

**Approval of the Application**  
**by Agency for Scientific and University Quality of**  
**Andalusia (ACCUA)**  
**for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register**

**Register Committee**  
 26 – 27 November 2024

Ref. RC45/A158  
 Ver. 1.0  
 Date 2024-12-11  
 Page 1 / 5

<b>Application of:</b>	2023-12-22		
<b>Agency registered since:</b>	2009-01-01		
<b>Type of review:</b>	Full	<b>Site visit:</b>	2024-04-26
<b>External review report of:</b>	2024-09-26	<b>Submitted:</b>	2024-10-08
<b>Review coordinated by:</b>	European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)		
<b>Review panel members:</b>	Ana Gvritishvili, Ewa Kolanowska, Luut Kroes, Marisol Morales-Ladrón		
<b>Decision of:</b>	2024-11-27		
<b>Registration until:</b>	2029-03-30		
<b>Absented themselves from decision-making:</b>	n/a		
<b>Attachments:</b>	1. <a href="#">External Review Report, 2024-09-26</a>		

1. The application of 2023-12-22 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 2024-01-19.
3. The Register Committee considered the external review report of 2024-09-26 on the compliance of ACCUA (formerly AAC-DEVA<sup>1</sup>) with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).

**Analysis:**

4. In considering ACCUA's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account:
  - *Accreditation of foreign language skills*
  - *Accreditation of Quality Assurance Systems*
  - *DOCENTIA programme for teaching activity evaluation*
  - *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes*

<sup>1</sup> see decision on [Substantive Change Report from 2023-06-30](#)

- *Ex-ante verification of study programmes – substantial modification of study programmes*
- *Ex-post re-accreditation verification of study programmes*
- *Follow-up/monitoring of study programmes*
- *Institutional accreditation*
- *Modification of study programmes (non-substantial modification) – Successive Academic Programmes (PARS)*
- *Reviews of universities for recognition*

**Register Committee**  
26 – 27 November 2024

**Ref.** RC45/A158  
**Ver.** 1.0  
**Date** 2024-12-11  
**Page** 2 / 5

5. The Register Committee found that the report provides sufficient evidence and analysis on ACCUA's level of compliance with the ESG.

6. With regard to the specific European Standards, the Register Committee considered the following:

### **ESG 2.6 – Reporting**

7. In its previous decision, the Register Committee found the agency to be partially compliant due to the lack of publication of reports with negative results of its ex-ante verification of study programmes.

8. The Register Committee learned that ACCUA now publishes reports with negative and positive results of all evaluations processes except for reviews of universities for recognition on its website. From the report, the Committee learned that these reviews only occur by a request from the regional ministry and are sporadic. The Committee further understood that the agency is not authorised to publish the reports as this is in the remit of the regional parliament.

**9. Given the improvements made in publication of the negative reports, the Register Committee could concur with the panel that the agency now complies with the standard. The Register Committee, nevertheless, highlighted the panel's recommendation that the agency should raise the issue with the publication of the results of the reviews of universities for recognition with the regional authorities to ensure that these reports are made available to the public.**

### **ESG 2.7 – Complaints and appeals**

10. In its last decision, the Register Committee raised concerns regarding the lack of an internal appeals system within the agency and as a result found the agency to be partially compliant with the standard.

11. The Register Committee noted that since the last review of ACCUA the agency has established a separate body within the agency responsible for appeals. Furthermore, the panel noted that the appeals procedure is clear, publicly available and ensures impartiality in decision-making by the Appeals Committee.

12. The Register Committee thus found that the agency has addressed the issues raised in the previous report and therefore can follow the panel’s conclusion of compliance.

### ESG 3.1 – Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

13. In its last decision, the Register Committee found the agency to be partially compliant due to the lack of stakeholders involvement on governance level and its lack of strategic planning.

14. The Register Committee learned from the panel’s analysis that the agency has addressed the issues raised in the previous review. The Committee noted that ACCUA has involved students and other stakeholder as members of the Governing Council of the agency. Furthermore, the Committee noted that ACCUA adopted an Initial Action Plan which is well-conceived to carry forwards the agency’s mission and vision.

**15. Following the improvements towards ESG compliance undertaken by the agency, the Register Committee was able to follow the panel’s conclusion that the agency complies with the standard.**

### ESG 3.3 – Independence

16. The Register Committee learned from the panel analysis that the representation of stakeholders in the Governing Council has improved compared to the previous review and that the share of Government appointees in this body has been lowered.

17. The Committee, however, also noted that the regional minister, whose portfolio the agency is situated in, is acting as the President of the agency, chairs the Governing Council and has a casting vote.

18. Furthermore, the Register Committee noted, as underlined by the panel, that the agency is dependent on the Regional Government’s approval for hiring both temporary and permanent staff, which limits the agency’s operational autonomy.

**19. Considering the significant level of involvement of the regional government in the governing of the agency and the potential constraints over the staff management and the operational independence of the agency, the Register Committee could not follow the panel’s judgement and concluded that ACCUA complies partially with the standard.**

### ESG 3.4 – Thematic analysis

20. The Register Committee learned that ACCUA has created a statistical analysis unit and produced five thematic reports since the last external review. However, as noted by the panel, out of the five reports only one can be considered as a thematic analysis in the sense of the standard, since the other four reports provided useful inputs for policy debates with regional stakeholders and for improvements in quality assurance at universities.

21. The Register Committee finds, in line with its interpretation of the standard, that the thematic analysis report in question is sufficient for achieving compliance with the standard and therefore could not follow the panel’s judgement of partial compliance and concluded that ACCUA complies with ESG 3.4.

22. The Register Committee nevertheless underlined the panel’s recommendation that the agency should devise a clear plan for thematic studies and use its evaluation reports to produce these studies.

### ESG 3.6 – Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

23. In its last decision, the Register Committee found the agency to be partially compliant due to the lack of development and proper implementation of its internal quality assurance system.

24. The Register Committee understood, from the panel analysis, that the agency has made a significant progress, by introducing a number of internal mechanisms, reviewing policies, procedures and guides. The panel noted that, however, the agency does not yet have a full internal quality assurance system in place, but intends to work on this in the coming period.

25. While the Register Committee welcomed the progress made by the agency. The Committee noted that, however, a well-rounded internal quality assurance system that synchronises the newly introduced tools is yet to be set. **Therefore, the Register Committee could not follow the panel’s judgement and found the agency to be partially compliant with the standard.**

26. For the remaining standards, the Register Committee was able to concur with the review panel's analysis and conclusion without further comments.

### Conclusion:

27. Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that ACCUA demonstrated compliance with the ESG (Parts 2 and 3) as follows:

Standard	Previous decision (2020-06-22)	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
2.1	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.2	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.3	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.4	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.5	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.6	Partial compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.7	Partial compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.1	Partial compliance	Compliance	Compliance

3.2	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.3	Compliance	Compliance	Partial Compliance
3.4	Compliance	Partial compliance	Compliance
3.5	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.6	Partial compliance	Compliance	Partial Compliance
3.7	Compliance	(not expected)	Compliance (by virtue of applying)

**Register Committee**  
26 – 27 November 2024

**Ref.** RC45/A158  
**Ver.** 1.0  
**Date** 2024-12-11  
**Page** 5 / 5

28. The Register Committee considered that ACCUA only achieved partial compliance with some standards. In its holistic judgement, the Register Committee concluded that these are specific and limited issues, and that ACCUA continues to comply substantially with the ESG as a whole.

29. The Register Committee therefore renewed ACCUA's inclusion on the Register. ACCUA's renewed inclusion shall be valid until 2029-09-30<sup>2</sup>.

30. The Register Committee further underlined that ACCUA is expected to address the issues mentioned appropriately and to resolve them at the earliest opportunity.

---

<sup>2</sup> Inclusion is valid for five years from the date of the external review report, see §3.25 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.