

EVALUATION PROTOCOL: FOLLOW-UP OF OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY DOCTORATE DEGREES IN THE COMUNITAT VALENCIANA

January 2023



**AGÈNCIA VALENCIANA
D'AVALUACIÓ I
PROSPECTIVA**

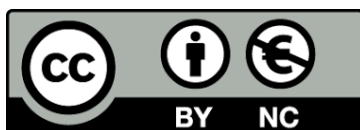


AGÈNCIA VALENCIANA
D'AVALUACIÓ I PROSPECTIVA



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AGÈNCIA VALENCIANA D'AVALUACIÓ I PROSPECTIVA

1. INTRODUCTION AND APPLICABLE LAW

The Spanish university system undertook a reform of its educational offer and its organisation by adopting the principles that constituted the essence of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The implementation of the European Higher Education Area led to greater university autonomy in the formulation of new university degree, Master's and doctoral programmes; and Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December, on Universities (LOU), established the bases for adapting the university system to the new EHEA.

Thus, the adaptation of a cyclical structure consisting of the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate degrees, which consecutively incorporated more specialised training in terms of employability or research, has been completed in all the universities that make up the Spanish university system.

Together with a new structuring of studies and the incorporation of a learning approach centred on students' competences, two further principles underpinning the great agreement that is the EHEA should be highlighted. The first is to assume the need to promote more active teaching, based on a teaching-learning methodology, in which the master class must share the limelight with other strategies and ways of teaching and learning, which seek to reinforce the students' capacity for autonomous work, and in which the use of new information and communication technologies is one of the main pillars. The second lies in promoting and facilitating the international mobility of our students towards their stay in other universities abroad, especially in other European countries. To achieve this objective, the common model for calculating academic time in credits of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) was adopted.

The accumulation of modifications in the organisation of official university education in Spain makes a new regulation necessary and proportional which, guaranteeing the principle of legal security in the functioning of the Spanish university system, advances in an organisation adapted to the demands of society and to the disruptive changes taking place in the economy and in technology, as well as more flexible in its components and structure, and which, at the same time, favours the necessary effective innovation in teaching.

Thus, Royal Decree 822/2021, of 28 September, which establishes the organisation of university education and the procedure for quality assurance, was created with the aim of ensuring the quality of university studies as an educational service for the whole of Spanish society, official university degrees must be subject to external evaluation procedures in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ESG), in accordance with the provisions of Title V of Organic Law 6/2001 of 21 December 2001, and in accordance with the provisions of this Royal Decree.

In return for increased university autonomy, proposals for new degree programmes must undergo an ex ante evaluation process (known as verification) and, after six to eight years, an ex post evaluation process (accreditation), in accordance with the procedure and deadlines established by the Valencian Regional Government, 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 accreditation are agreed jointly by the quality agencies registered in the Spanish Network of University Quality Assurance Agencies (REACU), and in accordance with international quality standards, especially the ESG, the standards of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and the rest of the legal regulations.

2. OBJECT

The purpose of this Protocol is to establish the criteria and procedure for the monitoring of doctoral programmes 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 822/2021, of 28 September, which establishes the organisation of university education and the procedure for quality assurance, in accordance with Royal Decree 640/2021, of 27 July, on the creation, recognition and authorisation of universities and university centres, and institutional accreditation of university centres, and in accordance with Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, which regulates official doctoral studies.

In accordance with art. 28.1 of RD 822/2021, all official university degrees taught in centres that are not institutionally accredited, new degrees that have been verified and those that have obtained the renewal of accreditation will be subject to monitoring of compliance with the academic project contained in the syllabus. This procedure shall be developed by the centres through the bodies established in the university regulations. To this end, in accordance with AVAP guidelines and with what is reflected in the external assessment reports, they shall draw up at least one monitoring report, which is mandatory three years after the effective implementation or renewal of accreditation.

3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This Protocol is applicable to official university doctorate courses taught in the Valencian Region by public and private universities, including affiliated centres, which must be monitored and require a monitoring report from AVAP.

In the case of doctoral programmes involving several universities, this protocol will be applicable when the administrative head of the doctoral programme is a university belonging to the Valencian university

system, i.e. when it is the university that requested and processed the application for monitoring and that receives all correspondence and notifications relating to the programme. This university, which does not necessarily have to be the coordinating university of the doctoral programme, must notify the other universities participating in the doctoral programme of the information on this assessment procedure.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the evaluation for the renewal of the accreditation of official university doctoral studies are as follows:

- To ensure the quality of the doctoral programme offered in accordance with the established qualification levels and the criteria set out in current legislation.
- To guarantee that the quality of the results obtained in the development of the doctoral programme corresponds to the commitments acquired and verified by the corresponding assessment body.
- Check that the doctoral programme 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 ensure the availability and accessibility of valid, reliable, relevant, pertinent and relevant public information that helps in the decision-making process of students and other agents of interest in the national and international university system.
- Provide recommendations and/or suggestions for improvement for the doctoral programme.

5. RESULT

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

6. PERIODICITY OF EVALUATION

In accordance with article 28 of Royal Decree 822/2021, of 28 September, which establishes the organisation of university education and the procedure for quality assurance, compliance with the academic project contained in the syllabus will be monitored:

- All official university degrees taught in non-institutionally accredited institutions,
- New degrees verified and
 - Those who have obtained the renewal of accreditation.

This procedure shall be developed by the centres through the bodies established in the university regulations.

To this end, in accordance with the guidelines established by AVAP and with what is reflected in the external evaluation reports, they shall draw up at least one follow-up report, which is mandatory three years after the effective implementation or renewal of accreditation.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Following the guidelines and lines of action agreed for the monitoring process of official university doctoral degrees, 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", the evaluation criteria established for the monitoring of doctoral programmes are divided into three dimensions:

- **MANAGEMENT OF THE DOCTORATE PROGRAMME** : Those aspects of the implementation of the doctoral programme that demonstrate the level of compliance with the institution's project are analysed: the validity of its interest for society, academic management, the public information generated and the degree of implementation of its Internal Quality Assurance System.
- **RESOURCES** : The human, material and support resources available to the doctoral programme to guarantee the achievement of the competences defined by the programme are analysed.
- **RESULTS** : Aspects related to the results of the doctoral programme and satisfaction are evaluated, as well as the evolution that these have had during the development of the programme.

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The relationship between the criteria established in this Protocol for the monitoring of doctoral programmes in the Valencian Region and the criteria for internal quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015)¹ is as follows:

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR THE MONITORING OF DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES	GSR CRITERIA 2015
Criterion 1. Organisation and development	1.2 Programme design and approval
	1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
	1.4 Admission, progression, recognition and certification of students
Criterion 2. Information and transparency	1.8. Public information
Criterion 3. Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)	1.1 Quality Assurance Policy
	1.7 Information management
	1.9 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes
	1.10 External Cyclical Quality Assurance
Criterion 4. Academic Staff	1.5 Faculty
Criterion 5. Support staff, material resources and services	1.6 Learning resources and support for students
Criterion 6. Learning outcomes	1.2 Programme design and approval
	1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
Criterion 7. Satisfaction and performance indicators	1.7 Information management
	1.9 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes
	1.10 External cyclical 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 criteria included in the three dimensions of the assessment are detailed below, indicating for each of them the corresponding standard and the guidelines that will be taken into account to assess whether it is achieved.

DIMENSION 1. MANAGEMENT OF THE DEGREE

Criterion 1. ORGANISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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

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.

Guidelines to be assessed:

1.1 The programme has mechanisms in place to ensure that the entry profile of doctoral students is appropriate and their number is consistent with the characteristics and distribution of the programme's lines of research and the number of places offered.

1.2 The programme has adequate mechanisms in place for the supervision of doctoral students and, where appropriate, training activities

1.3 The institution responds to the possible recommendations made in the Verification Report and, where appropriate, in the possible modification reports, as well as to those that may be contained in successive follow-up reports.

1.4 Where applicable, changes introduced in the doctoral programme and which have not been subject to modification do not alter MECES level 4 and allow it to be updated in accordance with the requirements of the discipline.

Considerations to be taken into account in each of the guidelines:

Guideline 1.1. Aspects to consider:

- The admission criteria ensure that students have the entry profile to begin their studies in accordance with the characteristics and lines of research of the programme, as well as the number of places offered in the verified report and/or its successive modifications.
- Complementary courses fulfil their function in terms of the acquisition of competences and knowledge by students in the different entry disciplines.

Guideline 1.2. Aspects to consider:

- The academic committee monitors the progress of the PhD student through the documents established by RD 99/2011 (research plan and record of activities carried out by each student).
- The procedure used by the academic committee for assigning the academic staff who will tutor and supervise the doctoral thesis, as well as for their possible change, is adequate.
- Mechanisms have been put in place to prevent fraud and to ensure the originality of the research.
- In the event that the doctoral programme is taught in several centres and/or is inter-university, the coordination mechanisms between the centres and/or universities participating in the programme.
- The university's regulations on the presentation and defence of doctoral theses are adapted to current state legislation.
- In the case of inter-university doctoral programmes, the regulations applied for the presentation and defence of the doctoral thesis determine the same requirements in all participating universities.
- In the case of an international mention, the necessary coordination and supervision of the stay at the foreign higher education institution or prestigious research centre has been ensured.
- In the case of internationally co-supervised theses, the stays and activities have been reflected in the co-supervision agreements and are adequately fulfilled.
- In the case of the industrial mention, the necessary coordination and supervision has been ensured so that the activities carried out in the company enable the students to acquire the corresponding competences.

Guideline 1.3. Aspects to consider:

- Where applicable, the degree of implementation of the recommendations made in the Verification Report and/or in its successive modifications, in the authorisation report.

Guideline 1.4. Aspects to consider:

- Where appropriate, characteristics and results of changes introduced and not subject to a programme modification report.

Criterion 2. INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY

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

ESG 2015:

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

Guidelines to be assessed:

2.1 The university publishes objective, complete and up-to-date information on the doctoral programme, its characteristics, its development and the results achieved.

2.2 The institution ensures easy access to relevant information about the doctoral programme for all stakeholders.

2.3 The institution publishes the SAIC in which the doctoral programme is framed.

Considerations to be taken into account in each of the guidelines:

Guideline 2.1. Aspects to consider:

- The verified doctoral programme report and/or its subsequent modifications are published on the website and are open access.
- The final evaluation report for the verification and the different reports of modifications of the doctoral programme, as well as the resolution of verification by the Council of Universities are published on the web and are open access.
- AVAP's monitoring reports on the doctoral programme are published on the website and are open access.
- The internal monitoring reports of the doctoral programme are published on the website, although access to them is restricted.
- The direct link to the doctoral programme in the Register of Universities, Centres and Degrees is available on the website.
- The correspondence between the name of the doctoral programme advertised and the name that appears in the RUCT.
- The description of the main aspects related to access to the doctoral programme (objectives, entry profile, exit profile, number of places offered, enrolment period and procedure,

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admission requirements and criteria, body that carries out the admission process and its composition, procedure and assignment of tutor and thesis supervisor, training complements, and grants and other aid) are published on the website and are open access.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The description of the main aspects related to the organisation of the doctoral programme (lines of research, training activities, and the procedure for the preparation and defence of the research plan) are published on the website and are open access.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The description of the main aspects related to the operational planning of the PhD programme (composition of the academic committee, duration of studies and tenure, academic calendar and learning resources) are published on the website and are open access.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The description of the academic and research staff involved in the doctoral programme is published on the website and is open access.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where applicable, the description of the main aspects related to the mobility programmes (objectives, regulations, and grants and scholarships) are published on the website and are open access.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The academic regulations on the doctoral thesis (evaluation, deposit and defence, international mention, thesis under international co-supervision, and Industrial mention) are published on the website and are open access.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The main results of the doctoral programme (doctoral theses defended and stakeholder satisfaction) are published on the website and are open access.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the event that the information on the doctoral programme is accessible on several websites of the university (universities if it is interuniversity) or of the centres that offer it, the information does not present contradictions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where applicable, the degree of implementation of the recommendations for improvement included in the monitoring reports of the doctoral programme.

Guideline 2.2 Issues to consider:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ease of access to the description of the doctoral programme.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ease of access to information on the competences to be acquired by students.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ease of access to information on the requirements for access and admission to the doctoral programme and, where appropriate, the additional training that must be undertaken.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ease of access to information prior to enrolment (documents to be submitted, places, etc.).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ease of access to information on the organisation and operational planning of the doctoral programme.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where appropriate, easy access to information on the meaning and implications of the international mention, the international co-supervision thesis and the Industrial Mention.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ease of access to information about student support programmes or services and available learning resources.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ease of access to the regulations applicable to students on the doctoral programme.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where applicable, the degree of implementation of the recommendations for improvement included in the monitoring reports of the doctoral programme.

Guideline 2.3. Aspects to consider:

- The Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) in which the doctoral programme is framed, including those responsible for it, the procedures and, where appropriate, the improvement actions implemented, is published on the website and is open access.

Criterion 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 doctoral programme.

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.

Guidelines to be assessed:

3.1 The implemented SAIC ensures the collection of relevant information and results for decision-making and efficient management of the doctoral programme, especially on learning outcomes and stakeholder satisfaction.

3.2 The implemented SAIC has procedures that facilitate the evaluation and improvement of the doctoral programme.

3.3 The implemented SAIC has adequate procedures for dealing with suggestions, complaints and compliments.

Considerations to be taken into account in each of the guidelines:

Guideline 3.1. Aspects to consider:

- The implemented SAIC ensures the continuous collection of information and analysis of learning outcomes.
- The implemented SAIC ensures the continuous collection of information and the analysis of the degree of satisfaction of the different stakeholders.
- The procedures for collecting information on an ongoing basis, analysing the results and using them for decision-making and improving the quality of the doctoral programme have been developed in accordance with the established procedures.
- In the case of inter-university doctoral programmes, if the actions carried out as a result of the implementation of the SAIC are coordinated in all the universities or centres participating in the training programme.

Guideline 3.2. Aspects to consider:

- The recommendations included in the assessment reports for the verification and, if necessary, modification of the doctoral programme have been analysed within the SAIC and the corresponding actions have been established by those responsible for the doctoral programme.
- The SAIC, based on the analysis of objective and reliable data, provides information for the development of the processes of monitoring, modification and accreditation of the degree and has generated useful information for the groups involved in the doctoral programme.
- Where appropriate, modifications have been made to the initially planned design of the doctoral programme as a result of feedback from the SAIC, and the monitoring of these modifications confirms that they have been effective and have achieved the objectives set.

Guideline 3.3. Aspects to consider:

- The implemented SAIC has adequate procedures for dealing with suggestions, complaints and congratulations.

DIMENSION 2. RESOURCES

Criterion 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.

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.

Guidelines to be assessed:

4.1 The academic staff meet the levels of academic qualification required for participation in the doctoral programme and accredit their research experience.

4.2 The academic staff is sufficient and has the necessary dedication to carry out its functions adequately, considering the number of students in each line of research and the nature and characteristics of the doctoral programme.

4.3 The doctoral programme has mechanisms for the recognition of tutoring and thesis supervision.

4.4 The degree of participation of international experts in the monitoring committees and thesis tribunals is adequate according to the scientific field of the programme.

Considerations to be taken into account in each of the guidelines:

Guideline 4.1. Aspects to consider:

- The teaching and research staff involved in the doctoral programme and the research experience they accredit.
- The involvement of teaching staff in research, development and innovation activities and their impact on the doctoral programme.
- Changes in the structure of the academic staff in the period under consideration.
- The degree of compliance with the commitments made in the verified report and/or subsequent modifications.
- Where applicable, the degree of implementation of the recommendations included in the authorisation and monitoring reports of the doctoral programme.

Guideline 4.2. Aspects to consider:

- The degree of compliance with the commitments included in the verification report and/or subsequent modifications.
- Changes in the structure of the academic staff in the period under consideration.
- The degree of satisfaction of students with the tutoring received and the supervision of their theses and, where appropriate, the improvement actions established.
- Where applicable, the degree of implementation of the recommendations included in the verification and authorisation reports of the doctoral programme.

Guideline 4.3. Aspects to consider:

- The doctoral programme has mechanisms for the recognition of tutoring work and these are adequate.
- The doctoral programme has mechanisms for the recognition of thesis supervision and these are adequate.

- The degree of satisfaction of the academic staff with the mechanisms for recognition of the tutoring and supervision of doctoral theses.

Guideline 4.4. Aspects to consider:

- The degree of compliance with the commitments included in the verification report and/or subsequent modifications.
- The degree of participation of international experts in the monitoring committees and thesis tribunals is adequate according to the scientific scope of the programme and the commitments made in the verification report or subsequent modifications.

Criterion 5. 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.

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 offered sufficient and easily accessible learning support and resources.

Guidelines to be assessed:

- 5.1 The material resources available are appropriate to the number of students in each line of research and the nature and characteristics of the doctoral programme.
- 5.2 Academic guidance services and support staff respond to the needs of the training and learning process of students as researchers.

Considerations to be taken into account in each of the guidelines:

Guideline 5.1 Issues to consider:

- The characteristics, if any, of the laboratories, workshops and experimental spaces in relation to the number of students and the training activities programmed.
- The characteristics of the bibliographic and documentary resources in relation to the number of students and the training activities programmed.
- In the event that there are collaborating entities that participate by agreement in the development of research activities, the characteristics of the material resources and other means that they place at the service of the doctoral programme.
- The existence of financial support from the doctoral programme itself, or from the university, for doctoral students to attend conferences and stays abroad.

- The degree of compliance with the commitments included in the verification report and/or subsequent modifications.
- Where applicable, the level of implementation of the recommendations included in the verification and authorisation reports of the doctoral programme.

Guideline 5.2. Aspects to consider:

- The characteristics of academic and, where appropriate, vocational guidance services and/or programmes.
- The degree of compliance with the commitments included in the verification report and/or subsequent modifications.
- Where applicable, the level of implementation of the recommendations included in the verification and authorisation reports of the doctoral programme.

DIMENSION 3. RESULTS

Criterion 6. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Standard: The learning outcomes achieved by doctoral students correspond to level 4 of the MECES (Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education).

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.

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 academic indicators of the doctoral programme and its evolution correspond to level 4 of the MECES.

Considerations to be taken into account in each of the guidelines:

Guideline 6.1. Aspects to consider:

- The training activities and their assessment are coherent with the competences defined for the doctoral programme.
- The number of doctoral theses defended and their evolution are adequate for the characteristics of the doctoral programme.
- The level of requirements for the awarding of *cum laude* marks to doctoral theses.

Guideline 6.2. Aspects to consider:

- The doctoral theses defended and the scientific contributions derived from them, both prior to their defence and subsequently, demonstrate the acquisition of the basic competences established by the MECES for doctoral programmes, as well as the competences and capacities specific to the programme.

Criterion 7. SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Standard : The results of the doctoral programme indicators are appropriate to its characteristics and to the socio-economic and research context, and meet the demands of its environment through periodic evaluation.

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.

Guidelines to be assessed:

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

7.2 The indicators are appropriate to the profile of the students, in accordance with the scientific field of the programme.

7.3 The evolution of the indicators is coherent with the forecasts established in the verified report.

Considerations to be taken into account in each of the guidelines:

Guideline 7.1. Aspects to consider:

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- The reliability of the results of surveys or other methods used to assess stakeholder satisfaction.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with the competences developed by students.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with the organisation and planning of the doctoral programme.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with the communication channels used by the doctoral programme and the content of the information it provides.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with the material resources available.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with academic and, where appropriate, career guidance services and/or programmes.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with the academic indicators of the doctoral programme.

Guideline 7.2. Aspects to consider:

- The evolution of the number of new students per academic year in relation to the forecasts made in the verified report and/or subsequent modifications.
- If applicable, the results of the application of the admission criteria in relation to the admission profile defined in the verification report and/or subsequent modifications.
- The evolution of the average duration of the programme and the drop-out rate, in accordance with its subject area and the environment in which the doctoral programme is inserted.

Guideline 7.3. Aspects to consider:

- The evolution of the indicators of the doctoral programme in accordance with the forecasts made in the verified report and/or subsequent modifications.

8. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

In order to guarantee transparency in the development of the monitoring procedure for official university Bachelor's and Master's degrees, this section describes the sequence of activities to be carried out by the different agents involved in the monitoring process.

8.1. Publication of the call for proposals

Every year, the Ministry of Universities publishes one or more calls for applications in the Official Gazette of the 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.

8.2. Follow-up request

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

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.

8.3. Establishment of the Monitoring Committees

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

Each Monitoring Committee is composed of:

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| 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 degree verification, authorisation, monitoring or accreditation processes. |
| 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 monitoring call, AVAP may set up one or more Monitoring Committees for each field of knowledge.

The members of the Monitoring Committees 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.

In general, AVAP takes into account the following criteria for the selection of the members of the Monitoring Committee:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflict of interest: Evaluators must not have any direct relationship with the university to be evaluated or with its territorial scope. |
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- Previous experience: It will be taken into account as a positive aspect that the evaluators have previously participated in evaluation processes.
- Level of satisfaction: AVAP should not have received any justified formal complaints about its performance as evaluator.
- Territorial representation: Evaluators must come from university systems other than that of the Comunitat Valenciana.
- Parity: AVAP will strive for a gender-balanced composition of the Committee.

8.4. Information on which the assessment is based

In accordance with article 28.2 of RD 822/2021, the purpose of the report drawn up by the university is to monitor the development of the syllabus of the official university degree with the aim of assessing compliance with the fundamental academic criteria and approaches set out in the syllabus report. This monitoring report will also accredit the transparency of the information and indicators that show the academic results of the degree, detect possible deficiencies in the implementation and identify good practices in the monitoring and continuous improvement of university studies. The aforementioned report will be sent to AVAP for assessment.

Once the deadline for submitting the self-report and the evidence established by this Protocol has passed, and AVAP has checked that the documents are correctly incorporated into the assessment platform, it provides the Monitoring Committee with access to the documentary evidence of the degree for carrying out the visit, where appropriate, as well as to the support tools that facilitate its work, such as report models and templates and permanent access to the computer tool managed by AVAP.

For the assessment of the criteria and guidelines described above, the following set of prior documentary evidence must be provided:

- The self-monitoring report on the degree programme drawn up by the university in 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 must be adapted to the model determined by AVAP.
- 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.
- External monitoring reports carried out by AVAP, if available.
- The report on the renewal of the accreditation of the degree, if applicable.
- Evidence obtained from the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS).

EVALUATION PROTOCOL: FOLLOW-UP OF OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY DOCTORATE DEGREES IN THE COMUNITAT VALENCIANA

- The certification reports on the implementation of the IQAS derived from the AUDIT programme, if available.
- Certification reports on the implementation of 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.

8.5. Report from the AVAP Follow-up Committee

This report should contain a detailed and reasoned analysis of the degree of compliance with the criteria and guidelines for monitoring, in accordance with the model provided by AVAP.

The academic member of the Monitoring Committee will coordinate the drafting of a Report, which is reviewed by each member of the committee to provide suggestions and proposals. The person responsible for the report incorporates the suggestions and proposals made and finalises the draft. The chairman of the committee reviews the final draft of the report and signs it, sending it to AVAP within a maximum period of seven days.

This report is based on the assessment of:

- a) The degree report produced by the university.
- b) The body of evidence provided by the university.
- c) The visit to the facilities, if any, where each training programme is carried out.

Each of the seven criteria is assessed by the Monitoring Committee on four levels:

Outperforms excellently	The standard corresponding to the criterion is fully achieved. Furthermore, it is an example that exceeds the basic requirements and good practice can be identified.
It is reached	The standard corresponding to the criterion is fully achieved.
Partially achieved	The standard is achieved, but specific areas for improvement are identified.
Not reached	The criterion does not achieve the minimum level required to reach the relevant standard.

The report should also be assessed at a global level and be motivated, and can be:

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

A "**Favourable**" monitoring report may contain in relation to each of the criteria suggested actions that contribute to achieving better quality in teaching or in the resources allocated to it, which, where appropriate, should be included in the box marked "Recommendations", which may be taken into account in future accreditations.

A "**favourable with requirements**" report is foreseen for those university degrees that contain aspects that necessarily need to be revised or improved. In this case, the report will contain a list of requirements.

In the case of an "**unfavourable**" report, and depending on the nature of the deficiencies observed, it may be indicated which aspects must necessarily be modified by the university in order to obtain a favourable report. In addition, when a degree is taught in several centres (own and/or affiliated) of the same university, the proposal to eliminate the participation of the centre or centres in which serious non-compliances occur that condition the issuing of a favourable report may be included.

Once the report has been finalised and after verification by AVAP technicians that it meets all the requirements and includes the evaluation of all the criteria in a congruent manner, the monitoring report is communicated to the university, which will have a period of 5 working days to communicate any factual errors in the drafting of the report that may have led to an erroneous conclusion.

Reportable factual errors must have the following characteristics:

1. simple elementary mistakes of names, dates, arithmetical operations, or transcriptions of documents;
- (2) the error is assessed solely on the basis of the information contained in the file;
- (3) the error is obvious and clear, without the need to rely on interpretations of applicable legal rules;
- (4) there is no fundamental alteration in the meaning of the act (since there is no material error where its assessment involves a value judgement or requires an operation of legal qualification);

If the university wishes to report factual errors, it must use the form provided for this purpose by AVAP. Factual errors will be reviewed by the Monitoring Committee, which will have to modify the report if necessary, or indicate in writing that it is not necessary to modify the report, stating the reasons.

After reviewing factual errors if any, or after the period of 5 working days to report them without any, the Monitoring Report will be published.

Subsequently, if it considers it appropriate, the university may submit appeals on the result of the report within 20 working days. The university may provide clarifications on the deficiencies detected, as well as provide an improvement plan that seeks to remedy them. This improvement plan must be specific, showing objectives, persons responsible and monitoring indicators, including a timetable for the implementation of the modifications to be made within a period of no more than three years.

With the exception of the improvement plan, appeals incorporating aspects or information not contained in the set of previous documentary evidence on which the report was based shall not be admitted.

Once the appeals, if any, have been assessed, AVAP will propose a final report, which may be favourable or unfavourable to the monitoring, and will send it to the applicant university. In the event that the follow-up report detects serious non-compliance with the commitments made in the syllabus report, AVAP will inform the governing bodies of the centre and the university and will inform the applicant university of this. And will inform the Regional Ministry so that the appropriate measures can be taken to safeguard the educational interests of the students, which may, if necessary, lead to the termination of the degree.

9. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

The complaints and appeals procedure allows an institution that has undergone a review process by AVAP to express dissatisfaction with the conduct of the process or those conducting it (complaints procedure) or to challenge the formal outcome, i.e. the renewal decision (appeals procedure).

The complaint procedure can be found in detail on AVAP's website <https://avap.es/es/avap-informa/sugerencias-quejas-y-felicitaciones/>.

The response to complaints, suggestions and/or acknowledgements will be the responsibility of the person in charge of the Directorate General of AVAP, as the body responsible. The processing of complaints, suggestions and/or acknowledgements will be the responsibility of the person in charge of the Higher Education Quality and Innovation service, or the Prospective Management and Public Services service, with regard to those that affect units and services within its remit.

Once the complaint, suggestion and/or thanks have been submitted, the body in charge of processing it will open an informative file, carrying out the enquiries and diligences it considers pertinent. Among the actions to be carried out, it shall obtain the appropriate information from the unit or service directly affected.

In relation to the appeals procedure, the university may lodge an appeal to the Follow-up Report within 20 working days.

AVAP will provide the university with a model for appeals. Once the university has sent them to AVAP, the latter will bring them to the attention of an independent commission, to ensure that they are resolved by a body other than the one that issued the report.

The body in charge of reviewing and responding to appeals is the Protocols and Appeals Commission, which is the responsible collegiate body designated by AVAP and whose Rules of Organisation and Operation can be consulted on our website.

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

The university, if it so wishes, may make clarifications or appeals regarding the deficiencies detected, as well as provide an improvement plan that seeks to remedy them. This improvement plan must be specific, showing objectives, persons responsible and monitoring indicators, including a timetable for the implementation of the modifications to be made within a period of no more than two years.

With the exception of the improvement plan, claims incorporating aspects or information not contained in the set of prior documentary evidence on which the interim report was based shall not be accepted.

In the event that a degree is taught in several centres (own and/or affiliated) of the same university and the interim report proposes the elimination of the participation of the centre or centres where there are serious breaches, the final report may be favourable if in the allegations the university undertakes that, once the renewal of accreditation has been obtained, if applicable, it will proceed to the specific modification of the degree programme report to exclude the centre from teaching the degree and request its removal from the degree programme before the Regional Ministry with responsibility for universities.

The Protocols and Appeals Commission is composed of:

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| a) A chairperson with an academic profile and experience in degree verification, authorisation, monitoring or accreditation processes. |
| b) A variable number of academic and/or professional members with experience in university quality assurance processes, preferably from the field of legal sciences. |
| c) A student member, trained in evaluation processes. |
| d) A secretary with a technical profile attached to AVAP, with the right to speak but not to vote. |

Once the appeals have been received, they are assessed by the Protocols and Appeals Committee, which, where appropriate, studies whether the improvement plan makes it possible to remedy the deficiencies found within a reasonable time, taking into account the impact of the deficiencies indicated in the report.



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