

Approval of the Application
by ANECA - National Agency for the Quality Assessment and
Accreditation of Spain (ANECA)
for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register

Register Committee

Ref. RC/A51

Ver. 1.0

Date 2018-09-11

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Application of:	23/11/2016
Agency registered since:	07/05/2013
External review report of:	25/10/2017
Review coordinated by:	ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education
Review panel members:	Jon Haakstad (Chair), Norma Ryan (Secretary), Hildegard Vermeiren (Academic), Samin Sedghi Zadeh (Student)
Decision of:	11/09/2018
Registration until:	31/10/2022
Absented themselves from decision-making:	N/A
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirmation of eligibility, 23/12/2016 2. External Review Report, 31/10/2017 3. Request to the Review Panel, 07/05/2018 4. Clarification by the Review Panel, 08/06/2018 5. Request to ANECA, 03/07/2018 6. Clarification response by ANECA, 31/07/2018

1. The application of 23/11/2016 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 23/12/2016.
3. The Register Committee considered the external review report of 25/10/2017 on the compliance of ANECA with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).
4. The Register Committee further considered the letter reconfirming ANECA's membership of ENQA.
5. The Register Committee sought and received clarification from the chair of the review panel on 08/06/2018 and ANECA on 31/07/2018.

Analysis:

6. In considering ANECA's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account:
 - *ex-ante, ex-post and monitoring of study programmes: VERIFICA, MONITOR, ACREDITA, ACREDITA PLUS;*
 - *reviews at institutional level: AUDIT, DOCENTIA;*
 - *evaluations for granting of labels: EUR-ACE, EURO-INF; EUROBACHELOR, EUROMASTER;*
 - *national and international evaluations derived from projects.*
7. Other evaluation procedures are not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to the application inclusion on the Register.
8. The Register Committee found that the report provides sufficient evidence and analysis on ANECA's level of compliance with the ESG.
9. With regard to the specific European Standards and Guidelines, the Register Committee considered the following:

ESG 2.1 – Consideration of internal quality assurance

In the last review of ANECA, the Register Committee flagged for attention the processes and criteria used in the ACCREDITA programme and how they take into account the existence and effectiveness of internal quality assurance in line with Part 1 of the ESG.

The Register Committee considered the panel's detailed accounts of how ANECA ensures the meeting of this criterion in all its procedures, including the international projects it has engaged in and noted that the regular review and assessment of the effectiveness of the procedures provided re-assurance and certainty to stakeholders on the quality of higher education in Spain. (p. 38)

The Register Committee therefore concluded that the flag was addressed and was able to follow the panel's conclusion that ANECA is compliant with ESG 2.1.

ESG 2.3 – Implementing processes

In ANECA's last review, the Register Committee flagged for attention the implementation of the key elements of the standard i.e. self-evaluation, site visit in the development and implementation of the ACCREDITA programme.

The panel's evidence and analysis show that since its last review ANECA has revised the ACREDITA procedure, which now includes: a self-evaluation stage, a revision by an assessment committee during a site-visit, and a report providing guidance for the actions taken by the institution.

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The Register Committee concluded that the flag was addressed and was therefore able to follow the panel’s conclusion that ANECA complies with ESG 2.3.

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ESG 2.6 – Reporting

The panel stated that ANECA does not publish initial review reports prepared by the assessment panels (of 50-60 page long) and that the agency only publishes a final summary report (of 10 pages). The Register Committee was unclear how the panel satisfied itself that the requirement of the standard to publish full reports was (substantially) met given that the agency only publishes summary reports.

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In its clarification letter the panel stated that publication of summary reports from programme accreditations is a national characteristic and that the panel confirmed during interviews that the AUDIT and DOCENTIA activities include full reports when published. The Register Committee could only verify the panel’s statement regarding the full publication of institutional evaluation reports for DOCENTIA, but not in case of AUDIT procedures.

While the Register Committee understands the usefulness of providing summary reports, the Committee saw no reasons why ANECA would not be able to also publish the full results for all its external quality assurance procedures.

The Register Committee concluded that ANECA’s practice of publishing summary reports does not meet the requirement of the standard, and therefore could not follow the panel’s conclusion of compliance. As the Register Committee could verify the publication of a number of full reports (in the case of the AUDIT procedure), the Register Committee was able to conclude that the agency complies at least partially with ESG 2.6.

ESG 2.7 – Complaints and appeals

While the Register Committee noted that the review panel was satisfied about how ANECA’s complaints procedure is communicated to higher education institutions, the panel provided no documentation or explanation on how the agency handles complaints procedures. The Register Committee has therefore asked the panel for further information.

In its response letter the review panel stated that it has not investigated the complaints processes, as the Claims and Suggestions Unit was recently established. The panel noted that it had discussed the complaints (and appeals) procedures with key stakeholders, who expressed their satisfaction with the functioning of the processes and confirmed that the agency considered all appeals and complaints according to its policy and within a reasonable time-frame.

The Register Committee also noted that appeals are not made available in case of ANECA's MONITOR procedure and asked the panel to also clarify this matter. The review panel stated that appeals are not available for the Monitor procedure as the activity has a supportive /developmental nature and that no decisions are taken on its basis. **The Register Committee nevertheless noted that higher education institution should be provided with the possibility to appeal the results of an external quality assurance procedure, no matter whether these include a formal accreditation decision or merely a published assessment report.**

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Having considered the functioning of the appeals and complaints procedure, the Register Committee concurred with the panel that ANECA complies with standard 2.7.

ESG 3.1 – Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

When confirming the eligibility of the application, the Register Committee noted that the award of the EUR-ACE label in Latin America is within the scope of the ESG and some of ANECA's international activities (including) might be as well within the scope of EQAR-registration. In its review report (p. 18-19) the panel listed all ANECA's international activities as part of the agency's projects and agreements, and did not discuss them as part of the agency's external quality assurance activities. Considering that some of these activities appeared to be within the scope of ESG (i.e. the EUR-ACE evaluations on ANECA's website) the Register Committee asked the panel for further clarification, including how the agency ensures a transparent distinction between its projects/consulting activity and the agency's regular external quality assurance activities.

The panel noted that in its understanding all international activities of ANECA were advisory in nature whereby ANECA acted essentially as a consultant/project partner and did not carry out external quality assurance activities (evaluation, accreditation, audits) abroad. **The panel did not provide any further information on how the agency ensures a clear distinction between external quality assurance and its other fields of work** i.e. how the agency ensures there is no conflict of interest when addressing issues relate to the ESG or a risk of confusion in using similar terminology (i.e. evaluation, certification, AUDIT).

The Register Committee noted that the way in which higher education institutions involved in these international activities presented them was not consistent with that. On the contrary, institutions stated on their public website that they had been "reviewed by ANECA" and as a result they have been provided with "certification of their internal quality assurance system" or awarded the EUR-ACE label. The Register Committee therefore also requested the agency to clarify the nature of its international activities.

In its response, the agency provided a detailed report on its international activities, explained and that they follow similar procedures to that of the AUDIT and ACCREDITA evaluations carried out in Spain and confirmed they are within the scope of the ESG. Following the agency’s response, the Register Committee could now verify the publication of criteria for evaluation and the publication of all (summary) reports of the international activities.

The Committee acknowledged the steps taken by ANECA to clarify the nature of its international activities, but noted that these activities were not considered by an external review panel (in particular in considering compliance with ESG Part 2). The Register Committee further noted that it could not analyse with full certainty how the agency separates its external QA activities within the scope of the ESG from the consultancy projects it carries out.

The Register Committee therefore remained unable to concur with the review panel’s conclusion (full compliance) and considered, after taking into account the clarification received, that ANECA only partially complies with standard 3.1.

ESG 3.3 – Independence

In its previous decision of ANECA’s renewal, the Register Committee flagged for attention the agency’s organisational independence.

The Register Committee noted that since its last evaluation, ANECA has strengthened its independence i.e. becoming an autonomous public body, ensuring a more balanced representations in its Governing Council, appointing of its own director and operating with full fiscal autonomy.

The Register Committee further noted that “the operation of ANECA’s policies and procedures surrounding the design, implementation and reporting on all the evaluation processes takes place in a fully independent and autonomous manner” (Review report, p. 26).

In light of the evidence and analysis presented by the panel the Register Committee was satisfied that the flag was addressed and was able to follow the panel’s judgement that ANECA complies with the ESG 3.3.

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

Conclusion:

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

Standard	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
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2.1	Full compliance	Compliance
2.2	Full compliance	Compliance
2.3	Full compliance	Compliance
2.4	Full compliance	Compliance
2.5	Full compliance	Compliance
2.6	Substantial compliance	Partial c.
2.7	Full compliance	Compliance
3.1	Full compliance	Partial c.
3.2	Full compliance	Compliance
3.3	Full compliance	Compliance
3.4	Substantial compliance	Compliance
3.5	Full compliance	Compliance
3.6	Full compliance	Compliance
3.7	(not expected)	Compliance (by virtue of applying)

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12. **The Register Committee considered that ANECA only achieved partial compliance with some standards. In its holistic judgement, the Register Committee concluded that these are specific and limited issues, but that ANECA continues to comply substantially with the ESG as a whole.**
13. **The Register Committee therefore renewed ANECA's inclusion on the Register. ANECA's renewed inclusion shall be valid until 31/10/2022¹.**
14. The Register Committee further underlined that ANECA is expected to address the issues mentioned appropriately and to resolve them at the earliest opportunity.

¹ Inclusion is valid for five years from the date of the external review report, see §4.1 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA)

Esther Balboa

C/ Orense 11, 7th Floor

28020 Madrid

Spain

Brussels, 23 December 2016

Confirmation of Eligibility: Application for Renewal of Registration

Application no. A51 of 23/11/2016

Dear Ms Balboa,

We hereby confirm that the application by ANECA for renewal of registration is eligible.

Based on the information and draft terms of reference provided, the external review coordinated by ENQA fulfils the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

We confirm that the following activities of ANECA are within the scope of the ESG:

- ex-ante, ex-post and monitoring of study programmes:
 - o *VERIFICA*;
 - o *MONITOR*;
 - o *ACREDITA*;
 - o *ACREDITA PLUS (EUR-ACE and EURO-INF)*;
- reviews at institutional level:
 - o *AUDIT*;
 - o *DOCENTIA*.

In the application form, ANECA stated that it did not consider *other national and international assessments* to be within the scope of the ESG. We considered the information provided and came to the conclusion that some of these activities might be within the scope of the ESG as far as they concerns the assessment of higher education institutions or study programmes (including joint programmes) in relation to teaching and learning in higher education, irrespective of whether these activities are carried out regularly or occasionally.

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The self-evaluation report and the external panel's report should thus address whether that is the case and, if so, analyse compliance with the ESG in those assessments.

We further note that ANECA carried out AUDIT and joint programme accreditation procedures (i.e. the award of the EUR-ACE engineering label) in Latin America. It is the understanding of the Register Committee (see Use and Interpretation of the ESG) that the ESG are applicable to all external quality assurance activities of higher education provision carried out by EQAR-registered agencies within and outside the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Thus, the institutional and programme accreditation procedures carried out by ANECA in Latin America are also within the scope of the ESG.

Please ensure that ANECA's self-evaluation report covers all the aforementioned activities.

We further remind you that the following issues were flagged when ANECA's registration was last renewed, and should be addressed in your self-evaluation report and the external review report:

ESG 2.1: Consideration of internal quality assurance [ESG 2005: standard 2.1]

It should receive attention how the processes and criteria used in the ACCREDITA programme take into account the existence and effectiveness of internal quality assurance in line with Part 1 of the ESG.

ESG 3.3: Independence [ESG 2005: standard 3.6]

It should be addressed whether ANECA developed further its governing structure, in particular the composition and functioning of the Board of Trustees, with a view to strengthening its structural independence as well as to safeguarding systematically its operational independence.

ESG 2.3: Implementing processes [ESG 2005: standard 3.7]

It should receive attention how the key elements required by the standard, in particular a self-evaluation and a site visit, have been incorporated in the further development and implementation of the ACCREDITA programme.

We confirm that the following activities are not within the scope of the ESG:

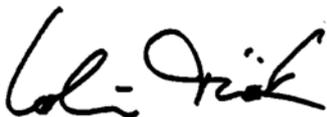
- *Academic Staff Recruitment Assessment Procedure (PEP);*
- *ACADEMIA;*
- *evaluation of staff by the National Committee for the Evaluation of Research Activity (CNEAI).*

While these activities are not relevant to your application, it is ANECA's choice – in agreement with the review coordinator – whether those activities should be commented upon by the review panel.

We will forward this letter to ENQA in its capacity as the coordinator of the external review. At the same time we underline that it is ANECA's responsibility to ensure that the coordinator and review panel take account of the present confirmation, so as to ensure that all activities mentioned are analysed by the panel.

This confirmation is made according to the relevant provisions of the EQAR Procedures for Applications. ANECA has the right to appeal this decision in accordance with the Appeals Procedure; any appeal must reach EQAR within 90 days from receipt of this decision.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Tück'.

Colin Tück
(Director)

Cc: ENQA

Brussels, 8 May 2018

Application by ANECA for inclusion/renewal of registration on EQAR

Dear Mr Haakstad,

ANECA has made an application for renewal of registration of inclusion on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

We are contacting you in your capacity as chair of the panel that prepared the external review report of 25/10/2017 on which ANECA's application is based.

The EQAR Register Committee's rapporteurs have been considering the application and the external review report. We would be obliged if you could clarify, in consultation with the panel members as necessary the following matter in order to contribute to the consideration of ANECA's application.

- **ESG 2.6:** The panel states that ANECA does not publish the initial review reports prepared by the assessment panels (of 50-60 page long) and that the agency only publishes a final summary report (of 10 pages). Could you please clarify how the panel satisfied itself that the requirement of the standard to publish full reports was (substantially) met given that the agency only publishes summary reports and in particular how this affects institutional QA procedures such as AUDIT and DOCENTIA?
- **ESG 2.7:** We noted from the review report that ANECA's complaints (and appeals) procedure is well communicated to higher education institutions and that the panel has commended the agency's procedure on complaints (including appeals) for their transparency. Could you please provide further analysis on how the agency handles complaints that could support the panel's commendations and conclusion of compliance (i.e. number of complaints received and addressed, effectiveness in responding to complaints, analysis carried out by the Claims and Suggestions Unit within the UCYPE etc.)?

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- We also noted that “the process for lodging an appeal and having it considered by the CGP is essentially the same for all the evaluation procedures” (p. 52). However the panel’s review report (see table 8 p. 42) also shows that appeals are not made available in the case of ANECA’s MONITOR procedure. Could you please clarify this matter?
- **ESG 3.1:** In its confirmation of eligibility, the Register Committee noted that some of ANECA’s international activities (including the award of the EUR-ACE label in Latin America) are within the scope of the ESG and asked for those to be addressed in the self-evaluation report and the external panel’s report. Could you therefore please clarify if the panel has considered the “pilot project to obtain the EUR-ACE label in Mexican universities” with regards to the ESG as was noted in the eligibility confirmation (in particular concerning implementing processes (ESG 2.3) involvement of students (ESG 2.4) and published reports (ESG 2.6)?
- Register Committee considers that all external QA activities are within the scope of the ESG, irrespective of whether they are carried out mainly for the purpose of accountability or enhancement (on a voluntary basis).¹ Could you clarify if the panel satisfied itself that AUDIT procedures (in particular the certification of the design and implementation of IQAS) carried out by ANECA in Peru and Guatemala are activities outside the scope of the ESG²?
- Could you please also clarify how the agency ensures a transparent distinction between its regular external quality assurance activities within the scope of the ESG, and other services provided by the agency that the panel found to be outside the scope of the ESG (i.e. national or international collaboration agreements with higher education institutions) and in particular how the agency ensures there is no conflict of interest when addressing issues relate to the ESG or a risk of confusion in using similar terminology (i.e. evaluation, certification, AUDIT)³.

We be would grateful if it was possible for you to respond by 24 May 2017, and we would appreciate if you get in contact with us should that not be feasible.

¹See the EQAR’s Use and Interpretation of the ESG (p. 2)
<https://www.eqar.eu/assets/uploads/2018/04/UseAndInterpretationOfTheESGv2.0-2015.pdf>

² See the four dimensions in the typology of external QA activities (p. 3) in the Use and Interpretation of the ESG.

³See Annex 5 of the EQAR Use and Interpretation of the ESG.

Please note that EQAR will publish this request and your response together with the final decision on ANECA's application. We, however, kindly ask you to keep information related to the application confidential until the final decision has been published.

We acknowledge that it might not be possible to clarify all of the above. However, we appreciate your assistance and I shall be at your disposal if you have any questions in relation to this request.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colin Tück".

Colin Tück
(Director)

Cc: Norma Ryan, Secretary of the ANECA review panel
ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher
Education (coordinator)
ANECA

European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)

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Comments to EQAR on questions raised in letter of 8 May 2018 to Mr Jon Haakstad, Chair, ENQA Review Panel for ANECA

Introduction

It is difficult to try to further and fully clarify points in the report one year after the evaluation, as many of these clarifications would have to rely on information obtained in the interviews, and that memory of what was said in the interviews obviously fades with time. The clarifications below are made after consultations with the panel's secretary (and full member).

In a sense, the need for such clarifications may disagree with the idea of trust in the expertise and professionalism of the review panel. The review panel must give reasons for its findings but does not have to prove them. The review report is not to be understood as a document that offers 'full evidence' – almost in a legal sense – of the conclusions that are given. Hopefully, this may explain why the report left certain points unclear to EQAR's readers.

The text on both 3.1 (procedures fit for purpose) and 2.6 (reporting) is clear on ANECA's compliance with the standards, without necessarily giving all the details in our chain of assessments.

Concerning the three points raised by EQAR:

- **2.6:** The practice of publishing only the summary reports from programme accreditations is a common feature of all or most Spanish agencies and as such a 'national characteristic' that it is difficult for individual agencies to deviate from. A fact that makes this practice understandable is the long and complicated process towards final accreditation (which also is only temporary), involving VERIFICA, MONITOR and ACREDITA evaluations. The panel were informed that the initial reports are usually of the order of 60-70 pages long and containing very detailed information. The agency, through its staff and the oversight committees, supports the condensing of the information into shorter and focussed reports that cover all the quality assurance requirements in terms of reporting but are easier for all stakeholders, especially students and employers, to access.

The review made recommendations concerning the the entire system of programme accreditation.

The panel confirmed during interviews that AUDIT and DOCENTIA processes include full reports that are published.

- **2.7:** During the site visit the appeals and complaints procedures were discussed with key stakeholders. All expressed their satisfaction with the processes and confirmed that the agency considered all appeals and complaints and reverted back to the appellant/complainant within a reasonable time frame and according to the policy.

The Claims and Suggestions Unit within the UCYPE had only recently been established prior to the external review and had not, at the time of the site visit, submitted its detailed report and analysis on complaints and outcomes in 2016 to the Management Board. Thus the review panel was unable to comment on this.

The fact that appeals cannot be made against 'decisions' in the MONITOR procedure has to do with the purely developmental and supportive nature of this process, and that no decisions are made here.

- **3.1:** The understanding of the panel with respect to the international activities of ANECA is that these are all advisory and that ANECA is acting essentially as a consultant/project partner to assist in the development and implementation of quality assurance procedures by a national partner, within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding. ANECA does not evaluate programmes or institutions outside Spain. This is in line with its strategic policy and is stated clearly in its documents. However the agency seeks to contribute towards the international agenda of the Spanish higher education system by engaging in such international projects. The guidance and advice provided is in line with the standards and guidelines of the ESG 2015. However evaluations and accreditations as a consequence of these projects are ultimately the responsibility of the national system they are carried out in.

During the site visit there were discussions on the international activities carried out by ANECA, including the role of the agency in developing procedures in international venues, for example, for the obtaining of the EUR-ACE label in Mexican universities. In all instances it was evident to the panel that ANECA is not conducting evaluations or accreditations of programmes/institutions in these jurisdictions and thus these activities lay outside the scope of this review.

Oslo, 9 June 2018,

Jon Haakstad

(sign.)

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ANECA - National Agency for the Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain

Esther Balboa García

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Brussels, 3 July 2018

Clarification concerning the application by ANECA for renewal of registration on EQAR

Dear Eszter,

The Register Committee has considered your application of 23/11/2016 for renewal of inclusion on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

In considering ANECA's compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version) the Register Committee has examined the external review report of 31/10/2017 and has sought and received clarifications from the chair of the review panel (see response of 08/06/2018).

The Register Committee found the analysis and evidence provided by the panel insufficient to support its conclusions and has therefore not been able to take a decision on your application. **Please note that a decision on the application is pending the additional clarification by the applicant on the matters included below:**

In its eligibility confirmation the Register Committee noted that ANECA's AUDIT and accreditation procedures i.e. the award of the EUR-ACE engineering label carried out by ANECA in Latin America are also within the scope of the ESG. It is the understanding of the Register Committee (see Policy on the Use and Interpretation of the ESG) that the ESG are applicable to all external quality assurance activities of higher education provision carried out by EQAR-registered agencies within and outside the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The Committee noted that, according to the panel, the role of ANECA in all its international activities was advisory in nature, whereby ANECA acted essentially as a consultant/project partner and did not carry out external quality assurance activities (evaluation, accreditation, audits); these activities were therefore not specifically addressed in the external review of ANECA.

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EQAR Founding Members:



The Register Committee, however, noted that the analysis by the panel seemed to be contradicted by the message presented by higher education institutions involved in these international activities:

- The Universidad Tacna, Peru, presents ANECA's activity as a certification of the internal quality assurance system:
http://www.upt.edu.pe/upt/web/home/not_detalle/100000000/61308898
- Universidad Continental, in Peru stated to be the first university in Latin America to certify its internal quality assurance system through an audit procedure carried out by ANECA:
<https://ucontinental.edu.pe/aneca/>
- Universidad del Istmo, Guatemala claims to have its internal quality assurance system certified by ANECA:
<http://unis.edu.gt/acreditaciones/>
- (*) Universidad Autónoma de San Luis de Potosí claims that two of its faculties have been awarded the EUR-ACE label by ANECA in 2015:
<http://www.uaslp.mx/Paginas/Noticias/2015/noviembre/Inicia-acreditaci%C3%B3n-europea-a-carreras-de-Ingenier%C3%ADa.aspx>
- (*) The Autonomous University of Yucatan reported that two of its faculties had been awarded the EUR-ACE label the in 2016 by ANECA:
<http://www.uadyglobal.uady.mx/en/index.php?modulo=contenido&id=331>
- (*) Universidad Nuevo León in 2017 stated that it has been awarded the EUR-ACE label in ANECA:
<http://www.uanl.mx/sites/default/files/documentos/general/uanl-informe-2017.pdf>

(*) These activities are also recorded in the ENAEE's official database of EUR-ACE labels awarded.

On the basis of the public information accessed, the Register Committee would consider that these activities were external quality assurance activities within the scope of the ESG¹ and are therefore covered by the agency's registration on EQAR, irrespective of whether these activities are carried out mainly for the purposes of accountability or enhancement (on

¹ See the four dimensions in the typology of external QA activities (p. 3) in the Use and Interpretation of the ESG.

a voluntary basis).² We therefore kindly ask you to clarify the role of ANECA in the above.

Should ANECA maintain that these were consultancy or project work, we kindly request that ANECA explains what steps it has taken to prevent the mentioned institutions from misrepresenting these activities as external quality assurance. Furthermore, please explain why ANECA added the mentioned programmes to the EUR-ACE label database.

Otherwise, as these evaluations were not covered in the external review of ANECA, we ask you to summarise the guidelines and methodology used in these procedure, in particular to what extent it differs from ANECA's guidelines/methodology used in the corresponding national activities. In doing so, please refer to the review team composition, selection, appointment and training of reviewers (ESG 2.4), site visits (ESG 2.3), publication of reports (ESG 2.6), follow-up (ESG 2.3), appeals system (ESG 2.7)³. In particular, please clarify where ANECA publishes reports from these activities.

We further kindly ask you to describe how the agency ensures a clear and transparent separation between its consultancy activities and those within the scope of the ESG, taking into account Annex 5 to the Policy on the Use and Interpretation of the ESG.

In order to support the decision of the Register Committee we would be obliged if you could respond to the above mentioned queries before by **31 July 2017**, and we would appreciate if you get in contact with us should that not be feasible.

Should you have any questions or inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact the EQAR Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,



Karl Dittrich

President, Chair of the Register Committee

² Please see the EQAR's Use and Interpretation of the ESG (p. 2)
<https://www.eqar.eu/assets/uploads/2018/04/UseAndInterpretationOfTheESGv2.0-2015.pdf>

³ See also our policy on reporting substantive changes:
<https://www.eqar.eu/register/reporting-and-renewal/>

José Arnáez Vadillo
Director

Madrid, 31 de julio de 2018

Dear President,

After carefully reading your letter, we have been working to give you a clear answer to the issues raised and collect the evidence required.

We have prepared a document to address all the issues mentioned (attached to this e-mail).

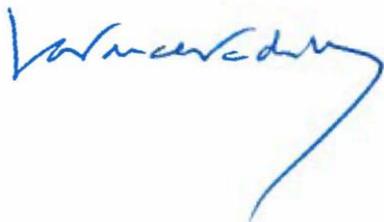
The document links to other documents which we have uploaded to the cloud and others which were already online. By doing so, we aim to provide you with evidence of some of the responses proposed.

ANECA would like to thank you for all the comments you sent us, because they have helped us improve some aspects which we thought were already well-covered. Thanks to these comments we have improved accessibility to information on our website with regard to international projects such as international quality seals and international AUDIT. We thought that the information regarding these international projects and its message was sufficiently clear, but your message helped us realise that this is not the case. Thank you so much for everything.

We hope this information helps clarify the issues you raise in your letter.

If you are still missing any other information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you so much for everything.





AGENCIA NACIONAL DE EVALUACIÓN
DE LA CALIDAD Y ACREDITACIÓN

Report of ANECA: Clarifications for EQAR

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to respond to the clarifications requested by EQAR in its letter dated 3 July, addressed to the Head of the Quality and Strategic Planning Unit of ANECA.

To gain a better understanding of the clarifications requested in relation to the activity that the Agency develops in Latin America, the appropriate clarifications will be given according to the two programmes that are developed; which are: The INTERNATIONAL SEAL OF QUALITY (formerly known as ACREDITA PLUS), and INTERNATIONAL AUDIT.

A short introduction will be given to both of the programmes, and subsequently, each of the requested aspects will be addressed, attaching different pieces of evidence. To access the corresponding evidence please click on the [underlined words](#).

2. AUDIT INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME



The AUDIT Programme in the International version has been developed by ANECA in response to the requirement from various international organizations to certify quality assurance systems for Higher Education Institutions (HEI) located in third countries and/or geographic regions.

Specifically, this initiative contributes to the internationalization of the quality guarantee practices and the effort made to align Latin American quality assurance systems with the European Higher Education Area.

ANECA's international initiatives are developed jointly with a counterpart agency from the host country within the framework of a cooperation agreement.

It involves the signing of a bilateral agreement within the framework of international, non-profit cooperation with an Agency or similar body.

Within this programme, ANECA carries out two lines of action:

With the bodies representing higher education institutions (HEI), with which agreements are reached to develop the AUDIT INTERNATIONAL programme in the specific environment of the country in question.

The actions developed under this framework are geared toward meeting the requirement of various international bodies that have addressed the Agency. They have requested the Agency's collaboration to develop in their respective territories similar versions of the Spanish AUDIT program, but adapted to each region's idiosyncrasies. Specifically, the difference is that the [AUDIT INTERNATIONAL](#) programme includes some additional criteria (depending on the country), such as research management and/or university extension and social projection.

With Latin American HEIs, where the adapted AUDIT model is [distributed and taught](#) and defined previously with the local agency in order for each institution to design their own IQAS (Internal quality assurance system) based on the adapted AUDIT model.

The AUDIT INTERNATIONAL programme consists of two main phases (just like the Spanish programme):

- EVALUATION of the design: once the institution defines its IQAS, an evaluation committee—through an online software tool—analyses whether the IQAS meets the criteria described in the AUDIT model. The result of this

step is the design evaluation report. If favourable, the HEI obtains the design certificate for its IQAS (see point process implementation).

- ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION: IES carries out the IQAS implementation. Later, a team of auditors carries out an on-site visit to audit to check the correct implementation of the system. After visiting they develop an audit report; if favourable, the HEI obtains the certificate for the implementation of its IQAS (see point process implementation).

The [role of ANECA](#) in this programme is as follows:

- Regarding the HEI local representation body, it focuses, among other things, on adapting the AUDIT model to the context of the participating country, to provide training on the same, coordinate the project, assessments, participate in certificate delivery decision meetings and monitoring, as appropriate.
- Regarding the interaction with local universities (HEI), ANECA provides training to persons designated by the institutions to participate in system design (see exhibit design training), for them to discover the reference model and learn to develop and audit internal quality assurance systems (IQAS) (see exhibit internal auditor training) based on this model, which in turn is based on the 2015 ESG criteria. In addition to this training, ANECA addresses specific questions of the centres that are developing their IQAS related to the interpretation of the model criteria, but it is never directly involved in the design or implementation. This task is the university's exclusive responsibility.

ANECA, hand in hand with a local body representing higher education institutions (HEI), provides the universities' technical staff the training needed for them to know the benefits of IQAS, as well as its meaning and the design methodology of the documentation system.

Once the designs have been developed and implemented by universities, they are regularly evaluated by both agencies.

Specifically, with regard to the Latin American universities mentioned in the EQAR document we state the following:

- The University of Tacna has certified the design of its IQAS as of June 2016.

-
- Continental University has certified the design of its IQAS for its headquarters in Huancayo as of November 2014 as well as the implementation in five of its centres—the first university in Latin America to receive this distinction on 30/May/2017.
 - Universidad del Istmo of Guatemala has certified the design of its IQAS as of October 2017.

The overall development scheme of the [AUDIT INTERNATIONAL Programme](#), when applied to a given environment (country/region), is similar to that developed in the Spanish context.

Once the [partnership agreement](#) is signed with the homologous body of the host country, we proceed to adapt the AUDIT Model (evaluation criteria) to the country context, with the collaboration of various stakeholders. This must be based on the AUDIT Spain Model, as a guarantee of its alignment with the ESG (see exhibit: different AUDIT programme models).

Once the country's AUDIT model is defined, the HEI receives generic training on the Programme so they can know the reference model and learn to [develop and audit](#) the internal quality assurance systems (IQAS) independently. The IQAS design developed by the HEI and based on the agreed model is jointly evaluated by an evaluation committee selected by the local agency and ANECA (see below information about Peer-review experts).

The design will be subjected to a consecutive number of evaluations that most comprehensively aligns to the various Model guidelines. The use of assessment committees of an [online tool](#) allows a more objective evaluation of criteria.

The design phase ends when the entity in question obtains a certification, issued by both entities.

Subsequently, the HEI proceeds to implement IQAS and when it considers that is already working properly (for example, via the application of internal audits) it requests an external audit again from ANECA and the local agency. This audit will take place on site by a team of auditors sent for that purpose. This team will issue an audit report. The HEI can issue claims to this report, which will be taken into account by the audit team. Subsequently, the certification committee takes a decision regarding the granting of the implementation certificate and issues a report. This certificate is granted for a renewable period of four years, during which an annual monitoring is carried out that does not require an on-site visit. At this stage the HEI sends a self-assessment report. This monitoring, among other

reasons, serves to check if the HEI are carrying out the improvement actions to which they have committed.

The evaluation committees comprise national and international reviewers.

- For the selection of **national reviewers**, ANECA carefully selects the people who will be responsible for these tasks. To this end, ANECA regularly publishes on its website a [call for peer reviewers](#) to the various programmes it carries out, indicating the criteria assessed. From among the people who sign up on each occasion, ANECA will select, according to its needs, the most suitable profiles (based on their CV) for the [requirements](#).
- As for the **international reviewers**, the selection is carried out jointly with local agencies using experts proposed by them and by ANECA, who meet the criteria required by the programme. The generic composition of the various committees is reflected in the AUDIT International model guide (see exhibit) and the composition of [committees](#) as published on the ANECA website.

The people selected to be part of the committees are given specific theoretical and practical training and internal auditor training) that allows them to objectively evaluate the IQAS designs presented and/or conduct audits in universities that request it to evaluate the IQAS implementations. Furthermore, ANECA tracks the work of these partners, to prevent/correct any deviations that may arise.

To ensure that there is no conflict of interest, ANECA selects from its pool of reviewers/auditor, those for which the existence of conflict of interest with the centre to be evaluated can be ruled out beforehand. Besides, it always announces the names and CVs of the selected auditors to the requesting university, so that it can also express objection to any of them if it considers that there is a conflict of interest. If so, ANECA would propose alternative names.

Besides all the above, all ANECA reviewers and auditors must sign a [code of ethics](#) where, among other things, they commit to opt out of an evaluation process, when they are aware of the existence of a potential conflict of interest with regard to the design or implementation to be evaluated.

The Certification Commissions in each case will be jointly appointed by ANECA and the corresponding counterpart agencies where they participate as members of the respective entities who have in-depth knowledge of quality assurance processes and programmes.

All evaluation phases undertaken under the AUDIT International Programme involve the drafting of various reports, carried out by the respective committee and with regard to the following process:

- Design certification: design evaluation report of IQAS and report on the decision of the Certification Committee.
- Implementation certification: report on the audits carried out to university centres and report on the decision of the Certification Committee.

Design certification.

Once the design is evaluated through online IT tool, the committee drafts an assessment report. A description of the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluated IQAS is always included. El report may include:

- Necessary improvement actions: the university must solve these actions to obtain the design certification. Should the IES apply necessary improvements to the design, it will be given a period of up to three months to make them effective, and then it will be re-evaluated. This process will be repeated until the report contains no amendments deemed necessary by the evaluation committee.
- and/or voluntary actions for which the HEI will decide the exact execution.

When they all necessary improvement actions proposed have been solved, the report is submitted to the Certification Committee, which issues the design certification report.

Implementation certification.

This process takes place through an audit carried out in the institution by the selected auditors.

The reports drawn up following the visit are sent to the institution. The reports provide data of the audit team, the persons and offices interviewed in the audited university and non-conformities, observations, opportunities for improvement and strengths that IQAS has implemented, to its judgment. If non-conformities are detected, the institution should develop an improvement action plan (IAP). Once analysed by the audit team, it allows wrapping up the report and passing it on to the Certification Committee. The committee, in turn, issues a separate report for each of the institutions evaluated, highlighting the context of the assessment and weighing the circumstances specified in the audit report in order to finally issue a

favourable or unfavourable statement to [awarding the certificate](#), and arguing the reasons that have led to one decision or another.

All the reports created are always submitted jointly by ANECA and the HEI counterpart agency in question. In all cases, the latter has 20 days to state any pleas and/or claims to any of its sections and conclusions. If there are any, they are analysed and are always answered in the form of new versions of previous reports.

For the implementation certification, the institution must annually submit a monitoring report to the agency and the counterpart agency which is analysed by both and, in response, the management of both agencies sends a letter in which it communicates whether the certificate validity is upheld or not.

To carry out monitoring, technicians appointed by both organizations analyse in detail the evidences submitted by the HEI to substantiate compliance with the improvement commitments reflected in the IAP which they sent prior to the certification decision.

These checks are accompanied by virtual online tours of the HEIs website in order to check if they have been implemented and/or amended.

The [reports](#) that are generated during the design and implementation certification process are published in ANECA website.

To protect the rights of HEIs participating in the programme against possible disagreements with assessments or any other aspect of the process, ANECA offers them three different and complementary channels so that they can express their differences, if any.

- Claims against reports. In the AUDIT program, the design evaluation reports and audit reports systematically allow users to file claims, and universities are reminded of this continually.

Design certification stage. The Agency sends the “Design Evaluation Report” to the requesting university. Each institution will have a period of 20 calendar days to submit any claims against the evaluation results.

If any claims arise, they would be sent to the evaluation committee for them to analyse and proceed to issue a new version of the respective report, which may match with the previous version entirely or in part. This new version would be submitted to the HEI in response to its claim.

Certification phase of SGIC implementation. The Agency sends the "Audit Report". If the university does not agree with the content of the report, it has five days to submit a "Pleading". After analysis of this document by the audit team, ANECA will forward to the representative of the university in question a new version of that report. In the case of discrepancy, the university may submit an appeal to be resolved jointly by the two agencies through the Advisory Committee for Programme and Institutional Evaluation (replaces the former Committee for Guarantees and Programmes Committee).

In terms of the overall operation of the Agency, ANECA has a procedure in place for complaints and suggestions defining the system for reception and treatment. All claims must be answered within a 20-day period. The Quality and Strategic Planning Unit is responsible for keeping track of this process. Periodically, they are all analysed and, where appropriate, improvement actions are defined to prevent recurrence. Likewise, any person/institution can send their complaints and suggestions:

- through e-mail accounts reclamaciones@aneca.es (now quejasysugerencias@aneca.es) and calidad@aneca.es, or any of the programme accounts;

Since the programme's inception and until today, there have been no claims or complaints, although some pleadings have been made to some of the reports, which have been treated as described herein, which is why no evidence on this issue are included.

3. INTERNATIONAL QUALITY LABEL PROGRAMME



In order to advance in the Spanish national accreditation, ANECA provides the possibility of obtaining an International Quality Label (IQS) of renowned prestige in Engineering within the context of the new ANECA [International Quality Label Programme](#) (which started in October 2017). This Programme includes the previous ACREDITA PLUS Programme that assessed the Spanish national accreditation in the same moment that the European Quality Label EURACE® label of ENAEE (European

Network for Engineering Accreditation). The [new Programme](#) follows assessing the EURACE® label in the same moment of the national accreditation and has included the assessment in a separated moment to the national accreditation, for example in Latin America. These two processes are similar. There are only two differences between them: 1) the possibility of obtaining two accreditations (Spanish national and EURACE®) in the same moment in the first case and only one accreditation in the second option and 2) the order of the 9 criteria is different between them. In the first case there are two differenced blocks: Block 1 (criterion 1 to 7 related with Spanish national accreditation) and Block 2 (criteria 8 to 9, specific ENAEE criteria), because if a University complies the criteria 1 to 7 and not the criteria 8 to 9, it can obtain one accreditation (the Spanish national accreditation), but in the second case it's necessary to comply all criteria for obtaining the EUR-ACE® criteria.

European Network for Engineering Accreditation (ENAEE) is the network that authorizes to award the EUR-ACE® label to accredited engineering degree programmes to accreditation and quality assurance agencies from 2006. It is rooted in the so-called Bologna process which aims at building a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), by strengthening the competitiveness and attractiveness of European higher education and fostering student mobility and employability.

ENAEE carries out its mission by evaluating quality assurance and accreditation agencies in respect of their standards and procedures when accrediting engineering degree programmes.

ENAEE describes [the standards and guidelines](#) which apply to engineering programmes to be accredited for the award of the EUR-ACE® Label and for applying for [authorisation or re-authorisation](#) to award the EUR-ACE® label from quality assurance and accreditation agencies each 4 years. Last September ANECA submitted to ENAEE the [Self-Evaluation Report](#) and evidences with which the ANECA justifies compliance with each one of the ENAEE criteria (which includes ESG criteria) in the assessment of Spanish and Latin American degrees. Also, last May a Review team of ENAEE was in ANECA for interviewing to representative of all the stakeholders in our EUR-ACE® evaluation process in Spain and in Latin America and attended a meeting of EUR-ACE® ANECA-IIE¹ Accreditation Committee. During this meeting ANECA-IIE assessed Spanish and Latin American degrees.

¹ IIE – Instituto de la Ingeniería de España (Engineering Institute of Spain -IIE, its acronym in Spain).

ENAE has authorized to award the EUR-ACE® label to their accredited programmes to the [following agencies](#):

1. **GERMANY** – ASIIN– Fachakkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge der Ingenieurwissenschaften, der Informatik, der Naturwissenschaften, und der Mathematik e.V. www.asiin.de; e-mail: moehren@asiin.de
2. **FRANCE** – CTI – Commission des Titres d'Ingénieur. www.cti-commission.fr; e-mail: julie.nolland@cti-commission.fr
3. **UK** – Engineering Council – www.engc.org.uk; e-mail: international@engc.org.uk; kturff@engc.org.uk
4. **IRELAND** – Engineers Ireland– www.engineersireland.ie; e-mail: dowens@engineersireland.ie
5. **PORTUGAL** – Ordem dos Engenheiros – www.ordemengenheiros.pt; e-mail: Susana.Teles@ordemdosengenheiros.pt
6. **RUSSIA** – AEER – Association for Engineering Education of Russia. www.aeer.ru; e-mail: aeer@list.ru,ac@ac-raee.ru.
7. **TURKEY** – MÜDEK – Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Engineering Programmes. www.mudek.org.tr; e-mail: tdogu@metu.edu.tr
8. **ROMANIA** – ARACIS – The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – www.aracis.ro; e-mail: iordan@alsys.ro, slache@unitbv.ro
9. **ITALY** – QUACING – Agenzia per la Certificazione di Qualità e l'Accreditamento EUR-ACE dei Corsi di Studio in Ingegneria – www.quacing.it; e-mail: segreteria@quacing.it
10. **POLAND** – KAUT – Komisja Akredytacyjna Uczelni Technicznych, www.kaut.agh.edu.pl; e-mail: B.Macukow@mini.pw.edu.pl
11. **SWITZERLAND** – AAQ – Schweizerische Agentur für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung, www.aaq.ch; e-mail: berchtold.vonsteiger@aaq.ch
12. **SPAIN** – ANECA – National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain, www.aneca.es (in conjunction with IIE – Instituto de la Ingeniería de España, www.iies.es); e-mail: abonilla@aneca.es
13. **FINLAND** – FINEEC – Korkeakoulujen arviointineuvosto KKA, <http://karvi.fi/en/> ; e-mail: touko.apajalahti@karvi.fi
14. **SLOVAKIA** – ZSVTS – Zväz slovenských vedeckotechnických spoločností – www.zsvts.sk; e-mail: zsvts@zsvts.sk
15. **KAZAKHSTAN** – KazSEE – Kazakhstan Society for Engineering Education; www.kazsee.kz ; alimov.kazsee@gmail.com

These evaluations don't differ from ANECA's guidelines/methodology used in the corresponding national activities. The award of the EUR-ACE® engineering label carried out by ANECA in Latin America is also within the scope of the ESG.

In the ANECA International Quality Labels programme which includes EUR-ACE® evaluation by ANECA-IIE, [the relationship between the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#) established by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in cooperation with the European Student's Union (ESU), European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European University Association (EUA) and those outlined in the ANECA-IIE EUR-ACE® label evaluation model is as follows:

Criterion 1.1. Quality assurance policy: The institutions must have a public quality assurance policy as part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders must develop and implement this policy through adequate structures and processes with the involvement of external stakeholders. This criterion is evaluated by experts pursuant to *criterion 5*, which analyses whether the Higher Education Institution (HEI) implements a formal internal quality assurance system that ensures ongoing improvement of the programme. The evaluation of the institutions' Internal Quality Assurance System asks the experts to verify whether the System is regularly reviewed and provides for ongoing improvement based on an analysis of objective data and whether it includes processes to guarantee the quality and improvement of the teaching-learning process.

Criterion 1.2. Programme design and approval: The institutions must have processes for designing and approving their study programmes. The programmes must be designed so they meet the goals established for them, including the expected learning outcomes. The qualification of a programme must be clearly specified and it must be public and must refer to the exact level of the national higher education qualification framework and, therefore, the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework. This criterion is evaluated by experts pursuant to *criteria 1, 3 and 8*. To check for compliance with these criteria, the educational programme is analysed to determine if it is updated and has been implemented pursuant to the conditions stipulated in the programme's educational goals and later modifications. On the other hand, there are two specific steps that require the experts analyse on the one hand, if the profile defined for graduates (detailed in the curriculum) continues to be relevant and is updated pursuant to the

academic, scientific and professional requirements); and, on the other hand, if the implementation of the curriculum and the programme organisation are consistent with the graduate profile and educational goals for the programme described in the programme specifications. To comply with these criteria, verifications are also made to check whether the learning outcomes acquired by graduates are consistent with the graduate profile and correspond to the level of the programme in the Qualifications Framework in Spain (QF-EHEA / MECES) and further verifications are made to check whether these include all those established by ENAEE for engineering degree programmes.

Criterion 1.3 Student-centred teaching, learning and assessment:

The institutions must ensure that the programmes are offered in a way that encourages students to actively participate in the creation of the learning process and that student evaluation reflects this student-centred approach. This criterion is evaluated by experts pursuant to 8. The experts are asked to verify whether the learning activities, teaching methods and evaluation systems used are adequate and adequately correspond to the objective of the learning outcomes acquired by the students.

Criterion 1.4 Student admission, evolution, recognition and certification: The institutions must consistently apply pre-established and public standards covering all phases of the student "lifecycle"; for example, student admission, progress, recognition and certification. This criterion is evaluated by experts pursuant to *criterion 3*. There are guidelines as part of this criteria requiring the experts to analyse whether the degree programme admission criteria ensure students have the proper entry profile to complete it, if the number of vacancies offered in the verified report is applied and the various academic regulations make it possible to improve the values of the academic performance indicators.

Criterion 1.5 Academic staff: The institutions must ensure their academic staff's competencies. Moreover, they must use fair and transparent processes for staff hiring and development. This criterion is evaluated by experts pursuant *criterion 6*. This criterion analyses whether the academic staff involved with teaching is sufficient and adequate based on the characteristics of the programme and the number of students.

Criterion 1.6 Resources for student learning and support: The institutions must have sufficient financing to develop the educational activities and ensure students are offered sufficient and easily accessible support and resources for learning. This criterion is evaluated by experts pursuant to *criteria 2 and 7*.

Standard 2 analyses whether the support staff, physical resources and services available to execute the programme are adequate in relation to the nature and type of programme, the number of students enrolled and the competences to be acquired. Standard 7 asks the experts to evaluate whether the programme receives adequate support from the institution to execute the educational programme, which ensures its sustainability over time.

Criterion 1.7 Information management: The institutions must ensure they compile, analyse and use the pertinent information for effective management of their programmes and other activities. This criterion is evaluated by experts pursuant to criteria 5 and 9. *Criterion 5* analyses whether the Internal Quality Assurance System which is in effect facilitates the monitoring, modification and accreditation processes of the degree programme and guarantees ongoing improvement on the basis of the analysis of objective and verifiable data. *Criterion 9* asks the experts to evaluate whether the outcomes of the indicators for the educational programme are consistent with the design, management and resources available for the programme and meet the institution's social demands.

Criterion 1.8 Public information: The institutions must publish clear, accurate, objective, updated and easily-accessible information on their activities and programmes.

This criterion is evaluated by experts pursuant to *criterion 4*. The criterion analyses whether the institution has mechanisms for adequately communicating the characteristics of the degree programme and processes ensuring the quality thereof to all stakeholders. Specifically, the experts are asked to verify whether:

- The programme academic coordinators publish adequate and updated information on the characteristics of the educational programme, its execution and outcomes both as regards monitoring as well as accreditation.
- The information necessary for decision making regarding potential students and other stakeholders in the national and international university system is easily accessible.
- Students enrolled in the degree programme have access at the appropriate time to relevant information from the study programme and the expected learning outcomes.

Criterion 1.9 Continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation of the programmes: The institutions must monitor and periodically evaluate their programmes to guarantee they achieve the objectives and meet the students' and society's needs. These evaluations must give rise to the ongoing improvement of

the programme. As a result of the foregoing, any measure planned or adopted must be communicated to all interested parties. This criterion is evaluated by experts pursuant to *criteria 1 and 5*. Criterion 1 asks the experts to verify whether the defined graduate profile (and its implementation in the programme) maintains pertinence and is updated as required in each academic, scientific or professional field while criterion 5 analyses whether the Internal Quality Assurance System in effect facilitates the degree programme monitoring, modification and periodic review processes.

Criterion 1.10 External cyclical quality assurance: The institutions must submit to an external quality assurance process which is cyclic in nature and in line with the ESG. The ANECA-IIE EUR-ACE® label evaluation establishes the validity period of this accreditation as six years for First Cycle programmes and four years for Second Cycle Programmes, which guarantees cyclical external quality assurance.

ANECA has established [nine internationally recognised criteria](#) which must be assessed in the label evaluation process in Latin American.

These criteria are grouped into dimensions:

Dimension 1, which corresponds to the description of the degree programme, and contains criteria 1 and 2:

- The degree programme: whether the degree programme is an educational proposal that is relevant to the context and coherent with the job market and societal needs, and the design thereof contemplates the learning outcomes established by EUR-ACE® for engineering degrees. Also assessed is if there is adequate institutional support so that its implementation guarantees sustainability over time.

Dimension 2, which is related to the degree programme management system, contains criteria 3, 4 and 5 corresponding to:

- The management system: the management and organisation of the study programme, including access, the teaching coordination mechanisms and credit transfer and recognition systems; transparency and visibility of the degree programme as concerns the information provided on it to the various stakeholders; and the efficacy of the Internal Quality Assurance System as a tool for collecting information, analysing it, carrying out improvement actions and conducting proper monitoring are all analysed.

Dimension 3, which corresponds to the resources the degree programme has, and contains criteria 6 and 7 which analyse:

- Resources: the suitability of the academic staff and the material resources, infrastructures and services made available to the students to guarantee the achievement of the competences defined by the degree programme are analysed.

Dimension 4, which is related to the degree programme outcomes, contains criteria 8 and 9 corresponding to:

- Outcomes: aspects related to the acquisition by the students of the competences initially defined for the degree programme; in other words, the learning outcomes established by ENAEE, are analysed by observing their suitability to the corresponding qualification level. Also evaluated is the evolution of the various academic outcome indicators, professional outcome indicators (employability) and personal outcome indicators (satisfaction with the educational experience).

[Review team](#) (or panel of experts). The panel of experts is **composed** by 5 members: 1 chairman, 1 academic member, 1 professional member, 1 student member and 1 secretary. This panel is responsible for the initial assessment and the visit to the college where the degree programme is offered.

The **selection of experts** for this panel with an academic profile and the student is made by ANECA. There is a [call for ANECA Peer reviewers](#) for the purpose of selecting reviewers for the evaluation programmes developed at the agency. The selection of experts with a professional profile is made in collaboration with the Engineering Institute of Spain (IIE, its acronym in Spain). The professional members can participate simultaneously in the assessment of degrees of different countries. ENAEE considers a best practice for other agencies this cooperation between ANECA and IIE in the assessment of EUR-ACE® label.

All experts are selected considering the transparency, suitability of the individuals to the duties performed during evaluation and their [specific training](#) on the methodology of this evaluation process.

For degree programmes outside Spain, the selection and **appointment** of the panel is the responsibility of ANECA in collaboration with the engineering degree programme accreditation ex-post agency operating in the applicant institution's home country. ANECA provides the applicant higher education institution with a list of people on the panel of experts and offers a brief CV for each one of the

members. The institution communicates the acceptance of said members or the [dismissal](#) of any of them with justification to ANECA. In this last case, ANECA, in collaboration with IIE (if the dismissal is related to an expert with a professional profile), studies the reasons alleged by the higher education institution and proceeds, as applicable, to modify the composition of the panel of experts that will conduct the degree programme visit.

All members of the panel receive the appropriate and specific **training** to evaluate the awarding of the EUR-ACE® label. This training is defined by ANECA, and receiving it is an essential requirement for all panel members.

ANECA uses the following **steps during the Latin America evaluation process**:

- a. The process begins with the submission of the [Self-Evaluation Report \(SR\)](#) by the institution applying for the EUR-ACE® label evaluation for each one of its degree programmes. In this report, the institution must explain how the degree programme complies with each one of the criterion established in the EUR-ACE® label evaluation (included the ESG), with special emphasis on the way in which all graduates of the degree programme evaluated acquire the learning outcomes established by ENAEE for engineering degrees. Evidence is submitted along with the Self-Evaluation Report with which the University justifies compliance with each one of the ENAEE criteria.

- b. The procedure includes a [visit to the college](#) where the degree programme subject of the evaluation by the panel of experts is offered with the participation of a student. Prior to this visit, preliminary discussion meetings -physical or virtual- are held among the members of the panel to identify the information that must be obtained during the visit. Depending on the number of degree programmes to be evaluated, the duration of the visit may be one to three days. The specific visit timetable is agreed upon with each higher education institution. The visit includes interviews with: the academics responsible for the degree programme, the academic staff, the administrative and service personnel (optional), students, graduates and employers/representatives of professional engineering organisations. Also includes is a visit to the facilities (libraries, laboratories, etc.) and a review of all evidence collected; it ends with a meeting between the panel of experts and the academics responsible for the programme at the higher

education institution. A second visit to the University may be conducted for degree programmes that have been awarded the label with additional orders if the EUR-ACE® ANECA-IIE Accreditation Committee deems necessary in order to verify compliance with them.

- c. In collaboration with the various members, the Chairman of the panel coordinates the preparation of a specific visit report for each one of the degree programmes subject of evaluation which will be agreed upon by all members of the panel of experts. This report assesses each one of the criterion established for the EUR-ACE® label evaluation outlined in the evaluation guides published at the ANECA website and verifications are made to determine if the recommendations issued in the **evaluations** performed prior to the EUR-ACE® accreditation (see criterion 5).

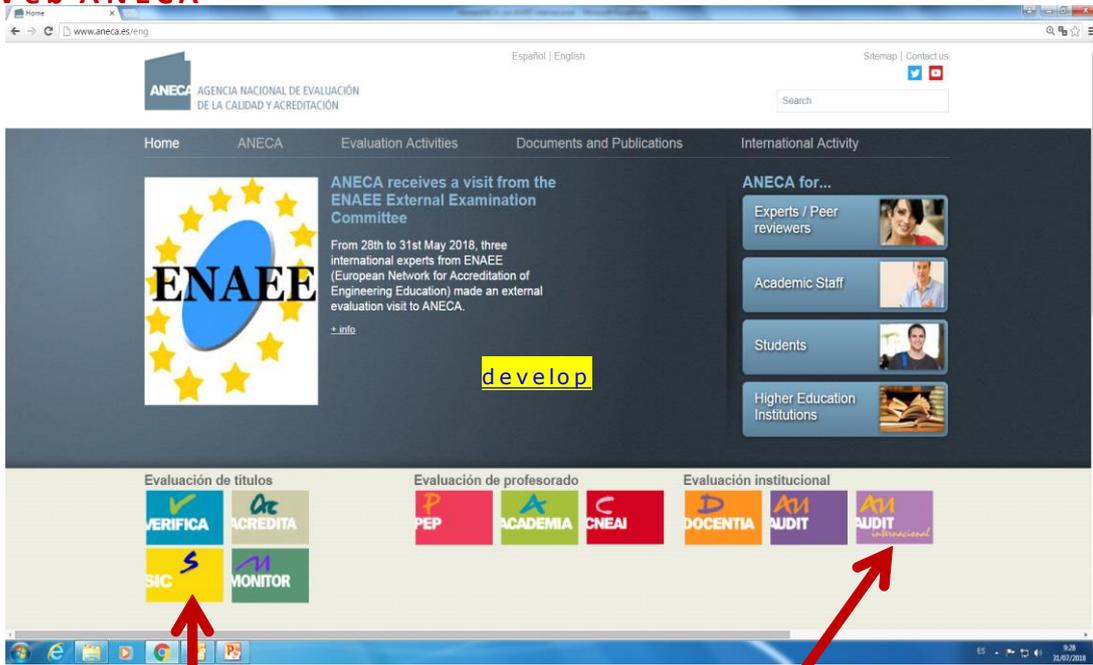
- d. The visit report, the self-evaluation report and all of the information available on the degree programme applying for the label are analysed by the [EUR-ACE® ANECA-IIE Accreditation Committee](#), which produces the grounded provisional evaluation report and includes all the information of the visit report with the provisional result of the assessment. This report is issued to the higher education institution which may submit any pleas deemed appropriate as well as an action, if appropriate, within twenty days. This action plan (improvement plan) aims to identify the actions, responsible parties and phases to be conducted by the higher education institution to correct or improve any aspects considered in the provisional report received. After receipt of pleas and the action plan, they will be reviewed by the EUR-ACE® ANECA-IIE Accreditation Committee which will prepare a grounded final evaluation report and make a decision as concerns the awarding of the EUR-ACE® label. This decision will be communicated to the corresponding higher education institution. This report will include all of the **recommendations for improvement of the degree programme** detected by the ANECA-IIE EUR-ACE® Accreditation Committee. EUR-ACE® Accreditation Committee remains responsible for ensuring a consistent **follow-up of these recommendations. The agency determines the nature and timing of this follow-up**, depending on the final decision of this assessment. If the result is accredited without reservation, but includes specification of

recommendations for the improvement of the programme, these recommendations are verified six years after of the obtaining the label for First Cycle programmes and four years after for Second Cycle programmes. If the result is accredited with prescriptions ANECA-IIE EUR-ACE® Accreditation Committee details concerning the way and time in which these must be carried out are to be specified. The quality label will have a period of validity of less than three years for First Cycle programmes and two years for Second Cycle programmes, depending on the prescriptions. Once this period has elapsed, compliance with the prescriptions is verified.

Various [reports](#) generated along the process are included as evidence.

- e. The results of these assessments are published in:
 - i. [ANECA website](#)
 - ii. [ENAE website](#) because ENAE authorises accreditation and quality assurance agencies to award the EUR-ACE® label to accredited engineering degree programmes.
- f. The [evaluation reports](#) are published in ANECA website.
- g. The ANECA evaluation procedure provides for the possibility of [Appealing EUR-ACE® label decisions](#) to Spanish and Latin American degrees. The university may appeal the decision regarding the awarding of the EUR-ACE® label within thirty days. After receipt, the complaint is reviewed by the ANECA - IIE [Appeal Committee](#) (the same Committee for Spanish and Latin American degrees), which considers the [complaint and issues a final decision](#).

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