

DEVA's Considerations for Higher Education On-site academic activities in the 2020/21 academic year

Since the second semester of the 2019-20 academic year, the Andalusian Universities are facing an unprecedented complex situation which has disrupted the normal development of academic life concerning On-site classes and all university activities. It should be pointed out the enormous effort that has been made by all the institutions during this term, and the Andalusian University System agents' organisation capacity and commitment to provide the academic activities under these difficult conditions.

The Andalusian Health authorities have felt obliged to partially restrict On-site classes at universities over the last months, however, authorisation for several academic activities, especially significant for degrees quality, have been provided, such as practical classes, as well as the classes required for ending studies works or doctoral thesis, curricular external practical classes and evaluation tests.

The Directorate for Evaluation and Accreditation (DEVA) is the entity responsible for developing the actions regarding Quality Assurance in the Andalusian Higher Education System, as well as the available evaluation tools and a model of active guiding to decision making. Within this context, DEVA, as the Agency for Quality Assurance in our autonomous community, offers the following considerations:

1. The planning for the current academic year has been made in accordance with the framework agreement¹ jointly-signed by the Universities, the Regional Ministry for Economic Transformation, Industry, Knowledge and Universities, and DEVA. This agreement is currently in force for the 2020-21 academic year, and it regulates the adaptation of teaching and learning activities to possible On-site classes situations, according to the level of restrictions on mobility and social contact provided by the Health authorities, with the object of maintaining the highest possible level of On-site activities. The Andalusian Public Universities reaffirmed their commitment on this objective in a recent agreement.²
2. The Centres and Degrees Quality Commissions, under the protection of their Quality Assurance Systems, have adapted the Academic Guides to the different activities according to the requirements concerning subjects and degrees, in accordance with the above-mentioned situations, including their evaluation systems. These updated Academic Guides, are the tools for information and transparency which allow students to know how the emergency situation may affect their studies development since the start of the academic year.
3. The Andalusian Health authorities provisions (BOJA, Official Regional Government Gazette, special edition, January 8, 2021), in accordance with DEVA's recommendations³, authorise On-site evaluation tests at universities, even under the highest emergency conditions.
4. The Degrees Reports, approved by the Council of Universities following DEVA evaluation, and the Academic Guides, approved by the Quality Commissions and the universities departments, are binding documents. Compliance with them is all students' right, and it is fundamental for mutual trust within the European Higher Education Area, as well as a guarantee for proper valuation and recognition of future degrees.

¹ [Agreement on the common criteria for University Higher Education adaptation to the Health requirements derived from the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2020-21 academic year.](#)

² Agreement signed by the Andalusian Public Universities' Rectors in January, 9, 2021, on the common criteria for the University Higher Education adaptation to the Health requirements derived from the COVID 19 pandemic in the 2020-21 academic year.

³ [DEVA recommendations for additional possible restriction measures adoption regarding On-site activities in the Andalusian Universities System.](#)

5. The Institutions and Centres' Internal Systems for Quality Assurance must ensure the highest possible quality of academic activities, including evaluation tests, as well as promoting the required necessary conditions, within the contingency plans approved by the universities due to the pandemic we currently undergo. It is particularly important the Internal Quality Assurance Systems' work both by the centres with institutional accreditation and by the new ones which will obtain it in the future. The autonomy achieved by the institutionally accredited centres requires an ongoing effort in order to keep their credibility as agents responsible for the quality assurance process.

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