



**ACPUA**

AGENCIA DE CALIDAD Y PROSPECTIVA  
UNIVERSITARIA DE ARAGÓN

PLAN OF  
ACTIVITIES

2023

Approved by the ACPUA Governing Board  
(23 March 2023)

## 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 this basis.*

#### 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.).*

*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 will become 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 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.*

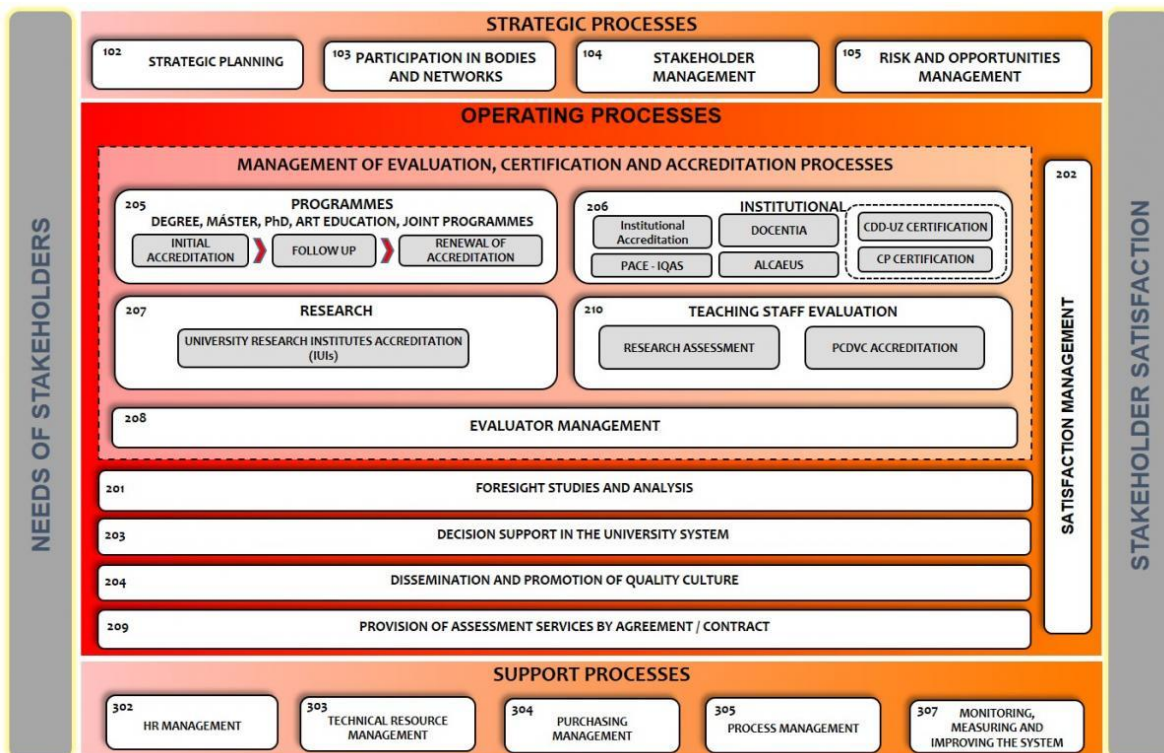
*In order to achieve this vision, ACPUA must be governed in all its procedures and actions by European standards and guidelines (ESG). With transparency, independence of judgement and commitment to accountability, we support reflection, continuous improvement and creativity.*

#### Values

- *Independence, autonomy and objectivity.*
- *Social accountability 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 activity 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 its collaborators, associated with professionalism and honesty.
- Teamwork, based on respect and collaboration to achieve the best working environment.

## MAP OF PROCESSES



### ANNUAL TARGETS 2023

No. Line	Strategic line	Annual target 2019	Annual target 2020	Annual target 2021	Annual target 2022	Annual target 2023
L1	<b>INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AND ITS IMPACT ON UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE</b>	Promoting Institutional Accreditation in Aragonese Universities	Promoting Institutional Accreditation in Aragonese Universities	<b>Advancing</b> the Institutional Accreditation of the Aragon University System	<b>To advance</b> the Institutional Accreditation of the University System of Aragon	<b>Advancing</b> the Institutional Accreditation of the Aragon University System
		<b>Promoting</b> evaluation programmes teacher	<b>Promote</b> teacher evaluation programmes	<b>Consolidate</b> programme s for the evaluation of the teaching	<b>Consolidate</b> programmes for the evaluation of the teaching	<b>Consolidate</b> teaching evaluation programmes
		<b>Develop</b> institutional reaccreditation protocol	<b>Develop</b> institutional <b>monitoring</b> and re-accreditation protocols	<b>Approve</b> institutional monitoring and re-accreditation protocols	<b>Adapt</b> the institutional monitoring and reaccreditation protocols to the new legislation	<b>Develop</b> protocols for the accreditation of doctoral schools and the reaccreditation of centres.

No. Line	Strategic line	Annual target 2019	Annual target 2020	Annual target 2021	Annual target 2022	Annual target 2023
L2	<b>CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROCESSES</b>	Complying with degree evaluation processes	Complying with degree evaluation processes	Comply with the evaluation processes of the qualifications	Comply with the evaluation processes of the qualifications	Complying with degree evaluation processes
				Update assessment protocols to adapt them to new developments (COVID-19 impact).	Adapt assessment protocols to the new legislation	Implement the new assessment protocols
					Have an action plan for recommendation of ENQA	Implement ENQA recommendations

No. Line	Strategic line	Annual target 2019	Annual target 2020	Annual target 2021	Annual target 2022	Annual target 2023
L3	<b>SYSTEMISATION OF R&amp;D&amp;I EVALUATION ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Reflect</b> on those aspects of the Science Law that could be developed by the Agency	<b>Reflect</b> on those aspects of the Science Law that could be developed by the Agency	<b>Reflecting</b> on the evaluative <b>challenges</b> of R&D&I in Aragon	<b>Reflecting</b> on challenges and improvements in the evaluation of the Humanities	<b>Participating in research evaluation reform</b>
		<b>Comply</b> with evaluation processes assigned	<b>Comply</b> with evaluation processes assigned	<b>Comply</b> with assigned evaluation processes	<b>Comply</b> with evaluation processes assigned	<b>Comply</b> with assigned evaluation processes
		<b>Develop</b> the accreditation protocol for PCDVC	Develop and <b>validate</b> the accreditation protocol for the PCDVC	<b>Launch</b> PCDVC accreditation assessment	<b>Consolidate</b> the evaluation for the accreditation of PCDVC	

No. Line	Strategic line	Annual target 2019	Annual target 2020	Annual target 2021	Annual target 2022	Annual target 2023
L4	<b>FORESIGHT: DRIVING EXCELLENCE, STRATEGIC EVALUATIONS AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS</b>	<b>Develop</b> studies on the insertion of alumni	<b>Develop</b> studies on the insertion of alumni	<b>Systematise and disseminate</b> thematic analyses on quality and employability in the SUA	<b>Systematise and disseminate</b> thematic analyses on quality and employability in the SUA	<b>Publishing and disseminating</b> the alumni survey
		<b>Promoting</b> thematic analysis of the SUA	<b>Promoting</b> thematic analysis of the SUA			<b>Visibilise</b> the excellence of the SUA and its comparability with other systems
			<b>Boosting</b> excellence and strategic evaluations	<b>Visibilising</b> the strategic strengths of the SUA		

No. Line	Strategic line	Annual target 2019	Annual target 2020	Annual target 2021	Annual target 2022	Annual target 2023
L5	DEVELOPING THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF QUALITY	Define indicators for sustainability assessment in HEIs	Development of an evaluation programme of the implementation of the 2030 agenda in the SUA	Implementing the ALCAEUS Programme	Consolidating the ALCAEUS Programme	Disseminating the ALCAEUS Programme after the pilot evaluation
		Incorporate equality criteria in evaluation processes.	Promoting the principle of equality and respect for sexual diversity	Apply across the board the principle of real (effective, material) equality of opportunity between women and men.	Apply the principle of real (effective, material) equality of opportunity between women and men across the board in evaluation guides.	Renewing the Agency's commitment to sustainability and Agenda2030
				Contribute to the effective respect for the sexual diversity of all persons in the centres of the SUA	Launch an ACPUA seal of respect for diversity	Apply the principle of real (effective, material) equality of opportunity between women and men across the board in evaluation guides.
				Launch an ACPUA seal of respect for diversity	Launch an ACPUA seal of respect for diversity	



No. Line	Strategic line	Annual target 2019	Annual target 2020	Annual target 2021	Annual target 2022	Annual target 2023
L6	OPENNESS TO STAKEHOLDERS	Increase stakeholder involvement in all Agency processes	Increasing stakeholder participation in all committees and processes of the company Agency	Strengthen stakeholder participation in all Agency committees and processes	Ensure active stakeholder participation in all Agency committees and processes	Consolidate the active participation of stakeholders in all Agency committees and processes
			Providing information and responding to the expectations of the Aragonese society	Providing information and responding to the expectations of the Aragonese society	Providing information and responding to the expectations of the Aragonese society	Providing information and responding to the expectations of the Aragonese society
				Establish a stable channel of communication with SUA students in order to know their needs and expectations. (impact COVID-19)	Strengthen communication with the SUA student body.	Strengthen communication with current and future students. future of SUA
					Analysing teaching needs and expectations (COVID Impact)	Sharing COVID Impact analysis with stakeholders

No. Line	Strategic line	Annual target 2019	Annual target 2020	Annual target 2021	Annual target 2022	Annual target 2023
L7	<b>INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE AGENCY AND OPENING UP TO OTHER SPACES AND CENTRES</b>	Increasing the ACPUA's participation in the international arena	Increasing the ACPUA's participation in the international arena	<b>Strengthen the ACPUA's participation in European and international projects.</b>	<b>Developing</b> ACPUA's international participation enhancing its involvement and prestige in the EHEA and in other global regions and networks	<p><b>Consolidate</b> the ACPUA's international participation by strengthening its involvement and prestige in the EHEA and in <b>America Latina</b></p> <p><b>Consolidating</b> the Agency's contribution to the quality assurance of <b>University Alliances European Union (UNITA)</b></p> <p><b>Advancing the</b> Agency's recognition according to standards international (GGP/ISG)</p>

		<p><b>Increasing ACPUA participation outside the SUA</b></p>	<p><b>Increase the ACPUA's projection at national level.</b></p>	<p><b>Strengthen the ACPUA's projection and exchanges at the national level.</b></p>	<p><b>Continue to collaborate and increase ACPUA exchanges at the international level.</b> national</p>	<p><b>Continue collaboration and <b>maintain</b> ACPUA exchanges at the national level.</b></p>
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No. Line	Strategic line	Annual target 2019	Annual target 2020	Annual target 2021	Annual target 2022	Annual target 2023
L7 + 1	<b>ADAPTING THE AGENCY'S STRUCTURE TO THE NEW TRENDS OF THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA</b>	<p><b>Strengthening the structure of the Agency</b></p> <p><b>Bringing the agency's management system into line with the new standards of quality</b></p>	<b>Strengthening the agency structure</b>	<b>Strengthening the agency structure</b>	<b>Strengthen the agency's structure, based on ENQA's recommendations on ESG. 3.5/3.6</b>	<b>Prepare ENQA Progress Visit (follow-up)</b>

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

### A1.1. Development of 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, among other models and procedures, those related to institutional accreditation.

The legal framework for institutional accreditation was modified in 2021 with the enactment of Royal Decree 640/2021, of 27 July, on the creation, recognition and authorisation of universities and university centres, and institutional accreditation of university centres. Following the publication of the Resolution of 3 March 2022, of the General Secretariat for Universities, which issued instructions on the procedure for the institutional accreditation of public and private university centres, and published the Protocol for the certification of internal quality assurance systems of university centres and the Protocol for the evaluation procedure for the renewal of the institutional accreditation of university centres, approved by the General Conference on University Policy, REACU has begun to work on the development (or adaptation) of the existing protocols.

Consequently, and building on this progress at national level, a key activity for the ACPUA in this area in **2023** is **the development of its own protocol for the monitoring and renewal of institutional accreditation.**

### A1.2. IACS Certification - PACE Programme (New: Doctoral Schools).

During 2023, and in the light of the aforementioned Resolution of 3 March 2022 of the General Secretariat of Universities, the ACPUA will review the PACE - IACS Programme to adapt it to the new regulations, incorporating **as a new feature** (as included in the new legislation) the particularities of this type of evaluation for **its application to Doctoral Schools.**

With regard to the evaluations to be carried out under the PACE Programme, and given that this evaluation may be requested at any time during the year, the **evaluation for the certification of the Internal Quality Assurance System of the centres that request it** will be carried out.

### A1.3. Advancing Institutional Accreditation

In the Aragonese University System, the USJ has accredited all its centres and the UZ already has institutional accreditation for a good number of centres, particularly those offering a greater number of degrees, so that **institutional accreditation** is at an **advanced stage of implementation** in the system.

During 2023, the ACPUA will issue the corresponding evaluation report when requested by the university for a faculty or school that has already obtained PACE certification of its IACS.

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

The ACPUA will continue with the certification process of the merits of dedication and teaching at the University of Zaragoza as established in the programme contract signed by the Government of Aragon and the University of Zaragoza for the payment of additional complements for teaching staff (ORDER IIU/2095/2018, of 27 December, publishing the Agreement of 3 December 2018, of the Government of Aragon, establishing the additional salary complements linked to individual merits of the teaching and research staff of the University of Zaragoza for the period 2019-2023 and approving the conclusion of the Contract-Programme between the Government of Aragon and the University of Zaragoza for the allocation and financing of the aforementioned salary 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 their teaching staff's teaching activities.

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.

During the year 2021, and at the initiative of ANECA, the programme was updated. The ACPUA participated in this task from the technical commission, which includes technicians from the different agencies. Subsequently, a new model of collaboration agreement between ANECA and each regional agency was discussed within REACU.

In 2023 the ACPUA plans to carry out the evaluations eventually requested by both universities.

#### **A1.6. Evaluation of the teaching merits of the teaching staff of the San Jorge University.**

Inspired by state regulations on the remuneration of university teaching staff, San Jorge University has for some years now had a procedure for the teaching recognition of its teaching staff by means of the evaluation of teaching merits in 5-year periods (five-year periods of teaching excellence). At the university's request, this evaluation is carried out by a technical committee of experts appointed by the ACPUA.

In 2023, this activity will continue with the evaluation of the five-year teaching period of the teaching staff of the Universidad San Jorge.

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

The ACPUA has been collaborating with the University of Zaragoza (Secretariat of Quality and Teaching Innovation, Vice-rectorate of Academic Policy) in the promotion of teaching innovation among its teaching staff, normally through the assignment to the University of Zaragoza of experts in the field registered in our Bank of Evaluators for the evaluation of teaching innovation projects. **This activity will continue in 2023.**

### **STRATEGIC LINE 2 - CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHING EVALUATION PROCESSES**

#### **A2.1. Verification and modification of curricula**

The verification of a curriculum is the process of ex ante evaluation of official studies 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 evaluative 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 assessment of degrees assesses the suitability of the degree project, the coherence of the syllabus and the adequacy of the resources with which the degree will be endowed. 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 where the justification, the opportunity of the degree, the curriculum, the learning outcomes to be achieved and the material and financial resources are approved.

human resources to be placed at the service of this degree. It had been governed by a Royal Decree (R.D. 1393/2007), which had been subject to numerous modifications.

With the publication of Royal Decree 822/2021 of 28 September, which establishes the organisation of university education and the procedure for quality assurance, the legal framework for the verification and modification of degrees was considerably modified, bringing important new developments. During 2022, the quality agencies have developed and approved by consensus various protocols or general assessment criteria for the application of the new regulations.

In 2023, the ACPUA will continue to **participate actively in the working groups, presentations and meetings of REACU aimed at the effective implementation of the new protocols for the verification and modification of courses** in accordance with the new Royal Decree. Similarly, the Agency will continue with the **corresponding adaptation of its own protocols and guides**, collaborating closely with the universities in their design and paying special attention **to the simplification of the processes and documentation** to be provided in the new verification reports.

The ACPUA's **activity of verification and evaluation of modifications** is always open and attends to all requests from both universities that come from the Council of Universities and comply with the requirements, deadlines and procedures established by the Directorate General of Universities of the Government of Aragon.

## **A2.2. Monitoring and renewal of degree programme accreditation**

Following the entry into force of the new R.D. 822/2021 (see A2.1), a **national review** of the degree monitoring process within REACU is pending.

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, these being the criteria that will inspire the ACPUA in the adaptation of its own protocol to the new requirements of R.D. 822. In this process of **revision and improvement of the procedure**, the Agency will connect, for reasons of coherence and efficiency in evaluation, the monitoring of degrees with the monitoring of institutional accreditation.

In relation to **the renewal of the accreditation of degrees** in 2023, the confluence of the extension of the deadline for the renewal of the accreditation of master's degrees provided for in RD822 together with the fact that all the centres of the USJ and the centres with more degrees of the UZ already have institutional accreditation, means that only one evaluation for the renewal of accreditation will be carried out this year during the first semester, specifically, the **evaluation for the renewal of the accreditation of the Doctoral Programme in Health Sciences of the Universidad San Jorge**.



### A2.3. Accreditation and monitoring of arts education

The regulations currently governing the provision of Arts Education in Spain make the authorisation of Masters in this field conditional on passing an ex-ante evaluation process, known as "homologation" and carried out by the university quality agencies.

The ACPUA carries out the evaluation of official Master's degree courses in parallel to official university courses, as part of 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.

**The ACPUA will keep open this evaluation programme for the accreditation, monitoring and renewal of the accreditation of Master's degrees in artistic education throughout the year 2023.**

### A2.4. Follow-up of ENQA recommendations (action plan)

The ACPUA's Strategic Plan (L2) speaks of the continuous improvement of evaluation processes. The best way to advance along this strategic line is to address the recommendations and suggestions for further development formulated in the report of the ENQA panel of experts that evaluated our Agency in 2021. Therefore, in 2022, the strategic reflection began in order to have an action plan with specific objectives to follow up on ENQA's recommendations and suggestions, which will be reflected in the Follow up report that will be prepared during the second quarter of the year, a prerequisite for **ENQA's Progress visit** (see section A7.1. International evaluation of ACPUA).

This reflection on evaluation processes runs parallel to the updating of the ACPUA's protocols and their adaptation to the new legal framework (RR.DD. 640 and 822, see A1.1 and A2.1) and **should lead, in the last quarter of the year, to the opening of work on the Agency's new Strategic Plan.**

## STRATEGIC STRAND 3 - SYSTEMISATION OF R&D&I EVALUATION 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 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.

Gradually in previous years, this evaluation process was opened up to other groups of researchers working in other centres: CUD Zaragoza, CITA, EUPLA, IACS, ETUZ (in a different call than the one addressed to contracted teaching staff of the University of Zaragoza to obtain the aforementioned complement).

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 (sexenios), 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.

In 2023 **this activity is maintained.**

### **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 the University Research Institutes, subject to a report by the ACPUA. Consequently, in 2023, **the Agency would launch this evaluation procedure in the case of a proposal for the creation of a new Institute.**

#### **Periodic evaluation every 5 years**

The ACPUA evaluates the existing University Research Institutes in Aragon every 5 years. In the second half of the year, work will be carried out with the institutes being **evaluated by IPH, CIRCE, IUCA, ISGH, I3A and BIFI** in order to prepare for their periodic evaluation.

### **A3.3. Assessment for the accreditation of contract lecturers with clinical attachment**

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

Following the evaluation of the first call and the corresponding meta-evaluation process in 2022, the application period for the second call closed in December.

With around fifty applications having been submitted, the evaluation is expected to be completed during the second quarter of the year.

The Programme provides that the call is annual, so that **in 2023 the activity is maintained with the closure of the second call and the publication at the end of the year of the third call.**

## STRATEGIC LINE 4 - FORWARD-LOOKING VISION: FOSTERING EXCELLENCE, STRATEGIC EVALUATIONS AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS

### A4.1. Labour market insertion studies: Publication of the results of the graduate follow-up project.

Among the functions of the ACPUA entrusted by Law 5/2005, of 14 June, on the Organisation of the University System of Aragon, is that of "monitoring the labour market insertion of graduates". With this objective, in 2015 a Framework Agreement was signed 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 assessing and analysing the labour market outcomes of graduates of the University System of Aragon (SUA).

A working group has been set up for the development of this project, led by the Social Council of the University of Zaragoza and in which all the signatory entities 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. Its 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 subsequently allowed the study of the main variables under analysis by each of the participating institutions. In 2021, the Social Council, the ACPUA and the rest of the entities completed the preparation work for the second survey (on the 2016/2017 cohort).

Once the fieldwork was put out to tender, the company awarded the contract carried out the survey from 31 March to 27 May 2022. Following the study of the database and subsequent exploitation of the graduate survey by the IAEST, in mid-October a first preview of the data was available in Excel table format. During the last quarter of 2022, the ACPUA proceeded to study and review the data, detecting some inconsistencies that were solved by the IAEST. In addition, cross-referencing of variables necessary to carry out a more in-depth analysis of certain aspects was requested, and a first assessment and graphic analysis of the results was carried out.

In the first quarter of the year 2023 the forecast is to finalise the graphic analysis of the data for its incorporation into the Report **"The Insertion of University Graduates of the University System of Aragon: Cohort 2016-2017"** which will be presented publicly in an event in coordination with the General Directorate of Universities of the Government of Aragon, ACPUA, IAEST, UZ, USJ and the Social Council of the UZ.

On the occasion of the publication of the results of this survey, it is the agency's intention to hold an **"Insertion Data Day" with students and graduates** in 2023. The aim is for the information to contribute not only to providing the system with evidence, but also to promote its knowledge and use among students and graduates. To this end, the aim is to establish bridges with these groups (through focus groups or workshops) that will

The aim is to improve the usability of this information and to broaden the understanding of students' needs in the transition to the labour market.

#### **A4.2. Systematisation and Dissemination of Thematic Analyses**

According to the European ESG 3.4. standard, agencies "must publish reports describing and analysing the overall results of their external quality assurance activities". Since the approval of the current Strategic Plan, the ACPUA has been consolidating this activity, publishing periodically on its website various studies of this type (cross-cutting competences on SDGs, results of evaluations of similar degrees within the SUA, identification of good practices, etc.). **In 2023 this activity will continue, publishing at least two new studies in the series "The ACPUA learns"**, one of which will describe the results obtained in the renewal of the accreditation of the University of Zaragoza's doctoral programmes and another will focus on the analysis of double degrees.

In addition, in 2023 the ACPUA will continue to actively participate in the **regular organisation of webinars on the challenges facing degree programmes today**, especially from the **employers' perspective**. In these webinars, the agencies AQU, Unibasq, DEVA-AAC, ACSUCYL, ACSUG, ACCUEE and ACPUA share the results of the different degree evaluations they carry out and then make them available to the public in the form of a thematic analysis.

Finally, the announced follow-up plan to the ENQA recommendations (see A2.4) should include **an action to develop** "a more systematic and deeper approach to the analysis of findings from its evaluation processes, and expand its research activities to provide reports that discuss trends and developments at the level of the Aragon higher education system".

#### **A4.3. ACPUA University Quality Seminars**

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 university community. This activity **will continue in 2023**.

#### **A4.4. Employability for decent work**

As an additional activity to A4.1, and aimed at the continuous improvement of the Aragonese University System, in 2023 the Agency will organise an **Employability Day for Decent Work**, based on the sharing of good practices in graduate follow-up and employability.

This conference is aimed at students and will have a twofold focus: a) learning from good practices within the SUA itself, sharing experiences within the UZ and the University of Zagreb, and b) learning from the best practices within the SUA itself, sharing experiences within the UZ and the University of Zagreb and the University of Zagreb.

USJ, as well as within other Aragonese institutions related to higher education; b) learning from good practices outside the SUA, sharing experiences from other bodies related to higher education, but outside Aragon (other universities, other quality agencies, employers' centres, etc.). The aim is, in a very simple way, to establish synergies between all stakeholders around a common theme (employability), which also allows working with students around two sustainable development goals: quality education (SDG 4) and decent work and economic development (SDG 8).

The approach is related to target 8.5: "By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value". *In other words: to go beyond graduate follow-up and employability itself, and to reflect on whether the employment of SUA graduates is appropriate to their studies, not only in terms of their position (working with something related or not), but also in terms of their working conditions.*

## STRATEGIC LINE 5 - DEVELOPING THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF QUALITY

### A5.1. Agenda 2030: the ALCAEUS programme

During 2018 the ACPUA actively participated in the international project S&QSHE (Sustainability & Quality in Higher Education) in collaboration with the Andorran agency AQUA. 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 was developed mainly during 2019 and its main result was the development of a proposal of indicators for universities to introduce sustainability criteria, connecting this proposal with institutional assessment processes.

Participation in this international project not only made it possible to go hand in hand with Aragonese universities in the promotion of university commitment to the SDGs, but 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.

Following the open and voluntary call for the pilot evaluation, two institutionally accredited Aragonese universities applied:

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

The evaluation was carried out **according to the ALCAEUS evaluation protocol** and ended with the 2030 Certification of these centres, making visible with a Seal their firm commitment to the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**In 2022, the meta-evaluation of the ALCAEUS programme was carried out**, which is of great importance for this programme and has led to the modification of some aspects and the introduction of the necessary and relevant improvements in the final protocol.

The Final Protocol of the ALCAEUS Programme is now well defined and has been included among the activities registered in EQAR, and the reports of this evaluation are published in DEQAR.

During the year **2023**, the ACPUA plans to **disseminate the new developments of the Programme** both nationally and internationally. The recipients of these dissemination actions will be universities, Quality Agencies and external experts, as well as the carrying out of any evaluations that may be requested.

#### **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 promoting equality between men and women, reducing the gender gap in higher education and introducing the gender perspective. 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 gender mainstreaming, methodologies and information on diagnostic elements and evaluation indicators have also been exchanged with Spanish agencies particularly committed to equality issues, such as AQU Catalunya and UNIBASQ.

Since 2018, the ACPUA has included in its Activity Reports a report on gender parity and equality in the composition of the Agency's committees and panels. In 2019, a new impetus was given to the evaluative perspective of this commitment to equality thanks to the aforementioned ALCAEUS Programme for the certification of centres according to the 2030 Agenda. In 2021, the new ACPUA technical committee (Subcommittee for Thematic Evaluations, SETE) was entrusted with the implementation of this strategic line.

Following these actions, the launch of an ACPUA diversity label was included in the planning of activities in 2022. During the year, work was carried out to establish the dimensions and sub-dimensions of evaluation, as well as the creation of a dynamic graphic

that would make visible the efforts made by the university centres to respect this subject. As the main activity, it was decided that it was essential to draw up a document in which the appropriate words were decided and unanimity was generated in the definitions of the terms corresponding to each of the dimensions described: gender, affective-sexual, disability and SEN (Specific Educational Support Needs), culture and religion and social exclusion. For this purpose, an ad hoc survey was designed and sent to stakeholders previously selected for their knowledge on the subject.

In addition, following the interest of other international agencies on the subject, exchanges on diversity have been held with the NVAO Agency in Flanders and workshops on the social dimension of quality have been held with the Italian National Agency ANVUR.

In the first quarter of 2023, the ACPUA will have the final report with the results of the above-mentioned survey. This report, called the "**Guide to diversity terms**", is the first step in the work to launch the diversity label.

### **A5.3. Renewing the Agency's commitment to sustainability and the 2030 Agenda**

Since 2015, the ACPUA has renewed its **commitment to the 2030 Agenda**, specifically with the **United Nations Global Compact** in Spain and with the **United Nations Global Compact** organisation based in New York.

In order to achieve these objectives of commitment, visibility and effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Agency issues the so-called COE or **Engagement Communication** in which we state the following aspects every two years:

- Part I. **Statement of continuing endorsement by the Executive Director** or equivalent position. In the 2023 communication (due for renewal from 1 March 2023 to 1 March 2025), we describe the steps taken by our organisation to support the UN Global Compact and its principles. We are also committed to sharing this information with our stakeholders through our main communication channels, as we have been doing for the past two years, mainly through our website and social media.
- Part II. Description of measures. In 2023, the ACPUA maintains and strengthens actions that it had already been carrying out, such as the application of a Code of Ethics based on "**Corporate Social Responsibility**", signed by all members and collaborators of the agency and which includes the highest ethical, professional and integrity standards. This Code of Ethics is published on our website, as an example of the principle of transparency that governs the agency's activities. It describes the measures that the ACPUA has been adopting and maintains at present, such as the organisation of seminars, conferences and other actions related to the principles of the UN Global Compact.

- Part III. **Measuring results in 2023.** Following our criteria of transparency and credibility, the final design of the evaluation protocol of the ALCAEUS Programme and the reports of the two ACCREDITED university centres are already available on the ACPUA website, as well as on the European DEQAR register.

In 2023, the **ACPUA** is expected to **join the Aragonese Alliance for the 2030 Agenda**, which aims to make visible and promote shared efforts in the Autonomous Community of Aragon in this area and to award a distinctive Seal.

## STRATEGIC LINE 6 - OPENNESS TO STAKEHOLDERS

### A6.1. ACPUA + STUDENTS Programme

This programme, launched at the end of 2014, seeks 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 active communication with the student body. Specifically, its objectives are:

- Integration of students into the ACPUA structure.
- Student participation in ACPUA evaluation activities.
- Cooperation and stable relations with the student councils and associations of the institutions of the University System of Aragon.
- Training students in the main evaluation processes.
- Quality culture: student awareness of Quality Agencies.
- Common understanding of student needs (student-centred learning).

In 2023, work will continue **on the training of students, their collaboration with the ACPUA and their participation in activities related to evaluation and quality.** We will also intensify both the communicative impulses and the collaboration in terms of quality of teaching with **representatives of the university student body, not only from Aragonese universities but also with state associations such as CREUP.**

Actions envisaged:

- **Training courses or webinars on quality processes**, at least one organised in collaboration with the Student Council of the University of Zaragoza, another one aimed at the CREUP student pool and another one carried out jointly with another regional quality agency.



- **Specific training action in quality and sustainability**, which also qualifies students to be part of expert panels of the ALCAEUS Programme (Agenda 2030).
- Meeting of the **transversal group** of students, where student representatives from Aragonese universities share experiences and visions of quality processes with students from outside Aragon who are part of the panels and evaluation committees of the ACPUA.
- **A training proposal for future university students**, aimed not only at Baccalaureate students but also at guidance counsellors and management teams of secondary schools and centres. In addition to publicising the activities and functions of the ACPUA, it is proposed to provide information **on student satisfaction, exit profiles and employability of the different degrees** of the Aragonese university system, extracted from our original source, which are the evaluation reports and prospective studies of the ACPUA.

In addition, in 2023 it will continue to host trainees from the University of Zaragoza.

### COVID Strategic Impact Forum

As a major innovation in 2022, and in view of the ACPUA's pressing need to receive feedback from students on the impact of the changes in teaching received as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the **ACPUA Strategic Forum** was launched.

+ **STUDENTS**, a virtual and face-to-face platform for deliberation, participation and empowerment, open and collaborative, through which a survey and 4 working groups have been carried out with students from the two Aragonese universities and which has culminated in the publication of the final report and the approval of a Decalogue of recommendations.

The three aspects that have been most intensively discussed are: how the pandemic has affected the quality of teaching, communication between students and teachers, and the socio-emotional impact.

In 2023, it is planned to disseminate the results generated in the ACPUA Covid Impact Report with the aim of sharing the improvements and recommendations that the students themselves consider should be maintained and promoted in universities. Specifically, the ACPUA is expected to participate with its communication entitled: **Post-Covid Strategic Forum of the ACPUA+Students Programme: education, quality learning and emotional impact during the pandemic in the Aragonese University System**, in the II International Congress on Research and Transfer in Education Sciences: ODS and Socioemotional Education in the digital era".

### Guidance for access to the universities of Aragon

As a **great novelty in 2023**, the ACPUA is launching a new system of information for students about access to the universities of Aragon called the **Programme**

### **ACPUA+Students: University orientation at a click.**

ACPUA launches a new infographic as part of its ACPUA+Students programme with the aim of promoting a smooth transition of students into higher education in Aragon.

Under the slogan "Inform yourself and decide your education!", both in Spanish and English, the updated links of 5 relevant topics are detailed, which have been meticulously selected by some public and private interest groups from Aragon and the rest of Spain.

The content focuses mainly on support for the choice of studies, the section on available and transitional degrees (access, levels, institutions, satisfaction reports, scholarships and grants), resources for employability and entrepreneurship, the possibility of free counselling and other options related to vocational training.

With this infographic, available on the ACPUA website and disseminated through social networks, teachers, students and families can find resources to facilitate decision-making, available at the click of a button.

In addition, during 2023 **the ACPUA will disseminate a university orientation seminar for interested parties** to raise awareness of this resource, as well as training actions in secondary schools in coordination with the Innovation and Vocational Training Service of Education of the Government of Aragon.

With these activities, ACPUA promotes its compliance with its Strategic Plan (line 6.1), with European standards (ESG 3.1) and also with the 2030 Agenda (SDG4) to achieve quality education.

### **A6.2. ACPUA + SOCIETY Programme**

This programme was conceived in 2017 to respond to the recommendations made in the 2016 ENQA evaluation report, as almost all of them converged on the need for ACPUA to increase the involvement of external stakeholders (mainly in evaluation panels and committees and in the design of protocols and procedures). In the recent ENQA report of 2021, stakeholder participation and involvement in the Agency's activities is no longer the subject of both recommendations and commendations (Commendations ESG 3.6 and ESG 2.2.), which means that the programme is working.

In 2022, the ACPUA has made a direct commitment to the social dimension of quality by collaborating intensively with the Spanish Red Cross for the accompaniment of immigrants and their recognition of qualifications, generating a collaboration agreement between the parties to ensure compliance.

In addition, active participation in a Europe-wide working group coordinated by the Italian National Agency ANVUR has culminated in the joint preparation of an international seminar-workshop entitled "**What do we talk about when we talk about social impact?**"

However, in 2023, the ACPUA+Society Programme **must continue to be promoted and its objectives implemented:**

- Integration of external stakeholders (professionals, industry, society) into the ACPUA structure.
- Involvement of external stakeholders (professionals, industry, society) in ACPUA evaluation activities.
- Joint commitment to the social dimension of quality and sustainability (achievement of the SDGs).
- Cooperation and stable relations with business associations, trade unions, professional associations, associations, chambers of commerce and economic sectors in Aragon.
- Raising awareness of the ACPUA's mission and actions among Aragonese society.
- Common understanding of innovation in Higher Education, technological changes and labour market needs.

In 2023, in view of the weight that the prospective studies on labour insertion and employability acquire this year, the **generation of communicative spaces** with representatives of the world of work and business in Aragon (periodic management meetings with economic clusters in Aragon, social agents such as the Red Cross, etc.) is foreseen.

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

### **A7.1. International assessment 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 assessment 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 assessment by ENQA in 2016 and passed its second international assessment in 2021. ACPUA therefore remains a full member of ENQA and continues to be listed in the European Register of EQAR Agencies.

In mid-2023, ACPUA will prepare the **Follow up Report**, as a start to ACPUA's monitoring process. This follow-up may culminate (if desired) with the **visit of part of the** evaluation panel to ACPUA in the last quarter of the year. The panel's representation will follow upon the progress of the Agency and the actions implemented by ACPUA in response to the recommendations in the evaluation report.

In 2022, the ACPUA has submitted the relevant documentation for evaluation by the INQAAHE International Network of Agencies to **certify the alignment of our evaluation criteria and activities with the Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP)**. In 2023, it is expected to be reviewed by a Committee of experts, as well as its homologation with the new international standards that the INQAAHE agency is going to launch in the coming months.

With these actions, **the ACPUA aligns itself with international and European compliance** with the quality standards promoted by INQAAHE and ENQA.

## **A7.2. ACPUA + INTERNATIONAL**

The ACPUA+INTERNACIONAL programme strategically brings together and systematises the Agency's internationalisation actions. The 2021 ENQA evaluation report commends the ACPUA "for involving international experts in all programme reaccreditation reviews" (ESG2.4).

The following activities are maintained during 2023:

- 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 partner, in the **European University Alliance UNITA-universitas montium**, of which the University of Zaragoza is a member.
- Active collaboration with **Campus Iberus** on quality issues related to its training offer.
- Proactivity of the ACPUA to participate in relevant **European projects**.
- International quality training for the Agency's staff and **exchanges with other foreign agencies**.
- **Participation of international evaluators** in all teaching and institution evaluation processes.

### 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 become particularly relevant with the launch of the European Universities Initiative.

As a novelty in 2022, the **quality assessment protocol of the ALCAEUS Programme** has become part of the DEQAR register. Thus, this register currently includes the positive reports with the **firm commitment to the 2030 Agenda** of the two accredited Aragonese university centres: the School of Engineering and Architecture of Zaragoza and the Higher Polytechnic School of Huesca; both belong to the University of Zaragoza.

**In 2023, all final degree and institution 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. The reports relating to the ALCAEUS programme will also be included.

### A7.5. Collaboration with the ANVUR Agency (Italy)

The ACPUA maintains special collaborative relations with the ANVUR agency, having agreed (general protocol of action) in 2021 that the two agencies will collaborate together in activities of evaluation, promotion and dissemination of quality.

In 2022, this collaboration was intensified with the Italian national agency for quality and evaluation, actively participating in a working group of European quality agencies, which culminated in the organisation of a workshop on the social impact of university quality, specifically the so-called Third Mission.

In this workshop, held in January 2023, ACPUA participated with a presentation entitled: **"What do we talk about when we talk about social impact? The ACPUA strategy".** In addition, the Red Cross participated as a stakeholder of the Agency, in a round table, in which it highlighted the interest of collaboration between social entities and quality agencies, especially with the ACPUA of Aragon.

In 2023, the Agency is expected to continue this line of collaboration with ANVUR, but it will also be involved in a **new Erasmus + project** with the aim of disseminating the ALCAEUS Programme for the certification of university centres in relation to the 2030 Agenda among Ibero-American countries.

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

At the request of the University of Cantabria and by means of a contract, the ACPUA has been certifying the merits of the teaching staff of that university, for the purposes of the programme of salary complements for teaching and research staff of the University of Cantabria.

**This activity will continue in 2023**, following the signing of the corresponding agreement with the University of Cantabria in 2022 for the next four years.

### **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 the proper development of the internships offered in its syllabuses.

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 work placements in the Bachelor's Degrees in Early Childhood Education and Primary Education and in the Master's Degree in Teaching.

In 2022, the ACPUA carried out for the first time a survey in collaboration with the Directorate General for Innovation and Vocational Training of Education of the Government of Aragon in which the need to provide information to schools about this activity, mainly to secondary schools, was detected.

For this reason, an online training session was held in June entitled: Pre-university quality: ACPUA certification, in which the Agency was presented, the data corresponding to the stable network of university internship centres, as well as an explanation of the ACPUA internship centre evaluation protocol. The result achieved was the extension of the ACPUA Certification to 35 secondary schools.

At the same time, the ACPUA Seal was updated together with the Manual of Use for sending to all schools accredited for the first time.

**In order to consolidate this stable network** of educational centres in which students can carry out their internships, the ACPUA **will continue** in 2023 **with the activity of certifying schools** that successfully host university students on internships, which began in 2014, for pre-school, primary and secondary schools.

During this year 2023, **the constant collaboration** with the Directorate General for Innovation and Vocational Training will **also be maintained**, as well as **the holding of a training seminar** aimed at the Training Coordinators, the Tutors of university internships and the Directors of all secondary schools in Aragon.

## STRATEGIC LINE 7+1 - ADAPTING 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 the number and composition of its committees. This is to ensure that we are always in a position to deal more effectively and efficiently with our obligations. The actions foreseen for 2023 in this area are as follows:

- Restructuring the composition and activities of the ACPUA **Monitoring Committee.**
- Assignment of new functions to the **Sub-Commission on Thematic Evaluations (SETE).**

### A7+1.2. Improving compliance with European standards

The Agency's internal quality system will continue in 2023 with a focus on **improving feedback between committees and evaluation panels**, in line with the ENQA evaluation report in relation to the European ESG 3.5 standard.

In relation to the European ESG 2.7 standard, in 2023 the ACPUA Assurance Committee will work on drafting a **specific procedure for breaches of the Agency's Code of Ethics.**

### A7+1.3. Modernisation of the Administration Area

With the aim of streamlining and modernising the Agency's administrative processes, the **"ACPUA: e-Government"** project will be launched in 2023 with the implementation of the following measures:

- **Paperless administration:** the administration area incorporates electronic procedures into its daily work, making paper disappear from its daily activity.
- **Optimisation of office automation tools:** Parameterisation of tax processes in the SERPA tool.
- Implementation of **electronic invoicing.**

## GLOSSARY

ACSUCYL: Agencia para la Calidad del Sistema Universitario de Castilla y León

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

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

ANVUR: Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca

AQU: Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya (Catalan University System Quality Agency)

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

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 (University Defence Centre)

DEQAR: The Database of External Quality Assurance Results

DEVA-AAC: Dirección de Evaluación y Acreditación - Agencia Andaluza del Conocimiento

ECA: European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education

EHEA: European Higher Education Area

ENQA: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

EQAR: The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

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

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

IAEST: Aragonese Institute of Statistics

INQAAHE: International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

LOSUA: Ley 5/2005, de 14 de junio, de Ordenación del Sistema Universitario de Aragón

PCDVC: Profesor Contratado Doctor con Vinculación Clínica (Hired Doctorate Professor with clinical links)

REACU: Spanish Network of University Quality Agencies



SETE: Subcommittee for Thematic Evaluations of the ACPUA

SGIC: Internal Quality Management System of the ACPUA

SUA: Aragon University System

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

USJ: San Jorge University

UZ: University of Zaragoza