



PROGRESS REPORT

Re-confirmation of AGAE Full Membership in ENQA

In November 2008, the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Research of Andalusia (AGAE) underwent an external evaluation of its activities according to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) in the European Higher Education Area. This evaluation was aimed at assessing whether AGAE met the criteria for full ENQA membership. Furthermore, the review also meant to provide feedback on AGAE's broader role and distinctive programs in the context of the Andalusian Knowledge System, with particular reference to its teaching staff assessment programmes and its research grant evaluation procedures.

The Review Panel was composed of five international experts on quality assurance, as listed below:

- Séamus Puirseil, lately Chief Executive of the Higher Education & Training Awards Council for Ireland (Chairman).
- Professor Domingo Do Campo, Department of Signal Theory and Communications, University of Vigo, (and formerly Rector of the University of Vigo), Spain.
- Thierry Malan, lately General Inspector for Administration of National Education and Research, Ministry of Education and Research, France.
- Rossella Iraci Capuccinello, doctoral postgraduate student, Lancaster University, UK, and lately member of the Executive Committee of the European Students Association.
- Paul Mitchell, (Secretary to the Panel), independent HE consultant, UK.

They did an extraordinary job: gathering evidence directly from stakeholders, assessing additional documentation provided, and analysing AGAE's Self-Evaluation Report. The Review Panel confirmed the solid development of the Agency by emphasizing the following:



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1. The key role played by AGAE as the main instrument for assuring quality in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Andalusia.
2. The selection of experts (preferably from outside Andalusia) to advise AGAE within a strategic framework set by the Agency on whether institutions, programmes and proposed research projects meet the relevant criteria for quality assurance.
3. The agreement between AGAE's procedures and guidelines and recognized good practice in terms of consistency, independent judgement, openness and clear communication. It is important to stress the explicit recognition of the ESG (through its Service Letter) as the basis for defining quality assurance criteria.
4. The creation, conduction and effective use of 'stakeholder surveys' to evaluate each of AGAE's core processes.
5. AGAE's solid structure: Solidity guaranteeing professional and efficient functioning.

In spite of this, the Review Panel's Report provided AGAE with two areas for further development: Independence and Publication of Reports (Letter sent by to AGAE on April 6, 2009). In a letter sent to President Bruno Curvale by AGAE (see document attached) on April 14, 2009, AGAE pointed out that:

1. In the Spanish legal system it is a habit that the President of the Board of AGAE is the Regional Minister for Science and Innovation. This is a legal formality and in no way impairs AGAE's independence either in decision making or evaluation procedures. AGAE informed President Curvale of a new reorganization of AGAE as a public enterprise in 2011.
2. AGAE makes its reports available upon written request and posts its annual reports on its Website. Yet, since more transparency and visibility was required AGAE assumed the responsibility of working in this direction.

As of now, March 28, 2011, the following remarks are appropriate:

1. AGAE has full legal personality. Created as an autonomous organisation, it has the capacity to manage its own actions and carry out its functions independent from political authorities.



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2. The new reorganization programmed for AGAE is supposed to become a reality in 2011. We will inform ENQA of the changes in structure when this happens.

3. The Website has been updated. Please, visit <<http://www.agae.es>>
The reports and guides posted include:

3.a. AGAE's Mid-term and Annual Reports with aggregate information about evaluation, certification and accreditation activities are available online.

3.b. AGAE's Self-evaluation Report (July 2008), Report on the ENQA panel and Comments by AGAE.

3.c. AGAE's Service Letter and Quality Plan with precise information to stakeholders about AGAE's functions.

3.d. Reports of Evaluation of all the Andalusian University Programmes and Reports on the External Quality Assessment of Spanish Universities (2008, 2009)

3.e. Teaching Performance Assessment Report.

3.f. Research Evaluation Reports.

3.g. Guides to Good Teaching Performance Incentives, Accreditation and how to apply to become Emeritus Professors.

3.h. Guides for Evaluation of Officially Recognized University Programmes, Plan for the Quality of Andalusian Universities and Teaching Performance Assessment.

Plans for the immediate future:

-AGAE's Contributions to Conferences will be posted on its Website.

-Post a FAQ section within each programme.

-Publish 2010 Annual Report.