



AGENCIA NACIONAL DE EVALUACIÓN
DE LA CALIDAD Y ACREDITACIÓN

2009 ACTION PLAN

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PRESENTATION

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2008 has been a real turning point for the Spanish university system in general and for ANECA in particular with the implementation of the critical points of the Royal Decrees for the application of Spain's Law for the Amendment of the Law of Universities [*LOMLOU* in its Spanish initials], but above all as regards the implantation of the new qualifications adapted to the EHEA and to the civil servant accreditation procedure.

The change brought about through the redefinition by the Law of certain functions has meant that certain actions have had to be reoriented and the organization has had to be adapted to meet the new commitments defined by Royal Decree 1312/2007 of the Accreditation of Official Teaching Staff and Royal Decree 1393/2007 by virtue of which the planning of official university studies is established.

Since the 2007 Action Plan, the *DOCENTIA* and *AUDIT* assessment activities, designed and set in motion by the Agency, have reinforced their link with ANECA's mission and the new lines defined in the amendment proposals of Spain's Law of Universities [*LOU* in its Spanish initials]. For this reason, all the programmes that distanced themselves from the object of the work defined in the new legal framework have had to be discarded.

From an internal point of view, all the 2009 Action Plan activities are in line with the strategic targets defined in the Strategic Plan and with the year's specific targets. Moreover, the Plan will be implanted in accordance with the new planning assumed by ANECA in 2008 through its MS Project Management programme. This means that the implantation of ANECA's programmes and activities, taking into account strict planning of times and resources and incorporating quality control mechanisms, is guaranteed. This fact, which ought merely to be an aspect of internal organization, is highlighted as a mechanism of on-going improvement to demonstrate the level of exigency the organization imposes on itself and its



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members at all levels in order to comply with its mission in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

Within this context, ANECA's Action Plan for 2009 maintains its division into four major sections covering the spectrum of all the areas and units around which this institution's work is organized:

- Assessment Activities
- Present and Future Studies
- Institutional Activities
- Internal Organization

GENERAL OBJECTIVES FOR 2009

The amendment of the LOU, the new policies of Spain's Ministry of Science and Innovation [*MICINN* in its Spanish initials] reflected in the future development of regulations (in particular, those relating to the new organization of qualifications and the new mechanism for the accreditation of state teaching staff) and the framework created by the Law of State Agencies necessarily oblige the Agency to adapt ANECA's Strategic Plan to the new situation.

For this, one of the targets of the 2009 Action Plan will be the reformulation of the current Strategic Plan. Nevertheless, the strategic objectives defined in the Basic Premises of ANECA's Strategic Plan for the 2010 horizon (drawn up in 2005) continue to be valid, with the logical variations in terminology resulting from the legislative change:

1. To introduce the accreditation of studies leading to official qualifications and to offer a catalogue of services focussed on the mission
2. To be the main source of information for society on the university system's quality
3. To generate credibility and trust with all the agents involved
4. To consolidate the organization

As could not be otherwise, the 2009 Action Plan is aligned with the ANECA Strategic Plan as a general reference framework and its strategic targets, which have had to be subjected to a first adaptation to bring them into line with the responsibilities and functions which the LOMLOU assigns to the Agency, and its gradual but unavoidable conversion into a state agency, in accordance with the Law which governs these bodies.

The general objectives to be taken into account in the new yearly period are as follows:

1. To improve and consolidate qualification assessment programmes and the programmes for the assessment and certification of the institutions' specific activities
2. To consolidate and improve teaching staff assessment programmes
3. To introduce a registered qualification monitoring programme, in accordance with the prevailing legislation
4. To report on the quality of university institutions, teaching staff and qualifications
5. To foster activities and studies for the improvement of qualification and teaching staff assessment programmes
6. To promote co-operation with regional agencies and with international networks and agencies through the development of joint projects
7. To consolidate the participation of all the agents involved in higher education in the Agency's advisory bodies and in the assessment processes
8. To consolidate ANECA's internal quality assurance system
9. To improve and consolidate the organization through the development of its human team, the efficient management of its resources and its external projection
10. To align the organization's structure and the new functions established by Law with the European framework

ACTIVITIES FOR 2009

I. ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Assessment of Studies and Institutions

1.1. Verification of Degree and Master Courses (VERIFICA)

1.1.1. Degree Verification Programme (Degree VERIFICA)

Pursuant to the provisions of Heading VI of Spain's Law 4/2007 of Universities, Spain's Royal Decree 1393/2007 of 29 October 2007 establishes the regulatory framework for the organization and verification of official university studies.

This Royal Decree sets down that ANECA will establish the procedures, guides and protocols for the verification of official qualifications. It also establishes that ANECA will assess the study plan proposals, in accordance with these verification guidelines and protocols.

During 2008 a programme will have been introduced, the first evaluations of all its phases (provisional and final evaluation and resources) will have been completed and the process will have been meta-evaluated. And as a consequence of all this, the resulting improvements will have been implemented.

In 2009 the activities in this programme, in line with general objective number 1, will be to consolidate it, evaluating the important number of study plans that it is expected will be presented (approximately 1,200 qualifications), and to continue with the analysis and improvement of the processes. Similarly, and in line with objective number 4, reports will be issued with the results of the evaluation, the aim of which will be to inform not only society of the quality of university studies but also the agents involved for the higher education system's improvement.

To this end, as a rule, one meeting will be held per month with each one of the evaluation committees and at least one annual analysis of the processes and results will be made, so that any necessary improvements can be detected.

1.1.2. Master Verification Programme (Master VERIFICA)

As in the case of the foregoing section, pursuant to the provisions of Heading VI of Law 4/2007 of Universities, Royal Decree 1393/2007 of 29 October 2007 establishes the regulatory framework for the organization and verification of official university studies. And, likewise, it lays down that ANECA will establish the procedures, guidelines and protocols so that the Agency can evaluate the study plan proposals.

During 2008 the process for assessing master courses will have been introduced, the first evaluations of all its phases (provisional and final evaluations and resources) will have been completed and the process will have been meta-evaluated. And as a consequence of all this, the resulting improvements will have been implemented. In addition, a shortened procedure for the master courses introduced in accordance with Royal Decree 56/2005 will have been designed.

In 2009, in line with general objective number 1, the programme will be consolidated through the assessment of the study plans presented (500 qualifications are expected through the normal route and 1,500 through the shortened route) and progress will be made on the processes' analysis and improvement. Similarly, and in line with general objective number 4, reports will be issued on the assessment's results, the aim of which will be to inform not only society of the quality of university studies but also the agents involved for the higher education system's improvement.

To this end, as a rule, one meeting will be held per month with each one of the assessment committees and at least one annual analysis of the processes and results will be made, so that any necessary improvements can be detected.

1.2. University Institution Quality Assurance System Recognition Programme (AUDIT)

This project's objectives are to increase the number of universities equipped with an Internal Quality Assurance System (*SGIC in its Spanish initials*), based on the AUDIT reference, to develop and put into practice the certification process of all the systems found to be correctly implanted and to carry out a meta-evaluation process that allows improvements to be introduced in the AUDIT programme.

In order to achieve these ends, the project, which is aligned with general objective number 1, will launch a new public announcement, a congress will be held to update the training of the assessors who have already participated in this programme and work will continue on the assessment of new quality assurance system designs presented to ANECA by universities and educational institutions. In addition, the prior certification of the internal quality assurance designs submitted for assessment will be completed and the necessary protocols and mechanisms for the certification and monitoring of systems after their implantation will be drawn up.

The publication of the assessment reports in the ANECA Web, initiated in 2008, will be completed with all the SGICs with a favourable report with which they are awarded a design certificate. Similarly, an open-day event will be organized for the presentation of certificates to the universities.

This new phase of the project will be carried out in collaboration with the regional agencies which also participate in the programme.

1.3. Teaching Staff Training and Assessment Support (DOCENTIA)

This programme's objective is to assist the universities in the development of *ad hoc* teaching staff teaching activity assessment procedures adapted to their institutional requirements.

In 2009, phases 3 and 4 of the DOCENTIA Programme, which is aligned with general objective number 1, will be embarked upon: on the one hand, the universities will introduce their assessment procedures over a two-year period, as a minimum, and on an experimental basis; and, on the other, the assessment agencies will monitor this process.

These activities will be conducted as established in the document: *Guidelines for Monitoring the Introduction of Designs* drawn up this year and basically will involve the following actions:

- The universities will review the introduction of their teaching staff assessment procedures, based on their own Quality Assurance Systems, and will prepare an annual follow-up Report.
- The assessment agencies will give technical support to the universities in this process and, through a *Follow-Up Committee* created for the purpose, they will

evaluate the universities' Reports and inform them of any improvements to be made in their designs.

Similarly, the necessary protocols and mechanisms will be designed to facilitate the Monitoring Committee's task and the protocols and guidelines for these assessment designs' certification, starting 2011, will be developed.

Lastly, as part of the DOCENTIA Programme's development and taking as a reference the documents generated in the TRAINING Programme, the quality criteria for the design by the universities of teaching staff training plans will be established. Once these plans have been reviewed, a list of the plans awarded a favourable report based on these criteria and of the institutions where these training plans can be studied will be published in the ANECA Web. ANECA will monitor the development and results of the training programmes published in its Web, based on the assessment of the participants themselves.

Once the training has been completed, this can be used as a credit (within the ACADEMIA Programme) in the National Accreditation process for admission to the body of official University Lecturers, open to all applicants and particularly those with an essentially researcher profile.

All these activities, which will be conducted in collaboration with the Autonomous Regions' quality agencies through the DOCENTIA Committee, will also be subjected to review and improvement.

The publication of the assessment reports in the ANECA Web, initiated in 2008, will be completed with all the assessment procedures designed by the universities which are awarded a favourable report.

1.4. Quality Mention in Doctorate Programmes (PDC)

The Quality Mention constitutes recognition of the scientific, technical and educational reliability of the doctorate programme overall and of the groups or departments which provide the doctorate training. Obtainment of the Quality Mention will also allow the universities to take part in the obtainment of grants which, in specific public announcements, may be constituted by the competent Ministry.

For the first time with respect to previous public announcements, an assessment process was introduced in 2007 with two unique procedures, one for the awarding of the Quality Mention and the other for its subsequent renewals, with a four-year validity being established for the Quality Mentions and, consequently, the introduction of an annual Quality Mention monitoring system throughout its validity period.

During 2009, this programme's activities, in line with objective number 1, will be orientated towards its consolidation, through the evaluation of the applications submitted in response to the public announcement, in which assessment for the renewal of the programmes with a valid Quality Mention up to the 2008-09 academic year (approximately 9) and the monitoring and renewal of those awarded for a longer term (approximately 700) is envisaged. To these must be added applications for its obtainment for programmes being presented for the first time (estimated at 150). Consequently, it is forecast that approximately 850 doctorate programmes will have to be assessed under the different assessment procedures.

The improvements resulting from the meta-evaluation of earlier public announcements will be introduced in this new one in addition to those deemed to be advisable as a result of the application of Royal Decree 1393/2007 in connection with the doctorate programme verification process. Likewise, international experts and students will be incorporated as assessors and those completing the period established for this function's performance will be replaced.

1.5. Other Assessment Activities

The ANECA **Service Assessment Programme** aims to make available to university services a tool for their assessment, review and continuous improvement that is compatible and in line with the instruments being used in Europe, which will allow Spanish universities to position themselves at the same level as the most prestigious European organizations. During 2009, work will continue on the activities being developed since 2006 within the framework of the agreement signed by ANECA and the *Club Excelencia en la Gestión* [Excellence in Management Club].

At the same time, since 2005 support is being given to **military training assessment processes**, within the framework of a collaboration agreement with Spain's Ministry of Defence. During 2009, it is forecast that a specific assessment



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model for military training by the Ministry of Defence will be designed and, if appropriate, the military training assessment programme based on the model designed by ANECA will be set in motion.

Likewise, ANECA will be able to respond to any assessment activity demands that may arise as part of its participation at the request of the MICINN or within the context of a network of agencies or that is coherent with the Agency's lines of action.

2. Teaching Staff Assessment

The general objective of the teaching staff assessment activities is to ensure that the candidates for stable posts in universities, whether as civil servants or contracted employees, have a minimum level of academic and scientific credits that guarantee their quality for taking part in any public announcements or job offers, all in accordance with the LOU, its amendments and the regulations for their application.

Similarly, and relating to a much smaller percentage of its activity, ANECA responds to the specific demands of some universities, participating in assessment processes orientated towards the granting of extra pay, grants and other rewards.

The Teaching Staff Assessment Unit is responsible for establishing in each case strict, transparent and effective assessment procedures, designed so that they are as acceptable as possible to all the parties involved.

2.1. For Hiring (PEP)

During 2009, work will continue, through the monthly activity of the five committees comprising this Programme, on the assessment processes for the hiring of non-civil servant teaching staff, as referred to in Sections 50, 51, 52 and 72 of the LOU.

Moreover, in accordance with general objective number 3, in order to consolidate and improve the programme, the role of its Assessment Committee will be strengthened, increasing the number of its meetings so as to convert it into an instrument for channelling the proposals put forward by the committees after analysing the meta-evaluation process's results. Its role will also be relevant in the definition of the programme's future evolution, to which we will refer further on.

As a development of the agreement signed by ANECA and the former CINDOC, it is now denominated *Instituto de Estudios Documentales sobre Ciencia y Tecnología* [IEDCYT – Institute of Science and Technology Documentary Studies], for setting up and maintaining a Legal and Social Sciences and Humanities magazine database [DICE in its Spanish initials]. This database's utility will be analysed again with the assessors of these scientific fields and IEDCYT will be entrusted with the preparation of new indices based on specific scientific publication quality criteria.

This activity will of course be extended to meet the needs of the ACADEMIA Programme.

Lastly, activities will continue for the diffusion of the programme's content and results through the publication, in the first quarter of 2009, of the programme's results corresponding to the assessments carried out in 2008 and the carrying out of public presentations in the different scopes required of us.

2.2. Civil Servant Accreditation (ACADEMIA)

During 2009, once the procedures established during 2008 have been consolidated and deployment has been completed, the eleven accreditation committees (five for access to the body of University Professors, five for access to the body of University Lecturers and one for the first and third additional provisions), together with a panel of more than one thousand external experts, will perform the assessment functions that are necessary to respond to the tasks defined in Royal Decree 1312/2008 and entrusted to ANECA. For this, at least one assessment meeting will be held each month by each one of the committees in which the more than eight thousand expected applications will be handled.

Similarly, the activities of the Committee will be maintained, which will certify the equivalence of the position attained by the teaching staff of the other European Union Member States, thereby responding to the mandate established in the fourth provision of the Royal Decree referred to above.

In line with general objective number 3, for the programme's improvement and consolidation, the role of its Co-ordination and Analysis Committee will be strengthened, adding to the ordinary tasks entrusted to it a detailed analysis of the programme's first results and a proposal for its modification. It will also play a relevant role in the definition of the programme's future evolution, to which we will refer further on.

The programme's results will be published during the first quarter of 2009 and the activities to disseminate the programme's content and results in the forums where these are requested will continue.

2.3. Analysis of Improvements in the Processes

In line with general objective number 5, a series of studies will be commenced to analyse the possible introduction, in the medium term, of actions orientated

towards a significant modification of existing teaching staff assessment programmes or the preparation of new support tools. During 2009, two will be implemented: a preliminary analysis of the possible convergence of accreditation programmes for access to the civil servant teaching staff (ACADEMIA) and non-civil servant teaching staff (PEP) bodies and a feasibility study of a possible classification and weighting of Spanish scientific magazines within non-international scopes in which indexed catalogues with agreed relative quality indices do not exist.

The ACADEMIA and PEP teaching staff assessment programmes have many common elements but also significant differences resulting from their different legal frameworks. These differences refer not to basic aspects (for example, a serious effort is being made to ensure that the reference levels are coherent) but to the form. Of these differences, we would highlight: different responsible bodies, the IT applications used by applicants for entering their credits are different and not fully compatible, differing committee structures, the need for preliminary reports, etc. The fact is that a unified vision of assessment for the accreditation of civil servant and non-civil servant teaching staff will allow a process to be defined adapted to a clearer professional trajectory, requiring less effort and with a more positive perception of the process on the applicants' part. The study will reflect the advantages and difficulties of this initiative.

The second study is nothing more than the logical evolution and enlargement of the existing activities associated with the agreement signed by ANECA and IEDCYT and is justified because this tool's use is being questioned by some sectors. This also occurs with other databases prepared by other organizations that are also questioned. An analysis will be made of ANECA's viability, with the collaboration of other assessment institutions and agencies, establishing a qualified classification of the main means of communication of scientific production within the fields of Art and the Humanities and Social and Legal Sciences.

2.4. Other Teaching Staff Assessment Activities

During the coming year, the demands for teaching staff assessment made by the universities will continue to be met. In general, these are assessments orientated towards specific purposes with consequences for the applicants to whom a favourable report is given, such as extra pay or other rewards. ANECA's

participation may vary considerably and is adapted to the needs of each university as outlined in the corresponding agreements.

3. Improvement and Innovation

3.1. Workshops for ANECA's Assessors

The purpose of this project, encompassed within general objective number 5, is to ensure that assessors acquire training on the key principles, foundations and capabilities present in any assessment process, irrespective of the specific object, scope or procedures applied in each case.

This project requires the design of a plan that responds to the objective described above and its execution and subsequent evaluation. It is envisaged that this project will be developed in collaboration with the Autonomous Regions' own assessment bodies.

3.2. Workshops for Assessors with an International Profile

As in the likely case of other regional assessment bodies and other European agencies, ANECA needs to count on experts with an international profile for its assessment processes. Moreover, this need is in line with criterion 2.4 of the European Higher Education Area's Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance.

The purpose of this project, encompassed within general objective number 5, is to ensure that ANECA and, as and when applicable, other agencies can rely on a group of assessors with an international profile capable of fulfilling the role of experts in assessment processes conducted in institutions and agencies linked to higher education.

This project involves the design of a training plan that responds to the objective described above and its execution and subsequent evaluation. It is expected that this project will be developed in collaboration with other European agencies and aligned with ECA Working Group 2, which expects to develop an activity of these characteristics.

3.3. Monitoring of Accredited Qualifications (MONITOR)

This project, aligned with general objective number 2, seeks to put into practice the participation of ANECA, together with the Autonomous Regions' assessment bodies, in the monitoring of accredited qualifications, based on public information available

up until this moment, in which they must be subjected to assessment for the accreditation's renewal.

ANECA will participate in the preparation and application of protocols for monitoring the qualifications being introduced, complying with the Basic Criteria for Monitoring Official Qualifications defined by the assessment agencies belonging to the Network of University Quality Agencies [*REACU* in its Spanish initials] and whatever the General University Policy Conference may establish with a view to boosting co-operation between agencies.

3.4. Evaluation of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs)

The aim of this project, as per objective number 5 which seeks to promote studies and activities for the improvement of qualification and teaching staff assessment programmes, is to set the foundations for the future development by ANECA of activities to evaluate the implantation of the Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in the planning and development of university studies.

The project comprises the creation of a working group to properly define the object of assessment of virtual teaching in official qualifications (virtual campuses, subject webs, on-line resources, virtual tutorials and other modalities) and its scope (teaching and learning processes, infrastructure and resource management, teaching staff, study results and other elements). Similarly, this group must draw up a work proposal that allows the evaluation criteria to be defined, proposing alternatives that allow the different agents of interest (universities, assessment agencies, experts, students and entities that produce software and utilities for the development of virtual teaching) to participate.

The timetable for its development includes a first year in which the group will be set up and the object and scope of the evaluation will be defined, together with the evaluation criteria. In a second year, the evaluation process will be executed, with the participation of interested universities and agencies, developing the evaluation protocols and establishing a voluntary public participation announcement. And in the third year the evaluation of the planning and development of ICTs will be initiated. As a result of the evaluation process, the agencies involved in the



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programme will certify the quality of the application of the ICTs in the teaching and learning processes.

II. PRESENT AND FUTURE STUDIES

1. ANECA 2009 Report to the Ministry of Science and Innovation

The object of this project is to provide the Ministry of Science and Innovation (MICINN) and the participating Autonomous Regions with information on the external assessments conducted by ANECA and the regional assessment agencies.

Under this project, linked to general objective number 4, basically the development and results of the above assessments will be reviewed, together with the results of the application of the accredited qualification monitoring protocol, including in this case an analysis of access, performance and satisfaction indicators. The main conclusions reached will be put to the MICINN and the Autonomous Regions in a report.

This project will be implemented in collaboration with all the ANECA units associated with the development of assessment processes and with the Autonomous Regions' assessment bodies.

2. ANECA Labour Market Insertion Observatory

The object of this project is to provide information to society to help it to take future decisions in favour of university qualified people's insertion in the labour market.

This project, linked to general objective number 4, involves a study on the insertion of university graduates in the labour market. For this, information will be obtained, on the one hand, on the perception of employers and, on the other, from the exploitation of public statistical records (e.g. those provided by the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* – Spain's National Statistics Institute – and other bodies). In addition, benchmarking of other countries with a more dynamic and developed labour market will be conducted.

This project will be developed in collaboration with the universities' employment units and other State Administration and regional assessment bodies.

In connection with the Observatory's Web, a new site will be designed and will include new Web 2.0 applications, with a new design and new structures allowing the presentation of contents to be optimized and a source of information to be generated that can be treated as a knowledge and learning database, increasing the current Web's level of contents and creating a portal in which collaboration-related aspects and users' knowledge will acquire greater relevance. For the achievement of these objectives, the portal's graphic environment will be designed, and a high-level conceptual model will be consolidated thus constructing a virtual space. The solution will be deployed through the attainment of four pillars relating to the design of: methodologies orientated towards the analysis of requirements, methods for the system's model, communication methods and, finally, relationships between the management of requirements and the different life cycle models.

Once this new tool has been constructed, the time will be ripe for consolidating the work through the achievement of new collaborations and members in the new regional agencies, capturing new expert collaborators in the Web's line of action, presenting and making known the new Web site not only to the media but also at congresses and conferences on the subject, and assuming as a normal part of the work the regular incorporation of elements into its content.

3. Information on Universities and Higher Education demanded by Spanish Society

In spite of the interest that various groups of Spanish society say they have in the subject of education and the University, the impression is that there is a lack of and a growing demand for information in this connection. In this case, the study will focus its attention on two groups: 1) people who are studying or may study in the university in future – and their families, and 2) universities.

The objective being pursued, linked to general objective number 4, is to know, through a survey, what type of information these groups are looking for, why this information will be useful to them (with special emphasis on decision-taking), who, in their opinion, ought to provide this information (the universities, ANECA, state and/or regional public administrations, etc.) and how it ought to be made available to achieve its ends.

The project's result will be a report with recommendations to help ANECA focus its information activities.

4. ANECA Forum

The ANECA Forum's objective of providing, through a debate of the agents involved, useful information on various strategic subjects for the university of today and tomorrow, exercising leadership in these university-related subjects' prospects but in close contact with the Agency's lines of action, is being maintained. It is forecast that two forums will be held in 2009.

5. Other Studies

The Action Plan foresees the possibility of conducting other studies in connection with ANECA's functions, at the request of the Board of Trustees, the Technical Committee or any of the Agency's other bodies. Similarly, it is envisaged that the analysis and exploitation of indicators relating to the monitoring of qualifications will be enlarged to include other indicators on students' living conditions related to the social and economic spheres. This analysis and exploitation will be conducted in connection with the initiatives currently being carried out in this field by national and international bodies.

III. INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Activities with Agents of Spain's Higher Education System

It is envisaged that for 2009 the institutional activities with Spain's university system agents will maintain the principles established for ANECA as defined by Law 4/2007 of 12 April 2007, by virtue of which Law 6/2001 of Universities was amended, as essential vectors of its institutional activity, which, in turn, is a reflection of its assessment tasks.

Similarly, it is important to explicitly establish relations with the agents involved in ANECA's mission, given the fact that they are the subjects to which the results of the Agency's functions are addressed. These agents adopt different forms (university institutions, employers, students, trade unions, society overall) but share the common denominator of potentiating the idea of public service as the horizon of ANECA's work.

1.1. Ministry of Science and Innovation (MICINN)

The essential aim in the relationship with the Ministry is to maintain the preferential line of contact with the main legislative agent of Spain's higher education system through its leading members: the Department of State for Universities and the bodies and offices included within its organization chart.

The work will be organized through regular meetings between the ANECA Board of Directors and the Ministry's leading members and through the working committees defined by MICINN, the activities of which are related to ANECA's competencies and functions.

- Directorate General for Universities
- University Council

Directorate General for Universities. This is the regular operational interlocutor for ANECA's assessment programmes: VERIFICA and the Teaching Staff Assessment Programme and ACADEMIA relating to the assessment of people. The Subdirectorate General for Academic Co-ordination and Legal Regime has to provide the necessary support to ANECA when it comes to responding to the doubts and demands of applicants (institutions and teaching staff) covered by the assessment processes of Royal Decrees 1312/2007 and 1393/2007, requiring an interpretation of the rules.

University Council. The University Council is the main interlocutor for the reports drawn up by ANECA not only for the verification of qualifications but also for the accreditation of state teaching staff. The Law establishes that the Agency should exercise the role of assessing agent before the University Council, a body which brings together all the rectors of Spain's university institutions and the people responsible for the university policy of the MICINN.

Spanish Higher Education Qualification Framework [MECES in its Spanish initials]

The definition of MECES is of particular importance for the process of assessing the qualification proposals and of preparing the assessment reports. For this reason, a special reference is made in this Action Plan to the Technical Working Group and the Committee for the definition of MECES as indicated in Royal Decree 900/2007 of 6 July 2007, although the initiative for its development corresponds to the Ministry. Due to the importance the Framework's definition has for the work of the assessment committees and for the whole study assessment process, ANECA, as has happened in other European countries such as Ireland, Germany and the United Kingdom, has undertaken to put new energy into the existing technical group and to develop means for disseminating the importance of this tool, particularly for universities in the process of adaptation to the European Higher Education Area. This is in no way detrimental to the initiative which corresponds to the Directorate General for Universities of the MICINN, a body which has been organizing this work since its origins in 2006. The inclusion of European experts in the Spanish group will allow their prior experience to be used but, above all, it will allow the development and use of MECES as a tool for the diffusion of information on the Spanish qualification system rather than for its regulation or control.

ANECA Summer Course in the Menéndez Pelayo International University

The design, organization and development of the ANECA annual summer course, being carried out since the Agency's beginnings, on a subject matter aligned with the year's Action Plan, forms part of its relations with the bodies that report to the Ministry of Science and Innovation.

1.2. Activities with the Rectors of Spain's Universities

As already indicated, the Agency's relations with the rectors of Spain's universities are organized, on the one part, through the University Council and, on the other, through the Spanish University Rectors' Conference.

Spanish University Rectors' Conference. The main objective of ANECA's relations with the Rectors' Conference is to report, analyse and comply with general objective number 7 for consolidating the Strategic Plan corresponding to the reinforcement of the participation in ANECA's processes of all the agents involved in higher education, without prejudice to its relations with rectors having a stable channel through the University Council.

The scope of the work with the Rectors' Conference will be established beforehand by the Director and President, maintaining the same rhythm of regular meetings as up until now. The object of these meetings will be three-fold: to explain to the Spanish university rectors' representatives ANECA's initiatives, programmes and studies prior to its launch in order to obtain information on this agent's opinion of the university system; to report on the results of the processes already in progress; and to act as a channel for the exchange of information between both parties so as to facilitate interlocution.

The agenda of the annual four-monthly (as a maximum) meetings must be established in January in order to guarantee the objective described in this point, without prejudice to others of interest to both parties being defined.

1.3. Autonomous Regions

The communications channel with the persons responsible for higher education of the six regional governments that have not created their own assessment body maintains the same dynamic of providing informative to the agents of interest. This consists, on the one hand, of the viewpoint of information to one of the system's agents and, on the other, the necessary collaboration so that ANECA can provide coverage on the subject matters of its competence to the universities in these Autonomous Regions.

An agenda of six-monthly meetings for the year will be established with the consent of the other parties, with a view to this objective's achievement.

Projects demanded by the Autonomous Regions without an Assessment Body

ANECA will give specific support to the applications received from the people responsible for higher education in the regional governments of the autonomous regions without their own quality assessment body. These projects will be aligned with any of the assessment programmes or activities being developed by ANECA.

1.4. Social Councils

The objective is to maintain the line of work defined with the Social Council's of Spain's State Universities through each and every one of these bodies' presidents, at the same time seeking to reinforce any communication channel that allows relations with these agents, who represent society in the universities, to be optimized. To this end, ANECA has established a channel for the exchange of communications with the Conference of Presidents and Secretaries of the Social Councils of the Spanish State Universities, which encompasses a majority of these institutions, although it does not constitute the only source.

The work plan with the Social Councils includes the preparation of reports, following the provisions of Section 11.2 of the LOMLOU. In the preparation of these reports, the Directors' Office will co-ordinate with the participation of the Innovation Area's Studies Unit.

2. Activities with Assessment Agencies

Relations within an international context, whether with the European Union or within the logic of integration in an Ibero-American Area, will continue in 2009 mainly defined through joint projects designed to act as the mortar of bilateral relations and of relations with the agency networks.

2.1. Projects and Activities with Regional Agencies

Within the framework of institutional relations defined by the LOMLOU, the Law establishes ANECA's co-operation with the autonomous regions' assessment agencies and the preparation of reports to society. It is on the basis of this mandate to *establish mechanisms of co-operation and mutual recognition* (Section 28.3) between ANECA and the autonomous regions' assessment agencies that the lines of joint relations must be established.

Nevertheless, within this scope, the General University Policy Conference has been commissioned by the Law to define the lines of collaboration between ANECA and the autonomous regions' assessment agencies and this fact must be borne in mind

in the final preparation of this point of the Action Plan. Consequently, prior to establishing lines of co-operation with the regional assessment agencies through agreements, ANECA and the agencies will wait for the General University Policy Conference to define and establish the criteria for this collaboration.

In compliance with general objectives 4 and 6, ANECA defines two work lines with the autonomous regions' assessment agencies.

2.1.1. ANECA Committee – Regional Agencies

The object of this Committee is to maintain the communications channel established with the autonomous regions' assessment agencies through an agenda of regular meetings for the exchange of information on ANECA's activities and for developing two specific work lines:

- Participation of the autonomous regions' assessment bodies in the assessment procedure for verification in the terms and conditions established by the General University Policy Conference, in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 1393/2007 of 29 October 2007 of the Planning of University Teaching and with the protocols defined by ANECA for the programme in compliance with the aforesaid Royal Decree.
- Deployment of the actions corresponding to the programmes already in progress developed in collaboration with the DOCENTIA and AUDIT autonomous region agencies.

2.1.2. REACU

ANECA's participation in the network made up of the State's assessment agencies will continue to be active within this body's collective dynamic in the projects generated within the network.

The joint development of the monitoring of verified qualifications, responsibility for which, as per the LOMLOU, corresponds to ANECA and the autonomous regions' assessment bodies, is forecast for 2009.

2.2. Projects and Activities with International Agencies

With the aim of contributing to the achievement of general objective number 6, the goal of the international projects and activities developed by ANECA must be to boost the Agency's internationalization not only from an internal point of view –

making known throughout ANECA the key quality assessment themes, but also from an external point of view – disseminating the good practices developed by the Agency in Spain.

2.2.1. Europe

The European agenda continues to be a priority within the activities aimed at the consolidation of quality assurance and accreditation in the EHEA. Within this framework, relations with the European networks set the agenda and establish the projects in which ANECA participates.

– European Association of Quality Agencies (ENQA)

The objective is to continue ANECA's active participation in this Association with the twin aim of giving visibility to ANECA's work in Europe and of nourishing the Agency with the most up-to-date themes on the subject of university quality.

Participation in ENQA is implemented through the General Assembly and the corresponding meetings, forums, seminars, workshops, etc. organized by or for ENQA and, finally, through the Association's specific projects and working groups, such as the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS).

In 2009, and in compliance with the work plan defined by ENQA after external assessment, ANECA must submit a report to the Executive Board indicating the degree of implantation of the recommendations of the Association's Executive Board.

– European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)

The objective of applying for inclusion in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) was met in 2008 and for 2009 the tasks will be to participate in the activities conducted around the new institution.

– European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA-II)

The second phase of the Consortium (ECA-II) was constituted on 5 June 2008. In its meeting, the Director of ANECA was appointed a member of its Executive Board. The objective with ECA will be to maintain the Agency's active presence in the working groups and to incorporate in the ANECA agenda the steps forward developed within it relating to mutual recognition and trust between agencies.

Participation will be structured around two parallel work lines in addition to the meetings of the Project's annual General Meeting.

Participation in 4 working groups defined in ECA, one of which, number 4 on the accreditation of learning results, is presided over by the Director of ANECA.

ANECA is one of the five member agencies of the ECA TE@M (Transparent European Accreditation Decisions and Mutual Recognition Agreements) project's Steering Group for the period 2008-2010, financed by the European Commission, the main objectives of which are:

- Development of a methodology to guarantee the quality and accreditation of procedures relating to joint programmes between countries.
- Exploration of cross-border recognition of qualifications granted to the joint programmes.
- Consolidation of the Qrossroads accreditation results information tool, enlarging it to include learning results.

ANECA will propose to the Project the inclusion of an Erasmus Mundus Master co-ordinated by a Spanish university as one of the joint programme accreditation pilot plans financed under the auspices of TE@M.

– Other European Projects

To actively participate in projects of interest that are aligned with the objectives of ANECA's Action Plan, when the initiative does not correspond to the networks referred to above. This is the case of the European agencies' working group on Student Assessment Practices. This group's objective is to continue with the analysis started in 2007 of student assessment practices and its relationship with the assessment of learning results, with the aim of taking advantage of this experience in the assessment and accreditation process in Spain through a study of these practices. This project has been sent to the ENQA Board to request its inclusion as one of the Association's working groups.

2.2.2. Latin America

The action lines in Latin America will continue to focus on the Ibero-American Network of Accreditation Agencies [*RIACES* in its Spanish initials] and the projects developed within it, in addition to bilateral initiatives with the agencies.

– RIACES

The membership of ANECA's Director of the Management Committee of RIACES allows the Agency to maintain a very active participation in the Network and to support its members in the design and implantation of internal quality assurance

systems, assuming the commitment accepted in the 2007 General Assembly for the 2007-09 two-year period.

For this, amongst the proposed practices envisaged by ANECA for 2009 is the organization and holding of two six-monthly training workshops for agency directors and technicians within the framework of the CINTAS (Assessment Agency Internal Quality) project. One of the workshops will be held in ANECA and the other in a Network country, preferably that of the General Assembly's organizer.

- Other Projects in Latin America

Along the lines of bilateral support for the strengthening of the emerging agencies' internal quality assurance systems, ANECA has forecast a specific advisory and support activity with the Bolivian authorities at the request of that country's Education Ministry.

A commitment also exists to maintain an active presence in the region, participating in projects aligned with the objectives of ANECA's Action Plan or in proposals considered relevant from the point of view of ANECA's visibility in the continent (for example, participation in international agency assessment panels).

2.2.3. Other Agencies and Networks

The objective is to continue ANECA's collaboration with multilateral bodies and agencies and those in contexts other than Europe and Latin America deemed to be relevant from the point of view of the Agency's international projection.

- Assistance and participation in the projects of such international bodies as the OECD or UNESCO.
- To maintain a presence in the INQAAHE global agency network. The Director has been invited by this organization to give a talk at this network's biennial Assembly, which will take place in April 2009.

2.3. Relations with State Assessment Agencies

ANECA will maintain links with state assessment agencies, continuing with joint actions with the aim of disseminating information on the Agency's activities within the framework of the State General Administration. Along this line, it has been invited to participate in one of the modules of the "University Expert in the Assessment of Public Services' Policies and Quality, 2008-2009" post-graduate

course, organized by AEVAL and the Complutense University of Madrid in the spring of 2009.

3. Activities with Other Groups of Interest

In order to comply with general objective number 7 aimed at consolidating the participation in ANECA's processes of all the agents involved in higher education, the Agency will maintain its collaboration with the following groups: students, employers, professional bodies, teaching staff and the Education Committees of the Spanish Parliament's Lower and Upper Houses.

As regards **students**, in 2008 the objective of involving students in ANECA's assessment processes was achieved, extending the experience of the Institutional Assessment Programme to the DOCENTIA and VERIFICA Programmes. In 2008, procedures for institutional relations with the main body which brings together representatives of the state universities, CREUP, were defined in order to request representatives in the different branches of knowledge for the programmes in progress, also formalizing the regular training of students, and progress was made on the drawing up of a code of good practices, to act as a vehicle for preferential relations between ANECA and one of the main agents involved in Spain's university system. For 2009, ANECA foresees the strengthening of this work line, creating a specific space in its Web page for students and higher education quality matters.

For 2009, the relationship with **employers** needs to be activated, orientating it towards such areas of interest for ANECA as graduates' insertion in the labour market, the new design of qualifications focussed on students' employability and training in competences, for which this social agent constitutes a preferential attention group for ANECA.

At the same time, **professional associations and groups** will be the object of interest and attention on the part of ANECA, above all, linking this relationship to the inclusion of proposals and useful information in the degree and master verification programme.

The work line with **teaching staff** represents the incorporation of a very relevant interest group, not only because of its position in and influence on higher education but also because of its number. This will require channels for relations and the exchange of information that are separate from those established within the framework of the university institution, through groups formed on the basis of

discipline or speciality. Secondly, ANECA is also considering the establishment of direct links with union organizations with representation in the sphere of university teaching. Apart from its participation in the ANECA Forum's Advisory Committee, the Agency's Board of Directors is also interested in creating stable communication channels with the union organizations' representatives.

4. Communication and Corporate Image

The main objective of this action is to disseminate, support and position the Agency's activity and results so that they are recognized as points of reference within its scope of activity, particularly as a source of information for society in connection with the Higher Education system's quality.

Work will proceed in the Agency throughout 2009 on the review and updating of the institution's corporate image.

4.1. External Communication

Throughout 2009, external communication activities will concentrate on meeting the needs posed by the key civil servant accreditation (ACADEMIA), teaching verification (VERIFICA), doctorate quality mention (MDC) and monitoring (MONITOR) Programmes and on boosting the dissemination of the reports which ANECA prepares as part of its function of informing society, based not only on the optimization of the tools already implanted, particularly the improvement of its Web (in Spanish and English), but also on the incorporation of others that may contribute greater efficiency.

Similarly, it is necessary to update and improve the corporate image, through the design and implantation of the corresponding manual and the necessary tools.

4.2. Internal Communication

The objective of these actions is to foster interaction between the different departments and levels of ANECA, based on tools that facilitate the management of the knowledge generated internally and that contribute value added elements (key elements, development context, relations with other elements and analysis).

Preparation of single-subject technical reports on relevant international matters, aligned with the Agency's priorities by the URI. The object of these reports is to

present the state of the question of subjects of interest to the Agency as well as to support decision-taking relating to the programmes in progress and, lastly, to contribute to the technical staff's knowledge of the international context.

5. Promotion of Training in Quality and Diffusion Activities

With the object of helping to improve Spain's university system with a view to its integration in the European Area, since 2007 ANECA has been issuing a public announcement for carrying out, in conjunction with Spanish universities, ten meetings for study, reflection and debate on strategic subjects for quality in Higher Education.

In 2009, an analysis will be made of the impact and utility of the first two announcements and, as a result of this analysis, this activity will be reviewed, incorporating any necessary improvements.

IV. ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

The need to address the new mandate resulting from the amendment of the LOU and the Royal Decrees on the accreditation of teaching staff and the verification of teaching has meant that the bodies with which ANECA was endowed in its Statutes, as well as some of the committees associated with the assessment bodies, need to be redefined and reinforced. Where the nature of the change has made this necessary, it has been communicated to the Foundation's Board of Trustees, for its ratification.

1. Governing, Executive, Advisory and Assessment Bodies

Apart from the **Board of Trustees**, which maintains its function of governing body of the ANECA Foundation, the redefinitions mentioned above refer exclusively to some bodies and committees which, nevertheless, play an important role in the Agency.

This is the case of the advisory body par excellence, the **Advisory Council**, which is included in the Statutes and which has made an effort in 2008 to give support through reports to Management. The term of office of the current President and its members comes to an end in January 2009 and it is expected that the appointment of its new members will be ratified by the Board of Trustees in its meeting of December 2008. Amongst the tasks entrusted to it in the Foundation's Statutes, it will be commissioned to support Management in the actions to be undertaken for its transformation into a State Agency.

Similarly, the **Management Committee** is the Agency's executive body and is made up of the Director and the management team comprising the area co-ordinators. Thus, the name of *Board of Directors* traditionally used in the Agency and which could lead to misunderstandings as it does not constitute a body of these characteristics, has been replaced.

The amendments introduced in 2008 also related to the creation of certain committees, such as ANECA's **Resources Committee**, which was very necessary as an instrument to guarantee the persons and institutions that submit to the ANECA assessment processes with consequences, but which have also been extended to all the other programmes and actions.

2. Internal Quality Assurance

The internal quality assurance system allows ANECA to plan internal quality management in its pursuit of continuous improvement and the enhanced satisfaction of the agents involved.

Durante 2009, the internal quality management system's design will be completed and the system will be introduced. Focussing its efforts on this latter aspect, throughout this year the Agency will establish more stringent control and monitoring mechanisms enabling the better control of the service rendered by this institution. In addition, it will establish procedures which allow the impact the designed assessment processes have on the universities to be evaluated and will work towards the developed system's adaptation to the changes and new functions to be addressed by ANECA.

All this will allow us to be in a position to apply for the certification of ANECA, so that this can take place at the end of 2009.

This activity is directly related to objective number 8 of this Action Plan.

3. Legal Guarantee

The Agency has established mechanisms for reinforcing the legal guarantee of the different programmes it is developing, so that legal reports can be issued on the questions raised in connection with them, the majority of which will relate, in 2009, to the new procedures set in motion after the amendment of the Law of Universities, as provided for in Royal Decree 1312/2007 of 5 October 2007 by virtue of which national accreditation for access to the bodies of university teaching staff (ACADEMIA Programme) was established, and Royal Decree 1393/2007 of 29 October 2007, by virtue of which the planning of official university teaching (VERIFICA Programme) was established.

In line with the activities carried out in 2008, the aim is to continue to reinforce the legal guarantee in the resources phase in all the other ANECA programmes, such as, for example, the Teaching Staff Assessment Programme (PEP) and the Doctorate Quality Programme, in which review and control are implemented to ensure that the allegations submitted by the appellants against the decisions issued after the corresponding ANECA reports receive a response in the report of the Committee in question.

4. Strategic Plan

Throughout 2009, ANECA's Strategic Plan will be reformulated to bring it into line with the responsibilities and functions which the LOMLOU assigns to the Agency. The process of ANECA's future transformation into a state agency will also be taken into account.

For the monitoring of the Action Plan, ANECA will continue to use the management methodology through the *MS Management Project*, which was introduced in the institution in 2008.

5. Information Support and Documentation Centre Systems

With the aim of achieving optimization of management of the information normally handled in the institution's programmes and of providing support to the ANECA activity, also taking into account the increase in the activity, actions relating to the management of technological resources (hardware and software) will be documented and standardized. Similarly, the infrastructure and architecture of the IT resources at the existing activity level will be dimensioned and adapted so as to guarantee an adequate service level.

At the same time, special attention will be paid to guaranteeing the confidentiality of the data handled and fulfilment of all the legal requirements relating to the computerized data used by ANECA, particularly the requirements imposed by Spain's Law of Information Society Services [*LSSI* in its Spanish initials].

As in previous years, the Documentation Centre will carry out regular and specialized feeding of its resources, covering specific demands. As a supplementary service, its summaries and extracts can continue to be queried through the computerized catalogue so as to facilitate access to the information. The Centre's constant aim is to provide the largest number of tools (subject matters, summaries, keywords, etc.) so as to achieve an efficient and effective results report. As a supplementary activity, feasibility studies will be carried out on related areas (archives, Web resources, etc.) as well as studies to evaluate other possible electronic resources of great value for the Agency. These resources will continue to be published on a regular basis in the Intranet space designed for the purpose.

Contacts will continue to be made to hire external resources needed by or of interest to ANECA as well as the selective dissemination of information wherever it may be requested (ACADEMIA, VERIFICA, etc.).

6. Human Resources

The two main pillars of human resource management for the Agency are the training and the professional development of the persons who work for it.

As in previous years, ANECA's Training Plan will be drawn up, developed and evaluated, based on the detected needs and in accordance with the Action Plan's priorities and strategic objectives. In this connection, the training of ANECA technicians as assessors has shown itself to be a key factor in the development of the external quality assurance processes in which the Agency participates, particularly as their level of involvement and responsibility in the assessment committees has considerably increased. Thus, the active participation of technicians from the different ANECA units will be fostered, acting as secretaries of the assessment committees in the ACADEMICA, AUDIT, DOCENTIA and VERIFICA Programmes.

Encompassed within a system of continuous improvement, the current professional development model and the performance assessment system will be reviewed with the aim of ensuring that the values, objectives and behaviour of the persons involved are in line with the values and the strategic and operational objectives of ANECA. For this, it is essential to provide an organizational framework in which these people can find a space for their professional and personal development.

7. Economic and Resource Management

The increase in the volume of the Agency's activity has led to an increase in the operations, transactions and assets managed by its Economic and Budgetary Management Unit. For this reason, it is essential for an asset inventory and reconciliation management model, which enables the efficient management of the inventoriable resources, to be planned and introduced.

At the same time, adaptation of the economic and resources management to the legal form of a State Agency is necessary so as to comply with the external requirements resulting from ANECA's nature and to facilitate the development of the institution's activities.



2009 Action Plan

XIII Meeting of the Board of Trustees
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*AGENCIA NACIONAL DE EVALUACIÓN DE LA CALIDAD Y
ACREDITACIÓN*
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