

External review of the Quality Assurance Agency for the University System in Castilla y León (ACSUCYL) by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

Annex I: TERMS OF REFERENCE

2013

1. Background and Context

ACSUCYL is independent from the regional government, directed by a Board of Directors. ACSUCYL was legally set up in November 2001 as the external assessment body for the university system in Castilla y León and is aimed at the assessment, accreditation and certification of quality at Universities and research and higher education institutions in Castilla y León.

ACSUCYL's mission is to ensure quality in the university system in Castilla y León, contributing to its ongoing improvement, and thereby creating value for society. Since its setting-up, the Agency has focused its activities on the development of programmes for quality assessment of the Universities in the Autonomous Region and enhancing the processes that lead to its improvement.

ACSUCYL can also collaborate in the processes of assessment, accreditation and certification of Universities and higher education institutions outside the Autonomous Region of Castilla y León in the context of the European Higher Education Area.

The main role of the Agency is the evaluation, certification and accreditation of the activities related to the quality of the university system, and specifically the evaluation of teaching staff, degrees, research, as well as institutional quality. The agency also carries out cooperation and coordination activities both at national and international level.

ACSUCYL has been Full member of ENQA since February 2010.

2. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

This is a type A review, as defined in the *Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area*. It will evaluate the way in which and to what extent ACSUCYL fulfils the criteria for the ENQA membership and thus the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. Consequently, the review will also provide information to the ENQA Board to aid its consideration of whether ACSUCYL Full membership should be renewed.

The review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgements as regards granting Full Membership.

3. The Review Process

The process is designed in the light of the *Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area*.

The evaluation procedure consists of the following steps:

- Formulation of the Terms of Reference and protocol for the review;
- Nomination and appointment of the review panel;
- Self-evaluation by ACSUCYL including the preparation of a self-evaluation report;
- A site visit by the review panel to ACSUCYL;
- Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report by the review panel;
- Scrutiny of the final evaluation report by the Review Committee of the ENQA Board;
- Analysis of the scrutiny by the ENQA Board and their decision regarding ENQA membership;
- Follow-up of the panel's and/or ENQA Board's recommendations by the agency.

3.1 Nomination and appointment of the review team members

The review panel consists of five members: four external reviewers (one or two quality assurance experts, representative(s) of higher education institutions, student member) and a review secretary. Three of the reviewers (including the review secretary) are nominated by the ENQA Board on the basis of proposals submitted to ENQA by the national agencies, and are drawn from senior serving members of Board/Council or staff of ENQA member agencies. The fourth external reviewer is drawn from a nomination provided by the European University Association (EUA). The nomination of the student member is asked from the European Students' Union (ESU). One of the panel members serves as the chair of the review.

Current members of the ENQA Board are not eligible to serve as reviewers.

ENQA will provide ACSUCYL with the list of suggested experts with their respective curriculum vitae to establish that there are no known conflicts of interest. The experts will have to sign a non-conflict of interest statement as regards the ACSUCYL review.

3.2 Self-evaluation by ACSUCYL, including the preparation of a self-evaluation report

ACSUCYL is responsible for the execution and organisation of its own self-evaluation process and shall take into account the following guidance:

- Self-evaluation is organised as a project with a clearly defined schedule and includes all relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- The self-evaluation report is broken down by the topics of the evaluation and is expected to contain, among others: a background description of the current situation of the Agency; an analysis and appraisal of the current situation; proposals for improvement and measures already planned; a SWOT analysis;
- The report is well-structured, concise and comprehensively prepared. It clearly demonstrates the extent to which ACSUCYL fulfils its tasks of external quality assurance and meets the criteria for the ENQA membership and thus the ESG. The report is submitted to the review panel a minimum of eight weeks prior to the site visit.

3.3 A Site Visit by the Review Panel

ACSUCYL will draw up a draft proposal of the schedule for the site visit to be submitted to the review panel two months before the planned dates of the visit. The schedule includes an indicative timetable of the meetings and other exercises to be undertaken by the review panel during the site visit, the duration of which is 2 days. The approved schedule shall be given to ACSUCYL one month before the site visit, in order to properly organise the requested interviews.

The review panel will be assisted by ACSUCYL in arriving in Valladolid, Spain.

The site visit will close with an oral presentation and discussion of the major issues of the evaluation between the review panel and ACSUCYL.

3.4 Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report

On the basis of the review panel's findings, the review secretary will draft the report in consultation with the review panel. The report will take into account the purpose and scope of the evaluation as defined under article 2. It will also provide a clear rationale for its findings with regards to each ENQA membership criteria. A draft will be submitted for comment to ACSUCYL within two months of the site visit for comment on factual accuracy. If ACSUCYL chooses to provide a statement in reference to the draft report it will be submitted to the chair of the review panel within two weeks after the receipt of the draft report. Thereafter the review panel will take into account the statement by ACSUCYL, finalise the document and submit it to ACSUCYL and ENQA.

The report is to be finalised within three months of the site visit and will not exceed 40 pages in length.

4. Follow-up Process and Publication of the Report

ACSUCYL will consider the expert panel's report and will publish it on its website. The report will also be published on the ENQA website, regardless of the review outcome and decision by the ENQA Board. ACSUCYL commits to preparing a follow-up plan in which it addresses the recommendations of the review panel and to submitting, if requested, a progress report to the ENQA.

5. Use of the report

ENQA shall retain ownership of the report. The intellectual property of all works created by the expert panel in connection with the review contract, including specifically any written reports, shall be vested in ENQA.

The review report is to be used by the Board of ENQA for the purpose of reaching a conclusion on whether ACSUCYL has met the membership criteria/ESG.

The review report is to be considered as property of ENQA only after being approved by the ENQA Board. Once submitted to ACSUCYL and ENQA and until the decision by the Board is made, the report may not be used or relied upon by ACSUCYL, the panel and any third party and may not be disclosed without the prior written consent of ENQA. ACSUCYL may use the report at its discretion only after the Board decision has been made.

Should the review report be used for applying to the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), the Chair of the panel shall remain available to respond to questions of

clarification or further information from the EQAR Register Committee provided that the ENQA Secretariat is copied in all such requests.

6. Budget

ACSUCYL shall pay the following review related fees:

Fee of the Chair	4,750 EUR
Fee of the Secretary	4,750 EUR
Fee of the 3 other panel members	8,250 EUR (2,750 EUR each)
Administrative overhead for ENQA Secretariat	5,000 EUR
Experts Training fund	1,250 EUR
Travel and subsistence expenses (approximate)	6,000 EUR

This gives a total indicative cost of 30,000.00 EUR for a review team of 5 members. In the case that the allowance for travel and subsistence expenses is exceeded, ACSUCYL will cover any additional costs after the completion of the review. However, the ENQA Secretariat will endeavour to keep the travel and subsistence expenses in the limits of the planned budget, and will refund the difference to ACSUCYL if the travel and subsistence expenses go under budget.

In the event of a second site visit required by the Board and aiming at completing the assessment of compliance, and should the agency accept a second visit, an additional fee of 500 EUR per expert, as well as travel and subsistence costs are recoverable from the agency.

7. Indicative Schedule of the Review

Agreement on terms of reference and protocol for review	December 2013 - January 2014
Appointment of review panel members	February-March 2014
Self-evaluation completed	End May-early June 2014
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	June 2014
Briefing of review panel members	June 2014
Review panel site visit	September 2014
Draft of evaluation report to ACSUCYL	November 2014
Statement of ACSUCYL to review panel if necessary	November 2014
Submission of final report to ENQA	December 2014
Consideration of the report by ENQA and response of ACSUCYL	February 2015
Publication of report	February 2015