

Approval of the Application
by Andalusian Agency of Knowledge, Directorate of
Evaluation and Accreditation (AAC-DEVA)
for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register

Register Committee
22/06/2020

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Application of:	11/09/2018
Agency registered since:	29/11/2014
External review report of:	19/09/2019
Review coordinated by:	European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)
Review panel members:	Oliver Vettori (chair, academic), Marion Coy, Isabel Ortega, Damian Michalik (student)
Decision of:	22/06/2020
Registration until:	30/09/2024
Absented themselves from decision-making:	Not applicable
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirmation of eligibility, 03/10/2018 2. External Review Report, 19/09/2019 3. AAC-DEVA's additional representation & Annexes 08/05/2020

1. The application of 11/09/2018 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 03/10/2018, having considered clarification received from AAC-DEVA on 24/09/2018.
3. The Register Committee considered the external review report of 19/09/2019 on the compliance of AAC-DEVA with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).
4. The Register Committee invited AAC-DEVA to make additional representation on the grounds for possible rejection on 25/03/2020. The Register Committee considered AAC-DEVA's additional representation of 08/05/2020.

Analysis:

4. In considering AAC-DEVA's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account:

- *ex-ante verification of study programmes;*
- *ex-post re-accreditation verification of study programmes;*
- *follow-up/monitoring of study programmes;*
- *modification of study programmes;*
- *accreditation of quality assurance systems;*
- *institutional accreditation;*
- *reviews of private universities for recognition;*
- *accreditation of foreign languages skills;*
- *DOCENTIA program for teaching activity evaluation.*

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

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

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ESG 2.6 – Reporting

7. The Register Committee noted that AAC-DEVA publishes the full reports of its external reviews, except those with a negative result of its (ex-ante) verification programme. While the review panel found the agency's explanations – that it is not necessary to publish information about study programmes that are not going to be offered – reasonable, the Register Committee underlined that it can be of interest for the public to know which concepts were denied accreditation and why. In particular, such information is important if the institutions applies for accreditation of the same programme with another quality assurance agency, which needs to be able to find out that it was earlier denied accreditation by AAC-DEVA.

8. In its additional representation the agency stated that it is committed to transparency, but that the publication of the ex ante reports would create confusion among students and might create prejudice against the concerned university. AAC-DEVA added that the current legal framework in Spain does not allow ex-ante accreditation to be carried out by a different QA agency and that the universities are required to wait at least two years before resubmitting the programme for the ex-ante verification.

9. The Committee however could not follow the agency's reasoning for not publishing reports where the agency takes a negative decision since such reports have been published in the past by registered agencies (in other regions of Spain and elsewhere), without the risk of confusion. The reputation of a higher education institutions should not be affected by an ex-ante negative report more than the publication of any other report with a negative outcome. The Register Committee added that the higher education

institution could always have the option to withdraw the proposal of a study programme before a decision by AAC-DEVA is taken, so as to avoid any public decision from being taken.

10. The Register Committee underlined that the standard requirement is clear, and does not include exceptions in regards to the publication of reports for any form of finalised external QA procedure.

11. **The Committee therefore did not concur with the review panel's conclusion of (full) compliance, but concluded that AAC-DEVA complies only partially with ESG 2.6.**

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ESG 2.7 – Complaints and appeals

12. The Register Committee noted that higher education institutions reviewed by AAC-DEVA may file an appeal before the Universities Council in case of verification/modification, accreditation renewal and institutional accreditation. If the claim is accepted, the appeal is sent to AAC-DEVA where a group of experts who have not intervened in the evaluation that led to the unfavourable decision will revise the report.

13. The Committee underlined that AAC-DEVA's current appeals process does not fully ensure the impartiality of decision making, as the Universities Council is both the body responsible for the accreditation decisions and the resolution of appeals after such procedures.

14. In case of DOCENTIA, IMPLANTA and the accreditation of foreign language skills, the resolution of the appeal is with the same body who issued the initial decision. Thus the impartiality of the decision making is not fully ensured in any of the external QA activities carried out by the agency.

15. In its additional representation the agency explained that according to the Spanish legal framework the agency cannot exclude the University Council in the consideration of the appeals procedure – in the case of verification/modification, accreditation renewal and institutional accreditation. The agency added that the appeal is assessed by a commission which includes experts that have not intervened in the evaluation, and following their examination, if the appeal is ratified it will be further submitted to the corresponding evaluation body for reevaluation. The agency nevertheless added that it will raise the impartiality issue in the meeting of the Spanish Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (REACU).

16. The Register Committee noted that AAC-DEVA intends to establish an Appeals Committee to consider all appeals related to the evaluation of programmes. The decision of the Appeals Committee will be binding for the DEVA Director. The proposal for such a committee will be approved following the meeting of the Technical Committee for Evaluation and Accreditation in June 2020.

17. Furthermore, the Register Committee noted that while higher education institutions have been able to state their dissatisfaction with the review

process i.e. by filling in an online 'suggestions form', the Committee further underlined that AAC-DEVA lacks a formal procedure that explains what form of complaints may be submitted and considered by the agency.

18. In its additional representation the agency stated that it has designed a specific procedure for complaints as part of its quality management system and that it has updated its online form for the submission of such complaints. The Register Committee could verify that a complaints protocol has been developed and that the modified online form allows the submission of various forms of complaints.

19. Register Committee welcomed the new procedure for complaints and the proposal for a specific Appeals Committee. The Committee could, however, not yet verify whether AAC-DEVA has established a separate Appeals Committee. The Register Committee therefore concluded that the agencies complies only partially with ESG 2.7.

ESG 3.1 – Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

20. The Register Committee noted the panel's concerns in terms of the agency's engagement with stakeholders. While the agency has strong connections with universities, the relationship with student representatives, and other civic and social groups is very weak. This lack of engagement is reflected in both the composition, working arrangements and internal interaction of the agency's committees.

21. The Register Committee considered the agency's explanation that the current regulation of its statutes limit the involvement of students, but the Register Committee underlined that stakeholder involvement such as students is a key requirement of the standard.

22. The panel further noted that the agency lacked a strategic focus and that there was no evidence of governance level oversight of strategic planning or review by AAC-DEVA.

23. In its additional representation the agency reported that steps have been already made to ensure the presence of students and professionals in all evaluation committees for ex-ante verification, modification and accreditation renewal. The agency stated that it intends to further strengthen the role of the Technical Committee for Evaluation and Accreditation (CTEyA) by incorporating professionals and by increasing the number of students.

24. Considering the lack of a strategic focus and governance oversight, the agency added that its new Strategic Plan for 2021-2026 is in preparation and that it will reflect the engagement of stakeholders and the different levels of strategic governance.

25. The Register Committee underlined that the agency has not yet translated its goals and objectives into its daily work, as the Strategic Plan has not yet been adopted nor implemented. The Register Committee

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therefore followed the panel's conclusion that AAC-DEVA complies only partially with ESG 3.1.

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ESG 3.5 – Resources

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26. In its last decision of inclusion the Register Committee flagged AAC-DEVA's ability to acquire and consolidate the resources required to organise site-visits as part of its periodic re-accreditation procedures.

27. As AAC-DEVA has been able to carry out site-visits within its procedures, the flag has been addressed.

28. The Register Committee noted that AAC-DEVA acknowledged in its SWOT analysis that it did not achieved what it aspired it set out to do in the past five years. These concerns were mainly due to the current organisational structure of the agency and lack of strategic planning which has lead to difficulties in the proper allocation of resources and development of prospective units for the full implementation of thematic analysis.

29. In its additional representation AAC-DEVA stated that it had been able to provide all the necessary resources to set up and maintain its external QA activities and that its budget has been approved without any reductions. Concerning the problems related to the structural organisation of the agency, AAC-DEVA explained that this are addressed in the development of its Strategic Plan.

30. Having considered the organisational related issues under ESG 3.1, the Register Committee found the agency clarification with regards to its allocation of appropriate resources reassuring. The Register Committee was thus able to follow the panel's conclusion of (substantial) compliance with ESG 3.5.

ESG 3.6 – Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

31. In its previous decision of inclusion, the Register Committee flagged the effectiveness of AAC-DEVA's internal quality assurance arrangements.

32. In May 2018, AAC-DEVA established an Internal Quality Assurance Commission to review its own internal quality assurance methodology, but at the time of the site-visit the agency was still reviewing its internal documentation.

33. The Register Committee noted that the panel saw insufficient evidence of a pattern of continuous improvement in the internal quality assurance of AAC-DEVA. While there has been a spur of activity in preparation for the external review the panel did not consider this was sufficient to achieve meaningful results.

34. In its additional representation the agency reasserted its commitment for improving its internal QA system and that it was in the process of reviewing its Services Charter and setting up a web application designed to

support continuous improvement and facilitate the management of the agency's activities.

35. The Register Committee noted that while AAC-DEVA had committed to ensuring the robustness of the internal quality assurance system, the implementation has not yet taken place. Therefore the Register Committee could not concur with the review panel's conclusion of (substantial) compliance but concluded that AAC-DEVA complies only partially with ESG 3.6.

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Conclusion:

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

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

37. The Register Committee considered that AAC-DEVA only achieved partial compliance with some standards. In its holistic judgement, the Register Committee considered that these issues did not raise substantial doubts about the reliability and trustworthiness of AAC-DEVA's outcomes. Moreover, AAC-DEVA is well aware of the issues and has already started to take concrete steps to resolve these matters, except for ESG 2.6. The Committee therefore concluded that AAC-DEVA continues to comply substantially with the ESG as a whole.

38. The Register Committee therefore approved the application and renewed AAC-DEVA's inclusion on the Register. AAC-DEVA's renewed inclusion shall be valid until 30/09/2024¹.

39. The Register Committee further underlined that AAC-DEVA is expected to address the issues mentioned appropriately and to resolve them at the earliest opportunity.

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



EQAR | Aarlenstraat 22 Rue d'Arlon 22 | BE-1050 Brussels

Agencia Andaluz del Conocimiento (AAC-DEVA)

C/ Max Planck 3

Edificio IRIS 1

Francisco Gracia Navarro

41092 Isla de la Cartuja - Sevilla

Spain

Brussels, 3 October 2018

Confirmation of Eligibility: Application for Inclusion on the Register

Application no. A79 of 11/09/2018

Dear Francisco,

We hereby confirm that the application by AAC-DEVA for renewal of registration is eligible.

Based on the information and draft terms of reference provided, the external review coordinated by ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education fulfils the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

We confirm that the following activities of AAC-DEVA are within the scope of the ESG:

- *Ex-ante verification of study programmes*
- *Ex-post re-accreditation verification of study programmes*
- *Follow-up/monitoring of study programmes*
- *Modification of study programmes*
- *Accreditation of Quality Assurance Systems*
- *Institutional accreditation*
- *Reviews of private universities for recognition*

Please ensure that AAC-DEVA's self-evaluation report covers all the afore-mentioned activities including all the external quality assurance activities carried out by the agency, irrespective of whether they are carried out regularly or occasionally (i.e. joint programme accreditations), within or outside Spain (i.e. Russia).

In the application form, AAC-DEVA stated that it did not consider the following activities to be within the scope of the ESG:

European Quality Assurance
Register for Higher Education
(EQAR) aisbl

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VAT BE 0897.690.557

EQAR Founding Members:



- *Accreditation of foreign languages skills*
- *DOCENTIA program for teaching activity evaluation*

We considered the clarification provided and came to the conclusion that these activities are within the scope of the ESG as they follow predefined processes that involve evaluating an individual higher education institution (or its units) against a set of existing criteria, and the activities are substantially concerned with teaching and learning in higher education. *Accreditation of foreign languages skills* is a certification procedure specialised in language teaching and assessment, while the *DOCENTIA program for teaching activity evaluation* is based on an existing external QA procedure (also covered by EQAR for other registered Spanish QA agencies) involving the monitoring and certification in the implementation of teaching assessment procedures.

Please ensure that AAC-DEVA's self-evaluation report covers all the afore-mentioned activities.

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

ESG 3.5 Resources [ESG 2005: standard 3.4]

It should be addressed whether AAC-DEVA was able to acquire and consolidate the resources required by the site-visits that it carries out as part of its periodic re-accreditation procedures.

ESG 3.6 Internal Quality Assurance and Professional Conduct [ESG 2005: standard 3.8]

It should receive attention to what extent AAC-DEVA has demonstrated the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance arrangements by introducing a sufficient level of formality.

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

- *Evaluation of research groups, university institutes and projects*
- *Teaching staff evaluation and accreditation*

While these activities are not relevant to your application, it is AAC-DEVA'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 - European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education in its capacity of the coordinator of the external review. At the same time we underline that it is AAC-DEVA'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. AAC-DEVA 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 (coordinator)

Karl Dittrich

European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)
President

Aarlenstraat 22 Rue d'Arlon
1050 Brussels
Belgium

Córdoba, 8 May 2020

Dear Mr Dittrich

Please, find below the additional representation that AAC-DEVA sends for the Register Committee consideration before a final decision on AAC-DEVA's application for renewal of inclusion on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) is made.

AAC-DEVA's argumentation

ESG 2.6 – Reporting

AAC-DEVA wants to make the following statements in response to the Register Committee decision regarding the ESG2.6:

1. AAC-DEVA is totally committed with transparency and publishes all reports except the negative ones from the ex-ante verification programme of non-implemented programmes. We believe that transparency by itself is not sustained if there is not a justified purpose. Since the main reason for publishing evaluation reports is to provide information to the stakeholders, mainly students, about the assessment of ongoing study programmes, we consider that the publication of reports of non-implemented projects would create confusion and will not provide any benefit while causing prejudice to the affected Universities. Moreover, according to ESG2.6, the report "provides information to society regarding the activities of an institution". However, a study programme with a negative verification will be no part of the activity of the institution. Accordingly, the official Spanish Register of Universities, Centres and Study programmes (RUCT, <https://www.educacion.gob.es/ruct/home>) only publishes information of study programmes with positive verification.
2. Consistently with the above statement, AAC-DEVA publishes the negative verification reports of programmes that have resulted in positive implementation after appealing to the Universities Council. Currently, this situation applies to eight Master programmes from five Andalusian Universities. The reports (in Spanish) are available at <http://deva.aac.es/?id=informestitulos>
3. AAC-DEVA would like to clarify that, according to the Spanish and Andalusian regulations, Andalusian universities cannot apply to a different quality agency in order to get the compulsory verification of the study programme before its implementation. Moreover, after a negative verification, it is mandatory for the University to wait for two years to present the study programme



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to Verification again. Thus, this argument should not support the Register Committee decision about the publication of the negative reports.

4. AAC-DEVA publishes negative reports resulting of the Modification programme, which provides more useful information to universities that have implemented similar study programmes. AAC-DEVA publishes Annual Reports in which an analysis of positive and negative evaluation reports is made (<http://deva.aac.es/?id=informesresultados&LAN=en>)
5. AAC-DEVA has been willing to provide access to all negative reports from the Verification programme during the three external reviews we have undergone but they have not been ever requested.
6. AAC-DEVA finds inconsistency in the application of unified criteria about this ESG. It is surprising that the external review panel considered the AAC-DEVA's performance as full compliant while the Register Committee concluded only partial compliance. We disagree with the Register Committee on the interpretation of this standard. According to EQAR's interpretation "all reports should be published, without exception". However, in our view the statement in the ESG2015 "Full reports by the experts should be published" can be interpreted as that the reports should contain all aspects described in the guidelines. We suggest that this requirement should be more explicit in the next revision of ESG.

Because all the above, AAC-DEVA considers that is in full compliance with ESG2.6

ESG 2.7 – Complaints and appeals

AAC-DEVA wants to make the following statements in response to the Register Committee decision regarding the ESG2.7:

1. According to the Spanish legal framework, appeals related to verification/modification, accreditation renewal and institutional accreditation must be presented before the University Council. AAC-DEVA cannot exclude this legal procedure from the corresponding evaluation programmes.
2. According to the Royal Decree 1393/2007, impartiality of the University Council is guarantee since it is said that (article 25, point 9) *"Against the verification resolution, the University may appeal to the Presidency of the Council of Universities, within one month from its notification. If the claim is admitted for processing, it will be assessed by a commission designated for that purpose formed by experts who have not intervened in the evaluation that has led to the negative resolution. This commission will examine the file related to verification to ensure the established guarantees and may ratify the resolution or, where appropriate, accept the complaint and send it to ANECA or the corresponding evaluation body, specifically indicating the aspects of the evaluation"*. Moreover, the Commission for Verification and Accreditation of Study Plans Claims is regulated according to the Royal Decree 1766/2009.
3. Since this procedure, legally established, seems to raise doubts about the impartiality of the University Council, AAC-DEVA will propose the discussion of this issue in the next meeting of the Spanish Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (REACU).
4. According to the Statutes of the Andalusian Agency of Knowledge, *"The acts dictated by the Director for Evaluation and Accreditation, in the exercise of the administrative faculties assigned, are subject to Administrative Law, in accordance with article 69.1, Law 9/2007, October 22nd"*. This means that appeals against resolutions from some programmes have to be presented before the DEVA's Director and this person is the only one that can sign the final resolution. However, for the resolution of those appeals, AAC-DEVA is supported by technical collaborators not involved in the evaluation.



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- In order to clarify the appeal procedure for each evaluation programme and to erase the doubts raised by the Register Committee about the impartiality in AAC-DEVA's decisions, the document "Complaints and Appeals Procedure" has been revised and split in two. One is focused only in appeals and includes the creation of an Appeal Committee, not related to any evaluation panel and whose decision is binding for DEVA's Director. Its composition and functions will be available at AAC-DEVA's web site as soon as this modification is approved by the Technical Committee for Evaluation and Accreditation (CTEyA) in its next meeting, which is planned for June 2020. This change will be included in all evaluation programmes guides and it will be formally communicated to all Andalusian Universities.
- A specific procedure for complains has been designed as part of the quality management system. It includes the legally established protocol for complains and suggestions that apply to all Andalusian Government administration (<https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/lsr/lsr/inicio.jsp>) and the DEVA's complain box. Modifications of the online form have been already done in order to facilitate the way of sending complains to DEVA (see <http://deva.aac.es/?id=&LAN=en>). Moreover, the DEVA's complain box includes the possibility to send anonymous complaints, suggestions for improvement and congratulations, which will be analysed by the internal Quality Committee. The procedure will be presented to the CTEyA in the next meeting and all DEVA's stakeholders will be formally informed.

Because all the above, AAC-DEVA considers that is in full compliance with ESG2.7

ESG 3.1 – Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

AAC-DEVA wants to make the following statements in response to the Register Committee decision regarding the ESG3.1:

- AAC-DEVA is committed to strengthen its engagement with stakeholders. Steps have been already made to assure the presence of students and professional in all evaluation committees for ex-ante verification, modification and accreditation renewal. Moreover, some of them have been incorporated to the Report Issuing Committee (CEI in Spanish) that conduct the cross-sectional revision of preliminary and final reports. This can be checked here http://deva.aac.es/include/files/universidades/verificacion/comisionesVerificacion_en.pdf?v=202057111855 and http://deva.aac.es/include/files/universidades/acreditacion/ComisionesAcreditacion_en.pdf?v=202057112030, where CEI members are denoted in bold and with an asterisk. As it is usual in AAC-DEVA, none of them belong to Andalusian institutions, which reinforces the independence value. In an attempt to include international evaluators, a recent call has been made through ENQA, INQAAHE and ESU.
- AAC-DEVA will also strengthen the role of the CTEyA as the body for the participation of the stakeholders, by incorporating professionals and by increasing the number of student members. In fact, the internationally recognised entrepreneur Juan Martínez Barea (<http://www.juanmartinezbarea.com/en/>) has been recently appointed by the AAC Governing Board as a CTEyA member. A meeting with the Student University Association has been taken place to nominate the student representatives.
- In order to promote the internal interaction between the different agency's committees, DEVA's Director will report to the Governing Board about DEVA's activities in each meeting.
- The above decisions are part of a broad DEVA's strategy to strengthen the engagement with stakeholders that will be reflected into the new AAC Strategic Plan 2021-2026, which is in preparation. In this new Strategic Plan, DEVA's strategic objectives will be clearly defined and



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differentiated making possible to demonstrate in the future the level of strategic governance. The Head of the General Secretary of Universities, Research and Technology, which is the President of the AAC, has clearly expressed her strong commitment with these measures (see enclosed letter 1).

Because all the above, AAC-DEVA considers that is on its way to be in full compliance with ESG3.1

ESG 3.5 – Resources

AAC-DEVA wants to make the following statements in response to the Register Committee decision regarding the ESG3.5:

1. AAC-DEVA has been able to provide all the necessary resources to set up and to maintain the site visits as part of the re-accreditation procedure when needed. In fact, the DEVA's budget has been approved annually by the Governing Board without reductions.
2. AAC-DEVA was unable to develop the prospective unit as expected. However, this is a strategic goal for DEVA. In fact, the President of the AAC is committed to provide the necessary internal AAC human resources for the creation of such prospective unit (see enclosed letter 1).
3. The current AAC organisation responds to criteria of public resources optimization avoiding duplicities in administrative structures. However, the problems that this organisation structure might pose for DEVA's operation and development will be reviewed in the process of the development of the Strategic Plan. There is a commitment of the President of AAC to carry out the structural reforms that AAC-DEVA might need.

Because all the above, AAC-DEVA considers that is on its way to be in full compliance with ESG3.5.

ESG 3.6 – Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

AAC-DEVA wants to make the following statements in response to the Register Committee decision regarding the ESG3.6:

1. AAC-DEVA is committed with the improvement of its internal quality assurance system as one strategic tool for management decision. Because of that, it will be included as a strategic objective in the new Strategic Plan. The necessary human and budgetary resources will be provided to make a robust IQAS focused on continuous improvement of AAC-DEVA's services.
2. AAC-DEVA's first step for this improvement will be to review its Services Charter and the associated quality objectives. To be more efficient, an alliance has been set with the Head of the Quality Service and Attention to Citizens (see attached letter 2). Full access to áGoRa, a web application developed to support management continuous improvement through the planning, execution and monitoring of projects of Services Charter, Self-evaluations, Management by processes and Improvement Plans (https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/haciendayadministracionpublica/agora/documentosInicio/bloc_completo_2_.pdf), has been granted.
3. AAC-DEVA will improve the current mechanisms to collect the satisfaction of the different stakeholders as a main input for improvement of AAC-DEVA's services. The development of the complaint and suggestion box and the associate procedure is a first step in this direction.

Because all the above, AAC-DEVA considers that is on its way to be in full compliance with ESG3.6.



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I hope that all this additional information results in a positive decision of the Register Committee on AAC-DEVA's application for renewal of inclusion on EQAR.

Yours sincerely

Sebastián Chávez
 Director



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FIRMADO POR	Sebastián Chávez de Diego - Director de Evaluación y Acreditación	FECHA	08/05/2020
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Dear Director of Evaluation and Accreditation:

The Directorate of Evaluation and Accreditation of the Andalusian Knowledge Agency (AAC-DEVA) plays an essential role in the Andalusian University System, as the responsible body for evaluating compliance with Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG-2015) in all Andalusian Higher Education Institutions. It is therefore of the highest priority for this General Secretariat to take all the necessary reinforcement measures to optimize the operation of AAC-DEVA and facilitate its procedures.

As President of the Andalusian Knowledge Agency, I inform you of my commitment to carry out the following operational actions:

1. Facilitate the renewal of the components of the Technical Committee for Evaluation and Accreditation and the updating of new members to strengthen the perspective provided by university students and external civic and social sectors.
2. Intensify the communication between AAC-DEVA and the Agency's Governing Board. To this end, the Director of Evaluation and Accreditation will report on the DEVA's activities in all ordinary sessions of the Governing Board.
3. Start immediately the drafting of the new Strategic Plan which will clearly define the strategic focus of AAC-DEVA and its lines of development, as well as the structural reforms necessary for AAC-DEVA to carry out these lines of action.
4. Strengthen AAC-DEVA's human resources and reorganize them in a stable manner once the new strategic planning has been completed.
5. Provide the necessary resources for the set-up of an AAC-DEVA thematic analysis unit, committed since 2014 but not yet available.
6. Contribute to AAC-DEVA's internal quality processes by approving its Service Charter, according to the rules and procedures established by the Andalusian Government.

I am convinced that these measures will result in a significant improvement in AAC-DEVA and reflect the commitment of Andalusian Government with the service provided by AAC-DEVA.

Yours sincerely,

Rosa M Ríos Sánchez
Secretary General for Universities, Research and Technology
President of the Andalusian Knowledge Agency

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Agencia Andaluza del Conocimiento

Directorate of Evaluation and Accreditation (AAC-DEVA)

Asunto: Inclusion of DEVA into Quality
Management System

Dear Sebastian,

In response to your request on the inclusion of the Directorate of Evaluation and Accreditation (AAC-DEVA) into the Quality Management System of the Junta de Andalucía, I am pleased to inform you it has been accepted.

The Quality Management System is based on the EFQM Model and regulated by the Decree 217/2003, November 18th, approving the Service Charters, the service quality assessment system and establishing the Public Service Quality Awards.

So, in order to prepare the Service Charter of the AAC-DEVA and to strengthen your quality system, all the tools developed by the Junta de Andalucía are at your disposal. One of these is ÁGoRa, a web application designed to support management continuous improvement through the planning, execution and monitoring of projects of Service Charter, Self-evaluations, Management by processes and Improvement Plans. This platform will allow AAC-DEVA (i) to renew its Service Charter and the quality objectives associated, (ii) to perform a monitoring of the achievement and (iii) to design improvement plans. Moreover, it can help AAC-DEVA to update all the documentation of its Quality Management System including the Process Map and the associated processes.

Once the Service Charter is approved, it will be published in the Junta de Andalucía Official Gazette and on the Junta de Andalucía Web Site, in compliance with the aforementioned Decree.

Moreover, we will be pleased to fully support AAC-DEVA in the achievement of its strategic objective of becoming a reference in internal quality assurance for all its stakeholders.

I look forward to hearing from you to determine the specific details.

Yours sincerely,

Pilar Toro
Head of the Quality Service and Attention to Citizens
General Secretariat for Public Administration
Junta de Andalucía



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Correo-e:

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