

Decision on the Substantive Change Report by Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU)

Register Committee

Ref. RC/C166

Ver. 1.0

Date 2026-05-18

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Decision of:	2026-05-15
Result:	Take note
Report received on:	2026-04-09
Agency registered since:	2008-03-04
Last external review report:	2026-06-10
Registration until:	2027-06-30
Absented themselves from decision-making:	Esther Huertas Hidalgo Aleksandra Zhivkovikj (EQAR secretariat)
Attachments:	1. Substantive Change Report, 2026-04-09

1. The Register Committee considered the Substantive Change Report of 2026-04-09.

1. The Register Committee noted that AQU has since its last review made the following changes:

A) Changes to existing quality assurance activities

- Ex-post IQAs Certification

B) Discontinuation of existing activities

- International Quality Assurance
- Ex-ante accreditation of short learning programmes/micro-credentials

A) Changes to existing quality assurance activities: Ex-post IQAs Certification.

2. The Register Committee understood that the scope of *Ex-post IQAs Certification* has been extended to include evaluation of the design phase of quality systems. The activity name has accordingly been changed from *Ex-post IQAs Certification* to *IQAs Certification*.

3. The Register Committee also learned that, while the scope has extended, the agency has not made any changes and the existing methodology and criteria were maintained for evaluating the design phase of quality systems.

4. The Register Committee expects the next review of the agency will analyse this activity in full, especially whether the methodology and criteria are fit for purpose for the activity's extended scope (ESG 2.2).

B.1) Discontinuation of existing activities: International Quality Assurance

5. The Register Committee understood that AQU has discontinued its *International Quality Assurance* activity as a strategic decision and now applies only the methodologies used within the Catalan higher education system.
6. The Register Committee took note of the change. *International Quality Assurance* shall be archived on AQU's entry on the register.

B.2) Discontinuation of existing activities: Ex-ante accreditation of short learning programmes/micro-credentials

7. The Register Committee understood that AQU discontinued *Ex-ante accreditation of short learning programmes/micro-credentials* following recommendations on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability.
8. From July 2026, evaluation of short learning programmes/micro-credentials will be included as part of the agency's institutional evaluations.
9. The Register Committee took note of the change. *Ex-ante accreditation of short learning programmes/micro-credentials* shall be archived on AQU's entry on the register.

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EQAR Substantive Change Report

Agency #1	Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency
Agency acronym	AQU
Expiry date #1	30/06/2027
Contact #1	Maria Giné Soca
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Other organisations?	No
A. Has the organisational identity of the registered agency changed?	No
B. Has the organisational structure changed?	No
C. Changes in EQA activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2. Substantive changes carried out to one or several existing external QA activities (e.g. changes to their methodology, criteria or procedures)• 3. One or several existing activities were discontinued
Description new/changed	<p>The Ex-post IQAS Certification process also incorporates a prior evaluation of the system design phase. This process does not affect compliance with any of the ESG standards, as the same evaluation methodology and criteria are applied throughout. The sole difference lies in the assessment methods used at each stage: during the design phase, the evaluation is conducted through a desk-based analysis of the documentation, whereas the following phase includes an external on-site visit.</p> <p>At present, the current guide does not explicitly include the design phase because, prior to entry into the EQAR Register, all institutions had</p>

already undergone an evaluation of the IQAS design through a previous programme that has since concluded. Nevertheless, the same guide remains fully applicable to both phases of the evaluation process.

For this reason, it is proposed that the section currently entitled Ex-post IQAS Certification be renamed IQAS Certification, with the understanding that the certification process comprises two sequential phases: an assessment of the system design and a subsequent evaluation of its implementation.

2. Changed EQA activity

1	Ex-post IQAS Certification
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ESG 2.1	Not applicable.
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ESG 2.2	Not applicable.
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ESG 2.3	
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1	Not applicable.
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ESG 2.4	Not applicable.
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ESG 2.5	Not applicable.
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ESG 2.6	
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1	Not applicable.
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3. Discontinued EQA activity

1	International quality assurance
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2	Ex-ante accreditation of short learning programmes/micro-credentials
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Context	With regard to international quality assurance activities, AQU Catalunya has revised its strategic orientation and now applies, in evaluation processes, only those methodologies that are also used within the Catalan university system.
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Following the recommendations of the European approach to micro-credentials, the activity Ex-ante accreditation of short learning programmes/micro-credentials will be integrated into the institutional evaluation processes and will therefore no longer constitute a stand-alone activity. As of July 2026, the micro-credential programmes that have been evaluated will be incorporated into the Institutional Accreditation programme. Consequently, this activity will be discontinued within AQU Catalunya's external review framework.

D. Activity outside the scope of the ESG

No

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