AQU CATALUNYA

IQAA

IQAA 15 YEARS

VI Eurasian Forum on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

«New Ways of Transforming Higher Education»

Short-Term Study Programmes: Flexible Trajectories for Higher Education

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Micro-credentials

Introduction

What?

Why?

How?

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Introduction

Based on Cirlan, E. (ENQA), Hungary. 2023

Demands on HE to adapt & change

- Policies & strategies (**SDG**)
- Responsibility to ensure **quality provision** and services
- **SCL, flexible,** interdisciplinarity
- **Stronger engagement with society**

QA supporting HEIs

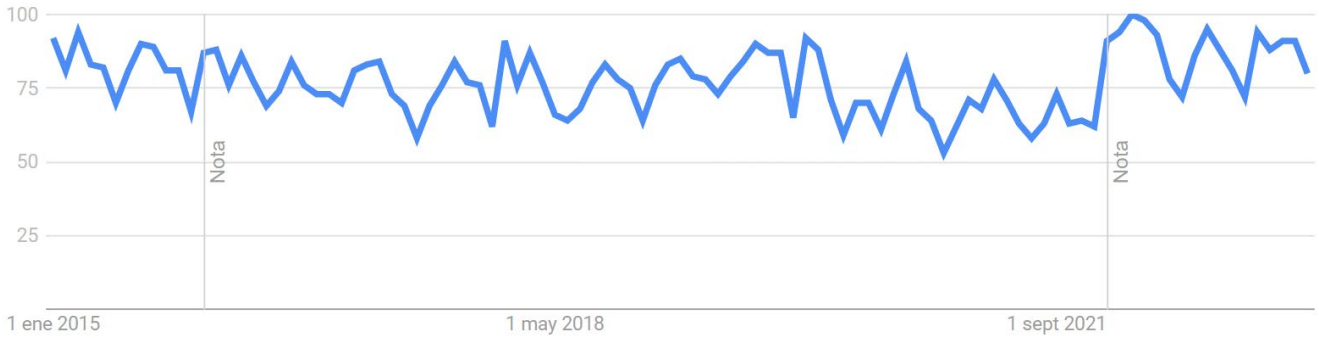
- **Standards and guidelines (ESG)**
- QA Agencies and supranational structures (ENQA, EQAR)
- **Flexible internal and external QA** (respond to the needs and changes)

Trends - LLL

Google Trends

lifelong learning

Todo el mundo, 1/1/15 - 29/5/23

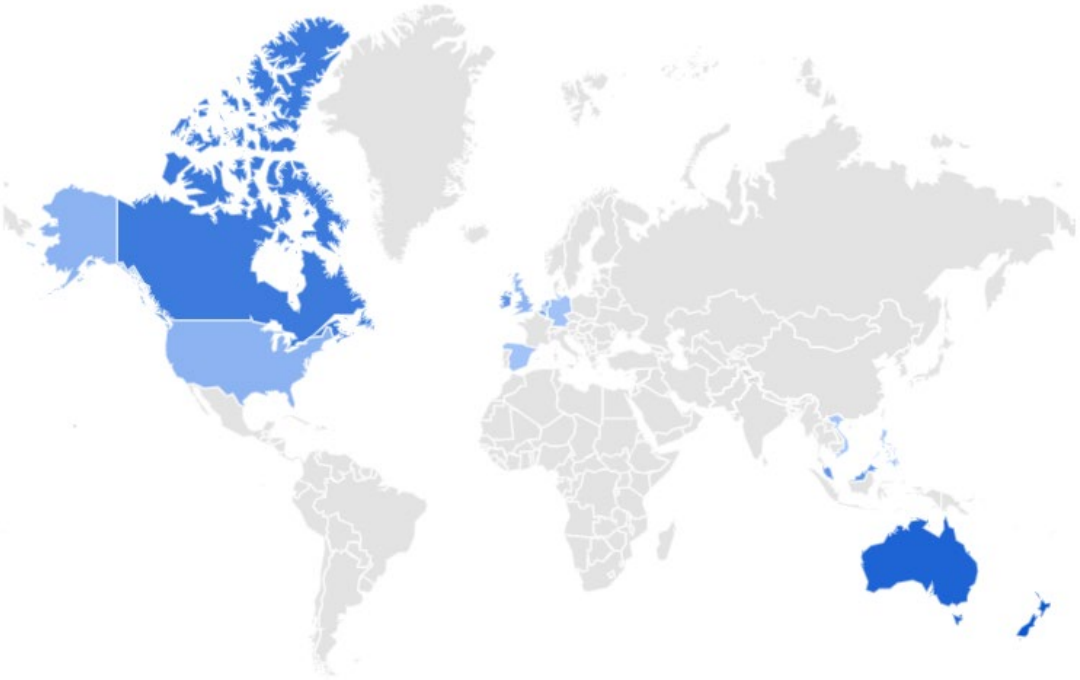


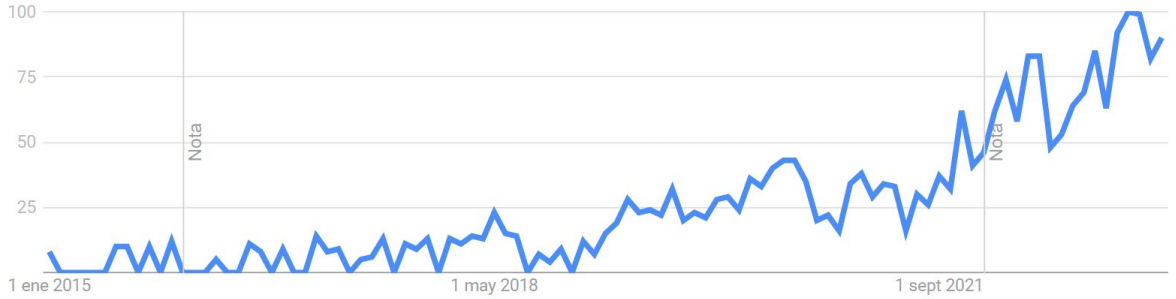
Trends – Micro-credentials

Google Trends

microcredentials

Todo el mundo, 1/1/15 - 29/5/23





Micro-credentials. Diversity

Micro-credentials

Do we want to organize them?

Micro-credentials. What? Why? How?

What?

Why?

How?

- Quality (internal / external QA)
- Transparency (ECTS, QF, Information)
- Relevance (LO, labour market)
- Valid assessment
- Flexible learning pathways
- Recognition
- Portability
- Learner-centred
- Authenticity
- Information and guidance

Micro-credentials. What? Why? How?

What?

Why?

How?

- Professional qualifications in the occupation.
- Response to labour market needs. (Transition towards digitalization and green economy)
- Improvement of skills (workforce).
- Pathway between HE and professional system.

Micro-credentials. What? Why? How?

What?

Why?

How?

ICT

Renewables energies

Automotive & sustainable mobility

- Strong applicability (occupational character)
- Level 6 and 7 of EQF
- ECTS: 4 – 30
- Recognition in official degrees
- Provider: HEI
- Quality assurance: ex-ante evaluation (programme level), but moving to institutional evaluation (IQAS)

Short learning programmes

VET

Catálogo Nacional de Cualificaciones Profesionales #FP

26 Familias profesionales / 676 Cualificaciones

2.252 Unidades de competencia

Vocational education & training

TIC

- 7 PCD
- 33 PCD x 9 HEI.
- 8 – 15 ECTS
- Level 6 EQF, except: “Data scientist” (level 7 EQF)

Renewables energies

- 8 PCD
- 6 PCD x 1 HEI.
- 6 – 13 ECTS
- Level 6 EQF, except: “Storage technologies” + “Businness plannin in energy transition” (level 7 EQF)

Automotive and sustainable mobility

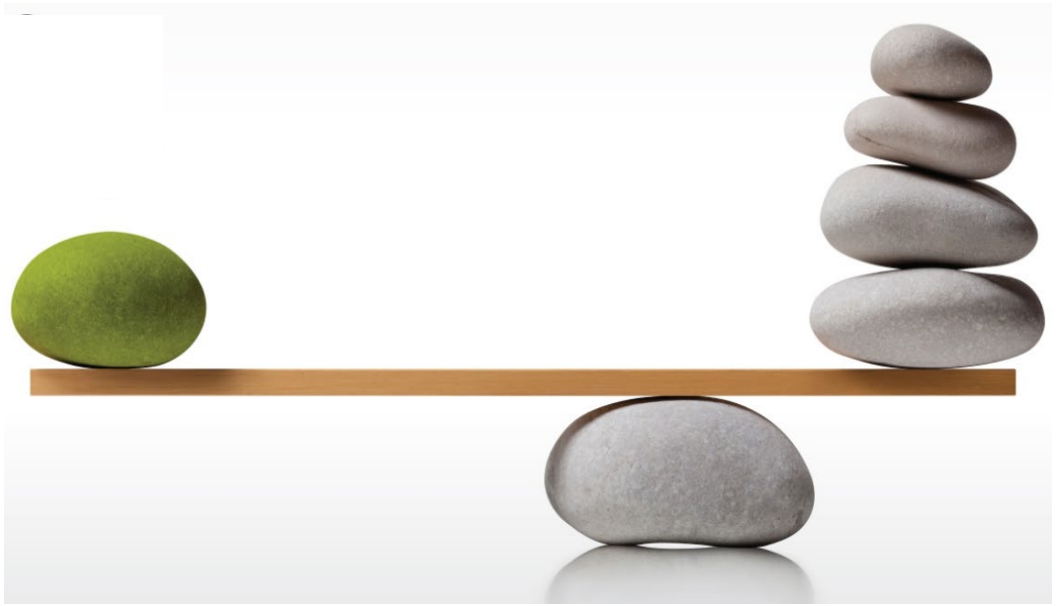
- 8 PCD
- 0 PCD x HEI.
- 7 – 9 ECTS
- Level 6 EQF, except: “Advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS)” (level 7 EQF)

Micro-credentials. What? Why? How?

What?

Why?

How?



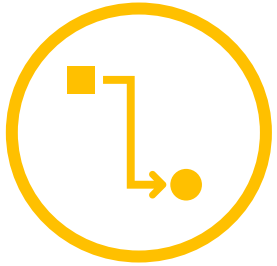
Quality assurance

Quality assurance

Trust, transparency and credibility

Fit for purpose

Enhancement vs. accountability

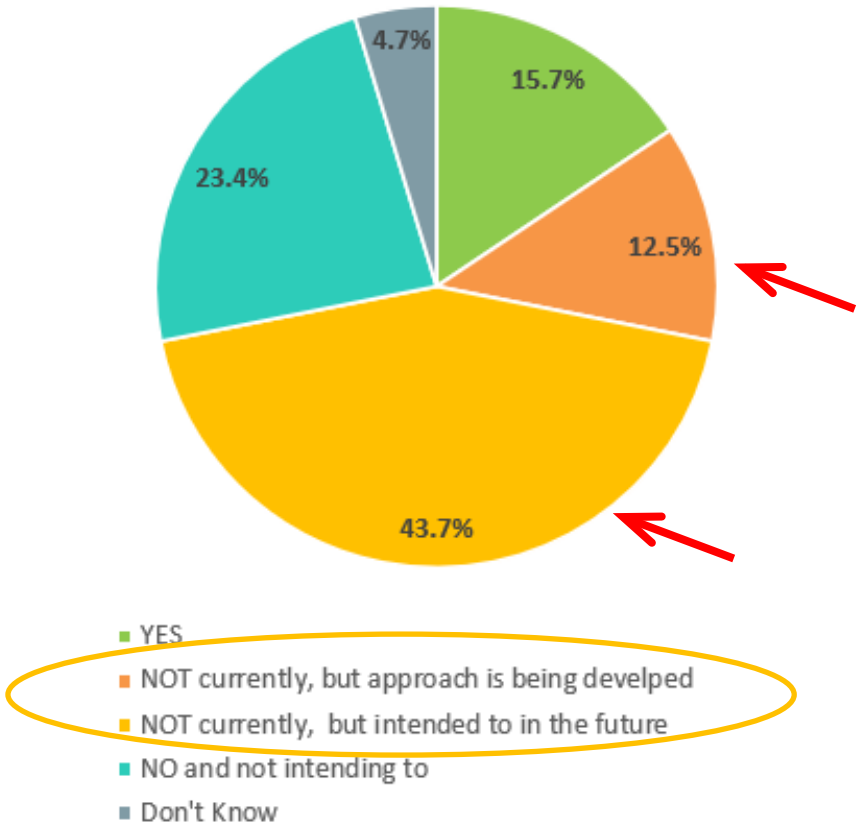


Simplicity

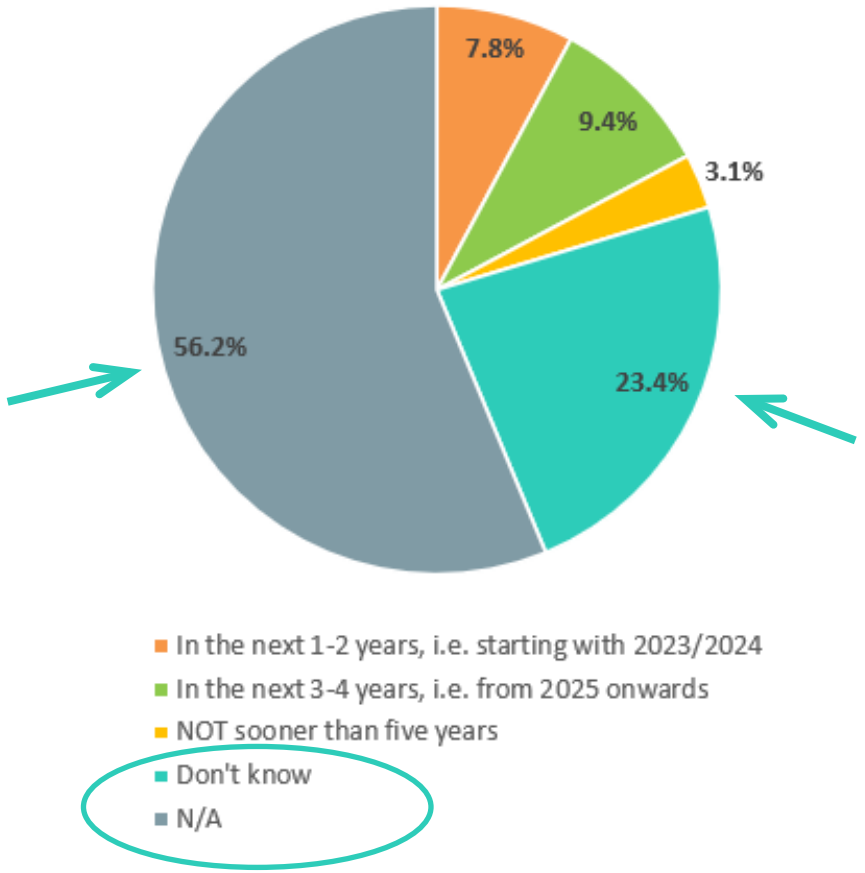
ENQA WG on micro-credentials. Results

Huertas, E. and García, E. (ENQA, 2022)

C10. Does your agency/organisation currently QA MC?



C11. When do you expect to start QA of MC?



ENQA WG on micro-credentials. Results

*"ESG […] provide **guidance**, covering the areas which are vital for **successful quality provision and learning environments** in higher education".*

*[…] The term "programme" in these standards refers to higher education provision in its broadest sense, including provision that is **not part of a programme leading to a formal degree**."*

Geere A.; Provijn, D.; Hedbjörk, U.; Seppman, G. (ENQA, 2022)

GENERAL FINDINGS

- Reassurance for the quality of MCs is important
- How to gain reassurances can be context-dependent and will consider existing QA arrangements
- Capturing MCs in external quality assurance processes has benefits
- Tools for recognition must be in place
- Models for stackability must be developed
- Combination between online, blended and face-to-face modalities must be explored

ENQA WG on micro-credentials. Results

Geere A.; Provijn, D.; Hedbjörk, U.; Seppman, G. (ENQA, 2022)

CONCLUSION

- Robust internal QA policy and processes crucial
- Programme level evaluation not encouraged
- Lifelong learning becomes more important to HEIs and should be made a topic in QA ('lifelong learning mainstreaming')
- MCs might develop the role of quality assurance agencies towards an even more supportive role beyond the assessment of compliance
- MCs might also develop the role of quality assurance agencies towards more cross-border and transnational activity

ENQA WG on micro-credentials. Results

Geere A.; Provijn, D.; Hedbjörk, U.; Seppman, G. (ENQA, 2022)

FOR THE FUTURE…

- More thinking on integration of LLL
- More effort into models for recognition and stackability
- More consideration of dynamics between various types of providers
- (Maybe) more visionary approaches for quality assurance agencies
- …

Micro-credentials. What? Why? How?

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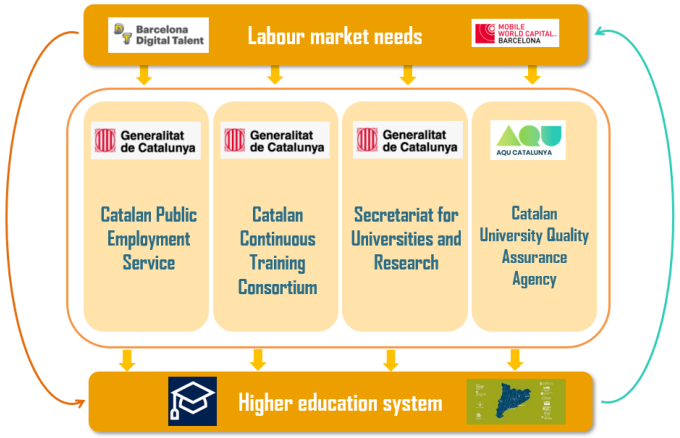

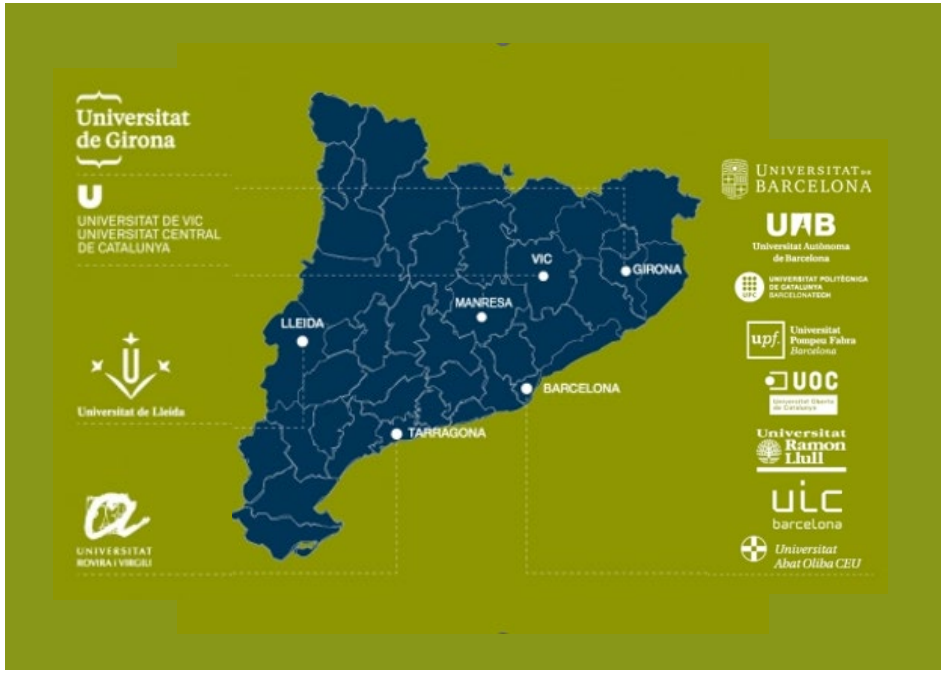

Quality assurance

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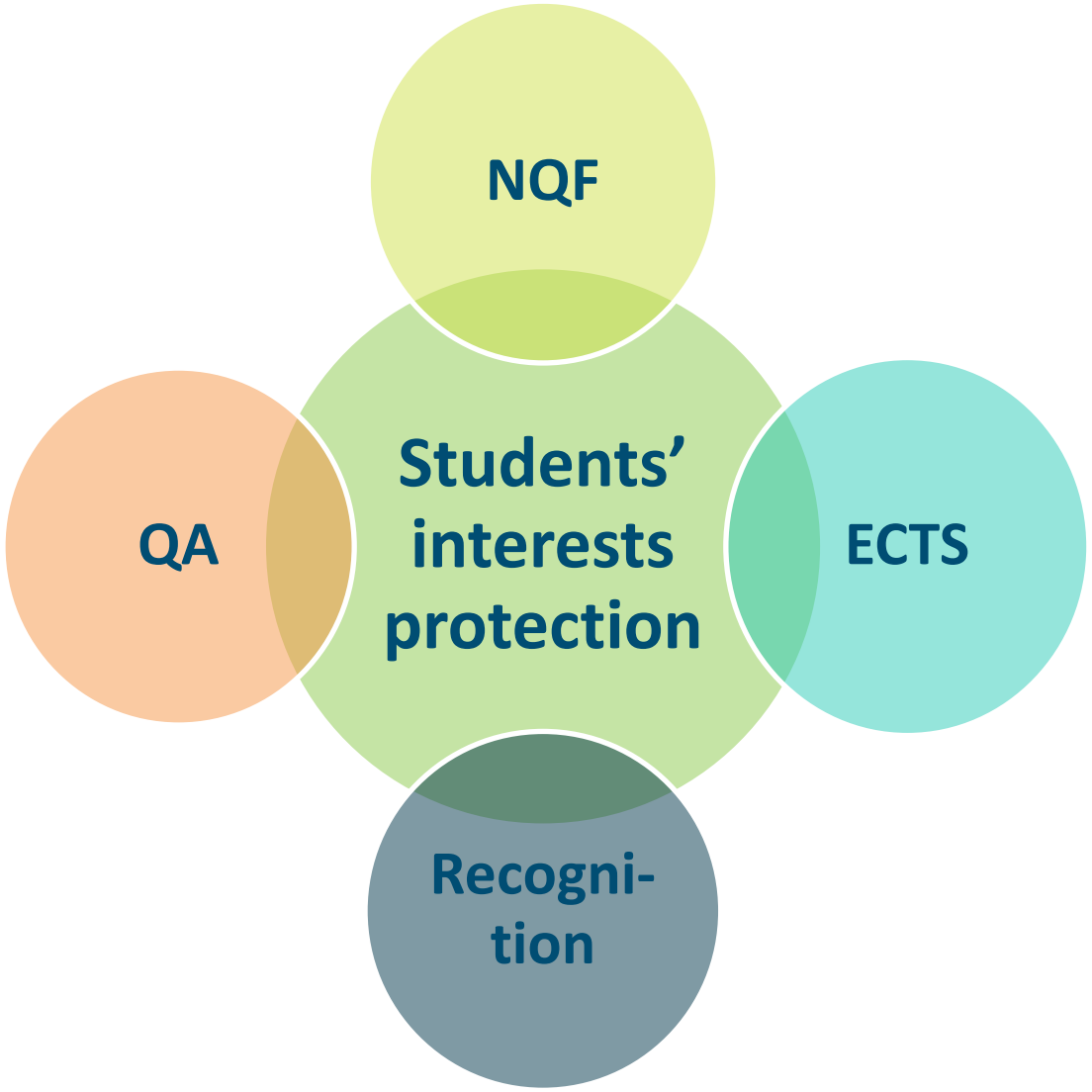
SLP – AQU Catalunya



- **Programme evaluation.**
- **Ex-ante evaluation.**
- ESG
  - **ESG 1.2** – design & approval of programmes
  - **ESG 1.3** – SCL, teaching & assessment
  - **ESG 1.5** – Teaching staff

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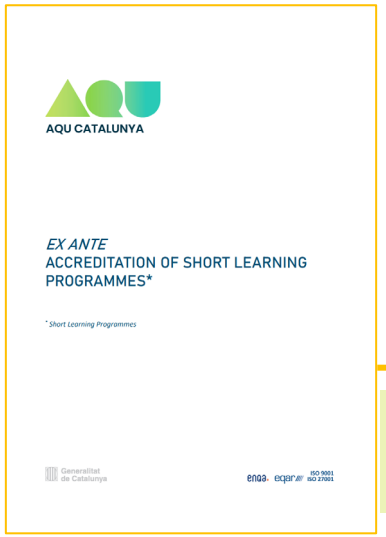
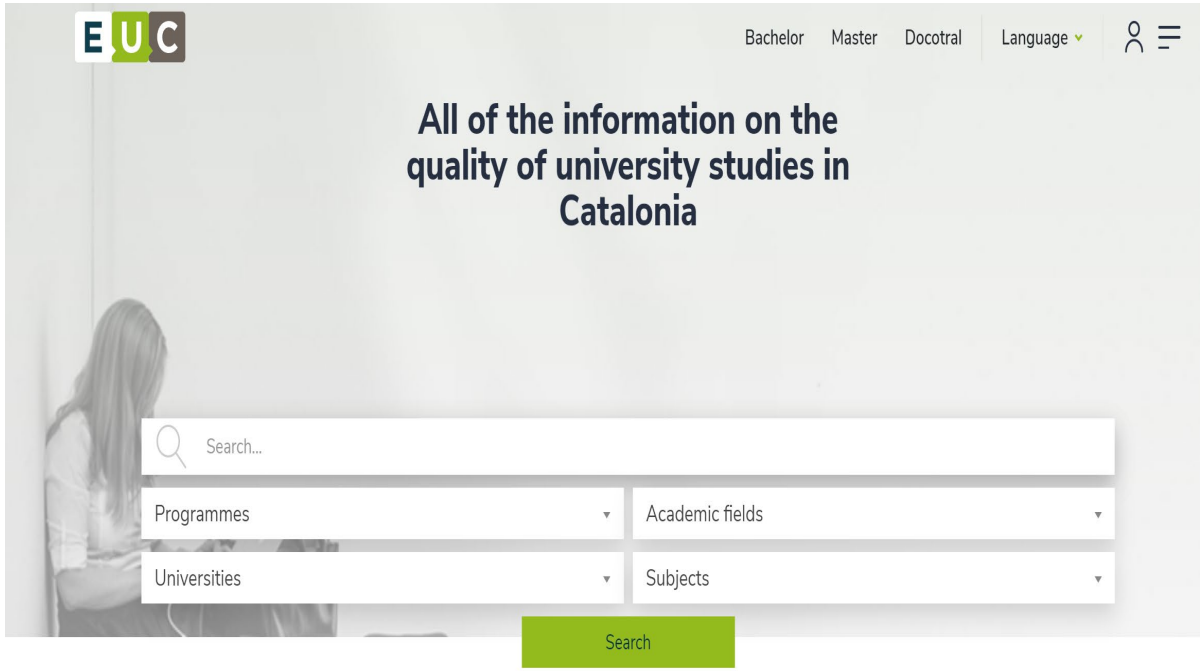
SLP – AQU Catalunya. Assessment dimensions

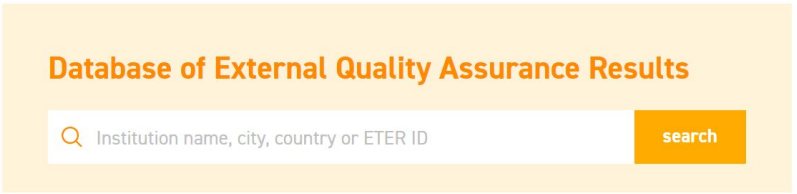
1. **Description of SLP:** university, name of SLP, EQF level, relationship with the professional family, ECTS, mode of delivery, offer
2. **Rationale:** relevance of the program to labour market, and potential of the institution to deliver the programme
3. **Aims and learning outcomes**
4. **Student access, admission & student support**
5. **Planning of SLP:** structure of the curriculum, modules, LO.
6. **Teaching and support staff**
7. **Material resources and services**
8. **IQAS**

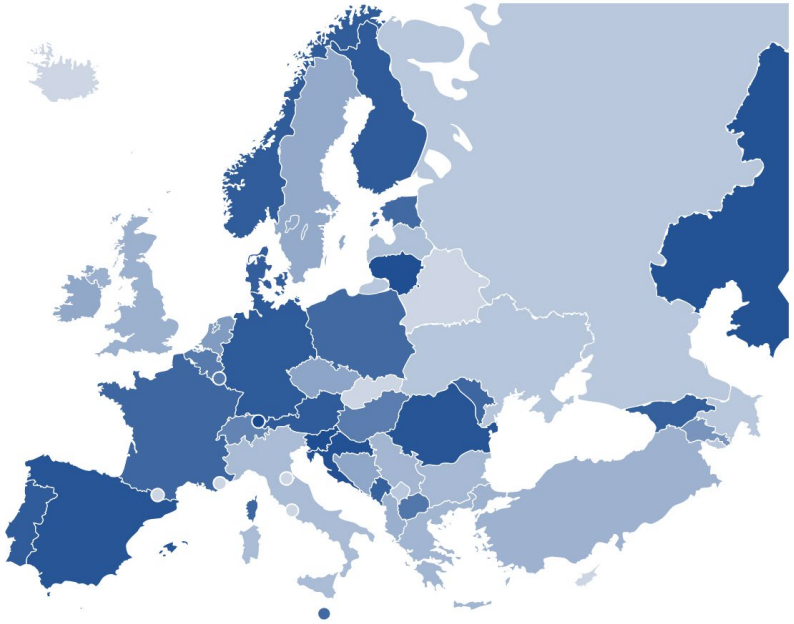


https://www.aqu.cat/es/doc/Universitats/Metodologia/Guia-acreditacion-ex-ante-de-programas-de-corta-duracion-PCD

SLP – AQU Catalunya. Results







SLP – AQU Catalunya. Conclusions I

- **High complexity** in the management of requests (duplication of information; high bureaucracy).
- Lack of attention to the **uniqueness** of universities
- Problems in **recruiting** and **completing** students.
- Special attention to guarantee the **NQF level**.
- **Workload associated to external review** and the short period of time life of SLP, another strategy more focused on the **IQAS**.

SLP – AQU Catalunya. Conclusions II

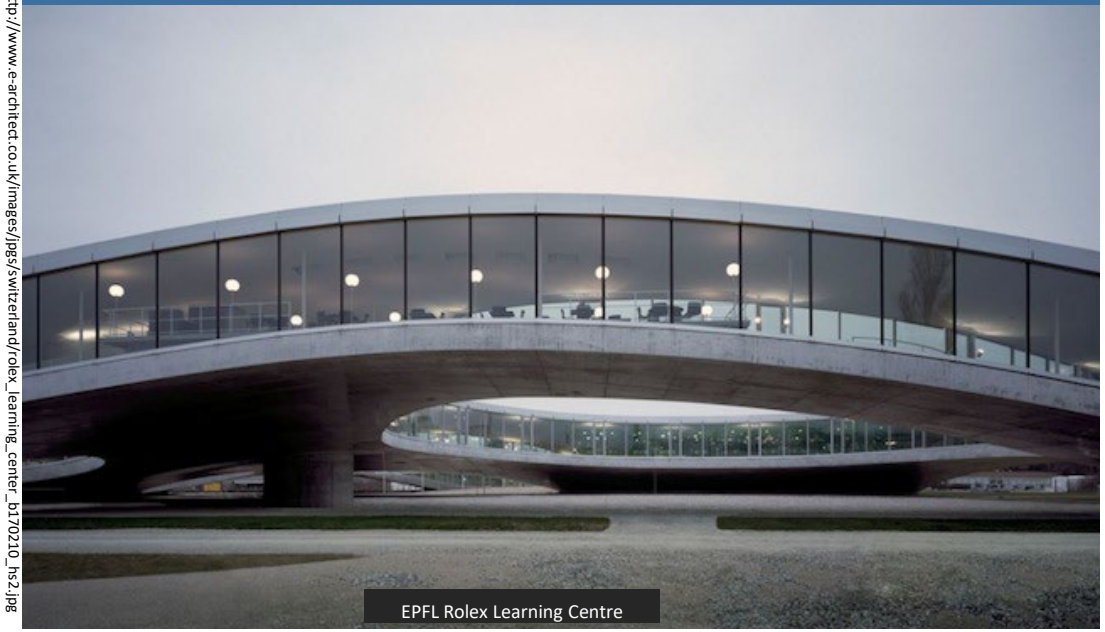
- ✓ High commitment from universities.
- ✓ Pathway between HE and professional system.
- ✓ Be part of the vocational training programs subsidized by the public employment service.

But...

- Adjust and align the way of working between universities and employment services, making processes more flexible and recognizing the way of working of universities.
- Establish a common language.
- Simpler external review procedures.

The future....

The Universities of the future will be more open, transparent and flexible institutions. They will be better adapted to a constantly changing landscape.



http://www.e-architect.co.uk/images/jpgs/switzerland/rolex_learning_center_b170210_hs2.jpg

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(A. Teixeira, Barcelona – 2018)