SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

2012-2016

ANECA

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report aims to show compliance of self-evaluation with the new European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), approved at the ministerial conference held in May 2015, and falls within the framework of the international external evaluation process that the Agency started implementing in 2007. After a positive evaluation, in 2012 ANECA was again ratified as an Agency with full rights under the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and entered in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

This new version of European Standards has led to a pause for reflection within the Agency, where in-depth analysis has been conducted of the repercussions on the various procedures in hand. This has included a review of ANECA's evaluation activities to ensure these are properly aligned with the content and philosophy of the new European criteria.

The Agency has viewed the self-evaluation process as a global evaluation instrument, participative and self-critical, to ascertain its compliance with the new ESG. Furthermore, the process has led to a reflection on future challenges, and to analyse the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations given by the expert panel. The most outstanding aspect of this joint effort is having given the staff and experts a deeper overall knowledge of the institution.

The activities pursued by ANECA during 2016 have been largely dominated by preparations for external evaluations. Throughout this year, ANECA has also been deeply involved in the work deriving from its transformation into an Autonomous Body, as provided for by law, 2016 being a transition year between the extinct ANECA Foundation and the new autonomous body.

2. THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

The ANECA self-evaluation process began with a careful, in-depth internal reflection to establish a clear overall perspective of the Agency's current position regarding European criteria, in order to identify and update its strengths and areas for improvement.

Conducting this self-evaluation process in advance of any external visits has contributed to enhancing the processes developed by the Agency's units and to greater compliance with the new ESG. The result is the drafting of this self-evaluation report. To complete this report, the appropriate methodology has been set up to evaluate and contextualise its level of alignment with ENQA requirements. In writing the report, furthermore, the recommendations made by the ENQA external assessment committee during its visit to the Agency in 2012, and the interpretation of the EQAR ESG established in the 'Guide for applicants and registered agencies', have been taken into account.

As agreed in the Terms of Reference (TOR) with ENQA and EQAR, the scope of this self-evaluation process focuses mainly on the programme and institutional evaluation procedures: **VERIFICA, MONITOR, ACREDITA, ACREDITA PLUS, DOCENTIA** and **AUDIT.**

Similarly, ANECA fulfils requests for other evaluation activities for a wide range of institutions or government bodies, in Spain and abroad. As these activities are performed by request, they are not subject to a regular schedule.

However, the Agency conducts evaluation procedures for teaching staff (**ACADEMIA**, **PEP** and **CNEAI**), which are highly significant activities, as is the case of other activities within the university environment such as evaluation for the granting of scholarships for university academic staff.

2.1. WORK PLAN

In developing this self-evaluation process, ANECA has taken a comprehensive sample of all the agents involved in the Agency's processes. Thus, the internal views of the management team and the Agency's staff have been taken into consideration in writing this report. Likewise, the views of all external agents involved have also been taken into account, gathered through the dissemination of the report to university representatives, experts, students and other stakeholders.

Figure 1 below shows the timeline followed during the process of drafting the self-evaluation report.

FIGURE 1. Phases in the preparation of the Self-evaluation Report

PHASES IN THE PROJECT		
	May 2016	
PERFORMANCE OF THE METHODOLOGY	Opening day for the presentation of the Self-evaluation project	June-July 2016
SELF-EVALUATION	Self-evaluation performance	June-Sep. 2016
	Preparing the first draft of the self-evaluation report	Sep.-Oct. 2016
	Dissemination of the draft evaluation among Agency staff and stakeholders	Nov. 2016
	Inclusion of suggestions in the Report	Nov. 2016
SUBMISSION OF THE REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS	Nov. 2016	
REVISION AND IMPROVEMENTS	Dec. 2016	
	Dec. 2016	
FINAL APPROVAL	Dissemination of the Final Report	January 2017

2.2. METHODOLOGY

Self-evaluation is a process in which the Agency describes, analyses and appraises its position with respect to the criteria stated in the ESG. The process was arranged in two phases:

1. Self-evaluation phase

   A task force is designated within the Quality and Strategic Planning Unit to conduct the main tasks leading to drafting the self-evaluation report.

   - Gathering information from the Agency's units.
   - Reflecting on each of the criteria and submitting an appraisal of the Agency's position.
   - Identifying strong points and areas for improvement.
   - Preparing the draft self-evaluation report.

2. Revision and approval phase

The draft self-evaluation report was submitted for revision by e-mail to:

- Agency staff: all staff.
- Stakeholders: academic, professional and student experts appointed as procedure committee members within the scope of the ESG.

The date of reference for data collection was set on 30 June 2016; the evidence was complemented with updated documents to December 2106.

The report contains two types of evidence:

- Evidence that is <u>underlined</u>: this includes a link to the document or set of documents on ANECA's website.
- Evidence that is in <u>*italics and underlined*</u>: this includes a restricted access link requiring sometimes a password, given the confidential nature of the data it contains.

In addition, further links in this report lead to the **criteria or paragraphs referred** to in the report.

The in-house dissemination of the progress made with the self-evaluation process has been conducted over three days of communicative sessions held during the course of the project:

- <u>*An initial session*</u> with members of each unit volunteering to work on drafting the report.
- <u>*The first dissemination session*</u> for the entire staff. Once the draft report was completed, dissemination sessions were held for Agency staff to become familiar with the draft report, and to gather contributions offered by the various units.
- <u>*The second dissemination session*</u> for all staff members, in which the final report was disclosed.

After gathering and analysing all suggestions, the report was endorsed by the ANECA management. As soon as it has been translated, it will be submitted to ENQA for analysis and subsequent external evaluation.

3. THE SPANISH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The Spanish university system is governed *by Organic Law 6/2001, on universities (LOMLOU),* and the Acts and Royal Decrees that modify and develop it with regard to the Spanish Government's competences. Spain's educational model is a decentralised organisation that distributes competences among the State, the regional governments and universities.

The State exercises its competences to guarantee the homogeneity and coherence of the educational system. The regional governments hold competences to create, modify and suppress educational courses, both at public and private universities, and assume the basic funding for public universities.

3.1. UNIVERSITY PLANNING IN SPAIN

In Spain, higher education encompasses University Education, Advanced Vocational Training (FP) and Special Regime Education, including Advanced Artistic Education, Vocational Training in the Plastic Arts and design, and Advanced Sports Education.

University education is structured in three cycles: Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and Doctoral Degree. The degrees reached through higher education pathways correspond to the levels and qualifications established in the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MECES). (See figure 2).

With the aim of demonstrating the validation and alignment of MECES with the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (NQF-HE) defined within the framework of the Bologna Process agreements, in November 2014, by March ANECA had coordinated the drafting of the *Self-Certification Report.*

Said report underscores the value of the Framework as an instrument for promoting transparency in Spanish higher education and contributing to its comparability, as well as clarifying Spanish qualifications in the international context.

FIGURE 2. Higher Education in Spain

HIGHER EDUCATION IN SPAIN

Non-university education	University education		
Advanced Technician	**Bachelor's Degree**	**Master's Degree**	Doctor
Meces Level 1 EQF Level 5	Meces Level 2 EQF Level 6	Meces Level 3 EQF Level 7	Meces Level 4 EQF Level 8

Advanced Technician — Meces Level 1, EQF Level 5
- Advanced Technician in Vocational Training (120 credits)
- Advanced Technician in the Plastic Arts and Design
- Advanced Sports Technician

Bachelor's Degree — Meces Level 2, EQF Level 6
- Graduate (180- 240 ECTS)
- Advanced Technician in Artistic Studies

Pre-Bologna Degree
Associate Degree, Technical Engineer, Technical Architect, Teacher

Master's Degree — Meces Level 3, EQF Level 7
- University Master's Degree (60- 120 ECTS)
- Master's Degree in Artistic Education

Master's Degree — Meces Level 3, EQF Level 7
Graduate
In the case of degrees leading to "graduate with less than 300 ECTS" such as medicine, veterinarian medicine, odontology, pharmacy or architecture, check the RUCT for the appropiate level

Pre-Bologna Degree
Bachelor, Engineer, Architect

Doctor — Meces Level 4, EQF Level 8
Doctor (PhD)

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports.

3.1.1. Student access to university

University access requires applicants to hold a secondary education certificate or equivalent qualification. Students who successfully complete the university entrance tests or who hold an advanced vocational training certificate in a university degree subject, or who are over 25, 40 or 45 years of age and pass the specific test set by the university, may apply for access. Access paths are shown in figure 3.

FIGURE 3. Access to university studies

ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY STUDIES (ARTICLE 42 LOMLOU)

University Studies

Students

| Having passed the university entrance test or similar test. | Having successfully completed advanced vocational training or similar qualification. | Students over 25 who do not hold an Upper Secondary Education or equivalent certificate. | Holders of a university degree or equivalent qualification. |

3.1.2. Access for teaching and researching staff

Teaching staff at public universities fall under two categories depending on their contractual relation with institution: civil servant academic staff and non civil servant academic staff. In both cases, incumbents' *curriculum vitae* are subjected to a screening process (academic staff evaluation) before being eligible for a post at university in free competition. The aim of this step is to ensure that candidates applying for universities' advertised posts are in possession of the minimum quality standards required for each position, though the responsibility of staff selection falls to the universities. At private universities, 60% of PhDs must also be accredited as Private University Professors.

Figure 4 shows Spanish public university teaching staff career.

FIGURE 4. The university teaching staff career

CIVIL SERVICE PATH

Senior Lectures → Professor

CONTRACTUAL PATH

PhD → PhD Assistant Lecturer → PhD Lecturer

Collaborating lecturer*

* Only eligible for the civil service path if holding a doctor's degree

Meces Level 3
EQF Level 7
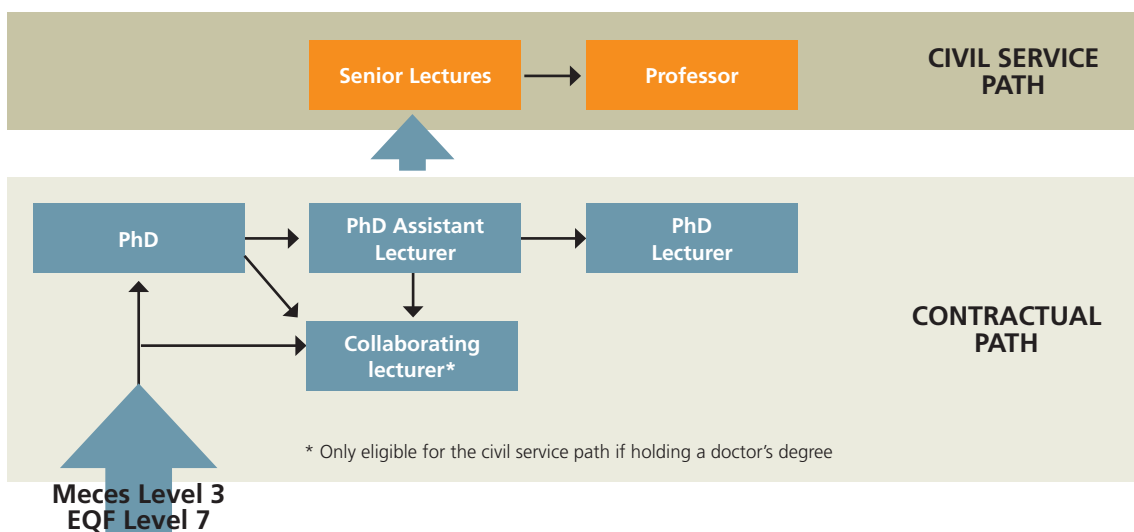
3.2. DATA PROVIDED BY THE SPANISH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM (DATA AND FIGURES FOR 2015-2016)[1]

At present, there are 84 universities in Spain (of which 82 offer degree courses), 50 public universities (of which 48 depend on Regional Governments and 2 on the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports) and 34 private and Church-owned universities (table 1).

TABLE 1. Evolution of the number of universities per type of funding

Modality	1985	2005	2012	2015
Public universities	30	50	50	50
Private universities	4	23	29	34
Total	**34**	**73**	**79**	**84**

In academic year 2014-2015 just over 1.5 million students were enrolled (1,529,730), of which 1,361,340 were Bachelor's Degree students in extinguishing programmes; 139,844 in Master's Degrees, and 28,546 in doctoral programmes. During 2014-2015, private universities attracted 12% of Bachelor's Degree students.

Details of the overall number of academic, administrative and services staff at universities are displayed in table 2.

TABLE 2. Teaching staff and administrative and services staff (PAS) at universities. Academic year 2014-2015

University	Teaching staff	P.A.S.
Public		
Civil servants	45,839	31,464
Non civil servants	47,988	19,478
Private	14,900	7,561
Total	**115,366**	**58,799**

As for accredited and implemented degrees, during academic year 2014-2015, the entire Spanish University System counted 2,637 Bachelor's Degrees, 3,661 Master's Degrees and 1,035 Doctorates. Of these, public universities delivered 610 Bachelor's Degrees, 709 Master's Degrees and 69 Doctorates (see table 3).

TABLE 3. Number of degrees accredited and implemented in academic year 2014-2015

2014-15	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree
Degrees implemented	2,637	3,661	1,035

1 Source: *Spanish University System Data and Figures 2015/2016.* MECD. General Technical Secretariat. Sub-Directorate General for Documentation and Publications, 2016.

3.3. EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

External Quality Assurance in higher education is set up through Spain's eleven Quality Agencies, eight of which are full members of ENQA (ANECA, AQU-Catalunya in Catalonia, ACSUG in Galicia, ACSUCYL in Castilla y León, AAC-DEVA in Andalusia, UNIBASQ in the Basque Country, FM+D in Madrid and ACPUA in Aragón). A further three Regional Governments have their own Quality Agencies despite lacking full membership of ENQA or EQAR: AQUIB in the Balearic Isles, ACCUEE in the Canary Isles and AVAP in the region of Valencia.

ANECA's evaluation actions and competences within Spanish territory depend on the type of evaluation:

- Evaluation procedures for education programmes: ANECA has exclusive competence over degrees in the Regional Governments that do not have a Quality Agency of their own (La Rioja, Cantabria, Asturias, Navarra, Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura and Murcia). ANECA shares evaluation competences with the Regional Evaluation Agencies for university education (ex-ante accreditation, follow-up and accreditation).
- Evaluation procedures for institutions: ANECA has exclusive competence over evaluation of teaching quality assessment systems (**DOCENTIA**) in regions that do not have a Quality Agency of their own (La Rioja, Cantabria, Asturias, Navarra, Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura and Murcia).

The evaluation procedure for internal quality assurance systems (**AUDIT**) is assessed by the Agency for all Regional Governments excepting Catalonia, Galicia and Basque Country.

- Academic staff evaluation procedures: ANECA has exclusive competences throughout the Spanish territory for accreditation of civil servant academic staff (**ACADEMIA**), and for the evaluation of researching work by university academic staff (**CNEAI**) and the scientific scale staff at the Higher Centre for Scientific Research (CSIC). The evaluation procedure for non civil servant academic staff (**PEP**) applies throughout Spain but is not exclusive to ANECA.
- In addition, ANECA is responsible for the evaluation of universities that are dependent on the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECD), namely, Universidad Nacional a Distancia and Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo, as well as the Universidades de la Iglesia, Universidad Pontificia Comillas and Universidad de Navarra.

A number of bodies and tools have been created to coordinate the Agencies' actions and evaluation outcomes across the Spanish University System. These are shown on the diagram in figure 5.

FIGURE 5. Coordination elements in the Spanish University System
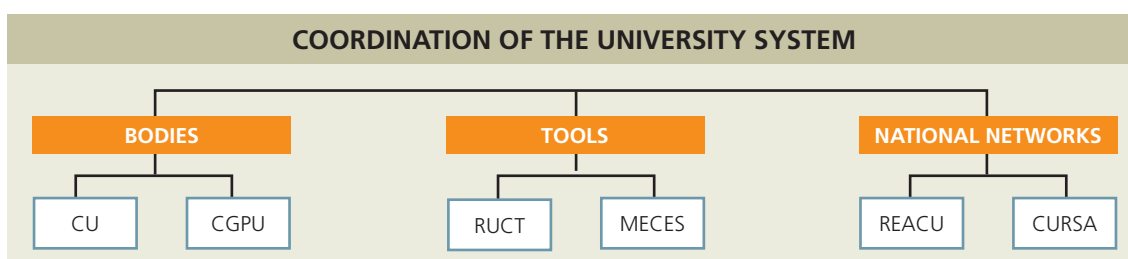
3.3.1. Coordination Bodies in the Spanish University System

The *Council of Universities (CU)* exercises advisory, cooperation and coordination functions. The CU is formed by the Minister of Education, Culture ad Sports, and the Rectors of public and private universities. Among other functions, current applicable laws grant the Council competences over decision-making in the accreditation ex-ante process for degrees, on the basis of the binding evaluation reports submitted by the Agencies. As for accreditation of academic staff, the Council of Universities is competent to appoint members of the assessment committees designated by ANECA and to make the formal decision on accreditation of the candidate on the basis of the Agency's resolution.

The *General Conference on University Policy (CGPU)* is the body responsible for arranging and coordinating the general university policy. It is made up of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and Regional Ministers responsible for higher education in the Autonomous Regions. The functions include establishing and assessing the general lines in university policy and approving the criteria for coordinating evaluation, certification and accreditation activities.

3.3.2. Coordination tools in the Spanish University System

The *Register of Universities, Higher Education Faculties/Schools and Degrees (RUCT)* is the official register created to provide essential information on universities, colleges and degrees in the Spanish university system, in which the new official Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees are entered. In addition, the RUCT is a public administrative register, designed as an instrument that is continuously updated.

In the current university planning scenario, each university, after ex-ante accreditation and authorisation, decides on the degrees it intends to offer (and their characteristics), in contrast with the previous planning scenario in which degrees were chosen from a closed catalogue of 134 degrees.

The *Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MECES)* is a regulation and international coordination tool aiming to facilitate the grading, compatibility and transparency of higher education qualifications in the Spanish education system. This is structured on four levels: non-university higher education programmes, Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and Doctorate.

3.3.3. National networks

The Spanish Network for Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies (REACU) was founded on 9 October 2006. ANECA, and all of the regional agencies for the assessment of quality in the university system, form part of this network.

REACU was created to coordinate activities and promote collaboration among these agencies. It does not have official standing but allows compliance with the mandate stated in the regulation, which requires the agencies to establish joint assessment protocols.

Their aims are:

- to promote and develop cooperation and the exchange of experience and information, especially relating to methodologies and good practices.
- To collaborate in promoting quality assurance.
- To act as a forum for proposing and developing standards, procedures and guidance for quality assurance.
- To promote the development and implementation of quality assurance and agency accreditation systems.

The University Committee for Regulating Follow-up and Accreditation (CURSA) was created in 2010 to guarantee coordination in launching the evaluation processes linked to follow-up and accreditation of official degrees. Participants on this committee are the Ministry, the Regional Governments, the Quality Agencies and the universities.

The CURSA Technical Commission comprises representatives from the State Public Administrations (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports), Regional Public Administrations, universities, Regional Evaluation Agencies and ANECA.

The aims of the CURSA Technical Commission are:

- to agree on the guidelines and protocol for the follow-up process for degrees and ex post accreditation.
- To issue reports of a general or specific nature on the implementation process of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), to be submitted to the Council of Universities and the General Conference on University Policy.
- To agree on solutions to interpretation difficulties and to any conflicts arising from the procedures for accreditation follow-up and ex post accreditation.
- To discuss and propose any other aspects not previously considered related with follow-up, ex post accreditation and the implementation of the EHEA.

4. SPANISH AGENCY FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION (ANECA): HISTORY, PROFILE AND ACTIVITIES
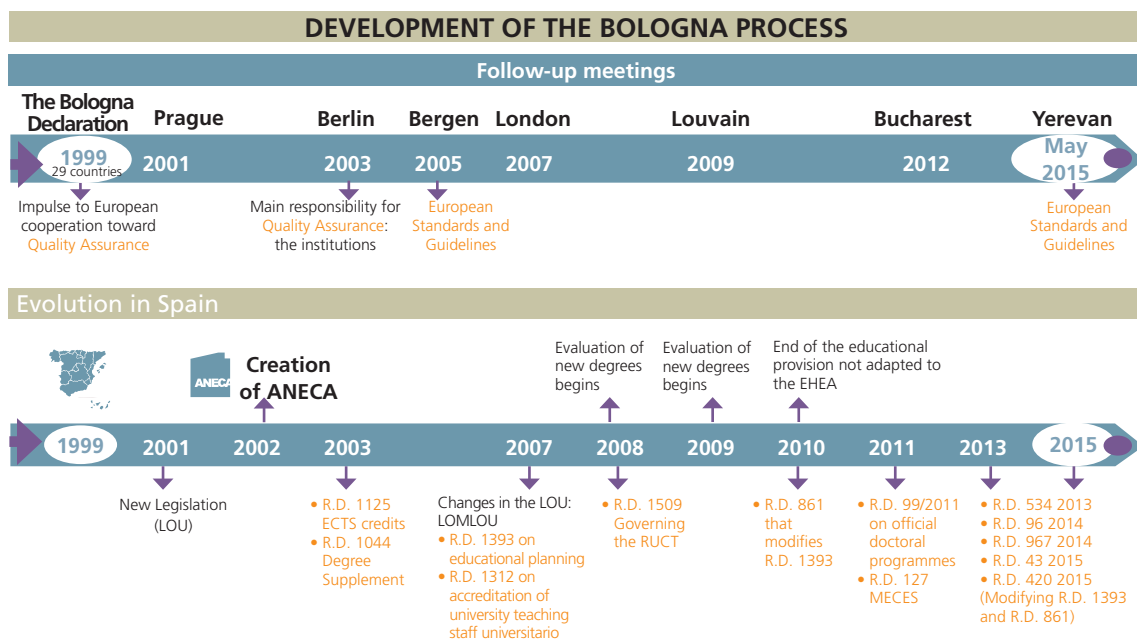
4.1. ANECA. EVOLUTION 2002-2015

ANECA was created in 2002 as a State public sector foundation by Ministerial Council agreement. Its function (*Articles 31 and 32 of the LOMLOU*) was to contribute to enhancing quality in the higher education System through the evaluation, certification and accreditation of education, procedures, academic staff and institutions, as well as submitting reports to the competent ministry for universities and to the Council of Universities on the performance of the evaluation processes. Similarly, the Agency's remit included providing information on the quality of the University System, and it was given a major role in relation with Spanish universities' stakeholders in establishing the framework for relations and advisory services with Spanish public universities' stakeholders' councils (*Article 14.2 of the LOMLOU*).

From its foundation up to the present, ANECA has undergone a number of internal and external changes (which should be taken into account to understand the present context) that have affected the institution itself as well as the self-evaluation process.

Figure 6 below shows the principal milestones in the development of the Bologna process and its repercussions in Spanish legislation and in the external evaluation activities conducted on the Spanish University System.

FIGURE 6. Development of the Bologna Process in Spain

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS							
Follow-up meetings							
The Bologna Declaration	Prague	Berlin	Bergen	London	Louvain	Bucharest	Yerevan
1999 29 countries	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2012	May 2015
Impulse to European cooperation toward Quality Assurance		Main responsibility for Quality Assurance: the institutions	European Standards and Guidelines				European Standards and Guidelines

Evolution in Spain

|	1999	2001	2002	2003	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2013	2015
			Creation of ANECA			Evaluation of new degrees begins	Evaluation of new degrees begins	End of the educational provision not adapted to the EHEA			
		New Legislation (LOU)		• R.D. 1125 ECTS credits • R.D. 1044 Degree Supplement	Changes in the LOU: LOMLOU • R.D. 1393 on educational planning • R.D. 1312 on accreditation of university teaching staff universitario	• R.D. 1509 Governing the RUCT		• R.D. 861 that modifies R.D. 1393	• R.D. 99/2011 on official doctoral programmes • R.D. 127 MECES	• R.D. 534 2013 • R.D. 96 2014 • R.D. 967 2014 • R.D. 43 2015 • R.D. 420 2015 (Modifying R.D. 1393 and R.D. 861)	

The _organic structure_ of the Agency, in force until 31 December 2015 (redefined between 2007 and 2012), has consisted of three coordination processes depending directly on the management: teaching staff assessment, institutional and programme evaluation, and general coordination.

The main governing bodies were: Board of Trustees, Board of Directors, Advisory Council and Committee for Guarantees and Procedures.

The organic structure of the Agency is shown in figure 7.

FIGURE 7. ANECA organigram 2012-2015
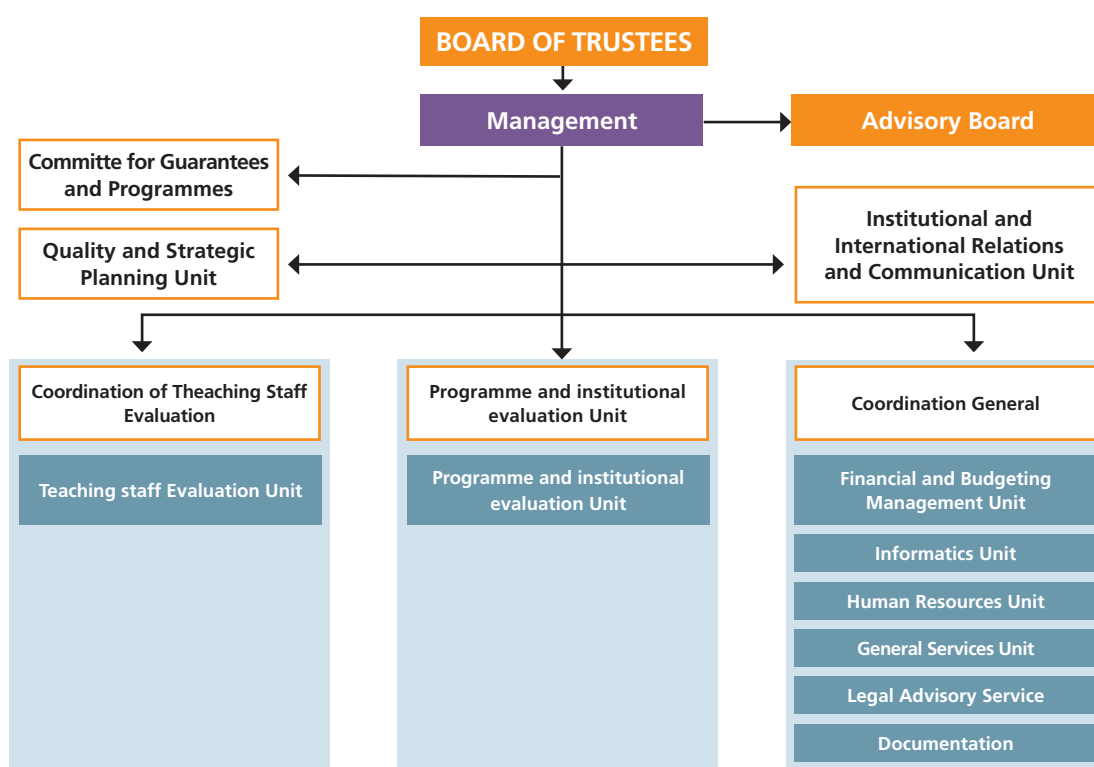
The **Board of Trustees:** the governing and representative body. The modification of the statutes, in 2011, incorporated a range of different agents from the University System into the Board of Trustees, such as: Rectors (3), Regional Governments (3), personalities of recognised prestige in scientific spheres (4), students (3) and Stakeholders' Councils (1).

The last Board of Trustees was held in December 2015, at which the ANECA Foundation was extinguished.

The **Board of Directors:** the executive body of the Agency responsible for the activities undertaken by ANECA, made up of the Director and the officers responsible for the three coordination processes run by the Agency. This was the highest decision-making body with regard to the procedures and actions undertaken by the institution, guaranteeing the objectivity and independence of the decisions taken within the assessment committees.

The **Advisory Council:** the consultative body that fulfilled its functions with total independence, objectivity and professionalism. Made up of academic experts and experts in quality evaluation, from Spain and abroad (2 Europeans and 2 Latin Americans), as well as representatives of students and stakeholders' councils.

The **Committee for Guarantees and Procedures** carried out the evaluation of appeals and claims against the programme evaluation procedures (**VERIFICA** and **ACREDITA**) and teaching staff evaluation procedures (**PEP**). The Agency could also carry out other types of evaluation at the behest of the Board of Directors.

Table 4 shows, in figures, the trajectory of ANECA between 2012 and 2015, taking into account the evaluation data for the different procedures.

TABLE 4. Evaluation of dossiers per ANECA procedure between 2012 and 2015

	Degrees evaluated*		Institutions evaluated		Dossier of teaching staff evaluated	
	VERIFICA	ACREDITA	AUDIT	DOCENTIA	PEP	ACADEMIA
	(G+M+D)	(G+M)				
2012	356	-	4	15	9,318	4,253
2013	784	-	16	15	7,900	3,680
2014	495	Pilot project	11	13	8,344	4,253
2015	324	219	17	17	10,072	5,895

*Note: G: Bachelor's degree; M: Master's Degree; D: Doctorate.

4.2. ANECA FROM 2006 TO THE PRESENT

The Spanish Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) became an Autonomous Body on 1 January 2016, created by virtue of _article 8 of Act 15/2014, of 16 September,_ on the rationalisation of the public sector and other measures of administrative reform, stemming from the transformation of the ANECA Foundation into a public body whose aim is to contribute to enhancing quality in the higher education System through the evaluation, certification and accreditation of educational programmes, teaching staff and institutions.

Thus, _Act 15/2014, of 16 September,_ on the rationalisation of the public sector and other measures of administrative reform, established the concentration in a single body of all teaching staff evaluation and accreditation functions, hitherto conducted within ANECA and the **CNEAI.** Likewise, it was advised that the ANECA Foundation should be transformed into an Autonomous Body. This was put into effect through the mentioned Act. In this manner, article 8 establishes ANECA's condition as a public body.

The most notable changes have affected mainly the administrative procedures and management rather than the performance of the procedures, and therefore the modifications have not influenced

the basic orientation of the institution or its commitments with ENQA regarding external evaluation. Over the years, ANECA has consolidated both its team of professionals with the appropriate technical profile and a pool of experts of renowned prestige to perform external evaluation processes. The procedures continue to be conducted to the same standards of effectiveness and efficiency as before. ANECA's structure and human resources are dealt with, in this report, in **paragraph 9.5**.

In accordance with _Act 15/2014_ and the Statutes of ANECA (_Royal Decree 1112/2015_), the Agency is structured into the bodies shown in figure 8:

FIGURE 8. ANECA organigram since 2016
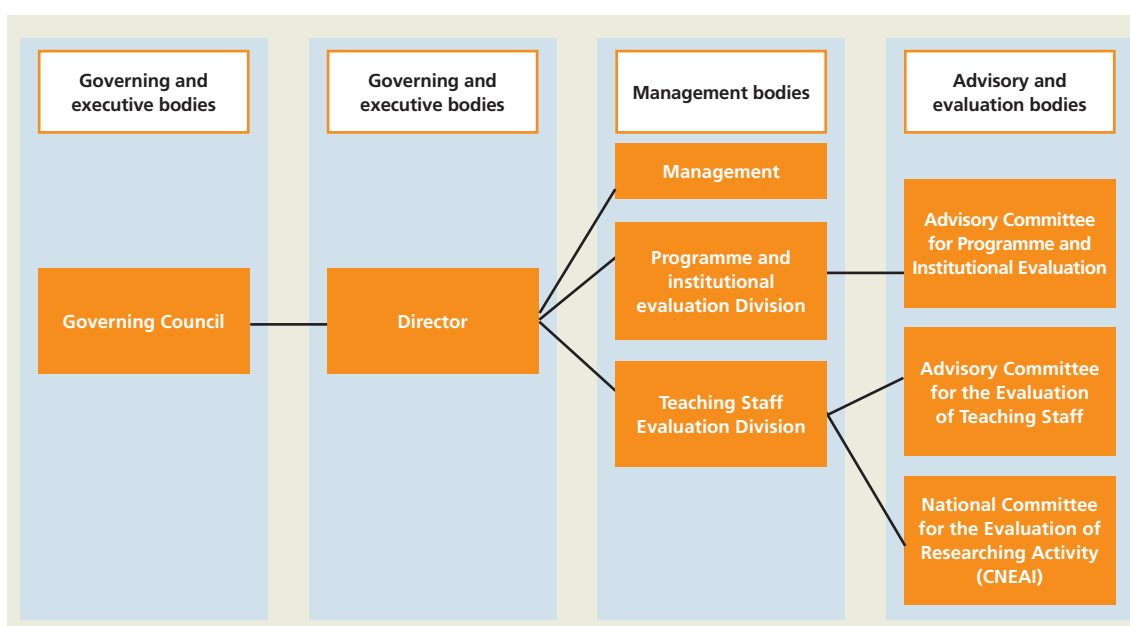
The **Governing Council** is the corporate governing body responsible for controlling and monitoring ANECA's activities, and for maintaining stakeholders in higher education informed of these, as provided for in the Statutes and other current legislation.

The Council has nine members. Participation by major stakeholders has been encouraged in higher education through representatives from different affiliated bodies: students, the Conference of the Social Bodies of Spanish Public Universities, trade unions and the national Confederation of Business Organisations, as well as a Regional Administration representative with responsibilities in university education.

This new composition reflects the significance of stakeholders.

The **Director** is a unipersonal executive body tasked with the ordinary management of ANECA. The Director is appointed by the Governing Council, thus further strengthening independence.

The following **Management Bodies** report directly to the Director of ANECA: the Management; the Division for institutional and programme evaluation; the Division for teaching staff evaluation.

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The **Advisory Councils** for institutional and programme evaluation and teaching staff evaluation are technical bodies belonging to ANECA, each with its own scope of assessment, in which highly reputed academics, university students, professionals with knowledge in the field of higher education, and researchers take part. Twelve is the maximum number of members on advisory committees for institutional and programme evaluation and evaluation of teaching staff.

The **CNEAI** is the body within ANECA responsible for the evaluation of research activity for the purposes of assigning the corresponding retribution complements, as per applicable regulations.

5. y 6. HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE ACTIVITIES, PROCESSES AND METHODOLOGY IN THE AGENCY

A description is given below of the procedures conducted by the agency, grouped according to the type of evaluation carried out: programme evaluation, institutional evaluation and evaluation of teaching staff. Other evaluation activities performed by ANECA are also described.

PROCEDURES FOR PROGRAMME EVALUATION

The Spanish laws regulating official university education planning in Spain set forth that official university degrees must submit to external evaluation processes conducted by ANECA in several stages. The first stage, prior to implementation of the degree, involves accreditation ex-ante of the degree proposal by means of ANECA's **VERIFICA Procedure (accreditation ex ante)**. After implementation of the degree, in the second stage, ANECA follows up the implementation process by means of the **MONITOR Procedure**. Once the degrees have become fully implemented, in the third stage they must submit to a cyclical ex post accreditation process to maintain their status as official degrees. For this third and last stage, ANECA has developed the **ACREDITA Procedure (accreditation ex post).**

The **VERIFICA Procedure** evaluates proposed Degree study plans (Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and Doctorate) designed in agreement with the European Higher Education Area. All study plans, before their implementation, must submit to an evaluation ex-ante to ensure, a priori, the coherence of the proposed course of study, and the availability of sufficient human and material resources.

The Agency conducts the evaluation of the degree proposal submitted by the University and issues an ex-ante accreditation report, which is binding in nature, and includes, as applicable, recommendations to be analysed subsequently during follow-up.

ANECA has drawn up guidelines to support universities in presenting their official degree proposals and has developed evaluation protocols to assist the assessment committees. **(See paragraphs 9.5 and 9.6)**.

In this context, a university may request, if necessary, the modification of a previously verified university degree. After each evaluation process the Agency delivers a report.

See VERIFICA PROCEDURE (PR-UEEI-001)

The **MONITOR Procedure** aims to provide universities with an external appraisal of the implementation of their official degrees, with a view to using this information to enhance their educational offer.

In more concrete terms, the **MONITOR Procedure** aims to:

• Ensure that programmes unfold as foreseen in the degree proposal, entered in the RUCT, together with the modifications favourably received and authorised, as appropriate, by the Regional Governments.
• Ensure the public availability of any relevant information to the various stakeholders in the University System.
• Detect any possible deficiencies in the effective delivery of educational programmes, and to analyse any remedial actions taken.
• Make recommendations and/or suggestions for improvement during the implementation stages of the study plan.
• Identify good practices for their dissemination across the University System framework.

See MONITOR PROCEDURE (PR-UEEI-003)

The **ACREDITA Procedure** performs an evaluation of the official university degrees to verify that, after their implementation, they are being delivered as initially projected.

Concretely, the general objectives of the **ACREDITA Procedure** are:

• To assure the quality of the programme offered as per the criteria expressed in the legal regulations currently in force. Consequently, one of the items to be assessed will be the quality of the outcome of the course of study.
• To guarantee that the degree is delivered according to the latest accredited version of the degree proposal, that it is conducted with the appropriate resources and supported by an internal quality assurance system that enables reflection and effective improvements to be incorporated to the degree.
• To guarantee that the degree has undergone the appropriate follow-up process, both internal and external, and that the available quantitative and qualitative information has been used to analyse its performance and to generate the pertinent proposals for improvement.
• To ensure the availability and accessibility of any public, valid, dependable, pertinent and relevant information that may be useful to users' and agents' decision-making or of interest to the University System.
• To provide recommendations and/or suggestions for improving the degree that support the internal processes for enhancing the quality of the educational programme and its delivery.

See ACREDITA PROCEDURE (PR-UEEI-004)

A new phase has been introduced in the Spanish higher education quality evaluation process with ex post accreditation for official degrees. In this context ANECA offers degrees in certain disciplines the opportunity to obtain an international label of recognised prestige, simultaneously with the ex post accreditation process for the degree.

This is the main objective of the new **ACREDITA PLUS Procedure**: to obtain ex post accreditation for the degree and a European or international label, benefiting from the synergies between the two evaluation procedures.

ANECA launched the ACREDITA PLUS Procedure jointly with two professional bodies, the Spanish Institute of Engineering (IIE) and the IT Engineering Colleges (CCII and CONCITI), in their corresponding areas of knowledge:

- Engineering: the EUR-ACE label is a certificate awarded to a university by an Agency authorised by the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAEE), in relation to a degree in engineering at the Bachelor's or Master's level, evaluated according to a series of defined standards, and compliant with the principles of quality, relevance, transparency, recognition and mobility established within the European Higher Education Area.
- Information Technology: the EURO-INF label is a certificate awarded to a university in relation to a degree in IT at the Bachelor's or Master's level, evaluated according to a series of defined standards, and compliant with the principles of quality, relevance, transparency, recognition and mobility established within the European Higher Education Area.

ANECA, additionally, is authorised by the European Chemistry Thematic Network (ECTN) to evaluate and award the labels EUROBACHELOR and EUROMASTER in the field of chemistry, although no degrees have been evaluated to date.

See ACREDITA PLUS PROCEDURE (PR-UEEI-005)

INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES

ANECA has created two institutional evaluation programs, which are voluntary for the institutions, with the aim of developing a quality culture within institutions.

In the Spanish University System, as it is organised at present, guaranteeing the level and competence of the teaching staff is the responsibility of the universities and, as a consequence, these are obliged

to apply procedures for appraising the performance of teaching and researching staff, and training and motivation programmes to ensure their teaching qualifications and skills.

In support of teaching staff evaluation, in 2007 ANECA set in motion, in close coordination with regional evaluation agencies, a procedure to assist evaluation of university teaching staff activity (**DOCENTIA**) with the aim of supporting universities in designing their own quality management mechanisms for university teaching staff activity and to boost its development and recognition.

At the present time, more than 90% of universities participate in this procedure throughout its various stages.

See DOCENTIA PROCEDURE (PR-UCPE-011)

The EHEA framework and the new changes in Spanish legislation establish that universities must guarantee that their actions comply with the targets associated with the courses of study they deliver, while, at the same time, seeking to enhance them. Universities, therefore, should enforce formally established and publicly available policies and IQAS. In accordance with the above, ANECA, in collaboration with other regional agencies, has developed the **AUDIT Procedure**.

The purpose of this procedure is to favour and strengthen the development and implementation of IQAS at universities. This initiative seeks to facilitate guidance to university faculties for designing their own IQAS. Subsequently, ANECA has developed a procedure for certifying and implementing these designs.

See AUDIT PROCEDURE (PR-UCPE-013)

The international activities engaged in by the Agency are shown in point 8: International activities engaged in by the Agency.

OTHER EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

ANECA receives requests from different players in Spain and abroad to engage in other evaluation, advisory or training activities, having signed the pertinent agreement of collaboration, on a not-for-profit basis; the requesting entity carries the costs incurred in conducting the chosen process.

A. National activities

Agreements of collaboration are signed, both with higher education institutions and with government bodies, related to the evaluation of educational provision, teaching staff and institutions, for

conducting a range of activities involving evaluation at the behest of the institution or body. The duration and establishment of these agreements is not a regular or systematic activity for the agency.

The activities conducted under these agreements are included within the three major evaluation fields covered by the agency. This implies that said activities are conducted compliant with the ESG in the design of the procedure, the screening and use of experts and their reports, and the results may always be appealed.

Table 5 displays the main evaluation activities conducted by ANECA through collaboration agreements with a variety of institutions and national bodies.

TABLE 5. National evaluation activities conducted by ANECA by contract

		PROGRAMMES	INSTITUTIONS	TEACHING STAFF
Higher Education Institutions	_Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED)_		Collaboration with the Quality Chair at the UNED "Ciudad de Tudela"	
	Universidad de Granada			Evaluation of applications for projects involving innovation and good teaching practices.
	Universidad de Extremadura			Assessment of individual teaching and researching merit among the teaching and researching staff.
Government Bodies	_The Accounting and Auditing Institute (ICAC)_	Approval of auditor training courses delivered by universities as unofficial degrees.		
	Ministry of Defence	Support to evaluation processes for military education and to the dissemination of the culture of quality throughout the colleges in all three services of the armed forces.		
	Ministry of Justice	Evaluation of course of study for admission to the profession of lawyer.		
	Regional Government of Murcia	Development of the MONITOR PLUS Procedure and other activities involving counselling, training and evaluation.		

B. International activities

As it will be mentioned on point 8 of the present SER, ANECA conducts various international activities worldwide which ranges from capacity building initiatives, cooperation with fellow QA bodies on technical and methodological issues and participation in European Commission funded projects from the Erasmus + framework (as well as the previous calls from DG Education and DG RELEX such as Tempus, Erasmus Mundus, ALFA, etc.)

Notwithstanding the functions of ANECA do not include international evaluation activities demanded by individual higher education institutions internationally, the National Agency may accomplish initiatives and projects that could involve the implementation of evaluation procedures adapted from

ANECA's ones, within the scope of international cooperation with bodies in charge of QA in the regions where the National Agency is active.

These activities are governed by a bilateral collaboration agreement with an agency or similar body within the framework of international cooperation on a not-for-profit basis: ANECA provides the know-how and the other institution finances the project.

ANECA adapts the necessary procedures to the country in hand by means of a joint institutional collaboration process; the resulting procedure, therefore, is similar but not identical, despite which the design of the procedures and their implementation comply with the requirements of the ESG, as they are linked to evaluation procedures such as **ACREDITA PLUS** or **AUDIT**.

This could be the rationale behind the adaptation of the AUDIT procedure requested by a national body in Peru between the timeframe of this report. This project has been jointly carried out within ANECA by the Unit in charge of this procedure, Strategic Planning and Quality and the Unit for International Relations.

The focus of such projects has been to respond to the request from an official body to provide technical support and training to adapt the QA procedure to its national context, with the contribution of local experts and according to the national legal framework, and to adapt ANECA's Spanish procedure to the HE setting in place. This effort would be followed by a pilot project with voluntary institutions to test the procedure and to build capacity within the national body which cooperates in the process.

The procedure resulted in a local/national adaptation based in ANECA's AUDIT procedure with the necessary amends derived from the technical meetings and the consultation process conducted under the coordination of the national body.

In the case of Peru the cooperating body was the extinct National Assembly of Rectors (ANR) which was shut by the reforms in the Higher Education Act approved in the Parliament in 2014.

The ANR invited all its members to an informative meeting to present the initiative and to join the pilot project under its coordination. The focus of the first part of the project dealt with the design of an internal QA system and its evaluation against to the AUDIT procedure. A further second stage of the project would focus on the evaluation of the implementation of the certified design of the first phase.

After the methodological discussions on the suitability of the current AUDIT criteria and their adaptation to the national context, ANECA provided the necessary training to the HE experts identified by the institutions in both vis-à-vis meetings of immersion in the technicalities of the procedure and an on-line support service on doubts of the procedure as well as in the usage of the on-line tool put at the disposal of the HEIs participating in the project.

Among the 35 institutions which took part in the first training meeting, around 7 committed themselves to develop their own internal QA system and finally 3 have finished their designs and

being subject to evaluation by an international AUDIT Committee selected and appointed among the national and international experts of the procedure and trained according to the International AUDIT procedure put in place in cooperation with ANR.

Due to the sudden and unexpected shutdown of the ANR after the reforms in the Peruvian legal framework in 2014, while the HEIs were in the process of developing their internal QA systems, the Direction of ANECA decided to maintain the compromise with the 3 institutions involved until they had finished its proposals and would be evaluated by the international AUDIT Committee.

After the completion of the evaluation of these institutions, the project has come to an end. The results of the evaluation have been communicated to the Peruvian authorities in charge of external QA set up after the approval of the Act in 2015, have shown interest in aligning the AUDIT project with the current priorities, but no decision has still been made.

The second international evaluation procedure carried out by ANECA was made in collaboration with HCERES for the institutional accreditation of two higher education institutions in Armenia.

In this particular case, the collaboration with HCERES consisted in the definition of a procedure for institutional accreditation that was under discussion in ANECA to prepare the recently approved Royal Decree 420/2015 of 29th May, on that approach for "centres" of Spanish HEIs.

The procedure was defined and approved by ANECA and shared with HCERES in 2015 and used for the accreditation of the National University of Architecture of Armenia (UNACA), which had previously developed an evaluation process with HCERES according to the current procedure defined by the French agency and the National Polytechnic University of Armenia (UNPA) which applied for an ad-hoc single accreditation decision separated from the French procedure as in the previous case.

In both cases a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the individual institution, HCERES and ANECA defining in detail the purpose and stages of the procedure and the responsibilities of the different parties.

The external reports of both procedures were submitted to ANECA's Accreditation Commission, in charge of issuing the formal decisions for the Spanish programme accreditation procedure, on the basis of the institutional procedure approved for the Armenian case.

 In September 2015 the decision made in the Accreditation Commission (COMA) of ANECA was issued to the UNACA. The process for the UNPA is in process.

Taking into account the success of the programme and the increasing demand for the EUR-ACE label (European of Accreditation of Engineering Programmes) among Spanish universities, and the historical link between Spain and Latin America, ANECA decided to carry out a pilot project to enable Mexican universities, and Latin American in second place, to obtain this European recognition. For that purpose, ANECA designed an evaluation process in collaboration with CACEI (Accreditation Council for Engineering Education of Mexico), which was reflected in an agreement signed by both organizations.

A total of 6 engineering programmes of 3 Mexican universities participated in the project, and the results of their evaluations were given in 2016.

Table 6 displays the main evaluation activities conducted by ANECA through collaboration agreements with a variety of international institutions and bodies.

TABLE 6. International evaluation activities conducted by ANECA by collaboration agreement

	CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITIES	EDUCATIONAL CONTENT	INSTITUTIONS	DOCUMENTATION
Higher Education Institutions	*Universidad TACNA (PERU)* *Universidad Continental (PERU)*		Training in Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) and the AUDIT INTERNACIONAL model. Certification of the design and implementation of IQAS.	*AUDIT-Peru documents*
	Universidad del Istmo (GUATEMALA)			*Guatemala documents*
	National Polytechnic University of Armenia (UNPA) *National University of Architecture of Armenia (UNACA)*		Definition of a procedure for institutional accreditation approved for the Armenian case.	http://www.aneca.es/Actividad-internacional/Proyectos-internacionales/Proyectos-en-el-EEES/Proyecto-bilateral-con-HCERES-Francia Armenian documents
Civil associations	*EURACE-MÉXICO (Agreement with the Engineering Education Accreditation Board of Mexico-CACEI)*	Pilot project to obtain the EUR-ACE label in Mexican universities.		*EUR-ACE-MEXICO documents*

7. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE AGENCY

The management of ANECA, aware of the need to improve follow-up of its procedures and after deliberations on how to fulfil the recommendations made by the evaluation panel, resolved in 2012 to reorganise the Agency's internal quality processes. The management took the strategic decision to create a unit to lead, transversely, all processes related with internal quality assurance. In this manner, in November 2012, the Strategic Quality and Planning Unit (UCYPE) was set up.

This unit has launched several actions to unite all efforts to achieve continuous improvement throughout the processes:

- To redesign the quality assurance system, integrated with the Agency's strategic targets and defined as a means for managing change and improvement. Its implementation requires a commitment by the Management to continuous improvement in quality. Each evaluation procedure is led by an officer responsible for encouraging staff to participate in enhancing the agency's processes.
- To benefit from the work performed by quality professionals and their proposals for improvements in developing a new quality assurance system.
- To incorporate the principle of continuous improvement to the Agency's philosophy and quality culture.
- To lead the risk management project as a key element in the decision-making process.
- To promote a project to define and set in motion a Strategy Plan, and its subsequent follow-up, through collecting and analysing data from the indicators established in each work plan.

An _Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)_ has been designed with the active implication of all the staff, based on the Agency's _2013-2016 Strategy Plan_ and the _European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education_ (ESG 2015).

The Agency's Management has promoted the development and implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System as a means to manage change and improvement in its processes, allowing:

- Systematisation of all processes in order to analyse, review and improve them.
- Optimisation of all processes, continuously updating aims and targets to ensure stakeholders' satisfaction.
- To comply with the minimum standards to guarantee the quality of the services rendered to universities.
- To detect opportunities for improvement, to become more efficient and to simplify processes and operations, thus reducing staff workload.

The steps followed to develop IQAS are displayed in figure 9:

FIGURE 9. Steps in the development of IQAS
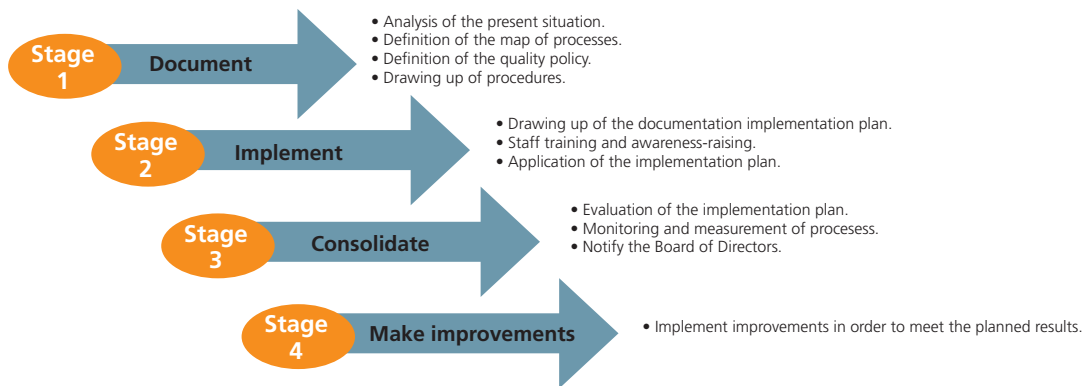
- Analysis of the current situation: a study has been conducted of the agency's current status, the existing documentation, the registers and the involvement of the staff, taking detailed stock of the point of departure.
- Definition of the map of processes: the agency's processes have been defined, seeking lines of interaction among them.
- Definition of quality policy: the management has committed to implementing an internal quality assurance system oriented toward stakeholders and continuous improvement. This commitment is expressed in the quality policy.
- Development of procedures: working groups have been set up with staff participating in processes and in the Quality Unit. This team has defined the procedures and distributed the draft procedures to all staff involved.
- Development of a document implementation procedure: a procedure has been drawn up, including dates and the names of the officers responsible, to ensure compliance with deadlines and the involvement of all responsible staff and their teams.
- *IQAS training and awareness-raising*: all staff members have taken part in training and awareness-raising sessions on the importance of IQAS as a tool to enhance the Agency's activities. This training includes, as a minimum, basic knowledge on the following aspects: the philosophy of quality, and an overall knowledge of the map of processes and of procedures.
- Application of the implementation procedure.
- Evaluation of implementation: on a yearly basis, the quality unit conducts an internal audit of the system.
- Follow-up and process measurement: the effectiveness of the system is evaluated and readings are taken from the indicators for each of the processes.
- Information to the Board of Directors: every six months, at the Board meetings, issues related to IQAS are discussed, such as documentation revision or analysis of the complaints and suggestions received, among others. Likewise, approval is given to proposals for improvement, as appropriate.
- Taking action for improvement to reach the planned results: as an outcome of process follow-up, actions for process improvement have been defined and implemented.

Figure 10 below shows the Agency's map of processes.

FIGURE 10. ANECA map of processes
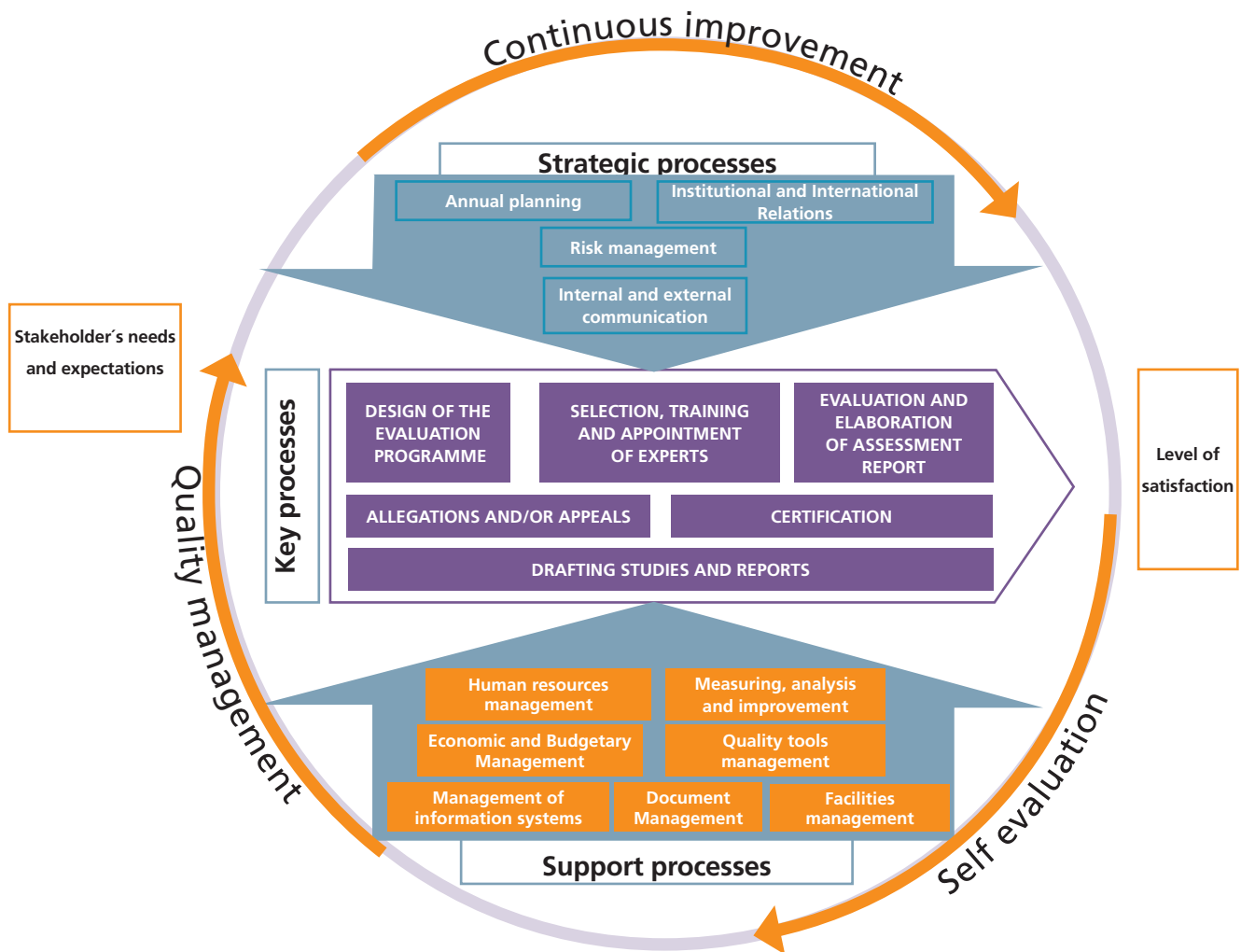
Within each unit, an officer has been appointed with responsibility for the system whose main function is to ensure the unit's compliance with the IQAS and to transmit information between each unit and the Quality Unit.

8. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES ENGAGED IN BY THE AGENCY

ANECA, since its creation in 2002, has developed an intense participation in international activities as a means to contribute to the internationalisation of quality assurance practices, and as part of the efforts made by the Spanish higher education system to become aligned with the European Higher Education Area and in those areas where the Spanish higher education institutions are involved, such as the Mediterranean Basin and Latin America.

Deriving from this early international involvement, ANECA took part in 2003 in the creation of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) focusing on mutual recognition among European QA agencies and accreditation of joint programmes. The Ibero-American Network for Accreditation Agencies (RIACES) was one of the first three European QA agencies to be listed in EQAR in 2008, after having conducted its first review of the ESG coordinated by ENQA in 2007.

ANECA's Strategy Plan for 2013-2016 places special emphasis on its Objective B featuring the relationship between the enhancement of the Spanish higher education system and the implementation of QA procedures based upon international standards: "To promote and contribute to quality enhancement in higher education, fundamentally within the university system, through the implementation of procedures that place the Agency in a leading position both in Spain and internationally."

For this reason, the international activities engaged in by ANECA should be understood as a means to further strengthening the procedures designed and run by the Agency for the benefit of the Spanish higher education system. Therefore, ANECA's procedures should also contribute to positioning ANECA internationally in QA matters.

According to its International Strategy, ANECA does not evaluate programmes or institutions outside Spain. The procedures implemented internationally by ANECA have been jointly developed with a national partner, within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding, in order to conduct processes that are part of its national portfolio contributing towards the international agenda of the Spanish higher education system as a whole.

As part of ANECA's international capacities, three main international outputs can be identified:

- Political leadership is represented through the establishment of memoranda of understanding and mutual recognition agreements with QA bodies that are members of international networks and associations such as ENQA, ECA, RIACES, INQAAHE, etc.
- Technical competences are represented by the main QA activities run by ANECA whose know-how is requested by other QA bodies to develop them jointly, such as internal QA mechanisms (AUDIT), discipline-oriented accreditation procedures and evaluation of individual academic staff.
- The geographical focus of ANECA's international activities plays a particularly important role in creating an inter-regional bridging function as part of the broader internationalisation strategy of

the Spanish higher education system in the European Higher Education Area, Latin America and the Mediterranean Basin. This focus is also linked to contributing to improved recognition of foreign qualifications, which is part of the latest competences assigned to ANECA by Royal Decree issued in December 2014.

ANECA's international activities are supported on a strong set of bilateral alliances with fellow organizations in Europe, Latin America and the Euro-Mediterranean Region, independently of sharing collaborative spaces within the corresponding regional QA networks.

Within this framework, some strategic bilateral agreements with QA agencies must be emphasised: with HCERES in France, which led to other international joint activities; with the Ministry of Education of Colombia and the national accreditation body in adapting the AUDIT procedure for Colombian Higher Education institutions; with CACEI, the Mexican Engineering Accreditation Agency, to adapt the European label for engineering programmes (EUR-ACE®) offered by Mexican Higher Education institutions.

ANECA has been represented on the executive boards of the main international organizations: Board of ENQA between 2009 and 2015, Board and Chair of ECA between 2010-2014 and 2014-15 respectively, Board of INQAAHE 2010-2012, etc.

At these bodies, ANECA has played an active part in internationalising its national procedures in a two-way process: sharing its expertise abroad and bringing the international debates and good practices into its daily activity.

In this two-way process, the participation of ANECA in international projects funded by the European Commission has been crucial. These projects allowed ANECA to take part in the first European attempts at simplifying the QA of joint programmes, and its recognition, since 2008, which has led to the current 'European Approach to QA in Joint Programmes' approved at the last Ministerial Meeting in Yerevan in 2015.

Furthermore, these projects channelled some initiatives to promote capacity-building in QA practices in Latin America, the Middle East and the Mediterranean Basin, strengthening the internal QA mechanisms of Higher Education institutions in Jordan (EQuAM Tempus Project 2012-15), the creation of the QA Agency in Lebanon (TLQAA Erasmus Project 2010-13, which continues in 2016-2019 with the Project TLQAA +), defining a label to evaluate the internationalization of Higher Education institutions (CeQUINT Erasmus Project 2012-2015), contributing to the quality assurance of regional mobility in Latin America (CAMINOS Erasmus + Project 2016-2019) or supporting the design and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework of Jordan (NQF-Jordan Erasmus + Project 2015-2018).

Figure 11 shows the areas in which ANECA conducts international activities.

FIGURE 11. ANECA international activity scenarios
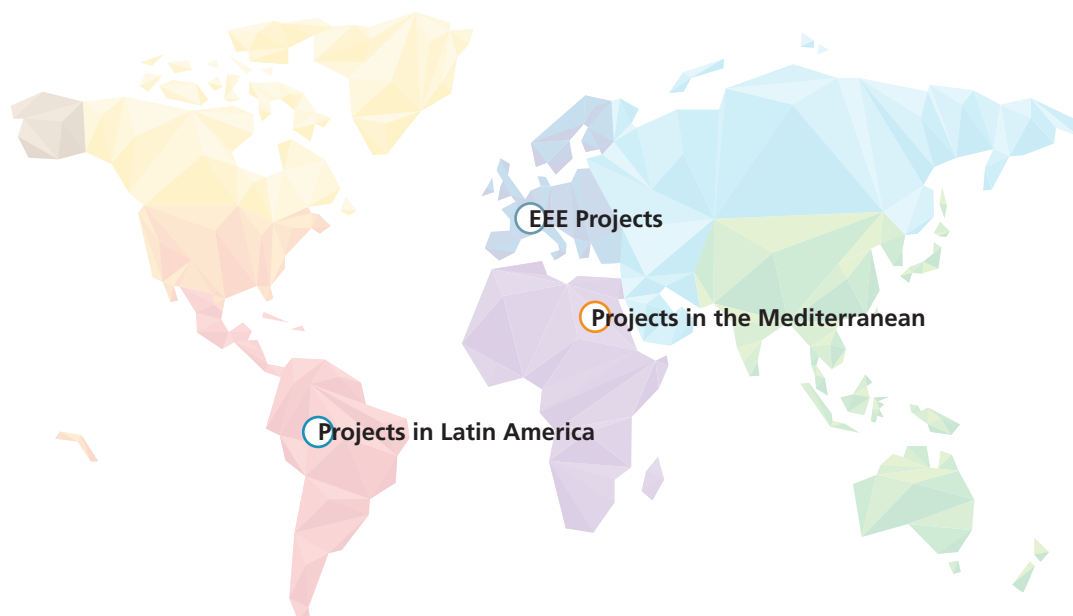
Probably the project that best explains the international dimension of ANECA worldwide has been 'Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education' (QACHE Erasmus Project 2013-2015), coordinated by ENQA, involving the regional QA networks of Asia-Pacific and the Arab countries. ANECA took part along with 3 European agencies plus Australia contributing to reinforce the awareness of QA agencies on addressing the current lack of information and policy dialogue at the national level concerning QA of cross-border HE, looking for ways of cooperation and information sharing among QA agencies and networks. For that purpose, the main product of the Project has been the 'Toolkit for QA Agencies on Cross-border Higher Education'.

The challenge for the international activities of ANECA is to be able to combine the increasing demand for cooperation from the various geographical settings where the Spanish higher education system is active, maintaining the focus on the role played as a bridge between the European agenda with Latin American QA bodies and the increasing involvement in the Euro-Mediterranean and Middle East Region conveying its expertise in technical QA matters.

9. COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (PART 3)

9.1. STANDARD 3.1. ACTIVITIES, POLICY AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.

The Agency's activities are established in the LOMLOU (*articles 31 and 32*) and in the regulation developing said law, as well as in *Act 15/2014* and in *ANECA's Statutes* which state that the Agency will perform the activities of evaluation, certification and accreditation of programmes, institutions and teaching staff.

Mission: ANECA's mission is to promote and assure quality in the Spanish higher education system by means of processes for guidance, evaluation, certification and accreditation, thus contributing to the development of the European Higher Education Area, and to contribute to raising the level of information and transparency toward society, as provided for in *articles 31 and 32 of Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December*, and any other applicable legislation.

Vision: to achieve recognition as a reference for good practices, in Spain and abroad, within the field of quality assurance in higher education systems, fulfilling its mission according to the principles of independence, objectivity and transparency, and with European quality standards. All the above is clearly oriented toward providing a service to society in general.

Mission fulfilment is achieved through the functions defined in *article 6 of ANECA's Statutes*, summarised below:

- Guidance, evaluation, certification and accreditation within the Spanish higher education system.
- Conducting, editing and disseminating studies and surveys regarding guidance, evaluation, certification and accreditation of Spanish universities.
- The promotion, evaluation and certification of internal quality assurance systems at universities and their faculties.

These functions are defined in the targets established in the *Agency's Strategy Plan* (temporal horizon 2013-2016), see figure 12. The following steps were taken to draft the plan:

- Analysis and diagnosis of the current legal regulations applicable to the agency, of the 2008 and 2012 recommendations report from the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher

Education (ENQA); internal meetings with Agency staff; information gathered at meetings with different stakeholders; reading and analysing European agencies' strategy plans; information provided by members of the various assessment committees, academics and students; information provided by members of the various technical committees: Board of Trustees, Advisory Council, Technical Committee, etc.

- Re-statement of the mission and vision.
- Definition of values.
- Establishment of the strategic targets, specific targets and work plans.
- Approval and dissemination.
- Implementation of the plan.
- Review, follow-up and evaluation of the plan.

FIGURE 12. Plan and Strategic Targets
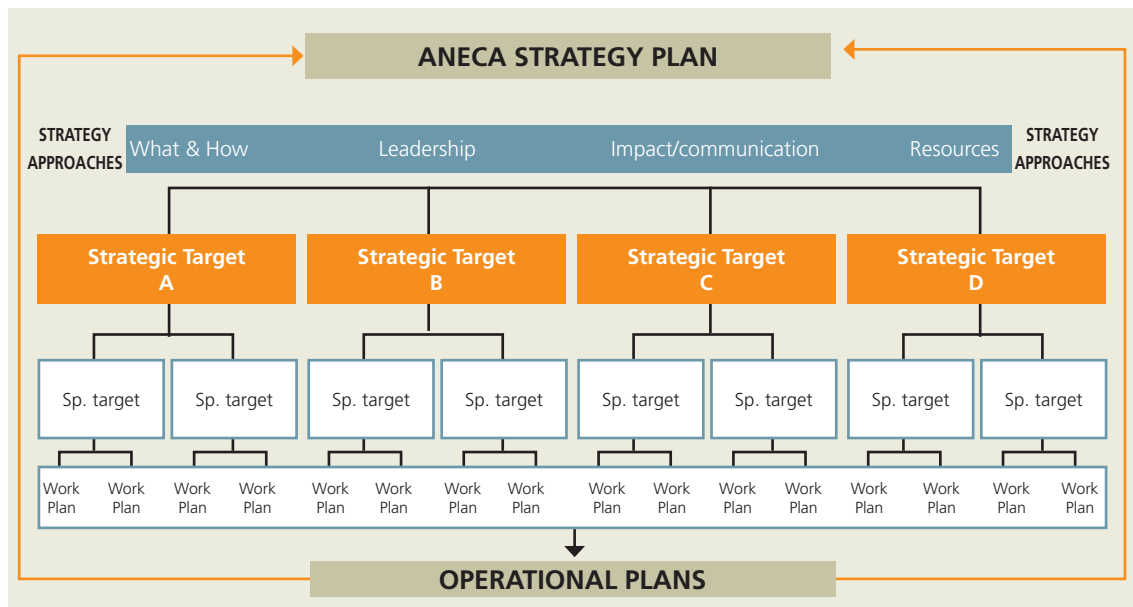
Similarly, strategic objectives have been transferred to specific aims and targets that contribute to achieving the Agency's mission through an *Annual Operational Plan*. This plan comprises the activities envisaged for the following year, aligned with the yearly budget. The Agency also drafts an *Annual Report* in which information is given relating to the implementation of said plan.

These documents are approved by the governing bodies and form part of the accountability for the Agency's activities, and are public and accessible on the website.

Table 7 below provides an overview of the various evaluation processes conducted at the agency. A detailed analysis and compliance with the requirements regarding the ESG in part two is given in **paragraph 10** of this report.

TABLE 7. Compliance with the ESG in each of the agency's procedures

EVALUATION PROCESSES		2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7
EDUCATIONAL CONTENT	VERIFICA	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	MONITOR	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	ACREDITA	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	ACREDITA PLUS	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
INSTITUTIONS	AUDIT	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	DOCENTIA	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Regarding stakeholders involvement, this is clearly the case both in the composition of the Agency's decision taking bodies and in the committees taking part in the various evaluation procedures and activities.

In particular, over time, stakeholders (as representatives of the Central and regional Administrations, students, teachers' unions, business organisations –employers– and international experts) have formed part of the main decision-making body within ANECA (Board of Trustees). Furthermore, at present, students have joined two new bodies: the advisory committees, both for evaluating programmes and institutions and for teaching staff evaluation.

Moreover, the assessment committees for the different procedures and the evaluation activities conducted at the Agency are also participated by the various stakeholders (national and international academics, students and professional associations) **(see paragraph 10.4)**. Participation by these agents is essential in the Agency's meta-evaluation activities **(see paragraph 9.6)**, as well as in developing a number of international projects. The opinions of other stakeholders, such as Stakeholders' Councils –representatives of society in Spanish universities– who participate in the Agency's consulting and decision-making divisions, have also been taken into account.

9.2. STANDARD 3.2. OFFICIAL STATUS

Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.

The Spanish Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) is an Autonomous Body created by virtue of _article 8 of Act 15/2014, of 16 September_, on the rationalisation of the public sector and other measures of administrative reform, stemming from the transformation of the Foundation ANECA into a public body.

ANECA's aim is to contribute to enhancing quality in the higher education system through the evaluation, certification and accreditation of educational content teaching staff and institutions (_articles 31 and 32 of Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December, on Universities_). Its Statute was approved by _Royal Decree 1112/2015_, of 11 December.

9.3. STANDARD 3.3. INDEPENDENCE

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

Following the evaluation of ANECA in 2012, the Agency's Management Board launched a process of reflection on the recommendations made by the evaluation panel and, in particular, on how to strengthen its independence.

As a consequence of this analysis, the Agency began to design structural changes to bolster its independence. This process led to the transformation of ANECA, in 2016, into an Autonomous Body assigned to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports. This change, among other objectives, was intended to endow the institution with greater independence on three fronts:

- *Organisational independence.*
- *Operational independence.*
- *Independence of results.*

Organisational independence

ANECA's organisational independence is expressed in the new *Agency Statutes*, as an Autonomous Body, guaranteeing its functional independence. In particular, the statutes read as follows:

Article 1. Nature, legal regime and adscription.

*ANECA has independent public legal personality, its own capital and treasury, and full legal capacity to act, and will exercise its competences will **full functional independence.***

ANECA conducts its activity as per the principles of legality and legal security, technical and scientific competence, objectivity, independence and transparency.

Article 2. Functional independence.

*1. In the fulfilment of its functions and to comply with the targets it has been assigned, ANECA operates with **full functional independence** [...].*

2. [...] neither its staff nor the members of ANECA's bodies may accept, nor request, in the fulfilment of their functions, instructions from any public or private entity.

Article 7. Principles of action.

b) Principle of independence of action, criterion, opinion and judgement in the conduct of its activities, thereby guaranteeing that its functions are fulfilled in accordance with technical-scientific and management criteria, pre-established and public, with full impartiality.

In addition, the agency's independence is strengthened by the system for appointing its director, through a governing council, a body pertaining to ANECA, for a period of three years which may be extended up to a maximum of a further three years.

Article 15. Appointment, separation and substitution of the director.

The director of ANECA will be appointed and separated by the governing Council, at the proposal of its president [...].

*The director of ANECA will perform his duties with full dedication, **full independence** a total objectivity; the director will not be subject to any imperative mandate, and will not receive express instructions from any authority with regard to academic or evaluation decisions.*

Therefore, the approval and enactment of ANECA's Statutes, which are the consequence of its transformation into an autonomous body, further strengthen its independence as it is stated therein that, among other responsibilities, it falls to the Director to design and approve the evaluation procedures, following the guidance provided by the pertinent advisory bodies, the strategy plan, the action plans and the legislation currently in force. The above documents underscore the independent nature of ANECA and guide the Agency's tasks, while enhancing its transparency and accountability.

Likewise, in the mentioned transformation of the Agency, the Governing Body has been created, replacing the former Board of Trustees, in the aim of giving more independence to this one: 1) reducing the presence of the Ministry's representatives and 2) granting a more significant role to the other stakeholders: students, universities, business organizations and regional government bodies involved in university education.

ANECA also has its own wealth and treasury and full autonomy in the management of its financial resources. The originate, on the one hand, from the General State Budget, and on the other hand, from the services rendered by ANECA through agreements signed with other institutions, further promoting its financial independence.

Thanks to this financial stability the Agency has the capacity to meet initiatives and requests from universities and organizations not included in the programmes envisaged in the legislation, as the conduct of these tasks is funded by these independent projects.

Operational independence

ANECA operates with clear independence in the development and modification of its evaluation processes and procedures, designed according to strictly technical principles, based on European

reference criteria and adapted to the Spanish University System requirements. Before setting these in motion, a number of university experts were consulted to examine the suitability of the processes and to incorporate their contributions **(see paragraph 10.5)** (see evidence of _meetings/reports by the Board of Trustees_ and the _Advisory Council_).

The assessment committees and panels participating in the procedures undergo strict training in the use of the tools designed by ANECA. Besides, they have been _selected_ and appointed in an autonomous manner on the merits of their knowledge and their scientific-technical skills, and independently of the universities to which they belong. Additionally, all the evaluation experts sign a _Code of Ethics_, previously approved by the Governing Council, committing to fulfil their duties in full independence.

Lastly, a procedure for the rejection of a candidate by the evaluated parties is established, and the assessment criteria are published in advance in the documentation for each procedure.

Independence of results

The outcome of ANECA evaluation processes is the result of the decision taken by the assessment committees, which are autonomous and operate independently of the Ministry and the universities. These committees make decisions as a body, and issue the corresponding reports **(see paragraph 10.6)**.

The evaluation reports on programmes issued by the Agency are binding for the Council of Universities and all other parties involved (universities, Autonomous Regions and Regional Governments) (figure 13).

Having completed the evaluation, ANECA notifies the universities of the results. Should the interested parties wish to make a plea or claim, ANECA has defined and published procedures for revision of these results through the established channels **(see paragraph 10.7)**. Lastly, the Agency submits the final evaluation results to the interested parties (universities, teaching staff and institutions) and to the Council of Universities.

FIGURE 13. Process for applying the results of programme evaluation
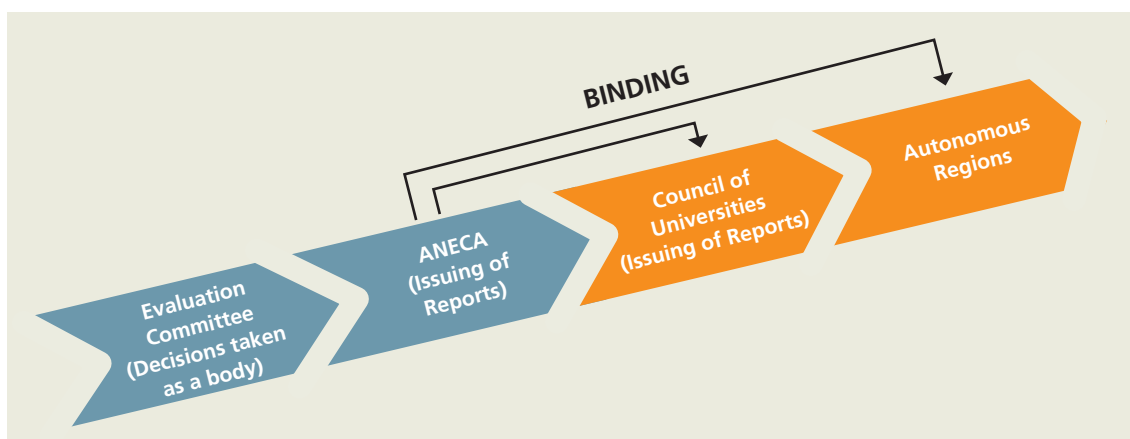
9.4. STANDARD 3.4. THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

The activities encompassed under this Criterion fall under ANECA's strategic target 'To provide information that is useful, transparent and reliable to the various stakeholders, in Spain and abroad'. Similarly, and further to the above, a series of processes, among others, has been set in motion to regulate and guarantee the stability of the actions taken by ANECA to this end.

Over recent years, the Agency has drafted and published on its website a set of analytical reports aiming to provide useful information to its stakeholders:

- **Report on the status of external quality assessment at Spanish universities.**

  Annual report addressed to the general public and to the Ministry competent for universities, drafted by ANECA with the participation of regional quality assurance agencies and the leading student bodies representatives at Spanish universities.

  The Report on the status of external evaluation of quality at Spanish universities, issued since 2006 and established as a reference for nationwide coordination for attaining quality assurance, aims above all to provide a situational analysis of the repercussions of of external quality evaluation measures on the Spanish University System and its evolution, with special emphasis on the reflection on a number of key aspects for propitiating better processes and outcomes. The report, therefore, going beyond a mere description of activities, looks into several fundamental points for analysis and the relations among these in the light of three main factors: the evaluation of universities and their centres; the evaluation of university education; and the evaluation of teaching and researching staff at the universities.

- **Statistical reports on the ANECA Data Bank of Statistics.**

  Statistical reports issued annually on the most important figures and indicators in the Agency's external evaluation activity and its evolution —currently relative to the evaluation of university degrees and of the teaching and researching staff (PDI)-—, with a twofold aim: first of all, to offer the various stakeholders public and systematic information on the mentioned activities, as a contribution to their knowledge, and in this sense, as an invitation to reflect on the current panorama; and, secondly, to provide internally to those responsible for the evaluation procedures useful information for detailed analysis, control and continuous enhancement of the procedures.

  At present, these reports are designed to present the information, aside from the generalities, by universities. In this way, if required, reports can easily be drafted for each individual university evaluated, and each university can view its own data with a general reference against which to compare itself.

These reports result from the activities of the ANECA Data Bank of Statistics, whose aim is to place at the Agency´s disposal periodic, stable and verified statistics. The Data Bank was created as a consequence of the project 'Sistema de información estadística de los programas y de las actividades de ANECA (SIEPAA)' for reviewing and enhancing the quality and control of statistical data in the Agency's fundamental operations, with the coordinated participation of various units involved in the external evaluation procedures.

- **Reports on the review and enhancement of the evaluation procedures.**

As a result of the institutional review process for the enhancement of the evaluation procedures, periodic meta-evaluation reports are envisaged that, following an agreed timeline, will conduct in-depth analyses of each of the procedures and their processes, with the participation of the leading agents involved, including the students themselves.

Similarly, the outcome of the meta-evaluation process is also a contributing factor to facilitating ANECA's accountability toward its stakeholders with regard to reviewing and enhancing its procedures.

In the last few years, special attention has been paid to reviewing degrees through their various stages. A summary of the report on in-depth Analysis and review of the ACREDITA and ACREDITA PLUS Procedures has been made available to the public. During the academic year 2016-17, as in previous years, work is in progress to review and analyse the VERIFICA degree evaluation procedure that will give rise to a report in the early months of 2017.

In addition to the reports mentioned thus far, ANECA regularly publishes reports providing in-depth studies of significantly important issues that respond to a wide range of stakeholders' concerns.

- Guide to drafting, launching and evaluating learning outcomes.

    In view of the critical role of learning outcomes in shaping university education programmes within the EHEA framework, ANECA has drawn up a report, mainly for the benefit of the universities and quality assurance agencies in the Spanish University System, comprising a number of essential methodological reflections that should be borne in mind when drafting and launching study plans. This report, without any doubt, has served to answer a host of questions posed by universities with regard to this issue.

- Report on transitioning from the former Official University Degree Catalogue to the Register of Universities, Higher Education Colleges and Degrees (RUCT), and the adjustment between the supply and demand of places.

    Report destined for the MECD, regional governments, universities and society, with a twofold aim: Firstly, to provide information facilitating a better understanding of the main patterns arising during the migration of official first and second cycle degrees toward Bachelor's Degrees within the EHEA framework. And secondly, by setting several examples, to contribute

to the reflection on the current state of affairs with regard to the balance in supply and demand for a range of Bachelor's Degree courses throughout the nation.

A proposal is made for the conclusions that can be drawn, as an incentive to debating the issues and finding common ground from which to launch well-grounded adjustments to the present offer of university qualifications.

A spin-off from this work is a tool that allows detailed regional and nationwide information to be gleaned on excessive or insufficient occupancy of the places offered by universities in the degrees taught at each of their centres. This is useful in planning future analyses to facilitate decision-making at regional and national public administrations, and for universities' governing bodies.

– Universities and Rules on Permanence. Reflections for the future.

This report, drafted in coordination with the Conference of the Social Bodies of Spanish Public Universities, invites a profound deliberation on the contents of the rules on permanence and students' progression at Spanish universities. The study offered in this report seeks to convey a series of elements that are of use to social bodies, universities, academic managers, student bodies' representatives, those responsible for the public administrations and society at large.

– White Paper on the design of university degrees in the Digital Economy framework.

The aim of this report, in which ANECA has formed part of a working group comprising, among others, professionals and employers up, is to serve as a guide to developing university degrees relating to the Digital Economy that are more fully aware of real professional profile demands.

In this manner, students, employers and universities, primarily, are offered an analysis of job placement for university graduates, and an overview of the international situation of university degrees relating to the Digital Economy. And secondly, following on from the above, a briefing on the competences and contents that will be expected of future graduates of degrees in this field, in order to boost and optimise their job placement.

Jointly with the foregoing, other reports may be mentioned, such as:

– The Report on cross-border education and its quality assurance in Spain in the framework of the international project QACHE. The "Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education" (QACHE) project's objective was to study the different ways in which European Quality Assurance Agencies and Higher Education Institutions address the accreditation and quality assurance of the programmes delivered outside of their countries.

It provided Quality Assurance Agencies and HEIs with guidance for activities of internal and external quality assurance processes of Cross-border Higher Education (CBHE) with support in establishing procedures for CBHE, as well as with comprehensive information on common

approaches on quality assurance of CBHE. Based on good practices from Europe, Australia, Asia-Pacific and the Gulf Region, the project elaborated basic principles for a common approach to quality assurance of European CBHE enabling higher education to be of comparable quality and meet the same standards within or outside Europe and being recognized in the host country without facing double procedures. This was materialized through the Toolkit for Quality Assurance Agencies and, in our concrete case, in a country report which consists in an in-depth investigation of the Spanish case and the development of case studies and good practice examples.

– The Report on different stakeholders' levels of satisfaction with regard to the activities conducted by ANECA: students and university social bodies' points of view, which have promoted reflection on the role and activities of ANECA with a view to their improvement, which has been published in summarised form.

In line with all the above, work has continued on the analysis of other critical issues, whose main conclusions will likewise be published in a range of reports. The Education Unit is currently drafting the following report: Analysis of the recommendations gathered in the final reports on ex-post accreditation for the degrees evaluated by ANECA. Said report, by means of an analysis of the recommendations resulting from the degree evaluation processes under the ACREDITA Procedure, aims to offer universities important keys to enhancing their degrees; the knowledge of these aspects for improvement provides universities with a useful source of information, on the one hand, to analyse the best scenario to address the evaluation processes, and on the other hand, to be aware of the points where the agency greater emphasis in its evaluation of degrees.

Similarly, the report will offer information to students and to society overall on the strengths and weaknesses shown by the degrees submitted to evaluation procedures in recent years.

In conclusion, firstly, the drafting of the mentioned reports and their publication has provided answers to a range of demands for information by critical stakeholders in the Spanish university system. Secondly, it has also addressed the analysis and in-depth reflection on essential and current issues in the context of external quality assurance in university education. Thirdly, it has called for leadership and coordination on behalf of the Agency in conducting analyses that are relevant to the Spanish University System as a whole, from many perspectives, and drawing on an abundance of information that has made it possible for longitudinal and comparative studies of various issues to be completed. Lastly, it has made it possible, through proper deliberation, to reach conclusions for improving quality assurance agencies' and universities' actions, identifying major challenges and grounding new initiatives in the most appropriate manner.

9.5. STANDARD 3.5. RESOURCES

Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

Human resources

A. Staff

Since its foundation, ANECA considers human capital as an essential factor to success. The *staff,* quantitatively speaking, has remained stable with little fluctuation since 2012; at present, it totals 87 individuals of which 54 are women and 33 are men.

Qualitatively speaking, the workforce profile is largely highly qualified staff, the majority of which holds a higher education degree as shown in figure 14.

FIGURE 14. Distribution of staff according to qualifications

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS
31%

UNIVERSITY GRADUATES
69%
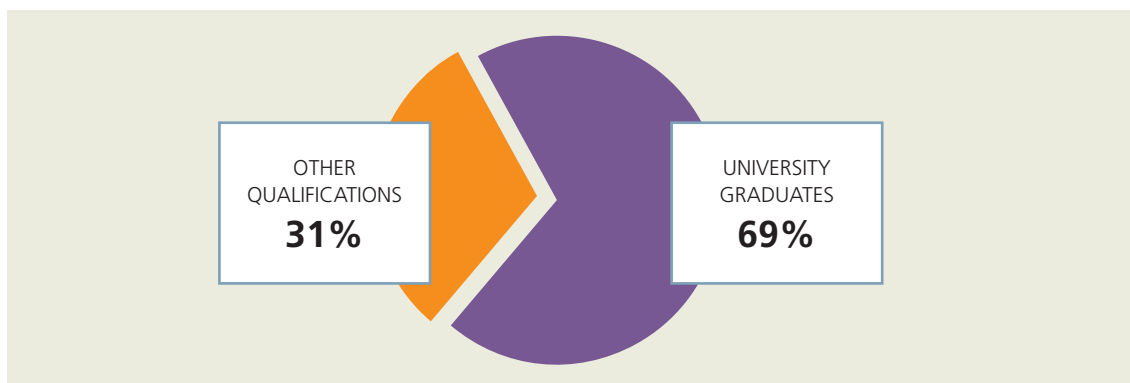
Stability in the workforce (90% of the staff is on an indefinite duration contract), moreover, allows individuals to develop their potential and to apply their experience in work processes.

The distribution of staff in each of the units is shown in table 8:

TABLE 8. Distribution of ANECA staff by units

	CG	UEEI	UEP	RRIIC	UCYPE	MANAGEMENT
No. of persons	24	25	25	5	5	3
Percentage	27.58%	28.41%	28.41%	5.68%	5.68%	3.41%

CG: General coordination; UEEI: Institutional and Programme Unit; UEP: Teaching staff evaluation unit; URRIIC: Institutional and International Relations and Communication; UCYPE: Quality and Strategic Planning Unit.

In late 2013, a review was conducted of the _ANECA professional grading system_ with a twofold aim: on the one hand, to allow staff to become familiar with the agency's new evaluation activities; and on the other hand, to update the profile and job description for each post to adapt professional competencies to those required in the transformation process from foundation to autonomous body.

In the _profiles_ for each post (unit head, officer, administrative staff, secretary, assistant), the academic requirements (degree, ofimatics, languages), as well as attitudinal requirements (teamworking, leadership, communication skills, etc.) are stated. Postholders' compliance with these criteria guarantees the fulfilment of their overriding mission:

- To design, execute and manage the activities and procedures within the scope of their competence, ensuring their planning, coordination and control;
- To collaborate in the implementation of the institution's policies in order to meet the targets set by the Management efficiently and effectively, to safeguard independence, transparency, objectivity, cooperation and austerity within the institution.

In late 2013 and early 2014, the process was launched for the evaluation of job performance based on the professional grading system that was current at the time. Each employee evaluated completed the _self-evaluation questionnaire_ which was submitted to the expert (unit head, coordinator); the experts carried out the evaluations filling in the _evaluation questionnaires_. The results of this evaluation were transmitted to the evaluated individuals, and meetings and talks were held between experts and evaluated employees to share impressions, and also to advise the evaluated individuals of their strengths and areas for improvement.

The results of this job performance evaluation have repercussions on training licenses granted to the staff. Similarly, the information gathered, in relation to detecting educational needs, is used in drafting training plans.

Owing to current budgetary restrictions, no category changes have been made as a direct consequence of the evaluation process that involve a salary increase.

Resulting from the evaluation of job performance and the detection of training needs by the agency, certain shortcomings were identified in the programmes (mainly in languages and ofimatics), which have been included in the _training plans_ for the subsequent years 2014 and 2015. In 2016, as a consequence of the Agency's modified legal form, 100% of training was focused on preparing employees to work in a new technological environment and under the new operational protocols that were required.

Even under the current budgetary restrictions, the staff is benefiting from lifelong learning, becoming current both in the content of the procedures it participates in and in the necessary technological tools allowing them to fulfil their roles within the procedures. All the above is contained in the staff training plan. In this manner, the Agency ensures that all staff members involved both in evaluation procedures and in the internal management procedures receive the necessary training to guarantee consistency throughout the processes.

B. Evaluation and assessment staff

The members of the assessment committees within the various procedures are, for the most part, academics of renowned prestige, professionals, and in some cases experts, as in the case, for instance, of the **ACREDITA PLUS Procedure**. Their main function is to perform external evaluations in a collegiate manner.

ANECA convened a *call for experts* for the evaluation procedures in 2014 and in 2015 **(see paragraph 10.4)** for the purpose of selecting experts with the required profile.

Table 9 shows a summary of staff, both external (national and international academic experts, students and professionals) and belonging to ANECA (officers and administrative staff), that have participated in the various evaluation procedures.

TABLE 9. Participation of external and ANECA staff in each of the procedures

		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
		External staff	ANECA staff	External staff	ANECA staff	External staff	ANECA staff	External staff	ANECA staff	External staff	ANECA staff
Programmes	VERIFICA-MONITOR	190	13	244	19	171	10	180	3	109	2
	ACREDITA	-	-	61	19	183	21	216	14	107	13
	ACREDITA PLUS	-	-	-	-	77	1	241	4	53	4
Teaching staff	PEP	56	8	56	5	56	15	56	15	56	15
	ACADEMIA	2,236	21	2,236	15	2,236	15	2,236	15	2,236	15
	CNEAI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	95	5
Institutions	AUDIT	5	2	14	2	8	2	11	2	10	2
	DOCENTIA	4	1	6	1	4	1	5	1	4	1

Financial resources

ANECA's financial regime as a Foundation was governed in *chapter IV of the corresponding Statutes*. Since 1 January 2016, the financial regime of ANECA as an Autonomous Body is governed by *RD 1112/2015, of 11 December*. The economic resources generated originate fundamentally from current and capital transfers from public administrations or bodies. Other sources of funding are: revenue deriving from international agreements, contracts for evaluation on demand, or other commissions by public or private entities.

ANECA is free to distribute its budget among its different units. In the *Annual Operational Plan,* the agency's budget is allocated to each of its evaluation activities. In the *Report*, the follow-up of budget execution is documented.

Table 10 shows the distribution of expenditure in each activity.

TABLE 10. Distribution of expenditure

ACTIVITY	2012	2013	2014	2015
Programmes	2,331,531	2,394,828	2,593,818	3,212,653
Institutions	529,731	737,022	671,798	658,871
Teaching staff	3,821,555	2,902,387	2,786,061	3,554.345
Management and coordination	3,218,001	2,767,729	2,738,129	2,728,689

Over these years, a scheme has been developed to charge expenditure against the activity in which it was generated. This allows the actual expenditure activity to be known, which, among other things, serves as a basis on which to take decisions from a cost-saving point of view.

Each year, the Management of the General Intervention Board of the Central Administration performs an audit of ANECA's accounts.

Technological resources

The IT Unit employs qualified professionals who endeavour continuously to enhance the software applications used in the evaluation processes, and to provide the necessary support to all of the Agency's activities. Occasionally, leading companies in the sector work together with the IT Unit to develop new software tools.

In recent years, the Agency has been equipped with the necessary means and infrastructure to allow the committees to work remotely with the sole requisite of having access to Internet. This concept change has enabled more flexible and versatile meetings, as well as significant savings in costs. Videoconferences are held within all the committees dealing with degrees, for instance.

Likewise, the Agency has been endowed with 'cloud' type spaces for collaboration, in which to exchange information with experts and turning the committee's workspaces into dynamic and secure data-sharing platforms.

With regard to IT applications, new software tools have been created to support the new procedures, namely, **ACREDITA, ACREDITA PLUS**, and **ACADEMIA**.

Other resources

A. Material resources

ANECA is located close to Madrid's city centre (c/ Orense, 11) and well communicated by public transport.

The 14 meeting rooms at its main offices are equipped with the necessary technology for holding meetings or evaluation sessions. The general services staff provide logistic support to meetings.

In recent years the documentation centre has taken a more central role by providing support to the digitisation of documents reaching the Agency in hard copy.

B. Information systems

Additionally, each unit has a common folder on the publicly accessed servers for each member of the unit.

The ANECA website, together with external bulletins, is the external communications tool for reaching out to shareholders. Over recent years, social networks have also been incorporated (Twitter and YouTube) as vehicles for information and the dissemination of material related to quality evaluation in Higher Education.

Moreover, the Intranet is considered to be the basic internal communications tool within the agency, with a document repository available to all staff members. At the present time, a major effort is being made to centralise the data and information for the various evaluation processes on the Strategic Quality and Planning Unit (UCYPE) to make these available and accessible to all staff members.

9.6. STANDARD 3.6. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

ANECA has defined an Internal Quality Assurance System **(see point 7)**, oriented toward continuing enhancement, whose framework of reference is the document containing the *European Quality Assurance Criteria 2015*. The Agency is likewise registered in EQAR. Similarly, ANECA has voluntarily agreed to comply with the ECA *Code of Good Practice* and to align its actions with the *Guidelines of Good Practices* of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), as a token of its self-demanding approach to international projects.

ANECA has received recognition from a range of European bodies:

- the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAEE) for the evaluation and granting of the <u>European labels EUR-ACE</u>®;
- the European Quality Assurance Network for Informatics Education (EQANIE) for the evaluation and granting of the European Quality labels <u>EURO-INF</u>,
- the European Chemistry Thematic Network (ECTN) for the evaluation and *<u>granting of the labels</u>* EUROBACHELOR and EUROMASTER.

This activity is handled jointly with professional associations (IIE, CCII, CONCITI). In this sense, ENAEE has highlighted the noteworthy interest demonstrated by the joint efforts of organisations in academic and professional fields to carry out the evaluation and in granting these labels.

Similarly, as the result of discussing the previous external evaluation process conducted by ENQA, ANECA has moved on from working with Quality Circles, which produced good results in each of the units, to setting up a Quality and Strategic Planning Unit, which owing to its transverse nature is dependent on the Management. The main objective is to work towards internal quality assurance within the institution.

To guarantee the quality and integrity of the activities conducted by the Agency, all staff members participating in them (both external and internal staff) are qualified and work to ethical and professional standards **(see paragraphs 9.5 and 10.4)**.

ANECA also has procedures and tools at its disposal to guarantee the periodic revision and continuing enhancement of its activity at several levels. For this purpose, the following have been defined:

- A _panel of indicators_ to follow up the ANECA Strategy Plan, of use in the periodic general revision of the Agency's actions in fulfilment of its mission.
- A meta-evaluation process: a _multiannual calendar_ is established to apply meta-evaluation to the procedures with a predetermined frequency, approved by the ANECA Management. Each of these processes involves an extensive, in-depth analysis of the procedures in hand that takes into consideration the viewpoints of several internal and external agents involved in the procedure. The resulting report should include the consequential actions for improvement that, as appropriate, are approved by the Agency Management. The above is complemented by regular revisions of each procedure by the officers directly responsible and a periodic follow-up of the actions for continuing enhancement.
- Two IT tools:

  – _Database for review and enhancement of evaluation procedures (RMPE),_ to facilitate the continuing management, register and follow-up of opportunities for improvement from different sources (these include the meta-evaluation reports mentioned earlier), and the actions set in motion to ensure continuing enhancement of the procedures.
  – _Application for managing IT issues_ via the e-mail address soporte@aneca.es: focused on enhancing IT tools supporting evaluation procedures and troubleshooting relating thereto.

- Other follow-up and reflection mechanisms: meetings of the Internal Coordination Commission, the Advisory Council, the Chairs of the ACADEMIA, PEP and CNEAI Commissions, the Commissions for Issuing Reports (CEI), the Agencies co-participating in the AUDIT and DOCENTIA Procedures, and meta-evaluations.

Table 11 shows evidence of follow-up by ANECA for all its procedures. This table shows the importance to the Agency of reflecting on the follow-up of its activities. The latest revision of the procedures has yielded a new version of the documents, incorporating the implications of the new ESG[2], and the contributions of stakeholders, among other results.

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2 In the annexes to the documentation accompanying the programmes are the relations between the programme criteria and the ESG 2015.

TABLE 11. ANECA Internal Quality Assurance System

Procedures	Programmes			Institutions	
	VERIFICA	**MONITOR**	**ACREDITA and ACREDITA PLUS**	**AUDIT**	**DOCENTIA**
Evidence of procedure revisions	*Meeting minutes* VERIFICA Procedure (agreements) Meta-evaluation of the procedure in 2016. See the new version of the documentation RMPE Registers	*Meeting minutes* MONITOR Procedure (agreements) See the new version of the documentation RMPE Registers	*Meta-evaluation of the procedure. Meeting minutes* ACREDITA Procedure (agreements) *Meeting minutes* ACREDITA PLUS (agreements) See the new version of the documentation ACREDITA y ACREDITA PLUS. RMPE Registers	*Meeting minutes* AUDIT Procedure (agreements) See the new version of the documentation RMPE Registers	*Meeting minutes* DOCENTIA Procedure (agreements) See the new version of the documentation RMPE Registers

All procedures include mechanisms for claims or appeals **(see paragraph 10.7)**.

Similarly, the development of the **ACREDITA Procedure**, at present fully deployed, was assisted by different stakeholders (universities, evaluation experts and ANECA itself). More concretely, prior to its implementation a *pilot project* was run in which stakeholders' opinions were gathered, both regarding the suitability of the procedures and the tools prepared by ANECA for the ACREDITA Procedure.

A fluid dialogue with the universities is maintained throughout the Agency's evaluation procedures. To ensure this dialogue remains open, *meetings* are held between the universities and the Agency staff involved (jointly and individually for each university). These meetings are held throughout the delivery of the procedures and, on request, may be given a training or advisory format. In certain cases, such as the **ACREDITA Procedure**, these meetings may also serve to plan the evaluation tasks.

Additionally, specific e-mail addresses are made available for consultations regarding any doubts that stakeholders or university staff, students or their families may have. The turnaround time for solutions via e-mail is 48 hours.

ANECA complies with the legislation guaranteeing that no intolerant or discriminating attitude whatsoever shall be applied either to the staff employed at the Agency or to users of the agency's services. In this manner, it applies the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination in its internal and external screening processes, in all selection processes for representatives and in all activities and accreditation procedures. For instance, gender equality and territorial representativity criteria are applied in the composition of the assessment committees **(see paragraph 10.4)**.

Currently, ANECA operates nationwide in the evaluation of researching and teaching staff (PDI); and on a regional level in Autonomous Regions lacking an quality assurance agency with competences to evaluate institutions and programmes. In all cases, as appropriate under the applicable legislation, agreements are established with the national or regional governments with competences in university affairs.

The activities subcontracted by the Agency are limited to supporting roles (IT and logistics).

In any event, to control the services rendered by suppliers and subcontractors, the Agency has defined working procedures that include processes for the selection and evaluation of the services provided.

In conclusion, these actions, of which public information is made available, are further evidence of a solid internal quality assurance policy that responds adequately to society and the various stakeholder groups.

9.7. STANDARD 3.7. CYCLICAL EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AGENCIES

Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.

Spanish legislation establishes that, as a requirement to conducting ex-ante and ex-post accreditation, quality Agencies 'should be registered under EQAR after successfully passing an external evaluation in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Higher Education'.

In compliance with mandatory regulations, ANECA has passed its third external evaluation. The previous evaluations took place in in _2007_ and in _2012_, respectively.

The Agency has recourse to a number of elements that assist reflection in preparation for such external evaluation, which include:

- The implementation of a Quality Assurance System that yields data and indicators: Strategy Plan, Annual Operational Plan, and Degree Proposal.
- More active and more constant participation by stakeholders. For example, through regular meetings with Committees and the Advisory Council; Advisory Council reports; participation in meta-evaluations **(see paragraphs 9.1 and 9.6)**; conferences with universities (e.g. Conference on good practices **DOCENTIA**, informative conference on **ACREDITA, ACREDITA PLUS** and **AUDIT**; Almagro Conference for the reflection on Quality); the Rectors' Conference (CRUE), other Agencies (REACU and CURSA), participation in _Student Association Congresses_, participation in _Seminars with the Technical Quality Units_, etc.
- The recommendations and enhancements noted in previous external reports by ENQA.
- Additionally, in the course of a symposium and targeted visits the universities have been presented with the _Guide to drafting, putting into practice and evaluating learning outcomes_. This document aims to guide stakeholders through the complete process of designing degrees, and implementing and revising study plans.

10. COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (PART 2)

10.1. STANDARD 2.1. CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

> External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.

As established in this criterion, table 12 shows how ANECA's various evaluation procedures, national and cross-border activities, adhere to the criteria in Part 1. Additionally, the specific relationships between criteria/guidelines and the criteria given in the ESG may be consulted in the documentation referred to in the procedures.

Procedure for programme evaluation

TABLE 12A. Compliance with each evaluation procedure/process in the ESG in part one

| EVALUATION PROCESSES | PROGRAMME EVALUATION | | | | | INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION | |
	VERIFICA Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree	VERIFICA Doctorate	MONITOR	ACREDITA	ACREDITA PLUS	AUDIT	DOCENTIA
ESG 1.1.	Criterion 9	Criterion 8	Criterion 3	Criterion 3	Criterion 3	Guideline 1.0	Dimension 1
ESG 1.2	Criteria 2, 5 and 8	Criteria 1, 4, 5 and 8	Criteria 2, 5 and 8	(*2)	(*2)	Guideline 1.1	Dimension 2
ESG 1.3	Criteria 5 and 8	Criteria 4, 5 and 8	Criteria 1 and 6	Criteria 1 and 6	Criteria 1 and 6	Guideline 1.2	Dimension 2
ESG 1.4	Criterion 4	Criterion 3	Guidelines 1.1 and 1.2	Guidelines 1.4 and 1.5	Criterion 1	Guideline 1.2	Not applicable
ESG 1.5.	Criterion 6	Criterion 6	Criterion 4	Criterion 4	Criterion 4	Guideline 1.3	Dimensions 1, 2 and 3
ESG 1.6	Criterion 7	Criterion 7	Criterion 5	Criterion 5	Criteria 5 and 9	Guideline 1.4	Dimension 2
ESG 1.7	Criteria 8 and 9	Criterion 8	Criteria 3 and 6	Criteria 3 and 7	Criteria 3 and 7	Guideline 1.5	Dimension 2
ESG 1.8	Criterion 4	Criterion 3	Criterion 2	Criterion 2	Criterion 2	Guideline 1.6	Dimensions 1 and 2
ESG 1.9	Criteria 8 and 9	Criterion 8	Guideline 1.1 and Criterion 3	Criterion 1 y 3	Criteria 1 and 3	Guideline 1.1	Dimension 2
ESG 1.10	(*1)	(*1)	(*3)	(*4)	(*4)	(*5)	(*6)
DOCUMENT	Guide to drawing up the degree proposal for the ex ante accreditation of recognised university degrees (Bachelor and Master Degree). (Pages 60-64)	Support guide: assessment for accreditation ex ante of official doctoral courses (pages 39-43)	Guide to official Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree programme follow-up processes (Pages 56-57)	Framework Document (Pages 33-34)	(to be added to the documentation)	(to be added to the documentation)	(to be added to the documentation)

*(*1) VERIFICA. The ex ante ACCREDITATION process is the first stage in a normative framework that requires official university degrees to submit cyclically to an external evaluation process. The legislation of reference in this case is Royal Decree 1393/2007 and its subsequent updates.*

*(*2) VERIFICA procedure evaluates, through several criteria, aspects of the design of degrees relating to the definition of educational planning, the intended learning outcomes and the various rules for student progress and retention. In the ACREDITA procedure the outcomes of this design are eventually reviewed according to Criterion 1 and 6.*

*(*3) MONITOR. The follow-up process for an official degree implies that official university degrees should undergo a cyclical external evaluation process. This aspect is stated in the legal regulation currently in force in Spain, which includes Royal Decree 1393/2007 and its subsequent updates.*

*(*4) ACREDITA. The accreditation renewal process implies that official university degrees must undergo a cyclical external assessment process. This aspect is stated in the legal regulation currently in force in Spain, which includes Royal Decree 1393/2007 and its subsequent updates*

*(*5) AUDIT. Implementation certification requires the renewal of the certificate every 4 years.*

*(*6) DOCENTIA. Degree certification requires implies the renewal of the certificate every 5 years.*

The Agency has also prepared a _report_ covering a broader study of compliance with ESG Criterion 1 in each of the programme and institutional evaluation procedures, and explaining how each of the criteria/dimensions in the procedures meets each of these criteria.

In what follows is a description of the manner in which the ESG, Part 1 criteria are taken into account when evaluating the criteria in the various programme and institutional procedures.

1.1 Quality assurance policy

ANECA has mechanisms in place to ensure that Institutions have implemented quality assurance policies. This item is taken into account both in compulsory programme evaluation procedures (ex ante accreditation, follow-up and ex post accreditation) and in voluntary institutional evaluation procedures: DOCENTIA deals with Quality Assurance relating to the teaching staff, and AUDIT evaluates the internal quality assurance systems developed by centres and universities.

1.2 Design and approval of degree programmes

This criterion addresses a central aspect in Higher Education Institutions, and is therefore painstakingly revised in all compulsory programme evaluation procedures, throughout all of their stages (ex ante accreditation, follow-up and ex post accreditation); the accreditation process, in itself, consists in an external evaluation of the Institutions. This is likewise addressed in the AUDIT Procedure. In the DOCENTIA Procedure, this aspect is addressed in the evaluation of teaching activity planning.

1.3. Student-focused teaching, learning and assessment

These aspects are examined, in educational programmes, in the ex ante evaluation for Bachelor's Degrees and Master's Degrees, in the teaching activity planning criteria and expected outcomes; in the ex ante evaluation for Doctoral Degrees, in the educational activities, programme organisation and the revision and enhancement of the outcomes; in the follow-up evaluation and accreditation procedures, through aspects such as organisation and delivery and performance indicators, or learning outcomes, respectively. As for AUDIT, this aspect is reviewed in the guideline concerning the manner in which the centre provides student-focused educational programmes. In the case of DOCENTIA, this is taken into account in the evaluation of planning and that of the teaching activity and its outcomes.

Furthermore, ANECA has written and disseminated the Guide to drafting, launching and evaluating learning outcomes, intended to assist those responsible for degree design, lecturers, students, experts and agencies in the comprehensive process of designing, implementing and reviewing study plans from the viewpoint of learning outcomes.

1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

This criterion is evaluated in all educational programmes. In the case of Bachelor's and Master's Degrees, in the ex ante evaluation of the student admission criteria, and for Doctoral Degrees, in students' access and admission; and in general, as per the entrance profile guidelines and the admission criteria and academic regulations affecting each degree, through ex post evaluation given in Criterion 1 in the guidelines for entrance profile and academic regulations.

With regard to AUDIT, this aspect is reviewed in the guideline concerning the manner in which the Centre provides student-focused educational programmes. This aspect falls without the scope of the DOCENTIA Procedure.

1.5 Teaching staff

In the case of programme evaluation procedures, during ex ante accreditation, follow-up and ex post accreditation, quality assurance for the teaching staff is reviewed under the academic staff or the human resources criterion. In AUDIT, this is examined under the guideline concerning the manner in which the Centre guarantees and enhances the quality of its academic staff. Regarding DOCENTIA, quality assurance of the teaching activity is the object of the Procedure.

1.6 Learning resources and student support

This criterion is analysed in the section on material resources and services, both during ex ante evaluation and during follow-up and ex post accreditation. In addition, this aspect is reviewed prior to the award of quality labels providing institutional support to the degree. In the AUDIT Procedure, this criterion is evaluated according to the guideline Manner in which the Centre manages and improves on its material resources and services. In the DOCENTIA Procedure, under the methodological dimension.

1.7 Information management

In all degree programmes, this criterion is reviewed (ex ante accreditation, follow-up and ex post accreditation) within the Internal Quality Assurance System and the indicators for level of satisfaction and performance / envisaged outcomes / revision and enhancement and degree outcomes. In the AUDIT Procedure, it is reviewed as per the guideline Manner in which the Centre analyses and takes into consideration its outcomes, and in the DOCENTIA Procedure, information on the quality of education is also taken into account.

1.8 Public information

All the programme and institutional evaluation procedures ensure that Institutions publish the information required in each case on their activities and programmes. For educational programmes, ex ante accreditation evaluates the student entrance criteria, and the follow-up and accreditation stages evaluate the criterion Information and Transparency: in the AUDIT Procedure, the guideline Manner in which the Centre guarantees the quality of its degree programmes, and in the DOCENTIA Procedure, in the strategic and methodological dimensions.

1.9 Permanent monitoring and periodic evaluation of programmes

Programme and institutional evaluation procedures alike address the evaluation of this criterion. With regard to ex ante accreditation, this is addressed through the envisaged outcomes and quality assurance system (Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree) and the revision, enhancement and outcomes in the case of Doctoral programmes. During the follow-up stage, it is addressed in the

entrance profile guideline and the admission criteria, and in the Internal Quality Assurance System criterion. During accreditation, this is assessed in the criteria for organisation and development and Internal Quality Assurance System. In the AUDIT Procedure, this is examined in the guideline Manner in which the Centre defines its policy and quality targets, and in DOCENTIA in the methodological dimension.

1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

Spanish law requires official university degrees to be subjected to an external evaluation process on a cyclical basis, as set forth in Royal Decree 1393/2007 and subsequent updates, with regard to ex ante evaluation (VERIFICA), and to follow-up (MONITOR) and to accreditation (ACREDITA and ACREDITA PLUS). In the AUDIT and DOCENTIA Procedures, degree certification implies the renewal of the certificate every 4 or 5 years, respectively.

As shown, in addition to the activity conducted by the Agency, and in line with the recommendations expressed by the 2012 evaluation panel, a consolidation path has been commenced for the **AUDIT** Procedure at all Spanish universities, supported by _recently enacted legislation_ according to which a requirement for the accreditation of HE centres is the certification of the implementation of a system such as **AUDIT**. This initiative, together with a training programme open to all universities on Spanish soil (courses for internal IQAS auditors), has increased the number of applications for participation in the procedure and for certification.

Another procedure developed by the Agency for quality assurance in institutions is the **ACREDITA** Procedure, at this time fully deployed. During the first semester of 2014, ANECA developed a pilot project in which a number of stakeholders took part and which resulted in the adaptation of the procedures and tools developed by the Agency for the procedure (this adaptation took into account the ESG Standards and Guidelines).

Associated to the ACREDITA Procedure and for degrees in certain disciplines, ANECA offers the possibility of obtaining, through the **ACREDITA PLUS** Procedure, an international label of recognised prestige, tapping into the synergies between the national evaluation procedure and European procedures. This procedure leads, in the field of Engineering, to obtaining the label EUR-ACE(R), and in the field of IT, to the label EURO-INF. At the time of publishing this report, 114 and 17 of the above-mentioned labels have been granted, respectively. In order to be authorized as an agency able to award the EUR-ACE label, the agency must be aligned with ESG as it is established in the EUR ACE® _Framework Standards and Guidelines (EAFSG)_.

Procedure related to cross-border activities

TABLE 12B. Compliance with each cross-border activity in the ESG in part one

EVALUATION PROCESSES	EDUCATIONAL CONTENT	INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION	
	EUR-ACE MEXICO	ARMENIAN PROJECT	AUDIT-PERU
ESG 1.1	Criterion 5	Criterion 5	Dimension 2
ESG 1.2	Criteria 1 and 8	Criterion 2	Dimension 3
ESG 1.3	Criterion 8	Criteria 2, 3, 7	Dimension 4
ESG 1.4	Criterion 3	Criterion 3	Dimension 4
ESG 1.5	Criterion 6	Criterion 4	Dimension 5
ESG 1.6	Criteria 7 and 2	Criterion 4	Dimension 6
ESG 1.7	Criteria 5 and 9	Criterion 5	All
ESG 1.8	Criterion 4	Criterion 7	Dimension10
ESG 1.9	Criteria 1 and 5	Criterion 5	All
ESG 1.10	All	Not cyclical as it is a specific Project	(*)

(*) AUDIT. Implementation certification requires the renewal of the certificate every 4 years.

AUDIT-PERU

The AUDIT-Peru Project started in 2011 with the signing of the cooperation agreement between the National Association of Rectors of Peru (ANR) and ANECA, in the aim of giving technical support and of developing a similar Programme to the Spanish AUDIT one. Throughout this project, the AUDIT model, based on the ESG, was adapted to the Peruvian national context, its education system and socio-economic environment, with the help of local experts.

ANECA trained 35 Universities interested in the model and evaluation procedure. After the extinction of the ANR, ANECA decided to continue with the Project only with those Universities who, at that moment, were in a more advanced phase of the process, namely:

- Univ. Continental (its design is certified).
- Univ. Hermilio Valdizán.
- Univ. de Tacna (request the evaluation of its design by ANECA in July 2015).

Being an adaptation of the Spanish AUDIT model with three new criteria, the procedure carried out for the international AUDIT is perfectly adapted to the ESG 2005 but not yet adjusted to the 2015 version. The Project has been developed following the different national Programme documents (Guides) and the same methodology has been applied for the selection of experts and the international AUDIT committee is composed of national and international experts.

ARMENIAN PROJECT

Within the collaboration framework between the Haut conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur (HCERES) and the Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y

Acreditación (ANECA) and as a result of two Armenian higher education institutions' request to be evaluated and accredited by ENQA and EQAR European Agencies, both Agencies jointly elaborated an institutional evaluation and accreditation process including the definition of the working framework and cooperation methods between the both. In this way, a Guide for institutional evaluation and accreditation and specific accreditation criteria, adapted to the Armenian context, were developed in order to carry out this process.

The criteria used within this process are the result of a comparative study of several existing quality criteria in Europe and in countries with a similar higher education and socio-economic system as the Armenian one. The criteria are based, first on the ESG but also on those used at national level by HCERES and ANECA at European level and on non-European countries' criteria with similar characteristics to the Armenian context.

It is worth noting that both Agencies realized exploratory visits to the Universities subject of the evaluation and that it allowed contextualizing and defining European based criteria adapted to the observed circumstances proper to the Armenian Higher Education Institutions.

EUR-ACE-MEXICO

ANECA, in collaboration with CACEI (Consejo de Acreditación de la Enseñanza de la Ingeniería, in Spain), developed in 2015-2016 a pilot project to award the EUR-ACE label to Mexican engineering programmes. ANECA, in collaboration with CACEI, elaborated the accreditation process and the cooperation methods to apply, gathered in the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two organizations. In this way, an assessment Guide to obtain the EUR-ACE label for engineering programmes, adapted to the Mexican context, was developed in order to carry out this process. 6 engineering programmes from 3 different universities participated in the pilot project.

The criteria used within this process are the result of the experience of ANECA when accrediting programmes for the EUR-ACE label (ACREDITA PLUS programme), together with the experience of ANECA when ex-ante accrediting programmes (VERIFICA programme). The criteria are based, first on the ESG but also on those used at national level by ANECA in both programmes (ACREDITA PLUS and VERIFICA).

It is worth noting that both Agencies realized a joint work that allowed contextualizing and defining European based criteria adapted to the observed circumstances proper to the Mexican Higher Education Institutions.

10.2. STANDARD 2.2. DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE

External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.
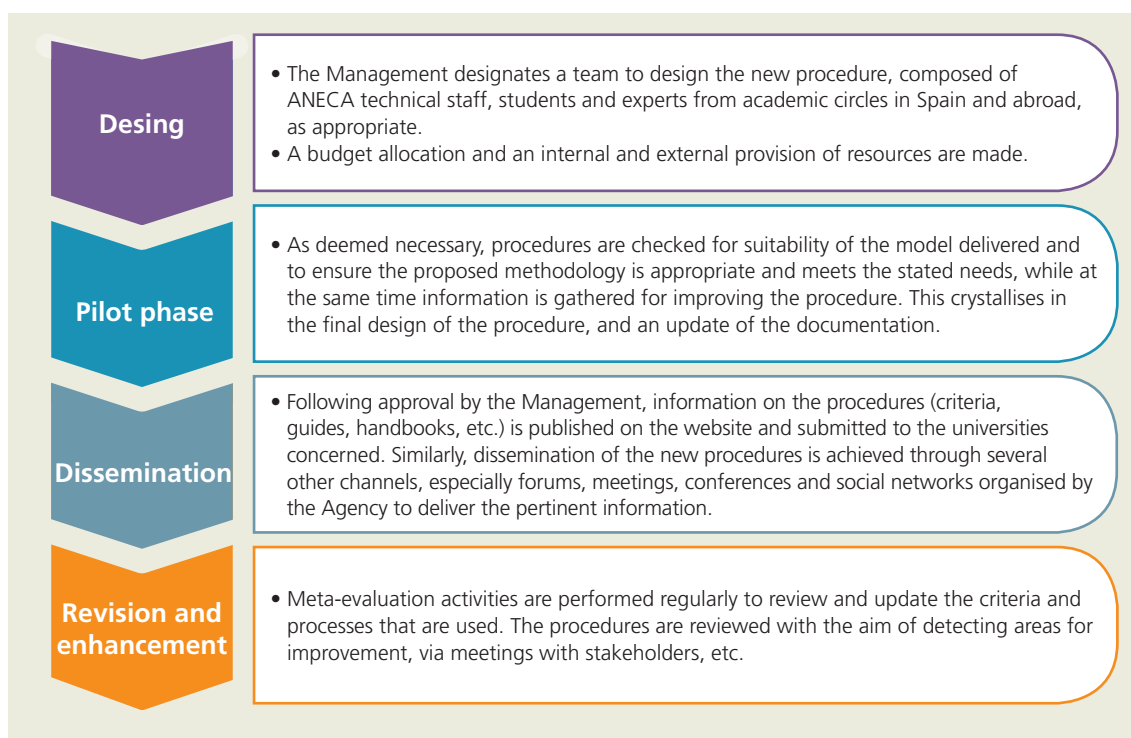
Every action taken by ANECA aims to contribute added value to the Spanish University System overall (*see Strategy Plan: objective B*). Two kinds of evaluation procedure are delivered:

- Compulsory for Higher Education Institutions (**VERIFICA**, **MONITOR**, **ACREDITA**) and for the teaching staff at these institutions, (**PEP** and **ACADEMIA**). In the latter case, the aims and objectives are defined in the Royal Decrees that develop the original legislation.
- Voluntary for Higher Education Institutions (**AUDIT**, **DOCENTIA**, **ACREDITA PLUS**).

In either case, the Agency's Management designs and approves the evaluation procedures, having heard the opinion of the corresponding advisory bodies and in accordance with the Strategy Plan, the action plans and the current legislation. In the design, attention is paid to the ESG established by ENQA and other agents, as well as to other European references.

Figure 15 below shows the design and review process of the Agency's evaluation procedures.

FIGURE 15. Process for the design and review of evaluation procedures

Desing	• The Management designates a team to design the new procedure, composed of ANECA technical staff, students and experts from academic circles in Spain and abroad, as appropriate. • A budget allocation and an internal and external provision of resources are made.
Pilot phase	• As deemed necessary, procedures are checked for suitability of the model delivered and to ensure the proposed methodology is appropriate and meets the stated needs, while at the same time information is gathered for improving the procedure. This crystallises in the final design of the procedure, and an update of the documentation.
Dissemination	• Following approval by the Management, information on the procedures (criteria, guides, handbooks, etc.) is published on the website and submitted to the universities concerned. Similarly, dissemination of the new procedures is achieved through several other channels, especially forums, meetings, conferences and social networks organised by the Agency to deliver the pertinent information.
Revision and enhancement	• Meta-evaluation activities are performed regularly to review and update the criteria and processes that are used. The procedures are reviewed with the aim of detecting areas for improvement, via meetings with stakeholders, etc.

In the case of legally regulated procedures that are compulsory throughout the Spanish territory, Quality Agency coordination bodies have been created in different areas, in which ANECA participates as set forth in article 4 of ANECA's Statutes (see figure 17). These coordination bodies are: the Spanish Network for Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies (REACU), and the University Commission for the Regulation of Follow-up and Accreditation Processes (CURSA) **(see paragraph 3.3.3)**.

ANECA, furthermore, has a number of mechanisms for verifying compliance with the aims and purposes previously defined and published:

- Programme evaluation procedures: in **VERIFICA, MONITOR, ACREDITA** and **ACREDITA PLUS** the assessment committees hold _regular meetings_ and submit reports on the evolution of programme evaluation procedures for degrees that fall under their competence. In addition, to enhance these procedures, further mechanisms are in place for revision and data-gathering at meetings with the agents implicated **(see paragraph 10.5)**.
- Institutional evaluation procedures: in **DOCENTIA** and **AUDIT** the evaluation processes are coordinated through _meetings with the Regional Governments' agencies_ **(see paragraph 10.5)**.

In order to guarantee efficient and effective external quality assurance at institutions, ANECA has set up synergies among several of its procedures, allowing institutions to cut costs and bear a lighter workload. In particular, the **ACREDITA Procedure** exempts institutions from giving evidence of some of their criteria, in the event that they have received certification of having implemented the **DOCENTIA** and **AUDIT Procedures**. Similarly, in the **ACREDITA PLUS** Procedure, ex post accreditation may be obtained for the degree programme and the European or international label, benefiting from the synergies between the two evaluation procedures.

In like manner, the **MONITOR** Procedure aims to highlight the issues and actions, if any, that may hinder future degree ex post accreditation.

ANECA, moreover, has taken part in the Project Erasmus Mundus 'Joint Programmes: Quality Assurance and Recognition of degrees awarded (JOQAR)', whose aim is to create a European coordination team specialised in information on joint programmes evaluated in Europe and the recognition of their degrees.

ANECA has also taken part in the evaluation process for a Master's Degree coordinated by Frontex in late 2012 with the evaluation agencies in the countries whose universities formed part of the joint degree consortium, applying the methodology tested in the JOQAR project.

10.3. STANDARD 2.3. IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES

External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include:

• a self-assessment or equivalent;

• an external assessment normally including a site visit;

• a report resulting from the external assessment;

• a consistent follow-up.

The procedures developed at the Agency focused on programmes and institutions display all available information on the Agency website. Generally speaking, the above includes: a self-evaluation stage (self-evaluation or equivalent documentation, submitted by the institution on its behalf), the revision thereof by an assessment committee, and a report providing guidance for the actions taken by the institution, all of which must be published on the corresponding website. In the case of procedures comprising an implementation stage, the evaluation is complemented by a site visit during the course of which stakeholders are interviewed.

Table 13 shows the different elements included in the various evaluation processes:

TABLE 13. Evaluation processes

Self-evaluation process		Self-evaluation report (IA)	External evaluation (Includes students)	Appeals	Site Visit	Publication of the report with recommendations	Follow-up of the recommendations in the report
PROGRAMMES	VERIFICA	✔	✔	✔		✔	Performed by means of the MONITOR Procedure.
	MONITOR	✔	✔			✔	This comprises the follow-up process for the VERIFICA and MODIFICA Procedures.
	ACREDITA	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	The accreditation report establishes the frequency of follow-up and any aspects to which special attention will be paid. The report will also state the date for the next accreditation of the degree.
	ACREDITA PLUS	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	The report on the label obtained will establish the timeline for awarding the label. In the event of having included prescriptions, the concession period will be duly reduced, and the university, in the meantime, will report on their compliance.
INSTITUTIONS	AUDIT	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	As soon as the IQAS implementation certificate has been delivered, the faculties must notify ANECA in writing of any changes made each year to their systems. ANECA will evaluate the changes and the results obtained therefrom and issue a notification to the faculty indicating whether or not the certification will be extended.
	DOCENTIA	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	Follow-up of implementation of the system is one of the stages in this programme. Nevertheless, throughout the stages, all reports submitted will include follow-up of the recommendations made in the previous report. Follow-up of certification is also foreseen in the procedure.

Throughout all processes, the Agency will submit a provisional report to the institution so that the latter may file allegations before receiving the final report. Against the final report, an appeal may be brought before the Committee for Guarantees and Procedures.

All reports corresponding to programme evaluation are published on the search engine What to study and where? and those that correspond to institutional evaluation, on the website for each procedure: (**AUDIT** and **DOCENTIA**).

For further details of the manner in which these evaluation processes are conducted, consult the *IQAS documentation* provided by ANECA; in particular, the specific processes for each of these procedures.

10.4. STANDARD 2.4. PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS

> External quality assurance processes should be conducted by groups of external experts that include one or more student members.

The work performed by external reviewers is essential to ANECA. Therefore, screening peer reviewers is a process of vital importance to guarantee that the Agency renders its services in the best possible manner.

This screening process is the responsibility of ANECA and is conducted in a straightforward and transparent manner, following the criteria established a priori for each of the procedures.

In 2014 and 2015 a public call was made for a peer reviewer selection process for the Agency's range of procedures. This screening process was carried out on the basis of the applications received and following the instructions given in the document _Call for peer reviewers in evaluation, certification and accreditation processes_.

The aim of this call was to strengthen ANECA's technical capacity with national and international peer reviewers, whose profiles are academic or professional, quality management experts or students, taking part in the evaluation, certification and accreditation processes for programmes and/or institutions.

The selection process for expert reviewers sought to ensure that the chosen candidates' profiles should meet the minimum requirements established for each procedure. The basic requirements for all expert reviewers were defined (e.g.: candidates must be independent of the organisations being accredited, certified or evaluated, and of any institutions or bodies with political influence; candidates must commit to respecting and complying with ANECA's code of ethics, thus guaranteeing their ethical and responsible behaviour in the discharge of their duties). Some specific requirements were also defined depending on the procedure and the profile required in each.

In addition to this, a majority of the procedures allow the panel or assessment committee to be totally or partially rejected by the institution being evaluated before the process commences, both in the case of institutional and programme evaluation and in the case of teaching staff evaluation.

All expert reviewers selected by ANECA necessarily undergo a _training process_ before conducting any evaluation assignment for ANECA.

The training sessions will be specific to each procedure. In general, training will be based on the following three dimensions:

- Technical training in the procedures: background, applicable legislation, the EHEA, ESG standards, and the specific technical documentation for each procedure.
- Training in technologies: the use of tools/software apps that will be used to conduct the evaluation, both for the evaluation itself and for any teleconference meetings.

- Training in evaluator skills that are role-specific. For instance, in the **ACREDITA** Procedure, there are three training areas that correspond to the diversity and experience of the experts on the panel:

  – Type 1 Training, for experts who have gained experience in the procedure after the pilot project. This training activity aims to update experts› currency, and to present the aspects that are yielding the best results and those that offer room for improvement. Besides, these sessions encourage a collective exchange of impressions between experts and the Agency.
  – Type 2 Training, aimed at experts who have only taken part in the ANECA pilot project and evaluations performed in the second half of 2014. At these sessions, the experience gained throughout the implementation of the procedure is shared with the experts, and any new developments in the procedure since 2015 are explained.
  – Type 3 Training, for experts taking part for the first time in the **ACREDITA** Procedure.

On the basis of these profiles, different techniques are employed to train the candidates (case study, explanation of criteria and references, among others), and the training mode may be presential or online. In this way, before starting any new evaluation, certification or accreditation process, ANECA will ensure that all experts take part in a training event to become fully acquainted with the methodology and the evaluation model used.

Overall, for procedures focusing on programmes and institutions, the evaluation team is composed of two academic evaluators, one professional and one student.

For procedures focused on degree programmes, a _database of experts_[3] is available, listing all the activities conducted by these experts within each of the procedures. Each year, an evaluation is conducted of the work performed by the committees on the basis of criteria previously established by the Director of each of the corresponding Divisions.

Regarding the selection and training of experts within the Armenian accreditation process, the profile of the experts to be involved was previously defined in the Guide of Evaluation and Accreditation elaborated bilaterally for this procedure which details the different steps to be carried out. The experts selected by ANECA responded to the criteria stipulated with an extra one regarding the language skills as far as the process is ran in French in its entirety. The proposal of experts was sent, at first sight, to HCERES for their consent and afterwards to the Institution for the revision of the panel composition and their agreement on this one.

In both cases, the experts involved by ANECA were trained at the moment of their selection during a one-day face to face session for two of them and virtually for one of them.

In the case of the evaluation phase of the UNPA, additionally, all the experts were trained during the preparation meeting which took place a few weeks before the site-visit at HCERES in Paris with the participation of both Agencies and the full panel in order to present the Armenian Higher Education context as well as the partner Institutions' characteristics through diverse documents and facts, a

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3 This evidence could only be checked in ANECA's premises.

presentation of an expert involved in the evaluation phase of the UNACA and a session for the criteria's explanation and interpretation.

In the case of evaluation _EURACE-MEXICO_ and AUDIT-PERU, the experts involved by ANECA were trained at the moment of their selection and institution's approval.

10.5. STANDARD 2.5. CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES

Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

ANECA Ensures that all information is accessible and transparent for all stakeholders, by publishing the documentation relative to the procedures on its underline:website:

- Programme evaluation procedures: the applicable legal documentation; guides to support drafting the reports; assessment templates; links to software applications for each of the procedures; composition of the committees and/or panels; frequently asked questions.
- Institutional evaluation procedures: the applicable legal documentation (as required); links to software applications for each of the procedures (as required); calls; quality assessment bodies; frequently asked questions, guides and documents.

The assessment criteria, guidelines and methods applied by panel, committee or commission members in drafting their reports are known to all members through the training sessions they receive before commencing evaluation assignments. In this manner, the Agency ensures that all participants have received the training and information they need to conduct an evaluation. The officers/secretaries in each of the procedures are responsible for enforcing the committees' compliance with each of the criteria, uniformly and systematically, in each procedure.

The procedure for each programme establishes the necessary mechanisms to ensure that the members of the panels of experts, commissions or committees do not present conflicts of interests with the institution to which the degree or dossier being evaluated belongs.

In procedures for programme evaluation:

- In the **VERIFICA** and **MONITOR** Procedures, with a view to guaranteeing a rigorous and systematic evaluation process throughout all phases, two types of committees are present: assessment committees per branch of knowledge (_CER_), which are divided according to the field of knowledge, and commissions for issuing reports (_CEI_). The CER perform the evaluation of universities' degree proposals, on the basis of which the CEI issue their opinions. In both of the above, agreements are reached on the application of the assessment criteria and proposals are made for improvements. In all cases the final decision on the evaluation is taken as a body.

The committees are plural in nature and composed of the chair, academic specialists, professionals, students and a secretary.

- In the **ACREDITA** and **ACREDITA PLUS** Procedures, the agreements within the different committees and panels are reached by consent, so that the experts' decision is taken as a body and complies with the criteria established in the accreditation system.

In both programmes, the visiting panels are required to visit the faculty at which the degree being evaluated is delivered and, subsequently, to draft a Visit Report.

The Accreditation Committee is responsible for analysing the Visit Report drafted by the expert panel, the self-evaluation report completed by the university and any other information in the accreditation dossier for the degree (which contains the evaluation reports of other ANECA procedures: **VERIFICA**, **MONITOR**, **AUDIT** and **DOCENTIA** that affect the degree). With this information, the Committee will issue the binding evaluation report for ex post accreditation (or non-accreditation). In the **ACREDITA PLUS** Procedure, the Accreditation Committees for _EUR-ACE_® or _EURO-INF_ are responsible for taking the decision regarding obtaining international labels.

In institutional evaluation procedures:

- In **DOCENTIA**, the evaluation processes are coordinated through meetings with regional agencies, where the evaluation activities and results are agreed upon and reviewed. To prove that the criteria are interpreted homogeneously, a single _committee_ may examine dossiers originating from different Agencies.
- In **AUDIT**, with the aim of coordinating and standardising all evaluation processes, the procedure's _certification committee_ will ensure the uniform interpretation of the criteria in all evaluation events performed.

The final results of all procedures are given in other binding reports up issued by the committees/ commissions for the various procedures **(see paragraph 10.6)**.

10.6. STANDARD 2.6. REPORTING

Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

The structure of the reports, as well as the systematic process to be used in drafting them, is defined and reasoned in the documentation accompanying the Agency's procedures. As part of this process, all of the procedures offer the possibility for the evaluated parties to point out possible errors of interpretation before the report is concluded **(see paragraph 10.7)**.

Moreover, considering the conclusions drawn from the project EQArep, ANECA continues to strive to improve the content and structure of the reports, rendering them more straightforward and accessible to all stakeholders, including present and future students.

To facilitate drafting the reports:

- Some of the procedures are accompanied by specific guides, such as the *Manual to support assessment committees conducting ex-ante accreditation* (Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree). At the time of publishing the Manual, ANECA had completed the evaluation of over 5,000 reports on applications for ex-ante accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's Degrees. The know-how, experience and agreements accumulated by officers and experts participating in this process were systematised and reflected in the Manual.
- The **ACREDITA Procedure** is accompanied by the *Document on Good Practices in drafting experts' reports in the ACREDITA Procedure*, and the document *Accreditation Committee Agreements*.

As regards the content of these reports, this varies according to the procedure:

- Programme evaluation procedures:

  - **VERIFICA Procedure**: general information on the degree, applicable committee and legislation, applications for changes, motivation for each of the proposed criteria, recommendations.
  - **ACREDITA Procedure** and **ACREDITA PLUS Procedure** (**EURO-INF** and **EURO-ACE®**): general information on the degree, applicable committee and legislation, compliance with the assessment criteria (for each of the dimensions in the procedure, a value is given for the criteria), motivation: the issue of a final evaluation report for ex post accreditation that may be favourable or unfavourable, recommendations for improving the degree. The university also submits an improvement plan and, in the case of degrees in **ACREDITA PLUS**, the report bearing the corresponding international quality label.
  - **MONITOR Procedure**: general data on the applicable degree, committee and legislation, and remarks for each of the dimensions.

- Institutional evaluation procedures:

  - **AUDIT**: Overall evaluation, justification, opportunities for improvement and strengths.
  - **DOCENTIA**: Composition of the assessment committee, context of the institution, overall evaluation, compared data, analysis, main conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for improvement, and good practices implemented by the institution.

In addition, before submitting the reports to the interested parties, ANECA has set up control mechanisms for quality assurance and to guarantee consistency in the results shown in the reports to be submitted.

For instance, ANECA's technical staff performs two readings of the reports:

- An individual reading to verify that both the redaction and the content of the report provide an accurate rendition of the data, and that the text is not liable to erroneous interpretation by third parties.
- A transverse reading of all the reports issued by a single institution, to verify the homogeneity in all common information.
- In the **ACREDITA** Procedure, an expert conducts an evaluation of the common aspects of a given university's degrees (internal quality assurance system and public information regarding the degree), with the purpose of giving consistency to evaluations.

Similarly, for greater transparency throughout the Agency's activities, reports on programme and institutional evaluation are published unabridged on the ANECA website:

- Reports on programme evaluations are published on the search engine What to study and where? which provides stakeholders, and especially students (present and future), with comprehensive information on Bachelor's Degrees, Master's Degrees and Doctorates offered at Spanish universities. The information provided is complementary to the RUCT.
- The institutional evaluation reports are published on the website for each procedure.

10.7. STANDARD 2.7. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

All processes taking place within the evaluation procedures, including appeals and claims, must be made public on the ANECA website.

Before commencing an evaluation process, in certain procedures, (see paragraph 10.4) a challenge mechanism is available through which evaluated parties may submit their objections to the evaluation team.

In general, the procedure for pleas, claims and appeals in each of the procedures follows the pattern shown in figure 16:

FIGURE 16. General procedure for pleas, claims and appeals
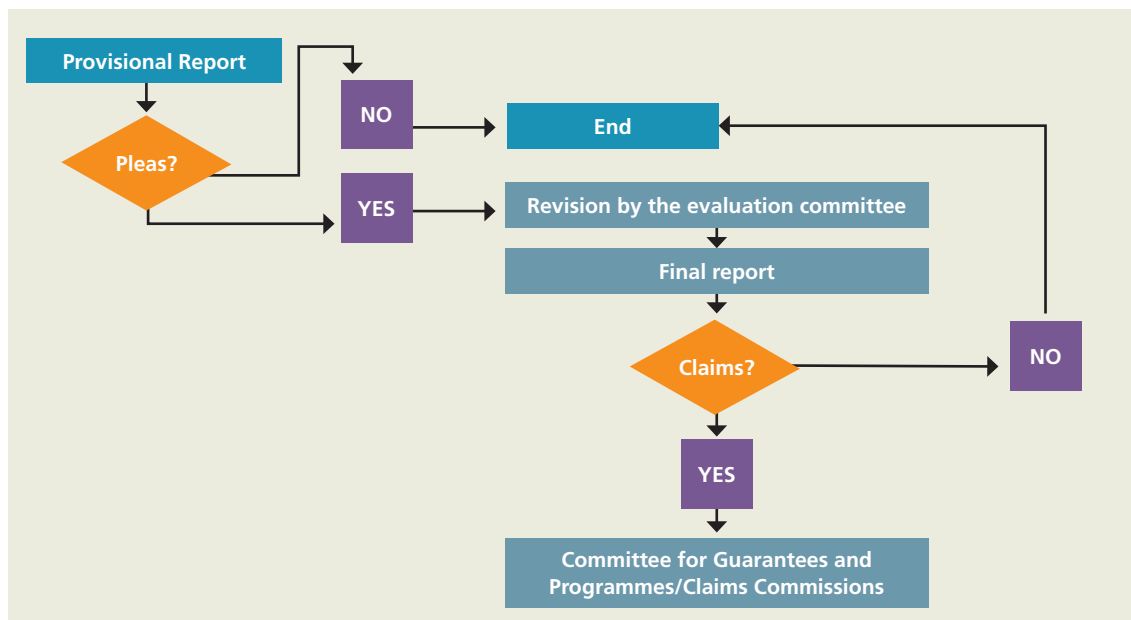
The Committee for Guarantees and Programmes (CGP) was created in March 2013, following the recommendations made in the report issued by ENQA (European Network of Quality Assessment) on the 2012 renewal process of ANECA's membership to this association. This Committee applies a transverse approach to ensuring proper implementation of the published certifiable evaluation criteria in all the Agency's procedures, and in any evaluations undertaken by ANECA by agreement with other bodies or institutions.

In particular, it is currently committed to performing evaluation and revision duties for:

- Claims against negative decisions in Programme assessment procedure.
- Appeals against negative decisions resulting from the Teaching Staff Evaluation Procedure.
- Appeals against negative reports on applications for exemption from the rule demanding that only members of a body of senior lecturers are eligible to apply for accreditation as 'Catedráticos de Universidad' (Professors).
- Other evaluation duties assigned by the Management Board.

Moreover, the CGP assists the Management Board in activities related to other evaluation procedures taken up by ANECA by agreement with the Ministry, universities or other bodies, and conducts assessment of experts' and evaluation professionals' performance, paying special attention to their compliance with the Code of Ethics.

The CGP's *operating procedures* were established at its first meeting, held on 21 March 2013, and the Committee became fully operational in April.

Until 31 December 2015, the CGP has resolved 889 appeals corresponding to the various contractual figures in the Teaching Staff Evaluation Procedure for recruitment (PEP), 42 appeals for Exemption, 8 appeals relating to Bachelor's, Master's and Doctor's Degrees in the VERIFICA Procedure, 1 for the AUDIT Procedure and 1 report regarding the Code of Ethics requested by the ANECA Management.

Throughout its activity, the CGP has safeguarded proper implementation of the published evaluation criteria by the corresponding evaluation committees in each of the procedures, ensuring that sufficient justification is given for the decisions taken, which in every case should clearly address the appellant's complaint.

Therefore, this committee understands that it is not required to conduct a further evaluation.

In the discharge of its duties, the Committee has availed of the information and collaboration provided by the appropriate committees and has always acted with full independence. On some occasions, and in the event of dysfunctions or incoherence in any evaluation or report, the CGP has had to propose modifications or corrections to the evaluation procedures, which have at all times been accepted and addressed by the relevant committee in each case.

Other indications of the impact, efficiency and correct practice of the CGR have been: firstly, the approval met by complainants, who have not had to appeal to a higher court; secondly, the progressive decrease in the number of appeals, giving evidence of the improvements suggested in the Committee proceedings; and thirdly, the reduction in the number of cases in which the respective committees' opinions have had to be rectified.

For each of the procedures, the process is as follows:

- **_VERIFICA Procedure_**: a provisional ex-ante accreditation report is issued by the Reports Committee (CEI), which allows the university to make pleadings as deemed appropriate. Subsequently, pleas are re-examined by the committees, and a 'Final draft ex-ante accreditation report' is issued. The Council of Universities (CU) renders its final decision taking into account ANECA's binding report. In the event of a negative report, the university may appeal to the Presidency of the CU within one month. If the claim is deemed admissible, it will be forwarded to the Management of ANECA for assessment by the Committee for Guarantees and Procedures. Said committee will study the claim, on the basis of the documentation available in the dossier, within a maximum period of one month.
- **_ACREDITA Procedure_** and **_ACREDITA PLUS_** Procedure: as soon as ANECA issues the 'Provisional Accreditation Report', universities have a timeframe of 20 days to make pleas and/or attach an improvement plan to the report. Following this, the 'Final ex post accreditation report' is issued, and the Council of Universities will render, compliant with the binding report by ANECA, its decision. In the event of an unfavourable decision, the university may file an appeal within one month. If the appeal is accepted by the Council of Universities, ANECA's Committee for Guarantees and Procedures will examine the aspects pointed to therein and will issue the pertinent report within a maximum of one month.
- **_DOCENTIA Procedure_**: as soon as the 'Provisional DOCENTIA Procedure Report' has been issued by the assessment committee on the design, evaluation and certification of the DOCENTIA Procedure, the university may make observations to said report; these will be studied by the

Committee, and the Agency will proceed with the publication of the 'Final DOCENTIA Procedure Report'. Against the results expressed in the report, in the case of certification, the applicant universities may file a claim with the Agency, within 20 days from the date of notification, which will be transferred to the pertinent Claims Commission. The latter, on receiving the claim, will issue a report with a proposal for certification supported on the technical report issued by the DOCENTIA Committee. The Agency will notify the university of the decision taken regarding the claim.

- **_AUDIT Procedure_**: The Agency will forward the 'Report on the evaluation of the design of the AUDIT Procedure' to the applicant university. Each faculty will be entitled to make its submissions to the results of the evaluation within a 20-day timeframe. These submissions will be evaluated by the assessment committee which, as appropriate, will include them in the Report. Similarly, during the phase comprising the certification of IQAS implementation, the 'Report on the audit performed within the AUDIT Procedure' will be drafted. In the event that the university should disagree with the report, it is entitled to submit written pleadings within five days. Following an analysis of the pleadings by a team of auditors, ANECA will forward to the point of contact at the university a new version of the mentioned report. In the event of any discrepancy, the university may lodge an appeal with the Agency, which will be studied by the Committee for Guarantees and Procedures.

As for the general operation of the Agency, ANECA avails of a procedure for _complaints and suggestions_, in which the system for receiving and handling complaints and suggestions is defined. All complaints will be answered within a maximum of 20 days. The Quality and Strategic Planning Unit is responsible for monitoring this process. All complaints will be reviewed periodically, with a view to taking actions to prevent their recurrence.

Similarly, any individual or institution may lodge a complaint or make a suggestion:

- via e-mail at reclamaciones@aneca.es and calidad@aneca.es, or any of the e-mail addresses available in the various procedures;
- in person, by means of the _Complaints/Suggestions Form_.

As of 2016, the Claims and Suggestions Unit has been set up within the UCYPE with the purpose of centralising all complaints and suggestions addressed to the Agency. At the end of each year, a report is issued to enable the Management to take the most appropriate actions to eliminate the root causes.

The report[4] will comprise the following:

- Data regarding complaints: number of complaints, means of submission, units affected, etc.
- Possible causes for the complaints.
- Solutions adopted as immediate response.

The aim is to conduct an overall analysis in order to define the remedial actions that are implicit, and to strive for streamlining the Agency's procedures to stakeholders' needs.

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4 This report should be drafted within the first quarter of 2017, and may therefore be available as an item of evidence during the visit by the panel of experts.

11. STAKEHOLDERS' INFORMATION AND OPINIONS

To maintain a suitable orientation of the Agency toward serving society necessarily entails awareness of stakeholders' diverse points of view.

In this light, and as a complement to the meta-evaluation processes conducted periodically by the Agency **(see paragraph 9.4)**, ANECA has launched a scheme for _consultation among stakeholders_, aimed at student groups and Stakeholders' Councils –the participative organ of society in the university environment– to become acquainted with their aspirations, such as knowledge regarding the actions taken by ANECA, and their demands for information.

The study was carried out by means of a series of semi-structured group interviews, both in presential and virtual modes. The use of this qualitative methodology allowed ANECA to reach greater depths in participants' responses, as well as allowing certain subjects of particular importance to different agents to be broached.

The results given in the _report_ serve the purpose of providing useful information for decision-making by the ANECA Management, bearing in mind the impressions expressed by participating stakeholders.

Table 14 below shows the main results of this study, together with some possible solutions, examined by the Management, to the problems identified.

TABLE 14. Results of the survey conducted among stakeholders regarding ANECA

Results	Stakeholders	Lines of action proposed by ANECA
Identification of ANECA as a sound and trustworthy body.	STUDENTS and COUNCILS OF UNIVERSITIES	Consolidation of ANECA's image.
To improve information regarding the activities of ANECA and their results.	STUDENTS and COUNCILS OF UNIVERSITIES	Seminar for the dissemination of ANECA's activities. Forums and seminars for exchange and participation with students and other stakeholders.
To take a more active role in degree programme evaluation processes, focusing on students and student-related aspects.	STUDENTS	Revision and update of the procedures to ESG 2015 standards.
Drafting of reports on the quality of the university system (for students and other stakeholders).	COUNCILS OF UNIVERSITIES	Periodic reporting on the quality of the Spanish University System (ICU).
To improve participation in evaluation processes and enhance contacts with ANECA.	STUDENTS and COUNCILS OF UNIVERSITIES	To achieve the participation of student representatives, in order to establish closer contact with the student body.
To improve communication channels with stakeholders.	STUDENTS and COUNCILS OF UNIVERSITIES	To hold regular consultations to measure the level of satisfaction among stakeholders.
To improve the dissemination of specific content for students (more succinct and more straightforward).	STUDENTS	To include issues and subjects that are closer to students' range of interests.
To increase the presence on Twitter and on Internet of issues that interest students.	STUDENTS	To enhance the areas dedicated to students on the website.
To gather stakeholders' opinions on a regular basis.	STUDENTS and COUNCILS OF UNIVERSITIES	Via questionnaires, interviews, etc.
To make ANECA a reference in Spain and abroad.	STUDENTS and COUNCILS OF UNIVERSITIES	To increase activities abroad, and in collaboration with other Agencies and other stakeholders.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MAIN RESULTS OF THE PRELIMINARY REVISION OF THE AGENCY'S FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

During the evaluation conducted in 2012, the panel suggested a number of opportunities for improvement.

More specific details are given below of the lines of action taken over the last four years in response to these opportunities for improvement; these are shown grouped according to the different subject matter they refer to.

Each proposal for improvement is aligned with the current strategic targets. At Annex 1 is a table showing how opportunities for improvement have been associated with specific targets in the Strategy Plan.

The status of each recommendation is indicated according to the following criteria:

- **Corrected:** measures have been taken allowing the recommendation to be considered implemented, and no issues of importance remain pending.
- **In process:** the recommendations have been taken into consideration and actions have been taken to correct any deficiencies, but these are not yet completed.
- **Not applicable**: no actions have been taken with regard to these recommendations, as these are not considered applicable to the current situation within ANECA.

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROCEDURES

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	STATUS
ANECA should consolidate the AUDIT Procedure and explore new paths to ensure the commitment of all Spanish universities with this process.	The certification phase for the implementation in universities of the IQAS - AUDIT has been designed, tested in a pilot project, and set in motion. _Symposiums have been held for the dissemination of the procedure_ and to encourage universities to participate. Similarly, 28 editions of the internal auditor course in IQAS have been given at a number of universities. Recently enacted legislation (RD 420/2015) has aroused increased interest in this procedure among universities.	Corrected
ANECA should continue developing the ACREDITA Procedure and start implementing it in the near future.	ACREDITA is currently fully implemented. ANECA has worked together with regional agencies to agree on common criteria for the ex post accreditation process for Higher Education Degrees. Starting from a common framework, the procedure has been designed, and a pilot project has been conducted inclusive of a meta-evaluation process. Before launching the programme, informative sessions were held at all of the universities under the competence of ANECA. Interrelations with the MONITOR, AUDIT and DOCENTIA Procedures have been included. Following implementation, the procedure was subjected to meta-evaluation and further changes made resulting from continuing follow-up.	Corrected
In developing the procedures for ACREDITA, ANECA should consider incorporating self-evaluation and a site visit **(see paragraphs 5 and 6).**	The procedure has been implemented incorporating self-evaluation, external evaluation including a site visit and follow-up process.	Corrected

STAKEHOLDERS: INTERACTION AND OTHER FACTORS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	STATUS
ANECA should strengthen the current system for participation by external agents, especially students, from the outset of each new evaluation process.	Both in designing the certification phase for the implementation of AUDIT, and in the meta-evaluation of the pilot project for ACREDITA, a range of different stakeholders, including students, were involved. In addition, representatives of Stakeholders' Councils and student bodies were present among the Accreditation Committee members. An Action Plan was devised to enhance their participation in the Agency's activities, including promoting a job network with student organisations to reflect on the agency's procedures (for example, participation by ANECA in symposiums arranged by student associations-UAH), and a study has been conducted on their level of satisfaction with regard to the procedures and to the Agency itself. In all procedures in which it is permitted by law, student representatives have been included in the majority of assessment committees, in Spain and abroad. A menu of services has been drawn up to inform citizens of the services rendered, their rights and of the quality commitments in rendering said services. Likewise, a number of events have been held for the dissemination and exchange of experiences with stakeholders (for instance, the DOCENTIA symposium 2013).	In process
ANECA should strengthen its dialogue and collaboration with institutions to further improve its quality assurance activities.	ANECA organises and conducts forums and meetings for informative purposes on its evaluation procedures (for instance, the DOCENTIA symposium on good practices, with 230 attendees from 58 universities; an informative meeting on ACREDITA, ACREDITA PLUS and AUDIT; the Almagro Symposium for reflection on quality). Additionally, in the course of a symposium and targeted visits the universities have been presented with the *Guide to drafting, putting into practice and evaluating learning outcomes*. This document aims to guide stakeholders through the complete process of designing degrees and implementing and revising study plans. Lastly, new communication tools have been launched: an external newsletter, Twitter, YouTube, and a fully restructured website. All the above contribute to improving dialogue with institutions and to disseminate content on quality in universities, promoting reflection and discussion. In the course of each different procedure, meetings are arranged with universities, individually or jointly, with the purpose of providing guidance and exchanging points of view on the processes involved. In particular, in the ACREDITA Procedure, since 2014 some 36 meetings have been held to promote contact among universities, encouraging them to express opinions, complaints and suggestions on the conduct of the procedure.	In process
ANECA should establish a more active dialogue with universities with regard to evaluation results and their contribution to the development of degrees.	In the new pilot projects for AUDIT and ACREDITA, the universities consulted over the design of these procedures have contributed improvements. In recent years, a number of events and meetings have been held with the universities to reflect on the outcome of the procedures currently being conducted as well as the new evaluation processes. Visits have been paid to all the universities to present the ACREDITA pilot project and to establish a working schedule. ANECA, as part of the meta-evaluation procedure, consults universities directly for their opinion on the outcome of the evaluation processes conducted by the agency. Orientation and informative meetings are likewise held with the universities for each of the procedures.	Corrected
ANECA should consider implicating stakeholders more directly in internal evaluation and quality enhancement in the Agency's activity.	Stakeholders' participation has been encouraged by asking them to take part in meta-evaluation and in surveys to measure their level of satisfaction with the Agency. An Action Plan has likewise been drawn up to increase their implication, both in the Agency's various bodies and in its activities. Stakeholders have been incorporated to the Governing Council, and to the evaluation and accreditation committees (for example, students and other stakeholders).	In process

AGENCY STAFF

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	STATUS
ANECA should have a clear policy on the implication of its staff in assessment committees to guarantee consistency throughout the process.	In the documentation provided by ANECA, detailed definition is given for the role and functions of committee secretaries who, in most cases, are ANECA staff. The aim is to ensure consistency throughout the evaluation process. Staff implication is an important aspect of evaluation. Indeed, generally speaking, officers are required to provide the necessary technical and methodological support to ensure that the evaluation processes are conducted according to the standards established in the procedures.	Corrected
ANECA should consider re-implementing a model for assessing job performance, to motivate and support staff in their respective activity. **(See paragraph 9.5)**.	ANECA has developed a new assessment model for job performance based on skills assessment, which was implemented in December 2013. The results were used for granting leave and participation in training schemes for Agency staff, and also applied to other activities engaged in by ANECA. Moreover, the above evaluation was also useful in strengthening the training plan. Despite budgetary issues in the past year that have curtailed external training, a number of unofficial training activities have been conducted at the Agency.	In process

EVALUATION REPORTS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	STATUS
ANECA should provide committees with more detailed guidelines for the decision-making process.	In its Strategy Plan, ANECA envisages setting in motion an internal communication plan that will provide better information to the committees for decision-making purposes. In particular, in the case of degree programmes, transverse meetings are planned for panel secretaries and managers at which to establish deeper unity among the assessment criteria for decision-making purposes. The ensuing agreements will be uploaded to the evaluation portal. In the case of teaching staff evaluation, the committee for each branch of knowledge will continue to conduct periodic revision and updates of the established scale of assessment. The above revisions will further facilitate the decision-making process. Further meetings have been held by the complaints committee chairs, to analyse and review the assessment criteria. The evaluation guidelines for each different procedure are stated in the accompanying documentation. These guidelines have previously been submitted for approval to the advisory councils and the Management, and are available to the public. The criteria have been agreed upon by representatives of all agents involved in each procedure, prior to their implementation, and all expert evaluators are trained in their application. In a majority of cases, the committees and the Agency agree on the assessment scales that serve as the basis for the general aspects of the assessment criteria.	Corrected
ANECA should identify more concisely the needs of the potential audience of its reports.	ANECA has drawn up a preliminary report to analyse stakeholders' needs for information and is currently in the process of designing the necessary means for its implementation. Some of these needs have been detected in meta-evaluations and students' consultations through institutional e-mail addresses. In any case, the guides to good practices in the redaction and publication of reports (ACREDITA) have been revised to make them more accessible. An Action Plan was also conducted for stakeholders, geared toward identifying weaknesses and strengths in the relations with ANECA, and to support engaging in common activities.	In process
ANECA should examine its publications policies, in order to provide more information and to publish reports as soon as they are completed.	A link to the search engine *¿Qué estudiar y dónde?* has been added to the ANECA website to heighten the visibility of the reports on degree evaluation. Regarding reports on institutions, these are published on the ANECA website.	Corrected

EVALUATION REPORTS (cont.)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	STATUS
ANECA should publish more comprehensive and more exhaustive reports for the AUDIT and DOCENTIA Procedures.	The format used for the DOCENTIA reports has been altered, and the policy on publishing reports likewise, so that they are now available fully unabridged. Public information on the AUDIT Procedure has been fully redrafted, rendering it more transparent, organised and intuitive. In the certification stage for implementation of IQAS at university faculties, the reports containing the reasoned results are published on the website.	Corrected
ANECA should consider publishing reports containing more information on criteria, the opinions of assessment committees and the grounds for their recommendations.	ANECA has revised the content of reports and has deemed it appropriate to include more detailed information on the appraisal of criteria, committees' opinions and the recommendations given. All the evaluation reports on programmes and institutions, whether positive or negative, include a section for recommendations. A timeframe has been set for observations by the institution before the final report is issued.	Corrected

PROCESS FOR THE REVISION AND ENHANCEMENT OF PROCEDURES

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	STATUS
In general, whenever appropriate, ANECA should align its procedures and processes with the established model.	ANECA has designed the ACREDITA Procedure comprising a self-evaluation form, an external visit and a follow-up process. The certification stage for the implementation of both AUDIT and DOCENTIA likewise includes these aspects.	Corrected
In designing its procedures and their outcomes, ANECA should develop and publish an analysis of the entire system, carefully selected on the basis of explicit criteria.	Analytical and periodic reports are issued on the procedures and the ensuing outcomes, which are published on the website. ANECA has published the reports on the status of quality assessment in Spanish universities for the years 2007 to 2015. In addition, a system is being developed to analyse statistical information gathered from ANECA's procedures and activities, in order to obtain far more efficient information on the latter; this translates into a specific target in the Strategy Plan.	In process

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSSURANCE SYSTEM

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	STATUS
ANECA should consider implementing a transverse process for internal quality management and encourage the sharing of good practices throughout the Agency. **(See paragraph 7).**	ANECA has created the Quality and Strategic Planning Unit to coordinate and disseminate all internal quality-related actions taken by the Agency, including those activities engaged in within the quality circles in each department. The Director has approved the procedures included in the IQAS documentation.	Corrected

STRATEGY PLANNING

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	STATUS
ANECA should develop a well-defined medium-term Strategy Plan derived from its Mission; this should include a Risk Analysis and serve as the basis for the Annual Action Plan.	ANECA has drawn up a Strategy Plan for the period 2013-2016. It has also defined a Risk Analysis Plan which it applies to the activities engaged in by the Agency and an array of indicators for follow-up procedures.	Corrected
ANECA needs to align the current budgetary restrictions with its defined strategy, and to establish priorities regarding the development of new processes and procedures.	Since 2013, the Strategy Plan comprises a cost-saving scheme, based mainly on the revision of supplier contracts and on adjusting the retribution of evaluation experts, which measures have enabled a balance between expenditure and income. All the above is due to the current economic recession.	Corrected

OTHERS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	STATUS
ANECA should establish more formally and make more effective use of the Advisory Council.	The Strategy Plan envisages greater participation and advice from the Advisory Council. The Council has taken part in the Plan, revising the documentation for the design of the ACREDITA Procedure, and it is envisaged that it will participate in creating new activities deriving from the development of the Strategy Plan. Greater participation is likewise expected from the new body (Governing Council) established in the Statutes.	In process
ANECA should reconsider the composition of its Board of Trustees to guarantee the appropriate level of independence, and to ensure that all agents concerned are represented.	ANECA avails of new Statutes that strengthen its functional independence, while at the same time modifying the manner of appointing the Director, and the new functions assigned to the latter. Furthermore, the evaluation reports issued are binding for the Public Administrations.	Not applicable
It is recommended, once again, that the President of the Board of Trustees should be independent of the Ministry, thus enabling the desired level of autonomous responsibility.	Similarly, the corporate governing body of ANECA (Governing Council) has been augmented with members appointed by the collegiate bodies of leading stakeholders in Higher Education: students, the Conference of the Social Bodies of Spanish Public Universities, syndicalist councils, the national confederation of business organisations, and regional Higher Education authorities.	Corrected
ANECA should guarantee that student representatives on the Board of Trustees are appointed through a body with no formal political implication.	In December 2015, the Board of Trustees of the ANECA Foundation was dissolved.	Not applicable
ANECA should consider, within the legal limitations in force, the inclusion of student evaluators on the teaching staff assessment committees.	Students will continue to participate indirectly in our evaluation process through the assessment of teaching quality, which is taken into account in evaluating the faculty. The models for study plan peer reviews, and the Spanish legal framework, impose limitations on their scope for participation.	Not applicable

13. SWOT ANALYSIS

Conducting a SWOT analysis entails having established a strategy-planning unit within the Agency. As a result of informal, voluntary attendance meetings held with staff members, of remarks gathered from meetings at which to define IQAS procedures, and of the suggestions received through stakeholders, the following analysis was completed:

STRENGTHS

- Stakeholders identify ANECA as a body that inspires confidence and conducts its evaluation procedures in a reliable manner.
- Its human capital is highly professional: the staff is highly qualified, experienced and readily adapts to change.
- Communication and guidance are fluid, tailored to each institution, and form part of managing the development of its procedures.
- Advisory services for foreign universities: a number of initiatives have been undertaken for the dissemination of the **AUDIT** Model in Central and South American universities. ANECA has placed at the disposal of these projects the Spanish **AUDIT Procedure** documentation, and the experience and know-how of the Agency's technical staff, that has provided in situ methodological support to numerous universities expressing an interest in taking part in the project via seminars, courses and troubleshooting visits, among other activities.
- Independence of action and in results: having become an Autonomous Body has consolidated the independence of the Director, and by extension that of the Agency (and its processes).
- International development via agreements and covenants with international Agencies and bodies.
- Documentation and measuring processes that allow continuous improvement: the definition of an array of indicators for the Agency's main processes.
- High degree of evaluator commitment and training: ANECA avails of a large pool of expert evaluators who also collaborate in designing models and criteria.
- Procedure integration: this line of action leads to the simplification of evaluation processes and more efficient use of resources, both for ANECA and for the institutions (for instance, **ACREDITA**, **DOCENTIA** and **AUDIT**; **ACREDITA** and **ACREDITA PLUS**).
- The procedures developed by ANECA are offered with the aim of providing added value to universities (e.g. **ACREDITA PLUS**).

Summing up, the consolidation of ANECA as a sound and trustworthy body within the university system, backed up by its highly skilled staff and external evaluators and the fluent dialogue it maintains in Spain and abroad, while continuing to make progress with the integration of evaluation processes, constitute the Agency's foremost strengths.

The Agency has integrated procedures such as **AUDIT**, **DOCENTIA** and **ACREDITA** in view of the clear synergies in their processes. This has simplified evaluation processes making universities' and experts' tasks easier in the development of evaluation processes.

At this time, a label of quality is in the process of being defined for universities that have already received certification for the implementation of their internal quality assurance system, based on the AUDIT model and designed by ANECA. This label will undoubtedly imply a mark of quality for the agency's procedures and will reinforce the positive image of this institution.

WEAKNESSES

- The adaptation of ANECA to its new legal personality as an Autonomous Body: this has entailed an increase in the bureaucratic burden in financial management processes.
- The need to propose formulas for the internal professional recognition and promotion of ANECA staff.
- The demand for more robust information and communication channels with stakeholders, that are better suited to their needs.
- Scant participation by international experts on the assessment committees.
- The need to increase the use of existing internal communication channels.
- A decrease in the presence and visibility of ANECA in national and international forums.

ANECA has adopted **a new legal personality**. Although this change allows the Agency to exercise its competences with full functional independence, internal changes at an organisational level (organigrams, administrative procedures, etc.) are being made at a slow pace.

Regarding **internal communications**, an irregular use of the Intranet has been detected among the various units. In this sense, actions should be defined to promote the use of this tool which could be used to communicate internal changes and, in general, information of interest to all staff members. Although the Agency has the necessary channels and means to run an efficient internal communications programme, these have been under-exploited over the last few years.

The internal newsletter will continue to be used as a tool for gathering information from the various units, provided by the units themselves.

With the aim of ensuring that stakeholders receive the information that meets their specific needs, ANECA should re-think the design of its **external information and communication channels**. The Agency's website is currently being re-designed.

The budgetary restrictions that have affected the Agency during the last few years and the linguistic barrier have hindered the participation of **international experts** on the assessment committees.

It is deemed necessary to increase the presence of ANECA in **national and international forums** to raise the visibility of the Agency's activities in the eyes of stakeholders and society at large.
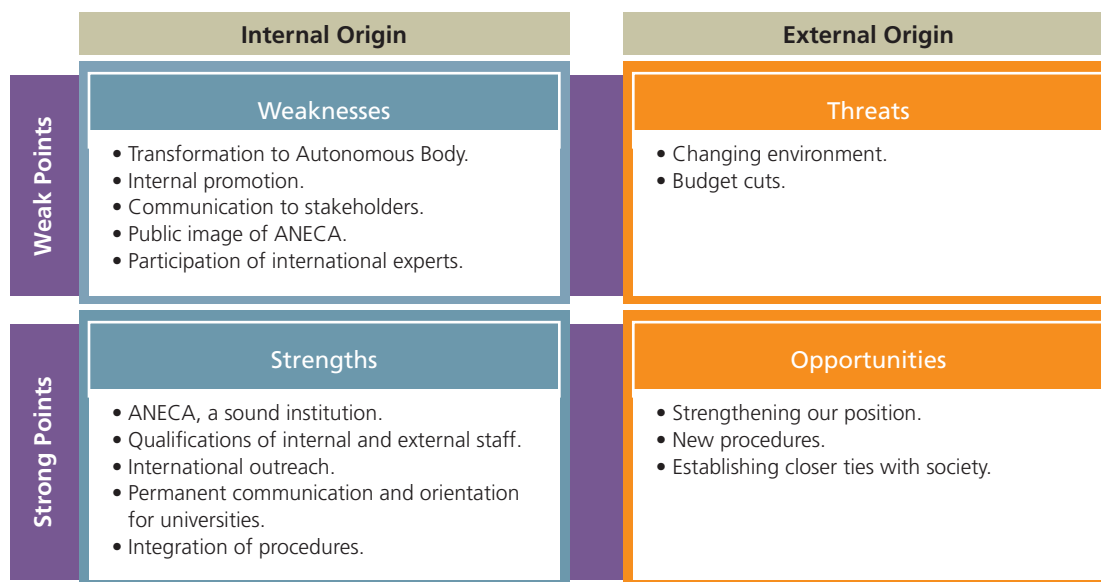
THREATS

- Changing legislation that affects the University system: for instance, the existence of three-year degrees and legal inflexibility with a direct impact on the University sector.
- Political instability.
- Budget cutbacks.

OPPORTUNITIES

- To strengthen the position of ANECA by means of:

  - Agreements of collaboration with other agencies and institutions in Spain and abroad.
  - Diversification of the range of activities offered by the agency, in fields such as international accreditation of degrees and institutions, in order to benefit from the experience gained and materials developed, or setting new procedures in motion.
  - Promoting the image of ANECA as a national Agency.

- Establishing closer ties with stakeholders and with society at large.

Figure 17 shows a summary of the agency's SWOT analysis:

FIGURE 17. SWOT

	Internal Origin	External Origin
Weak Points	**Weaknesses** • Transformation to Autonomous Body. • Internal promotion. • Communication to stakeholders. • Public image of ANECA. • Participation of international experts.	**Threats** • Changing environment. • Budget cuts.
Strong Points	**Strengths** • ANECA, a sound institution. • Qualifications of internal and external staff. • International outreach. • Permanent communication and orientation for universities. • Integration of procedures.	**Opportunities** • Strengthening our position. • New procedures. • Establishing closer ties with society.

14. CURRENT CHALLENGES AND FUTURE SCOPE OF ACTION

As a result of internal reflection within ANECA, and in line with the strategic targets to be included in the Strategy Plan 2017-2020 and the SWOT analysis, tables 15, 16 and 17 describe the future plans of action envisaged by the agency, taking into consideration stakeholders' viewpoints.

TABLE 15. Challenges arising from the internal organisation of ANECA

CHALLENGE	SCOPE OF ACTION
Transformation of the Agency into an Autonomous Body.	Incorporation of new procedures (electronic register/electronic administration, financial management, etc.).
Raising Agency staff members' motivation with measures that do not affect the budget.	Measures are to be implemented that will allow recognition of the work performed: for instance, distributing tasks according to skills and reducing monotony in the processes.
Consolidating ANECA's position at an international level as an instrument for the globalisation of higher education institutions.	To establish networks, quality labels, membership within international organisations and participation in projects that promote mutual recognition in European and American countries.
Increasing the use of new technologies to enhance interaction between experts and institutions.	Promoting the use of virtual meetings as a regular means to contact experts and institutions in procedures that have not incorporated these yet.
Supporting collaboration for the dissemination of a culture of quality in higher education.	Continue to sign agreements with other agencies and higher education institutions.
Strengthening internal communications.	Maximise the use of formal internal communication channels (newsletter, intranet, others).
Paying closer attention to student-centred learning (ACE).	Participation in conferences, forums, etc. addressing students. Meta-evaluation will be focused, most especially, on revising this aspect of the procedures.

TABLE 16. Challenges related to the agency's evaluation activities

CHALLENGE	SCOPE OF ACTION
To promote the accreditation process for institutions within the agency.	To develop all the necessary processes for conducting institutional accreditation.
To promote labels such as **AUDIT** and **DOCENTIA**.	To strengthen relations with universities to assist them with the implementation of these procedures. To link these actions to the future development of institutional accreditation. To continue using the information provided by these procedures to identify areas for improvement during the implementation of degrees (**VERIFICA, MONITOR, ACREDITA**).
To promote the **ACREDITA PLUS Procedure**.	To increase the number of labels by extending the scope of certification.
To increase procedure integration: simplification of evaluation processes and more efficient use of resources.	To increase the synergies among the **AUDIT, DOCENTIA, ACREDITA,** and **ACREDITA PLUS Procedures**.
To strengthen the role of the **MONITOR Procedure** in ex-post accreditation schemes.	To give a more significant role to degree follow-up processes enabling their proper conduct, the identification of problems and quicker and more efficient implementation of enhancements and changes.

TABLE 17. Challenges related to stakeholders

CHALLENGE	SCOPE OF ACTION
To give greater publicity to activities engaged in by ANECA: to raise the visibility of the Agency's actions.	Organisation and participation in conferences, forums, etc. for the various stakeholders (including students). Visibility of events and activities through the website and other channels (Twitter, YouTube). Drafting customised reports for stakeholders.
Establishing more robust information and communication channels with stakeholders, better adapted to their needs.	To increase website content for students and society in general, with topics that are of interest to these groups and providing the means for them to express their opinions.
To allow stakeholders greater scope for participation.	To promote the conduct of studies of different collectives to measure the level of satisfaction with the Agency's procedures. To achieve deeper implication by stakeholders in evaluation design and processes, and procedure enhancement.
To encourage the participation of international experts.	To increase the presence of international experts in a greater number of the Agency's committees and processes.

15. ANNEXES. List of recommendations given in the report submitted by the ENQA evaluation panel, and their association to specific targets

STANDARD 2.1 (SUBSTANTIALLY): USE OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

Opportunity for improvement 01: 'ANECA should consolidate the AUDIT Procedure and explore new paths to ensure the commitment of all Spanish universities with this process'.

B.2. **To lead the field in** quality management policy in higher education in Spain, designing and implementing procedures that facilitate **quality enhancement** within the University System.

Opportunity for improvement 02: 'ANECA should continue developing the ACREDITA Procedure and start implementing it in the near future'.

A.1. To conduct the various programme evaluation and accreditation procedures in compliance with current legislation and the guidelines for Quality Assurance in the **European Higher Education Area**, providing information that is **useful** and **relevant** to the **continuous improvement of university institutions**.

STANDARD 2.2 (SUBSTANTIALLY): CONDUCT OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

Opportunity for improvement 03: 'ANECA should strengthen the system in place for external agents' participation, especially students, from the outset of each new evaluation process.'

A.3. To develop the evaluation and accreditation procedures **causing all stakeholders in Higher Education** to become involved in their **design** and **implementation**.

Opportunity for improvement 04: 'ANECA should establish more formally and make more effective use of the Advisory Council.'

A.3. To develop the evaluation and accreditation procedures **causing all stakeholders in Higher Education** to become involved in their **design** and **implementation**.

STANDARD 2.3 (SUBSTANTIALLY): DECISION-MAKING CRITERIA

Opportunity for improvement 05: 'ANECA should provide committees with more detailed guidelines for the decision-making process.'

A.3. To develop the evaluation and accreditation procedures **causing all stakeholders in Higher Education** to become involved in their **design** and **implementation**.

A.4. To endow the evaluation procedures with the **necessary resources** for **quality assurance** in the **final results**.

Opportunity for improvement 06: 'ANECA should have a clear policy on the implication of its staff in assessment committees to guarantee consistency throughout the process.'

D.2. To apply a **human resources policy** developing the **maximum potential** of the **Agency's** workforce, in each and every post.

STANDARD 2.4 (PARTIALLY FOR THE PANEL, AND SUBSTANTIALLY FOR THE ENQA BOARD): PROCESSES ADJUSTED TO THEIR PURPOSE

Opportunity for improvement 07: 'ANECA should revise its policy regarding the involvement of international experts in its processes and supporting the selection of these experts'.

A.3. To develop the evaluation and accreditation procedures **causing all stakeholders in Higher Education** to become involved in their **design** and **implementation**.

Opportunity for improvement 08: 'ANECA should consider, within the legal limitations in force, the inclusion of student evaluators on the Teaching Staff Assessment Committees'.

A.3. To develop the evaluation and accreditation procedures **causing all stakeholders in Higher Education** to become involved in their **design** and **implementation**.

Opportunity for improvement 09: 'ANECA should strengthen its dialogue and collaboration with institutions to further improve its quality assurance activities'.

A.3. To develop the evaluation and accreditation procedures **causing all stakeholders in Higher Education** to become involved in their **design** and **implementation**.

B.2. **To lead the field in** quality management policy in higher education in Spain, designing and implementing procedures that facilitate **quality enhancement** within the University System.

C.1. To provide **relevant information** on the higher education system, that is readily **accessible** depending on the various stakeholders' profiles.

STANDARD 2.5 (PARTIALLY): REPORTS

Opportunity for improvement 10: 'ANECA should identify more concisely the needs of the potential audience of its reports'.

A.3. To develop the evaluation and accreditation procedures **causing all stakeholders in Higher Education** to become involved in their **design** and **implementation**.

A.4. To endow the evaluation procedures with the **necessary resources** for **quality assurance** in the **final results**.

C.1. To provide **relevant information** on the higher education system, that is readily **accessible** depending on the various stakeholders' profiles.

Opportunity for improvement 11: 'ANECA should examine its publications policies, in order to provide more information and to publish reports as soon as they are completed'.

A.4. To endow the evaluation procedures with the **necessary resources** for **quality assurance** in the **final results**.

C.1. To provide **relevant information** on the higher education system, that is readily **accessible** depending on the various stakeholders' profiles.

Opportunity for improvement 12: 'ANECA should publish more comprehensive and exhaustive reports for the AUDIT and DOCENTIA Procedures'.

A.4. To endow the evaluation procedures with the **necessary resources** for **quality assurance** in the **final results**.

B.2. **To lead the field in** quality management policy in higher education in Spain, designing and implementing procedures that facilitate **quality enhancement** within the University System.

C.1. To provide **relevant information** on the higher education system, that is readily **accessible** depending on the various stakeholders' profiles.

Opportunity for improvement 13: 'ANECA should consider publishing reports containing more information on criteria, the opinions of assessment committees and the grounds for their recommendations'.

A.4. To endow the evaluation procedures with the **necessary resources** for **quality assurance** in the **final results**.

C.1. To provide **relevant information** on the higher education system, that is readily **accessible** depending on the various stakeholders' profiles.

STANDARD 2.6 (SUBSTANTIALLY): FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

Opportunity for improvement 14: 'ANECA should establish a more active dialogue with universities with regard to evaluation results and their contribution to the development of degrees'.

A.3. To develop the evaluation and accreditation procedures **causing all stakeholders in Higher Education** to become involved in their **design** and **implementation**.

B.4. To endow the Agency with the necessary **instruments** to generate **trust** and **credibility** within the European Higher Education Area, establishing and maintaining straightforward and transparent relations with all the **agents involved**.

STANDARD 2.8 (PARTIALLY): ANALYSIS OF THE COMPLETE SYSTEM

Opportunity for improvement 15: 'In designing its procedures and the results therefrom, ANECA should develop and publish and analysis of the entire system, carefully selected on the basis of explicit criteria'.

C.3. To draft **reports** independently, or jointly with other bodies involved in the university system, analysing the **results** of the evaluation of **quality** in said system.

STANDARD 3.4 (FULLY): RESOURCES

Opportunity for improvement 16: 'ANECA should consider re-implementing a model for assessing job performance, to motivate and support staff in their respective activity'.

D.2. To apply a **human resources policy** developing the **maximum potential** of the **Agency's** workforce, in each and every post.

Opportunity for improvement 17: 'ANECA needs to align the current budgetary restrictions with its defined strategy, and to establish priorities regarding the development of new processes and procedures'.

D.3. To guarantee **a transparent financial management system** that complies with all the budgets set, whose main objective is **austerity** in expenditure allowing the Agency to be run to the highest level of **efficiency** as possible.

STANDARD 3.5. MISSION DECLARATION

Opportunity for improvement 18: 'ANECA should develop a well-defined medium-term Strategy Plan derived from its Mission; this should include a risk analysis and serve as the basis for the Annual Action Plan'.

The Strategy Plan.

STANDARD 3.6 (SUBSTANTIALLY): INDEPENDENCE

Opportunity for improvement 19: 'ANECA should reconsider the composition of its Board of Trustees to guarantee the appropriate level of independence, and to ensure that all agents concerned are represented'.

Opportunity for improvement 20: 'It is recommended, once again, that the President of the Board of Trustees should be independent of the Ministry, thus enabling the desired level of autonomous responsibility'.

Opportunity for improvement 21: 'ANECA should guarantee that student representatives on the Board of Trustees are appointed through a body with no formal political implication'.

STANDARD 3.7 (PARTIALLY): EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERIA AND PROCESSES APPLIED BY AGENCIES

Opportunity for improvement 22: 'In general, whenever appropriate, ANECA should align its procedures and processes with the established model'.

A.1. To conduct the various **programme** evaluation and accreditation procedures in compliance with current legislation and the guidelines for Quality Assurance in the **European Higher Education Area**, providing information that is **useful** and **relevant** to the **continuous improvement of university institutions**.

A.2. To perform the various evaluation procedures for teaching staff with **academic rigour** and **transparency** as an essential component of **quality** in our higher education system.

Opportunity for improvement 23: 'ANECA, in developing the procedures for ACREDITA, should consider incorporating self assessment and a visit'.

A.1. To conduct the various **programme** evaluation and accreditation procedures in compliance with current legislation and the guidelines for Quality Assurance in the **European Higher Education Area**, providing information that is **useful** and **relevant** to the **continuous improvement of university institutions**.

STANDARD 3.8. RESPONSIBILITY PROCEDURES

Opportunity for improvement 24: 'ANECA should consider implementing a transverse process for internal quality management and encourage the sharing of good practices throughout the Agency'.

D.1. To design and implement a **quality management system** to improve the **effectiveness** and **efficiency** of the processes, and to provide information for **decision-making** through data and indicators.

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Opportunity for improvement 25: 'ANECA should consider implicating stakeholders more directly in internal evaluation and quality enhancement in the Agency's activities'.

B.4. To endow the Agency with the necessary **instruments** to generate **trust** and **credibility** within the European Higher Education Area, establishing and maintaining straightforward and transparent relations with all the **agents involved**.

D.1. To design and implement a **quality management system** to improve the **effectiveness** and **efficiency** of the processes, and to provide information for **decision-making** through data and indicators.

ANECA

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