and research staff** for the purpose of the payment of the corresponding autonomous remuneration complements.

### A1.5. DOCENTIA Programme

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

The ACPUA's participation in the programme is twofold:

On the one hand, the ACPUA is part of the DOCENTIA Commission in charge of the development and monitoring of the programme. This commission is made up of technicians from the agencies in charge of the programme and meets several times a year.

On the other hand, the ACPUA evaluates the implementation of DOCENTIA in the universities of the Aragonese university system. The situation at the beginning of 2021 is as follows:

- San Jorge University is in the monitoring phase of the implementation and has the system ready to be submitted for certification.
- The University of Zaragoza, for its part, obtained the positive evaluation of the design of its DOCENTIA system in 2018.

### A1.6. Assessment of teaching merits (teaching staff at San Jorge University)

Inspired by the state regulations on the remuneration of university teaching staff, last year the San Jorge University launched a procedure aimed at the teaching recognition of its teaching staff by means of the evaluation of teaching merits for 5-year periods (five-year periods of teaching excellence). Under the terms of the addendum approved to the current framework agreement signed between San Jorge University and the ACPUA, **a technical committee of experts appointed by the ACPUA will be responsible for the evaluation of**

**applications submitted in 2021 by USJ faculty to their university.** *This activity is carried out by the ACPUA through an agreement with San Jorge University.*

#### **A1.7. Collaboration with the University of Zaragoza on teaching innovation**

The ACPUA has been collaborating with the University of Zaragoza (Teaching Quality and Innovation Secretariat, Vice-rectorate for Academic Policy) in the promotion of teaching innovation among its teaching staff, normally through the assignment of experts in the field registered in our Bank of Evaluators for the evaluation of teaching innovation projects. **This activity will continue in 2021.**

## STRATEGIC LINE 2 - CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHING ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

### A2.1. Verification and modification of syllabuses

The verification of a syllabus is the process of ex ante evaluation of official teaching in Spain. The ACPUA has been acting as a verifying agency since July 2017 (after being registered in the European Register of EQAR Agencies at the end of 2016). This process is the first step in the creation of a new degree, and requires universities to draw up a verification report setting out the project for a degree programme.

The ex ante evaluation of the degree programmes assesses the suitability of the degree project, the coherence of the curriculum and the adequacy of the resources with which the degree programme will be equipped. Once the verification report 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" that the universities sign with society and becomes the reference document for subsequent evaluations.

It is in this process that the justification, the appropriateness of the degree, the syllabus, the learning outcomes to be achieved and the material and human resources to be made available for the degree are approved.

**This activity of the ACPUA is always open**, it attends to all the requests that arrive from the Council of Universities and is in accordance with the deadlines and procedures established by the "ORDER IIU/969/2017, of 23 June, which regulates the procedure for the implementation, monitoring, modification, renewal of accreditation and suppression of official university studies in the Autonomous Community of Aragon".

As a guide to the number of study plans that will foreseeably have to be assessed for verification or modification in 2021, it should be noted that in 2019, 50 applications for verification or modification were received by the universities of Aragon (twice as many as in 2018). In 2020, 29 verification or modification files were dealt with by the Agency.

Likewise, **during the year 2021 the ACPUA will continue to promote the improvement of its assessment protocols for the verification and modification of study plans, paying special attention to the incorporation of specific guidelines for the assessment of distance and hybrid education.** In this sense, and in view of the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACPUA has collaborated intensively with the other REACU agencies on this matter, making contributions to the process of drawing up new national regulations on this type of teaching. In addition, since July 2020, ACPUA has had **its own document of guidelines on the evaluation of courses that use online methodologies**, which will be applied in 2021.

## A2.2. Accreditation and monitoring of arts education and training

The current regulations governing the provision of Arts Education in Spain make the authorisation of Masters in this field conditional upon the successful completion of an ex-ante evaluation process, known as "accreditation", carried out by university quality agencies.

**The ACPUA will keep this evaluation programme for the accreditation** of Master's degrees in arts education **open** throughout the year 2021. Given the idiosyncrasies of this type of studies and centres, the ACPUA accompanies the centres that intend to launch new master's degrees.

Currently, **the official Master's Degree in Advanced Systems of Conservation and Restoration of Mural Paintings** of the Higher School of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage of Aragon is currently **being evaluated for the homologation of the official Master's Degree in Advanced Systems of Conservation and Restoration of Mural Paintings** of the Higher School of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage of Aragon.

In this area, **this year 2021 it is planned to develop the monitoring activity of the three master's degrees in higher artistic education already in place** (and which will have to renew their accreditation as of 2021):

- Official Master's Degree in Artistic Education in Spatial and Graphic Creativity Strategies in Ephemeral Installations by ESDA.
- Official Master's Degree in Artistic Education in Contemporary Music by the CSMA.
- Official Master's Degree in Artistic Education in Ensemble Music by the CSMA.

The ACPUA carries out the evaluation of official Master's degree courses in parallel to official university courses, within the degree evaluation programmes, applying the same evaluation protocols (taking into account the specificities of this type of degree). The documentation is published on the Agency's website.

### A2.3. Monitoring of degree programmes

The monitoring programme is currently under review at national level within REACU. The reason for this review is based on the understanding that the nature and scope of the monitoring of a degree programme logically varies according to whether the degree programme has already been accredited or has not yet been submitted for re-accreditation, as well as the outcome of the re-accreditation. Moreover, as mentioned above, with the implementation of institutional accreditation, the degree monitoring protocol must be revised to align it with this process.

The ACPUA will therefore closely follow the progress made within REACU in the design of an efficient, user-friendly but effective model for post-accreditation monitoring of degrees.

In line with the above, the ACPUA carries out annual monitoring of those degrees whose renewal of accreditation has been favourable but conditional on the presentation of an improvement plan. Likewise, degrees that have renewed their accreditation for the second time, but with aspects to be modified within two years, are also subject to monitoring.

In 2021, there is no monitoring activity planned for the first of these cases (degrees with an improvement plan) but there is for the second: **10 reaccredited (or accredited in the second round) master's degrees that did not present significant data on graduates and suffered from low response rates to the surveys.** This monitoring will be carried out by the ACPUA Monitoring Commission, which was set up in 2020.

Furthermore, throughout 2021, work will continue on the **review and improvement of the degree monitoring procedure**, connecting it, for reasons of coherence and efficiency in assessment, and as previously stated, with the institutional accreditation monitoring.

## A2.4. Renewal of the accreditation of teaching programmes

In 2021, two accreditation renewal campaigns will be carried out, in accordance with the provisions of the "Order CUS/1374/2020, of 23 December, approving the 2021 call for the renewal of accreditation of official university degrees in the Autonomous Community of Aragón".

This Order affects the following degrees:

### FIRST SEMESTER 2021

INSTITUTION	CENTRE	LEVEL	DEGREE
University of Zaragoza	Defence University Centre	Master's Degree	Master's Degree in Defence Systems Acquisition Management and Administration
University of Zaragoza	Doctoral School	PhD	Doctorate Programme in Ancient Sciences
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in English Studies
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Hispanic Literatures
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	D. Programme in Hispanic Linguistics
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in History, Society and Culture: Medieval and Modern Times
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in History of Art
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Accounting and Finance
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Contemporary History (Joint)
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Organic Chemistry
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Design and Manufacturing Engineering
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Education
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	D.	PhD Programme in Analytical Science in Chemistry
University of Zaragoza	Doctoral School	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Economics
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Food Quality, Safety and Technology
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Gender Relations and Feminist Studies
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Sociology of Public and Social Policies
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Spatial Planning and the Environment
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Inorganic Chemistry
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	D. Programme in Physics
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Physical Chemistry
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Systems Engineering and Computer Science
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Animal Health and Medicine
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Economics and Management of Organisations

INSTITUTION	CENTRE	LEVEL	DEGREE
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Mathematics and Statistics (Joint)
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Medicine
University of Zaragoza	Doctoral School	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Law
University of Zaragoza	Doctoral School	PhD	Doctoral Programme in New Territories in Architecture
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Biomedical and Biotechnological Sciences (Joint)
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Animal Production
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Health and Sports Science
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Health Sciences / University School of Nursing of Huesca / University School of Nursing of Teruel	Degree	Graduate in Nursing
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Health Sciences	Degree	Degree in Physiotherapy
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Health Sciences	Degree	Graduate in Occupational Therapy
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Social and Human Sciences	Degree	Graduate in Fine Arts
University of Zaragoza	Polytechnic University School of La Almunia de D <sup>a</sup> Godina	Degree	Degree in Technical Architecture
University of Zaragoza	Polytechnic University School of La Almunia de Doña Godina	Degree	Degree in Civil Engineering
University of Zaragoza	Polytechnic University School of La Almunia de Doña Godina	Degree	Degree in Mechatronic Engineering
University of Zaragoza	Defence University Centre / Polytechnic University School of La Almunia de Doña Godina	Degree	Degree in Industrial Organisation Engineering
University of Zaragoza	University School of Tourism of Zaragoza	Degree	Degree in Tourism
University of Zaragoza	Doctorate School	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Mechanical Engineering
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Electronic Engineering
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Chemical and Environmental Engineering
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
University of Zaragoza	School of Doctoral Studies	PhD	PhD Programme in Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms
University of Zaragoza	Doctoral School	PhD	Doctoral Programme in Geology

## SECOND SEMESTER 2021

INSTITUTION	CENTRE	LEVEL	DEGREE
San Jorge University	School of Architecture and Technology	PhD	Doctorate Programme in Environment (Doctor - RD 99/2011)
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Law	Degree	Graduate in Law
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Economics and Business / Faculty of Business and Public Management / Faculty of Social and Human Sciences	Degree	Degree in Business Administration and Management
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Economics and Business	Degree	Degree in Finance and Accounting
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Economics and Business	Degree	Degree in Marketing and Market Research
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Social and Labour Sciences	Degree	Degree in Labour Relations and Human Resources
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Science	Degree	Degree in Physics
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Science	Degree	Degree in Chemistry
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Science	Degree	Graduate in Mathematics
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Science	Degree	Graduate in Biotechnology
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Economics and Business	Degree	Degree in Economics
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences	Degree	Degree in Human Nutrition and Dietetics
University of Zaragoza	Faculty of Business and Public Management	Degree	Degree in Management and Public Administration

## DEGREES IN TOTAL (61)

## STRATEGIC LINE 3 - SYSTEMISATION OF R&D&I ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

### A3.1. Evaluation of research activity (six-year periods)

By virtue of the aforementioned Agreement and contract-programme between the Government of Aragon and the University of Zaragoza (see above, A1.4), the ACPUA carries out the evaluation of the research activity of the contracted teaching staff of the University of Zaragoza aimed at obtaining the research merit complement.

From 2011 onwards, this evaluation process was gradually opened up to other groups of researchers working in Aragon: CUD Zaragoza, CITA, EUPLA, IACS, ETUZ (in a different call than the one addressed to contracted teaching staff at the University of Zaragoza to obtain the aforementioned allowance).

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 (six-year periods), applying the same criteria as those used at national level for civil servant staff by the CNEAI and by means of an annual call for applications.

**This activity is maintained** in 2021.

### A3.2. Evaluation of University Research Institutes

#### Evaluation for the creation

According to Art. 15 of the LOSUA, the Government of Aragon is responsible for the creation, suppression and assignment of University Research Institutes, following a report by the ACPUA. Consequently, **the Agency will launch this evaluation procedure in the event that the Government of Aragon requests the issuing of this mandatory report during 2021.** Initially, the evaluation of a new IUI of the University of Zaragoza in the field of Social Sciences is foreseen.

#### Periodic evaluation every 5 years

Article 15.3 of the LOSUA establishes that the ACPUA will evaluate the existing IUIs in Aragon every 5 years. The second periodic evaluation of these institutes having been carried out in the previous two years, no activity in this area is foreseen in 2021.

### A3.3. Assessment for the accreditation of contracted teaching staff with clinical links

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

In 2019, in close collaboration and coordination with the Directorate General for Universities, the SALUD and the University of Zaragoza, the ACPUA undertook the initial work of drawing up the corresponding protocol. In 2020, both the protocol and the evaluation procedure were approved. Therefore, **the launch of this new ACPUA evaluation activity is planned for 2021: the corresponding call for applications will be published and the accreditation applications will be evaluated.**

### A3.4. Collaboration with other bodies and entities

As in previous years, and to the extent of our possibilities, the ACPUA will provide technical assistance (such as the indication of profiles or the assignment of evaluators from our Bank) to authorities and organisations that request it (DGII of the Government of Aragon, ARAID Foundation, Secretariat for Teaching Quality and Innovation of the University of Zaragoza, Social Council of the University of Zaragoza, Antonio Gargallo Foundation, etc.).

## STRATEGIC LINE 4 - PROSPECTIVE VISION: PROMOTING EXCELLENCE, STRATEGIC EVALUATIONS AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS

### A4.1. Development of the "Boosting excellence" programme

In 2015, and based on both a recommendation of the ACPUA Expert Committee and the conclusions of a study carried out by ENQA on "The concept of Excellence in Higher Education", both formulated in 2014, the Governing Board approved a document entitled "Boosting Excellence". It encouraged the Agency to take steps in this direction, taking the quality of degrees and institutions as a reference. Furthermore, it was stated in this document, 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 procedure for the renewal of accreditation but of strategic interest for the Aragonese university system (such as, for example, internationalisation, entrepreneurship, student satisfaction and attention, etc.).

A few years later, and after a long period of both accompanying and evaluating the university system, which has concentrated almost all of the ACPUA's attention, the Agency intends to resume and develop this programme of "Promotion of excellence". Specifically, and in close collaboration with the universities, in 2021 it will proceed to the **design of criteria and tools that will make it possible to make visible, highlight and internationally contrast dimensions of excellence in the system**. This design will be supported by the thematic analysis being finalised by the Agency on "Accreditation of teaching and placement in rankings".

### A4.2. Thematic analysis

What in European quality parlance are called thematic analyses (i.e. second-order studies, beyond accreditations or certifications, undertaken by agencies on the basis of the data or results obtained in their evaluations) is one of the areas of activity that the Agency has been strengthening since the approval of its new Strategic Plan 2019-2022.

Specifically, **the following analyses are being carried out:**

1. Cross-cutting competences related to sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals (based on ex-ante assessments - initial accreditation).
2. Renewal of Accreditation: catalogue of good practices of Aragonese degrees.
3. Comparison of data and results of evaluations of similar degrees among different Spanish agencies (AQU, Unibasq, DEVA-AAC, ACSUCYL, ACSUG, ACCUEE and ACPUA, to date).
4. Comparative analysis of doctoral programmes for the improvement of the Higher Education System of Aragon.

#### A4.3. ACPUA Seminars on university quality

This important activity of the ACPUA, an interdisciplinary meeting place and exchange of knowledge, methods and experiences around the great theme of the quality of higher education in Aragon, is an open forum for communication with society and the participation of the entire university community. **It continues in 2021**, 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, Aragonese universities, other national and international quality agencies.

In the cycle of university quality seminars for this year 2021, a new feature is the holding of an **international seminar to present the results of the voluntary evaluation to measure the commitment of university centres to the Sustainable Development Goals** (ALCAEUS programme, see A5.1) and the **holding of the first Study Day for ACPUA collaborators**, bringing together all the members (academics, students and professionals) of the different bodies and committees of the Agency.

#### A4.4. Job placement studies: 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 integration of graduates". With this objective, in 2015 a Framework Agreement was signed between the Government of Aragon (ACPUA and the Aragonese Institute of Statistics, IAEST), the Social Council of the University of Zaragoza, the University of Zaragoza and the University of San Jorge, in order to promote a periodic survey aimed at the assessment and analysis of the labour market insertion of graduates of the University System of Aragon (SUA).

For the development of this project, a working group has been set up, led by the Social Council of the University of Zaragoza and in which all the signatories of the Agreement are represented: the General Directorate of Universities of the Government of Aragon, ACPUA, IAEST, UZ, USJ and the Social Council of the UZ itself. Their work resulted in the first Survey on labour market insertion of graduates of the University System of Aragon (cohort 2013/2014). This survey was exploited by the Aragonese Institute of Statistics (IAEST) and has subsequently allowed the study of the main variables to be analysed by each of the participating institutions. **It is planned to continue with this activity in 2021.**

#### A4.5. Technical reports

This heading includes those specific technical reports of a non-evaluative nature that are normally drawn up at the request of the Government of Aragon.

## STRATEGIC LINE 5 - SARROLLO DE LA DIMENSIÓN SOCIAL DE LA CALIDAD (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 assurance 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 development of a proposal for indicators that would help universities to introduce sustainability criteria, connecting this proposal with institutional evaluation processes.

Participation in this international project not only allowed Aragonese universities to work hand in hand with the agency to boost the university's commitment to the SDGs. It also encouraged the agency to develop its own programme, also unprecedented and pioneering both nationally and internationally, for the monitoring and certification of university centres according to their level of commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. This programme, which was presented to the REACU agencies during a conference organised by the ACPUA and to foreign agencies through the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA), is called ALCAEUS. To the best of the ACPUA's knowledge, it is the first concrete contribution to the SDGs in Europe from the external quality assurance sector.

For this reason, and taking a significant step forward, **in 2021 a pilot evaluation programme will be developed according to the ALCAEUS protocol**. This evaluation is voluntary, will take place during the first half of the year and, in this pilot phase, is aimed at the first Aragonese university centres to be institutionally accredited:

- School of Engineering and Architecture (U. of Zaragoza).
- Higher Polytechnic School (U. of Zaragoza).

This will be followed by the corresponding meta-evaluation, of great importance in this case in order to improve and generally offer the ALCAEUS tool to all universities and centres that may be interested, not only in Aragon.

The results of the pilot programme and the conclusions drawn from this meta-evaluation will be presented in the framework of an international event, with the participation of all the parties involved in the programme and especially addressed to the quality agencies members of REACU, ENQA and INQAAHE.

## A5.2. Mainstreaming gender mainstreaming and respect for sexual diversity

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

From the specific point of view of the introduction of the gender perspective, methodologies and information on diagnostic elements and evaluation indicators have also been exchanged with Spanish agencies that are particularly committed to equality issues, such as AQU Catalunya and Unibasq.

Since 2018, the Agency's activity reports have included a report on gender parity and equality in the composition of the Agency's committees and panels. In 2019, the evaluative perspective of this commitment to equality has been strengthened thanks to the aforementioned ALCAEUS Programme for the certification of centres in accordance with the 2030 Agenda.

In 2021, **this strategic line** will be **implemented in two directions**:

- On the one hand, and taking into account the emerging methodologies in the EHEA, the Agency's Equality Plan is going to be implemented, as well as approving the ACPUA document of gender perspective indicators, for its incorporation into the assessment protocols, both for degrees and research activity.
- Together with this, we will have a basic table or portal of indicators to promote and make visible the commitment of the centres that make up the Aragonese University System to respect sexual diversity and the recognition and protection of each person's gender identity.

## STRATEGIC LINE 6 - OPENNESS TO STAKEHOLDERS

### A6.1. ACPUA + STUDENTS Programme

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

**In 2021, work will continue on the training of students, their collaboration with the ACPUA and their participation in activities related to evaluation and quality.** Therefore, training sessions on the quality assurance process of university degrees in Spain will continue this year, with special emphasis on the *Student Centred Learning* (SCL, part 1 of the ESG) criteria, the centre certification programme and institutional accreditation and in close collaboration with the Student Council of the University of Zaragoza and equivalent student representative bodies of the University of San Jorge.

A specific training action will revolve around the ALCAEUS programme on the implementation of the SDGs in the university, with the aim of training students as evaluators of this new dimension.

Both the communicative impulses and the collaboration on the quality of teaching with university student representatives, not only from Aragonese universities but also with state associations such as CREUP, will also be intensified.

As a **great novelty in 2021**, and in view of the ACPUA's pressing need to **receive feedback from students on the impact of the changes in the teaching received as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic**, the **ACPUA + STUDENTS Strategic Forum**, a virtual platform for deliberation, **is launched**, participation and empowerment, open and collaborative, through which different themes and processes will be activated, so that students can make contributions and receive answers on key and pressing issues for the quality of their university education.

Another novelty within this section is the design of the **ACPUA - EL PASO Programme**, aimed at **generating connections with Aragonese Baccalaureate students**, given that one of the aims of the ACPUA is to pay attention to issues of transition to university. Among other actions, the aim is to promote exchanges and meetings with students and Councils of Secondary School Principals, Evau harmonisers, etc.

In addition, in 2021 we will continue to welcome students on work experience from the University of Zaragoza and also, as a novelty, a student from the Master's Degree in Evaluation and Quality Management in Higher Education from the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC).

### A6.2. ACPUA + SOCIETY Programme

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

In 2021, **the implementation of this programme** will continue as follows:

- Incorporation of external professionals and/or stakeholders in the panels and technical committees for the assessment of ACPUA degrees and centres.
- Incorporation of external stakeholders in the Agency's consultative bodies (Committee of Experts) and bodies for the approval of methodologies and protocols (Assessment, Certification and Accreditation Commission, CECA).
- Consultation with external stakeholders in the design phase of protocols and evaluation procedures related to degrees and centres.
- Generation of communication spaces with representatives of the world of work and business in Aragon (regular management meetings with economic clusters in Aragon, social agents such as the Red Cross, etc.).

## STRATEGIC LINE 7 - INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE AGENCY AND OPENING UP TO OTHER SPACES AND CENTRES

### A7.1. International evaluation of ACPUA

Following its reform in 2015, and in order to comply with current European standards (ESG), the LOSUA stipulates that the ACPUA must undergo an international evaluation every 5 years. This assessment requires accrediting compliance with each and every one of the ESG, is conducted by ENQA and only if the resulting report is favourable can the ACPUA be registered in the official EQAR Register of Agencies, which certifies its status as an accredited European agency. In turn, being registered in EQAR is a prerequisite for exercising all the powers granted by Spanish legislation to the regional agencies in the field of university quality and evaluation.

ACPUA passed its first international evaluation by ENQA in 2016, so in 2020 the second international evaluation was launched in order to renew its full membership of ENQA and the renewal of its registration in the European EQAR Register. After having submitted the required *Self-Assessment Report* in due time and form, the corresponding assessment visit took place at the end of November last year, and the Agency is currently awaiting the written *Review Report*.

Consequently, **the Agency's main action of international scope during 2021 is to complete this international evaluation process by obtaining within the year the renewal of the registration for another 5 years in the European Register of Agencies (EQAR).**

### A7.2. ACPUA + INTERNATIONAL

The ACPUA+INTERNATIONAL programme gathers and strategically systematises the Agency's internationalisation actions.

The actions planned for 2021 continue to be, with a reinforced character, the following:

- Active participation of 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 and ECA.
- Active collaboration, as an associate member, with the University of Zaragoza in the **UNITA-universitas montium European universities project**.
- Active collaboration with **Campus Iberus** on quality issues related to its educational offer.
- Proactivity of the ACPUA to participate in relevant European projects.

- International quality training of the Agency's staff and exchanges with other foreign agencies.
- Willingness of the ACPUA's technical staff to take part in international evaluation panels.
- Participation of ACPUA management or technical staff as members of the selection committees of international organisations and networks.
- Gradual incorporation of foreign evaluators in 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 whole EHEA. It is a project sponsored by the European Union (Erasmus+) that coordinates the European Register of University Quality Assurance Agencies EQAR. Its aim is to implement a **European database of university education on the basis of the results and contents of external evaluations conducted by the quality agencies registered in EQAR**. In recent years, the DEQAR database has grown exponentially and is now a reference document repository on university quality for the European Union, which has gained particular relevance with the launch of the European Universities Initiative.

**In 2021, all final degree and centre evaluation reports issued by the Agency will continue to be sent for publication in DEQAR**, and this fact will be expressly stated in the text of our reports.

Also, and as a novelty in 2021, **ACPUA has been invited by the European EQAR Registry to collaborate in a pilot experience to test the interoperability between the DEQAR database and the European Commission's QDR (Qualification Dataset Register) database**, in the context of the DEQAR Connect Project and the new European Union platform EUROPASS.

### A7.4. International degree evaluation in partnership with the agency (AKKORK, Russia)

This **new activity of international evaluation** of degrees outside our university system (provision of services with own income generation, under the coverage of the International Memorandum of Collaboration and with the participation of Aragonese experts) **is carried out in collaboration with the Russian agency AKKORK and consists of the accreditation of 4 masters of the RUDN University**, one of the most important universities in Moscow and recognised as a campus of excellence:

- Mathematical Models in Interdisciplinary Research.
- Foreign Language of Professional Communication and Specialized Translation.
- International Private Law.
- Global Security and Development Cooperation.

#### **A7.5. Evaluation of research activity (sexenios) for the University of La Rioja**

The University of La Rioja requested the ACPUA to evaluate the research activity of its non-permanent contracted teaching and research staff in 2018, by means of an agreement and under the figure of a management assignment. This service to a Campus Iberus university was carried out in both 2018 and 2019.

**In 2021, this activity would be maintained if the University of La Rioja were to request it again.**

The deadlines for this evaluation, as in 2019, will be adjusted to those established in the ordinary ACPUA calls for the evaluation of six-year periods, in order to optimise resources and facilitate the task of the evaluation panels and the agency's technical and administrative team .

#### **A7.6. Certification of merits of the teaching staff of the University of Cantabria**

The University of Cantabria and the University Quality and Prospective Agency of Aragon signed contracts in 2018 and 2019 under which the ACPUA has proceeded to the evaluation and certification of the salary complements of the teaching and research staff of the University of Cantabria for the years 2018 and 2019. Specifically, the merits of 756 and 754 professors were certified respectively.

**In 2021, this activity would be maintained if the University of Cantabria were to request it again.**

#### **A7.7. Advice to AQU Catalunya in the assessment for the renewal of the accreditation of a Master's degree of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC).**

At the request of the Catalan agency AQU, and under an agreement, it is planned that in 2021 the ACPUA will provide technical advice (issuing a visit report) to AQU in the process of renewing the accreditation of the MA in Higher Education Quality Assessment and Management by the UOC, in whose delivery the ACPUA itself collaborates. This same Master's degree was already the subject of a pre-report by the ACPUA in 2017 as part of the initial process of verification of its syllabus, always at the request of the Catalan agency.

### A7.8. Certification of placements in schools

The powers attributed to the ACPUA with regard to the monitoring and accreditation of official university education enable it to ensure that the placements offered in its syllabuses are carried out correctly.

In this sense, university teacher training includes in the different syllabuses the compulsory completion of curricular internships in educational centres. For this reason, the Government of Aragon is developing agreements with universities so that university students can carry out internships in the Bachelor's Degrees 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 in which students can carry out their internships, **and if so requested by the competent educational administration, the ACPUA will continue in 2021 with the activity of certifying schools** that successfully host university students on internships, which began in 2014.

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

### A7+1.1. Adaptation of panels and committees to the new activity of the Agency

The increasing activity - in terms of 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 their number and composition. This is to ensure that we are always in a position to deal more effectively and efficiently with our duties. **The actions planned for this year in this area are:**

- Restructuring of the panels and committees responsible for the evaluation of doctoral programmes.
- Creation of a Subcommittee for the Evaluation of Persons (SEP) responsible for issuing reports on the evaluation of six-year periods 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 has been completed. Phases I, II and III of the project were carried out in collaboration with Qualitas Management and are detailed below. **During 2021, phases IV and V are planned to be carried out.**

Phases of the project:

- 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: Axencia para a Calidade do Sistema Universitario de Galicia (Agency for Quality Assurance in the Galician University System)

AKKORK: Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Career Development

ANECA: Agencia Nacional de la Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación (National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation)

ANEP: Agencia Nacional de Evaluación y Prospectiva (National Agency for Evaluation and Foresight)

AQU: Agency for Quality Assurance in the University System of Catalonia

AQUIB: Agència de Qualitat Universitària de les Illes Balears (Balearic Islands University Quality Assurance Agency)

ARAIID: Aragonese Agency for Research and Development

AVAP: Agència Valenciana d'Avaluació i Prospectiva (Valencian Assessment and Foresight Agency)

CECA: Commission of Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation of the ACPUA

CGPU: Conferencia General de Política Universitaria (General Conference on University Policy)

CNEAI: Comisión Nacional de Evaluación de la Actividad Investigadora (National Commission for the Evaluation of Research Activity).

CREUP: Coordinadora de Representantes de Estudiantes de Universidades Públicas (Coordinating Committee of Public University Student Representatives).

CUD: Centro Universitario de la Defensa (Defence University Centre)

CURSA: University Commission for Monitoring and Accreditation.

DEQAR: The Database of External Quality Assurance Results

DEVA-AAC: Dirección de Evaluación y Acreditación - Agencia Andaluza del Conocimiento (Directorate of Evaluation and Accreditation - Andalusian Knowledge Agency)

ECA: European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education

EHEA: EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA 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: The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

ESG: European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education Area

ESU: European Student Union

ESU: European Student Union

EUA: European University Association

EURASHE: European Association of Institutions in Higher Education

FCM: Fundación para el Conocimiento madrimasd (Section of Evaluation, Certification and Accreditation of Quality in Higher Education)

IAEST: Aragonese Institute of Statistics

INQAAHE: International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

IUI: University Research Institute

LOSUA: Law 5/2005, of 14 June 2005, on the Organisation of the University System of Aragon.

LOTA: Law 4/2009, of 22 June, on Spatial Planning in Aragon

PCDVC: Professor Hired Doctor with Clinical Links

REACU: Spanish Network of University Quality Assurance Agencies

RRSS: Social Networks

RUCT: Registry of Universities, Centres and Degrees

SEC: Subcommittee for the Evaluation of Centres

SEI: ACPUA's Subcommittee for Research Evaluation

SET: ACPUA's Subcommittee for the Evaluation of Qualifications

IQAS: Internal Quality Management System of the ACPUA

IUSUIS: Integrated University Information System

SUA: Aragonese University System

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

USJ: San Jorge University

UZ: University of Zaragoza