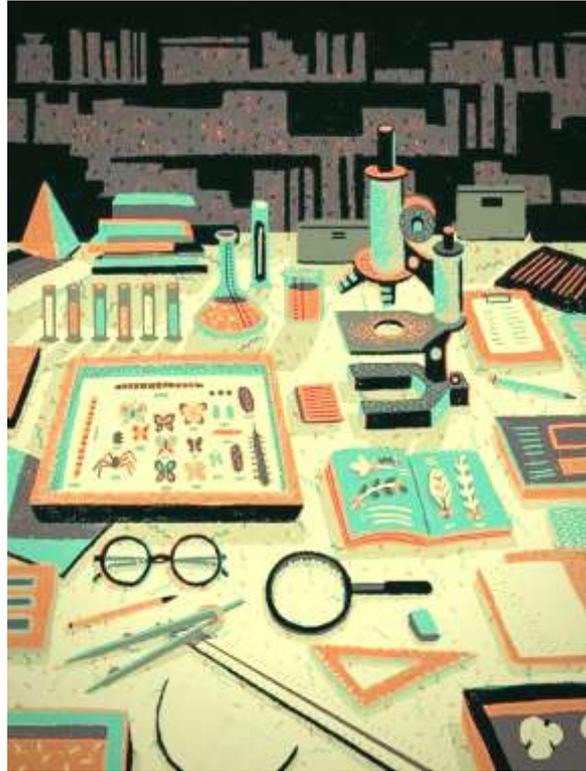


EVALUATION PROTOCOL: FOLLOW UP OF OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S DEGREES IN COMUNITAT VALENCIANA



June 2021

**AGÈNCIA VALENCIANA D'AVALUACIÓ I
PROSPECTIVA**

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CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION AND APPLICABLE LAW	3
2. OBJECT	4
3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION	4
4. OBJECTIVES	4
5. RESULT	5
6. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS AND PERIODICITY OF EVALUATION	5
Mode 1. Follow-up after the verification and implementation of the degree	5
Modality 2. Follow-up after the renewal of the degree's accreditation	6
7. EVALUATION CRITERIA	6
DIMENSION 1. MANAGEMENT OF THE DEGREE	8
Criterion 1: Organisation and development	8
Criterion 2: Information and transparency	9
Criterion 3: Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)	9
DIMENSION 2. RESOURCES	10
Criterion 4: Academic Staff	10
Criterion 5: Support staff, material resources and services	10
DIMENSION 3. RESULTS	11
Criterion 6: Learning outcomes	11
Criterion 7: Satisfaction and performance indicators	11
8. ASSESSMENT OF EVALUATION CRITERIA	12
8.1. Levels	12
8.2. Requirements for meeting the criteria	12
9. MONITORING EVALUATION PROCEDURE	13
9.1. Information on which the assessment is based	13
9.2. Publication of the <i>call for proposals</i>	14
9.3. Follow-up request	14
9.4. Evaluation Commission	14
9.5. Interim Monitoring Report	15
9.6. Allegations stage	15
9.7. Final Monitoring Report	16

1. INTRODUCTION AND APPLICABLE LAW

The implementation of the European Higher Education Area led to greater university autonomy in the formulation of new undergraduate, master's and doctoral degree programmes. Organic Law 4/2007 of 12 April 2007, which amended Organic Law 6/2001 of 21 December 2001 on Universities (LOU), laid the foundations for adapting the university system to the new EHEA.

Among other aspects, the law established a new structure for official university courses and degrees. Following the principles of the LOU, the Royal Decree extended university autonomy, since it is the universities themselves that must create and propose, in accordance with the established rules, the courses and degrees to be taught and awarded, without being subject to the existence of a previously established catalogue, as had been obligatory until then.

In return for this increased university autonomy, proposals for new degree programmes must undergo an ex ante evaluation process (known as verification) and, after four years (in the case of master's degrees) or six years (in the case of bachelor's degrees and doctorates), an ex post evaluation process (accreditation), in accordance with the procedure and deadlines established by the Generalitat Valenciana, a process which, in any case, must include a visit by experts from outside the university. Between the two processes, the universities carry out annual monitoring of the development of the degree programmes implemented, in accordance with their internal quality assurance system (SAIC).

The criteria for monitoring are jointly established by the quality agencies registered in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR), in accordance with international quality standards, in particular the ESG, and all other legal regulations.

The general evaluation procedure for monitoring is set out in this Protocol for monitoring official undergraduate and Master's degree courses in the Valencian Community, approved by the AVAP Steering Committee in 2018 and published on the AVAP website: www.avap.es and subsequently modified and approved by the AVAP Steering Committee at its meeting of 29 June 2021, published on the AVAP website: www.avap.es.

This general procedure implements the provisions of both the LOU and Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29 October, which establishes the organisation of official university education.

This protocol has been updated in accordance with the Resolution of 6 April 2021 of the General Secretariat for Universities, which approves recommendations in relation to the assessment criteria and standards for the verification, modification, monitoring and renewal of the accreditation of official university Bachelor's and Master's degrees offered in virtual and hybrid teaching modalities, which takes into consideration the approaches set out in "Considerations for quality assurance of e-learning provision" published in January 2018 by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European criteria and guidelines. Based on this ENQA position, the Spanish Network of University Quality Assurance Agencies (REACU) promoted and approved in February 2018 the Guidelines for the development and assessment of Bachelor's and Master's degrees in distance and blended learning, which has also been taken into account. Likewise, the ANECA Strategy for quality assurance in e-learning and its International Quality Seal for Blended and Blended Learning have also been taken into account.

2. OBJECT

The purpose of this Protocol is to establish the criteria and procedure for the monitoring of official university degree and master's degree courses registered in the Register of Universities, Centres and Degrees (RUCT) to be carried out by the Valencian Agency for Assessment and Prospective Studies (AVAP), in accordance with the conditions set out in Royal Decree 1393/2007 of 29 October, which establishes the organisation of official university education, and in accordance with Royal Decree 420/2015 of 29 May, on the creation, recognition, authorisation and accreditation of universities and university centres.

3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This Protocol is applicable to official Bachelor's and Master's degrees offered in the Valencian Region by public and private universities, including affiliated centres.

In the case of degrees in which several universities participate, this protocol is applicable when the administrative head of the degree is a university belonging to the Valencian university system, i.e. when it is the university that requested and processed the application for verification and the one that receives all correspondence and notifications corresponding to the degree. This university, which does not necessarily have to be the coordinating university for the degree, must notify the other universities participating in the degree of the information on this monitoring procedure.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the monitoring of official university Bachelor's and Master's degrees are as follows:

- To ensure the quality of the training programme offered in accordance with the levels of qualification established and the criteria expressed in the legal regulations in force.
- To guarantee that the quality of the results obtained in the development of official university education corresponds to the commitments acquired and verified by the corresponding assessment body.

- Review that the development of the degree is being carried out in accordance with the last verified report, with adequate resources and supported by an internal quality assurance system that has allowed for reflection and effective improvement of the degree.
- To examine that the degree has had an appropriate monitoring process and that the quantitative and qualitative information available has been used to analyse its development and generate the relevant proposals for improvement.
- To confirm the availability and accessibility of valid, reliable, relevant, pertinent and relevant public information to assist in the decision-making process of students and other stakeholders in the national and international university system.
- Supervise the incorporation of the modifications that the universities have made to the report after the degree has been verified.
- Review the implementation of the recommendations included in the reports on the verification, modification, authorisation or renewal of the accreditation of the degree.
- Provide recommendations and/or suggestions for improvement for the training programme.

5. RESULT

The outcome of the monitoring process is a reasoned report in terms of "Favourable", "Favourable with requirements" or "Unfavourable".

6. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS AND PERIODICITY OF EVALUATION

Two monitoring modalities are established:

Mode 1	Follow-up after the verification and implementation of the degree
Mode 2	Follow-up after the renewal of the degree's accreditation

Mode 1. Follow-up after the verification and implementation of the degree

Periodicity of evaluation:

- In the case of Bachelor's degrees, monitoring is carried out at the end of the third academic year following the implementation of the degree.
- In the case of Master's degrees, monitoring is carried out at the end of the third academic year after the degree has been introduced.

Exceptions:

- Any degree must be subject to extraordinary monitoring in accordance with what has been established in the authorisation decree for its implementation in the Valencian Region, at the

EVALUATION PROTOCOL: FOLLOW UP OF OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S DEGREES IN COMUNITAT VALENCIANA

request of the Regional Ministry with responsibility for Universities or at the request of the university itself.

- b) If the planned monitoring coincides in time with the evaluation for the renewal of accreditation, the monitoring will not be carried out.
- c) If the degree is taught in a single centre that is certified as having implemented the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), it will be subject to a simplified assessment procedure.

Modality 2. Follow-up after the renewal of the degree's accreditation

Those degrees whose final accreditation renewal report includes requirements in any of the criteria, or where the university has committed itself to developing an improvement plan, must be monitored after the renewal of accreditation.

In this modality, monitoring is carried out after the second academic year following the renewal of the accreditation of the Bachelor's or Master's degree.

Exceptions:

- a) Any degree is subject to extraordinary monitoring in accordance with the provisions of the accreditation renewal report, at the request of the Regional Ministry of Universities or at the request of the university itself.
- b) If the degree is taught in a single centre with SAIC implementation certification, it is only subject to monitoring when the final accreditation renewal report includes recommendations for special monitoring in criteria 4, 5, 6 or 7, or the university has undertaken to develop an improvement plan in one or more of these criteria.
- c) If the degree is taught in an institution that has institutional accreditation, it does not have to be monitored except in the cases set out in section a.

7. EVALUATION STANDARD

Following the guidelines and lines of action agreed within the framework of the Spanish Network of University Quality Assurance Agencies (REACU) and bearing in mind the criteria and guidelines established in the document "*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015)*", the evaluation criteria established for monitoring are divided into three dimensions:

- a) **Management of the degree:** the organisation and management of the syllabus (including access, modality, teaching coordination mechanisms and credit transfer and recognition systems); the transparency and visibility of the degree in terms of the information it provides to the different stakeholders and the effectiveness of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) as an instrument for collecting information, analysing it, implementing improvement actions and monitoring them.
- b) **Resources:** The adequacy of the academic and support staff, as well as the material resources, infrastructures and services available to guarantee the achievement of the competences defined by the degree are analysed.

c) **Results:** Aspects related to the results of the degree and their evolution during its development are evaluated.

The relationship between the criteria established in this Protocol for the monitoring of official Bachelor's and Master's degree courses in the Valencian Region and the criteria for internal quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015)¹ is as follows:

CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF MONITORING	ESG 2015
Standard 1. Organisation and development	1.2 Design and approval of programmes
	1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
	1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
Standard 2. Information and transparency	1.8. Public information
Standard 3. Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)	1.1 Policy for quality assurance
	1.7 Information management
	1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
	1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance
Standard 4. Academic Staff	1.5 Teaching staff
Standard 5. Support staff, material resources and services	1.6 Learning resources and student support
Standard 6. Learning outcomes	1.2 Design and approval of programmes
	1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
Standard 7. Satisfaction and performance indicators	1.7 Information management
	1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
	1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

¹ Adopted by the Conference of Ministers of Education held in Yerevan on 14-15 May 2015. Link to full text: http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

The standards included in the three dimensions are detailed below, indicating, for each of them, the standard and guidelines that are taken into account when assessing them with a view to issuing the corresponding reports.

DIMENSION 1. MANAGEMENT OF THE DEGREE

Standard 1: Organisation and development

Standard: The training programme is student-centred, up-to-date and has been implemented in accordance with the conditions set out in the verified report and/or its subsequent modifications.

Guidelines to be assessed:

1.1 The implementation of the syllabus and the organisation of the training programme are coherent with the profile of competences and objectives of the degree programme set out in the verification report and/or its subsequent modifications, guaranteeing student-centred learning.

1.2 The degree has teaching coordination mechanisms (horizontal and vertical articulation between the different subjects) that allow both an adequate allocation of the student's workload and an adequate time planning, ensuring the acquisition of the learning outcomes.

1.3 The admission criteria ensure that students have the appropriate entry profile to start these studies and their application respects the number of places offered in the verified report and/or its subsequent modifications.

1.4 The application of the different academic regulations (permanence, recognition, etc.) is carried out in an appropriate manner and allows for an improvement in the values of the academic performance indicators.

ESG 2015:

1.2 Programme design and approval. Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their study programmes. Programmes should be designed in such a way that they meet the stated objectives of the programme, including the expected learning outcomes. The qualification of a programme should be clearly specified and publicly available and should refer to the exact level of the national higher education qualifications framework and thus to the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework.

1.3 Student-centred teaching, learning and assessment. Institutions should ensure that programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to actively participate in the creation of the learning process and that student assessment reflects this student-centred approach.

1.4 Admission, progression, recognition and certification of students. Institutions should consistently apply pre-established and public standards covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. admission, progression, recognition and certification of students.

Standard 2: Information and transparency

Standard: Institutions should publish clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and easily accessible information about their activities and programmes.

Guidelines to be assessed:

2.1 Those responsible for the degree programme publish adequate and updated information on the characteristics of the training programme, its development and results, including information on the monitoring and accreditation processes, facilitating access to this information for people with functional diversity.

2.2 The information necessary for decision-making by students and other stakeholders in the national and international university system is easily accessible.

2.3 Students enrolled in the degree have timely access to relevant information about the curriculum and the intended learning outcomes.

ESG 2015:

1.8 Public information. Institutions should publish clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and easily accessible information about their activities and programmes.

Standard 3: Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)

Standard: The institution has a formally established and implemented internal quality assurance system that effectively ensures the continuous improvement of the degree.

Guidelines to be assessed:

3.1 The implemented SAIC ensures the continuous collection and analysis of information and results relevant to the effective management of the degree programmes, in particular learning outcomes and stakeholder satisfaction.

3.2 The implemented SAIC facilitates the process of monitoring, modification and accreditation of the degree, guaranteeing its continuous improvement based on the analysis of objective and verifiable data.

3.3 The implemented SAIC has procedures that facilitate the evaluation and improvement of the quality of the teaching-learning process.

ESG 2015:

1.1 Quality assurance policy. Institutions should have a public quality assurance policy as part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, involving external stakeholders.

1.7 Information management. Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

1.9 Continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation of programmes. Institutions should regularly monitor and evaluate their programmes to ensure that they achieve their objectives and respond to the needs of students and society. Such evaluations should lead to continuous programme improvement. As a consequence of the above, any measures planned or taken should be communicated to all stakeholders.

1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance. Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in accordance with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

DIMENSION 2. RESOURCES

Standard 4: Academic Staff

Standard: Institutions should ensure the competence of their teaching staff. They should also use fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of their staff.

Guidelines to be assessed:

4.1 The academic staff of the degree meets the level of academic qualification required for the degree and has the appropriate professional, teaching and research experience.

4.2 The academic staff is sufficient, adequately dedicated to the performance of their duties and encourages innovation in teaching methods.

4.3 The university provides the teaching staff with the mechanisms that enable them to be updated and continuously trained, taking into account the characteristics of the degree and the teaching-learning process in an appropriate manner.

ESG 2015:

1.5 Teaching staff. Institutions should ensure the competence of their teaching staff. They should also use fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of their staff.

Standard 5. Support staff, material resources and services

Standard: Institutions should have sufficient funding to develop teaching and learning activities and ensure that students are offered sufficient and easily accessible learning support and resources.

Guidelines to be assessed:

5.1 The support staff involved in training activities is adequate according to the nature and modality of the degree, the number of students enrolled and the competences to be acquired by them.

5.2 The material resources made available for the development of the degree are adequate according to the nature and modality of the degree, the number of students enrolled and the competences to be acquired by them.

5.3 The support services made available for the development of the degree are adequate according to the nature and modality of the degree, the number of students enrolled and the competences to be acquired by them.

ESG 2015:

1.6 Learning resources and student support. Institutions should be adequately funded to develop teaching and learning activities and ensure that students are provided with sufficient and easily accessible learning support and resources.

DIMENSION 3. RESULTS

Standard 6: Learning outcomes

Standard: The learning outcomes achieved by graduates are coherent with the graduate profile and correspond to the MECES (Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education) level of the degree.

Guidelines to be assessed:

6.1 The training activities, their teaching methodologies and the assessment systems used are adequate and are in line with the objective of acquiring the expected learning outcomes.

6.2 The learning outcomes achieved satisfy the objectives of the training programme and are in line with their level in the MECES.

ESG 2015:

1.2 Programme design and approval. Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their study programmes. Programmes should be designed in such a way that they meet the stated objectives of the programme, including the expected learning outcomes. The qualification of a programme should be clearly specified and publicly available and should refer to the exact level of the national higher education qualifications framework and thus to the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework.

1.3 Student-centred teaching, learning and assessment. Institutions should ensure that programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to actively participate in the creation of the learning process and that student assessment reflects this student-centred approach.

Standard 7. Satisfaction and performance indicators

Standard: The results of the indicators of the training programme are congruent with the design, management and resources made available to the degree and meet the social demands of its environment through periodic evaluation.

Guidelines to be assessed:

7.1 The evolution of the main data and indicators of the degree (number of new students per academic year, enrolment rate, graduation rate, drop-out rate, efficiency rate, performance rate and success rate) is adequate, in accordance with the subject area and the environment in which

the degree is inserted, and is coherent with the characteristics of the new students and with the forecasts established in the verified report.

7.2 The satisfaction of students, teaching staff, graduates and other stakeholders is adequate.

ESG 2015:

1.7 Information management. Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

1.9 Continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation of programmes. Institutions should regularly monitor and evaluate their programmes to ensure that they achieve their objectives and respond to the needs of students and society. Such evaluations should lead to continuous programme improvement. As a consequence of the above, any measures planned or taken should be communicated to all stakeholders.

1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance. Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in accordance with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

8. ASSESSMENT OF EVALUATION STANDARDS

8.1. Levels

Each of the evaluation criteria is assessed by the Evaluation Commission on four levels:

Outstanding	The standard corresponding to the criterion is fully achieved and, moreover, is an example that exceeds the basic requirements.
Achieved	The standard corresponding to the criterion is fully achieved.
Partially achieved	The standard is achieved, but specific areas for improvement are identified.
Not achieved	The standard does not achieve the minimum level required to reach the relevant standard.

8.2. Standard requirements

Taking into consideration the rating assigned to each criterion, the overall assessment of the monitoring report is in terms of "**Favourable**", "**Favourable with requirements**" or "**Unfavourable**".

If a report is rated "**favourable**" but the review panel still considers that there is room for improvement, suggested actions that contribute to achieving better quality in teaching or in the resources allocated to it can be included in the report and, where appropriate, should be included in the box marked "Recommendations", which can be analysed in future evaluation processes.

The overall assessment of a report is "**Favourable with prescriptions**" for cases in which a favourable report contains aspects related to the qualification that must necessarily be revised or improved through the drafting of an Improvement Plan, which must be submitted to AVAP. In this case, the report will

contain a list of prescriptions. A follow-up is carried out within two years for official university degrees that obtain this assessment, with the aim of verifying that these prescriptions have been implemented.

For the purposes of this procedure, this is considered as a reason for an **unfavourable** report:

-Deficiencies which, although they need to be rectified, have not been corrected after having been pointed out in the verification, modification, monitoring and/or renewal of accreditation report.

- The non-fulfilment of clear commitments and objectives assumed in the verified report or in its subsequent modifications in terms of academic staff, support staff, material resources and services.

In no case can a favourable report be obtained if a rating of "Not achieved" is obtained for any of the following criteria:

Standard 4. Academic staff
Standard 5. Support staff, material resources and services
Standard 6. Learning outcomes

The above does not exclude that, depending on the nature of the degree and its teaching-learning modality, the identification of serious deficiencies in other criteria may lead to the issuing of an unfavourable report.

9. MONITORING EVALUATION PROCEDURE

In order to guarantee transparency in the development of the procedure for the assessment of recognised university degrees, this section describes the sequence of activities to be carried out by the different agents involved in the monitoring process.

9.1. Information on which the assessment is based

AVAP's assessment of the criteria and guidelines described above is based on the following set of documentary evidence:

- The latest version of the verified report, which includes those modifications requested by the degree that have been reported favourably.
- The degree verification report and, where appropriate, the modification reports.
- The evaluation report for the authorisation of the degree drawn up by AVAP.
- The annual internal monitoring reports of the degree.
- The external monitoring reports carried out by AVAP.
- The report on the renewal of the accreditation of the degree, if applicable.

- Evidence obtained from the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS).
- The certification reports on the implementation of the IQAS derived from the AUDIT programme, if available.
- The certification reports on the implementation of the models for the evaluation of the teaching activity of university teaching staff, such as those derived from the DOCENTIA programme.
- Indicators from the Integrated University Information System (SIIU).
- Indicators developed by AVAP based on information provided by the university.
- The report and evidence of the degree programme drawn up by the university for the monitoring of the degree programme, by means of which the university justifies that the results obtained comply with the objectives for which the degree programme was designed. The structure and content of this report and evidence must be adapted to the model determined by AVAP.

9.2. Publication of the call for proposals

Every year, AVAP publishes one or more calls for applications in the Diari Oficial de la Generalitat Valenciana (DOGV), establishing the deadlines, the documentation to be provided and the procedure to be followed by universities applying for the monitoring of an official Bachelor's or Master's degree.

9.3. Follow-up request

In accordance with the procedure established by AVAP, each university submits the application for the monitoring of the corresponding degrees, in accordance with the established deadline and procedure.

Once AVAP has checked that the application meets all the requirements for monitoring, the applicant university sends, via the computer application provided for this purpose, the monitoring report for each degree following the model established by AVAP, together with the necessary documentary evidence accrediting the information contained and the corresponding hyperlinks to the web pages where the public information is available to facilitate the review.

9.4. Evaluation Commission

The **Assessment Committees** are the collegiate bodies responsible for drawing up the assessment report for the monitoring of degree programmes.

Each Evaluation Commission is composed of:

- a) A chairperson with an academic profile and experience in degree verification, authorisation, monitoring or accreditation processes.
- b) A variable number of academic members to be determined according to the number of degrees to be assessed and the heterogeneity of their academic field, with experience in processes of verification, authorisation, monitoring or accreditation of degrees.

- | |
|---|
| c) One or one student member, preferably from the academic field or branch of the degrees to be assessed, with training in assessment processes. |
| d) One member with a technical profile, who shall have experience in the field of implementation and operation of quality assurance systems, university management or the European Higher Education Area. |
| e) An AVAP technician, who acts as secretary, with the right to speak but not to vote. |

Depending on the number of degrees submitted to the annual call for applications, AVAP may set up one or more Evaluation Commissions for each field of knowledge.

The members of the Evaluation Commissions are appointed by AVAP's Directorate General and subscribe to AVAP's code of ethics, undertaking to comply with its principles of independence, confidentiality, objectivity, excellence and transparency.

9.5. Interim Monitoring Report

The Assessment Committee draws up a provisional assessment report based on the analysis and review of both the documentation provided by the university and the public information available on the website.

This report must be reasoned and may be:

- | |
|----------------------------------|
| a) Favourable |
| b) Favourable with prescriptions |
| c) Unfavourable |

Depending on the nature of the deficiencies observed, if any, it may be indicated which aspects will be given special attention during the re-accreditation assessment.

9.6. Appeals

The provisional report is sent to the university so that, within a period of fifteen days, it may make any allegations it deems appropriate. AVAP will ensure that this period does not coincide totally or partially with university holiday periods (Easter, August and Christmas).

Once the interim report has been received, the university may, if it so wishes, make clarifications or allegations regarding the deficiencies detected. Allegations that incorporate aspects or information not contained in the set of previous documentary evidence that served as the basis for issuing the interim report shall not be accepted.

9.7. Final Report

Once the allegations have been received, they are assessed by the Evaluation Commission, which, where appropriate, studies whether they should be taken into account and draws up the final monitoring report.

The final monitoring report must be reasoned and may be:

a) Favourable
b) Favourable with prescriptions
c) Unfavourable

Depending on the nature of the deficiencies observed, if any, the report may indicate which aspects will be given special attention at the time of the next monitoring or assessment procedure for the renewal of accreditation.

AVAP sends the final monitoring report to the applicant university.

In the event that, during the monitoring process, deficiencies have been detected in the degree programme that pose a serious risk to the minimum quality required, AVAP reports them to the Regional Ministry responsible for higher education and to the Council of Universities so that they may proceed in accordance with the provisions of the current regulatory framework.



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