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Project acronym: MICROGUIDE

Project full title: DEVELOPING GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MICRO-CREDENTIALS IN
HIGHER EDUCATION

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Accreditation of Study Programs in Spain

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FH | JOANNEUM
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VSMA FRAMEWORK



Agència
per a la Qualitat
del Sistema Universitari
de Catalunya

FRAMEWORK FOR THE VALIDATION, MONITORING, MODIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION OF RECOGNISED UNIVERSITY DEGREES (MVSMA)



The VSMA Framework links together the quality assurance (QA) processes (ex-ante assessment, monitoring, modification and accreditation) that take place throughout the life-cycle of a degree course, the aim being to establish coherent links between all of them and promote greater efficiency in process management.



VALIDATION

In order to validate proposals for new recognised degree programmes made by higher education institutions in Catalonia, AQU Catalunya constitutes the subject-specific committees (CEA) that come under the Agency's Institutional and Programme Review Commission (CAIP) and are made up of recognised academics, EHEA experts, professionals and students

The university itself must request implementation of the principles of mutual trust between institutions, following which the Institutional and Programme Review Commission (CAIP), having established the position of each proposal within the corresponding cluster, endorses the use of this pathway. In order to make this decision, it will need the following information:

- The name to be given to the programme
- The cluster or benchmark it will be assigned to
- The workload in ECTS and courses
- The institution (faculty/school/institute, or “faculty”) responsible for the proposal
- The rector's recommendation that, where appropriate, quality assurance of the programme can be managed directly by the university.



MONITORING

The monitoring of recognised degree programmes must enable the institution to evaluate programme delivery, using as evidence among other things the levels of academic performance and other necessary indicators (employment outcomes, resource availability, the satisfaction of students, teaching staff and employers, etc.) in their diagnosis and to draw up enhancement proposals in order to correct any deviations detected between the programme design and actual delivery.

Each university will therefore need to have its own system for monitoring each programme in accordance with the guidelines of AQU Catalunya and as stipulated in its own internal quality assurance system, which is the main evidence for the subsequent accreditation of the programme.



MODIFICATION

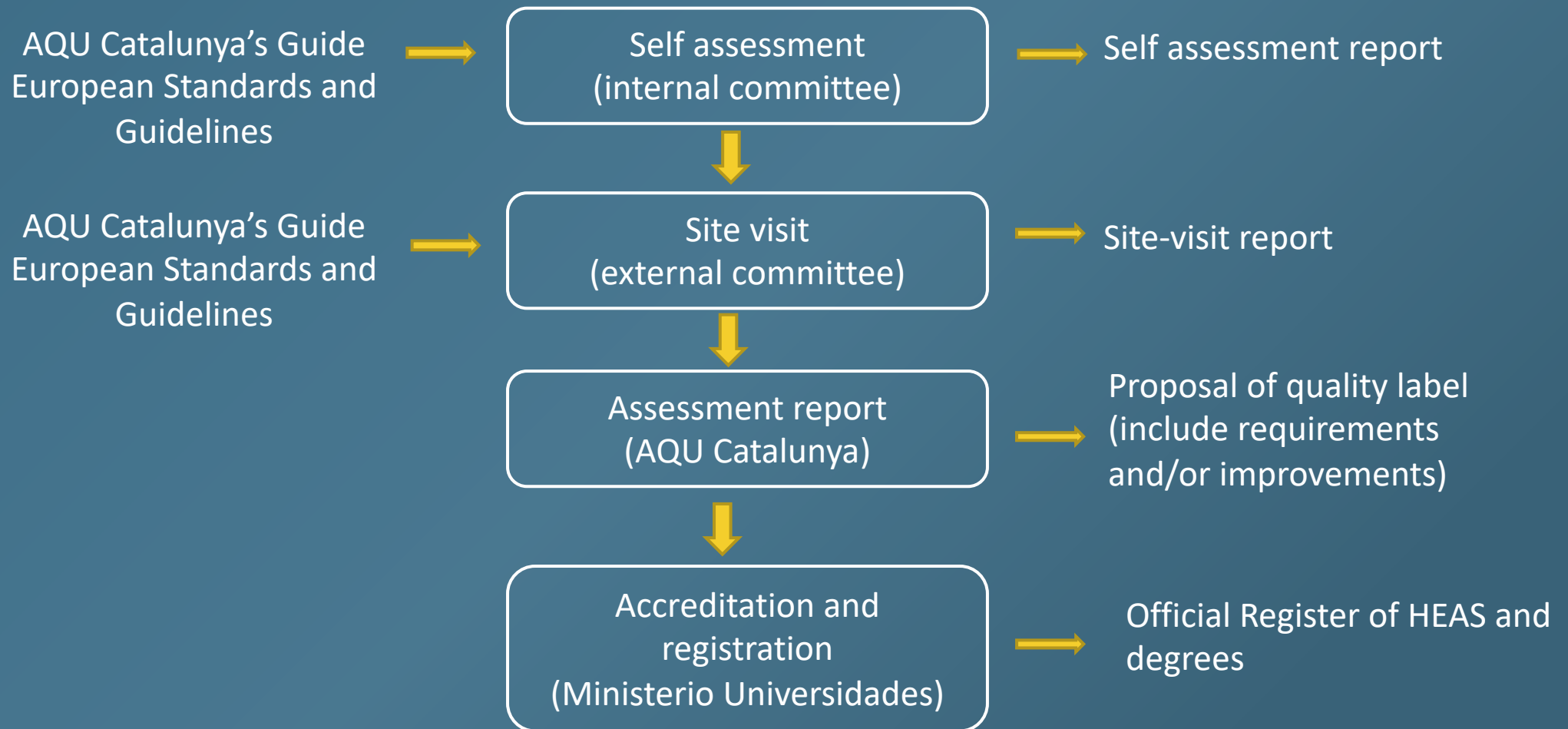
Proposals to modify degree programmes can only be made as a consequence of the monitoring process and are to be considered a natural result of this process

Possible changes to higher education degree courses can be classified according to type:

- **Non-substantial modifications:** minor changes that are improvements to the degree that the university can make as a result of monitoring. Changes of this type are set out in the monitoring reports and are included in the programme specification when it undergoes any modification.
- **Substantial modifications:** changes to a validated degree that imply alterations to its structure, nature, general objectives or competences. These are classified according to two types:
 - **Authorised:** changes that affect the structure of the degree, but not its nature, general objectives or competences. Changes of this type can be requested by way of modification.
 - **Unauthorised:** substantial changes that affect the nature, general objectives or competences of a validated degree and cannot be requested through programme modification. Such changes can only be made by applying for the validation of a new degree course and discontinuation of the degree course that is running

ACCREDITATION

As the corresponding external quality assurance body, AQU Catalunya is responsible for programme accreditation.





'EX ANTE' ACCREDITATION OF SHORT-LEARNING PROGRAMS

MICRO-CREDENTIALS



ACREDITACIÓ
'EX ANTE' DE PROGRAMES DE CURTA
DURADA*

** Short Learning Programmes*





AQU Catalunya has develop a guide for developing and assessing SLP and microcredentials

Short learning programmes - Micro-credentials

Short learning programmes (SLPs) are a type of course (unit, module, etc.) in a particular subject area that focus on specific societal needs which can be a part of larger degree programmes.

SLPs have evolved into an opportunity not only to establish bridges between the academic system and the professional world but also to promote lifelong learning.

A micro-credential is proof of the learning outcomes acquired by students on an SLP.



The SLPs assessed by AQU Catalunya can be characterised as follows:

- Levels 2 and 3 under the Catalan Higher Education Qualifications Framework, and levels 4 and 5 of the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications.
- Programmes linked to the Catalan Public Employment Service's Catalogue of Training in Specialised Fields.
- Credit load: between 4 and 30 ECTS credits.
- ECTS credits earned are recognisable in official qualifications.
- They are taught by Catalan universities.
- They are in line with labour market needs.
- They are targeted at non-traditional students.

Catalan Higher Education Qualifications Framework (CHE-QF)

“ Qualification frameworks enable **comparability** and **transparency within the EHEA**, and identification of the ways in which students can move from one level to another within a higher education system and between different education systems. In addition, **they describe what students need to know, understand, and be able to do from a given qualification Level.** ”

CHE-QF LEVELS	QUALIFICATIONS			LEVELS MECES	LEVELS EQF	LEVELS QF-EHEA
	Upper Vocational Training	HE Study Programmes In Arts	University			
4			PhD Diploma Not typically credit-rated 3 years	4	8	Third Cycle
3		Master's Degree in Arts 120 ECTS 2 years	Master's Degree 120 ECTS 2 years	3	7	Second Cycle
		60-ECTS 1 years	60-ECTS 1 years			
2B		Bachelor's Degree in Arts 240 ECTS 4 years	Advanced Bachelor's Degree 240 ECTS 4 years	2	6	First Cycle
2A			300-ECTS 5 years			
1	Advanced Technician in Vocational Training, Advanced Technician in Plastic Arts and Design, Advanced Technician in Sports Education (Advanced Technician) 120 ECTS 2 years	Bachelor's Degree in Arts 240 ECTS 4 years	Bachelor's Degree 180 ECTS 3 years	1	5	Short Cycle

DESIGN OF SHORT LEARNING OR MICRO-CREDENTIAL PROGRAMMES

When designing these programmes, the following must be taken into account:

- The description of the programme
- The justification for its creation
- The internal quality assurance system (IQAS)
- The objective and learning outcomes
- Student access and admission, and student support
- Planning
- Teaching and support staff
- Material resources and services
- Expected outcomes

ASSESSMENT PROCESS in brief

The assessment process consists of a prior evaluation by an ad hoc committee, which submits a proposal for an assessment report to the specific assessment committee of the corresponding area of the Institutional and Programme Assessment Committee.

This Specific Committee is the one that issues an initial report (preliminary report), regarding which the university may submit allegations. After having analysed the allegations made, the Specific Committee issues the final report in terms of a favourable or unfavourable ex ante assessment.

The university may lodge an appeal against this decision before the AQU Catalunya Appeals Committee within a maximum period of one month from its notification.

ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING OF THE EVALUATION

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ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING OF THE EVALUATION

AD HOC EVALUATION COMMITTEE OF THE PROPOSALS

AQU Catalunya will create an ad hoc assessment committee for SLP proposals, which will be made up of academics, representatives of the professional world and one or more students. This committee will evaluate the suitability and appropriateness of the new program proposal in a collegiate manner. The ad hoc evaluation committee will report to the specific evaluation committee (CEA) of AQU Catalunya that corresponds (by area), which are responsible for the evaluation processes of the programs.

As a general rule, the ad hoc evaluation committee for SLP proposals has the following composition:

- a) The president, preferably a professor, appointed from among people with recognized academic merit.
- b) At least one academic member or an academic member of the knowledge branch of the program.
- c) At least two people of recognized professional merit.
- d) At least one student from the SLP field of knowledge.
- e) A methodologist, with a voice but without a vote, preferably appointed from among the technical staff of AQU Catalunya.

All members of the ad hoc evaluation committee for SLP proposals are appointed by the president of the Institutional and Program Evaluation Commission (CAIP).

ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING OF THE EVALUATION

SPECIFIC EVALUATION COMMISSIONS

The Institutional and Program Evaluation Commission (CAIP) has set up, for the verification of bachelor's and master's degrees, five specific evaluation commissions (CEA), of a permanent nature and corresponding to the five branches of knowledge: Arts and Humanities, Social and Legal Sciences, Sciences, Health Sciences, and Engineering and Architecture. The CEAs are responsible for the evaluation of programs and institutions within the VSMA Framework (AQU Catalunya, 2016) and, therefore, are responsible for the verification, monitoring, modification and accreditation process. Its main function is to assess the suitability and adequacy of the new degree proposal made by the university institutions so that the Universities Council can verify them.

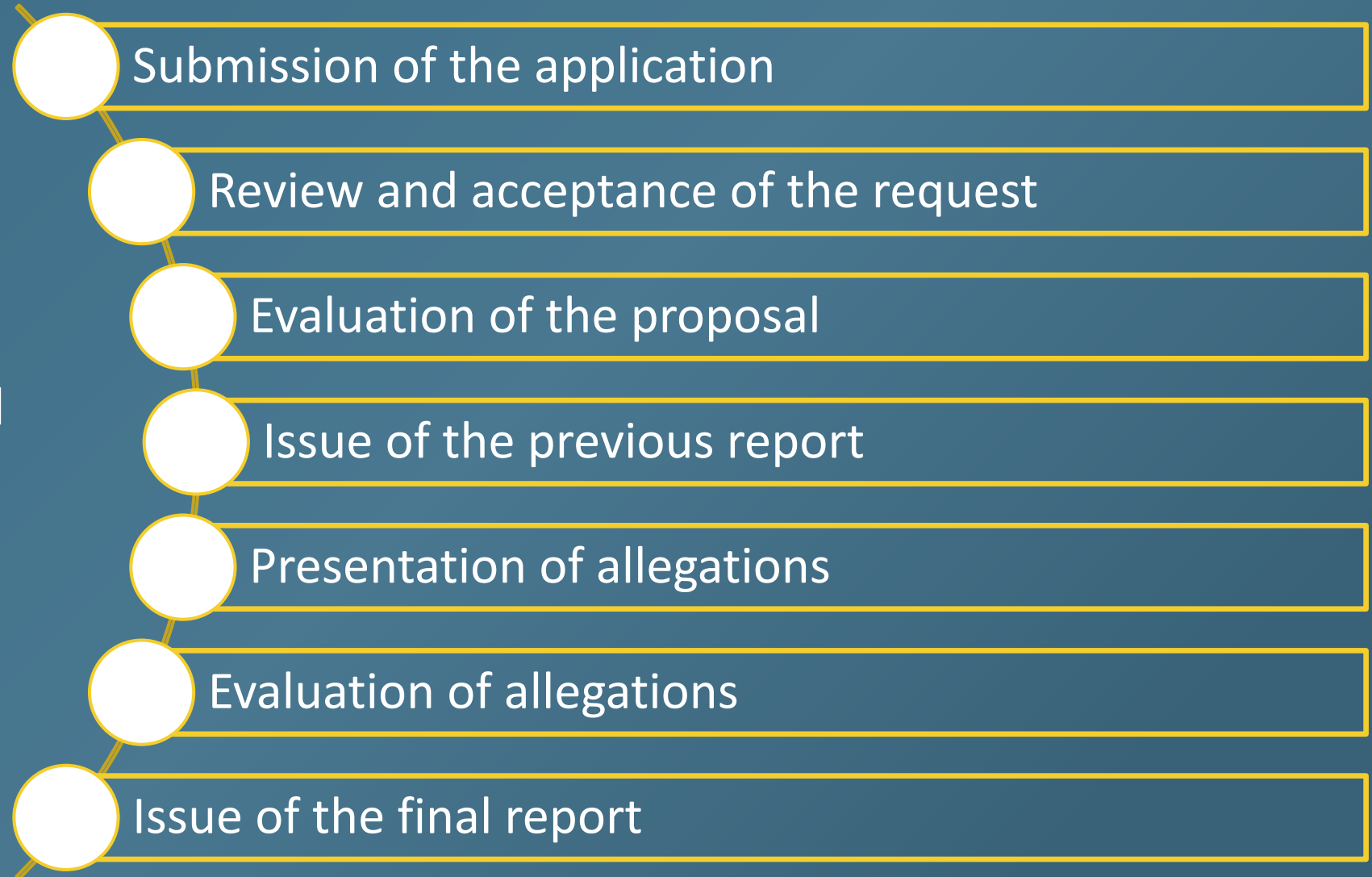
APPEALS COMMITTEE

The Appeals Committee is the committee responsible for resolving the appeals presented in the evaluation processes. For the resolution of appeals, the Commission must have reports from experts in the area or areas of the PCDs that bring the appeal, preferably from outside the Catalan university system.



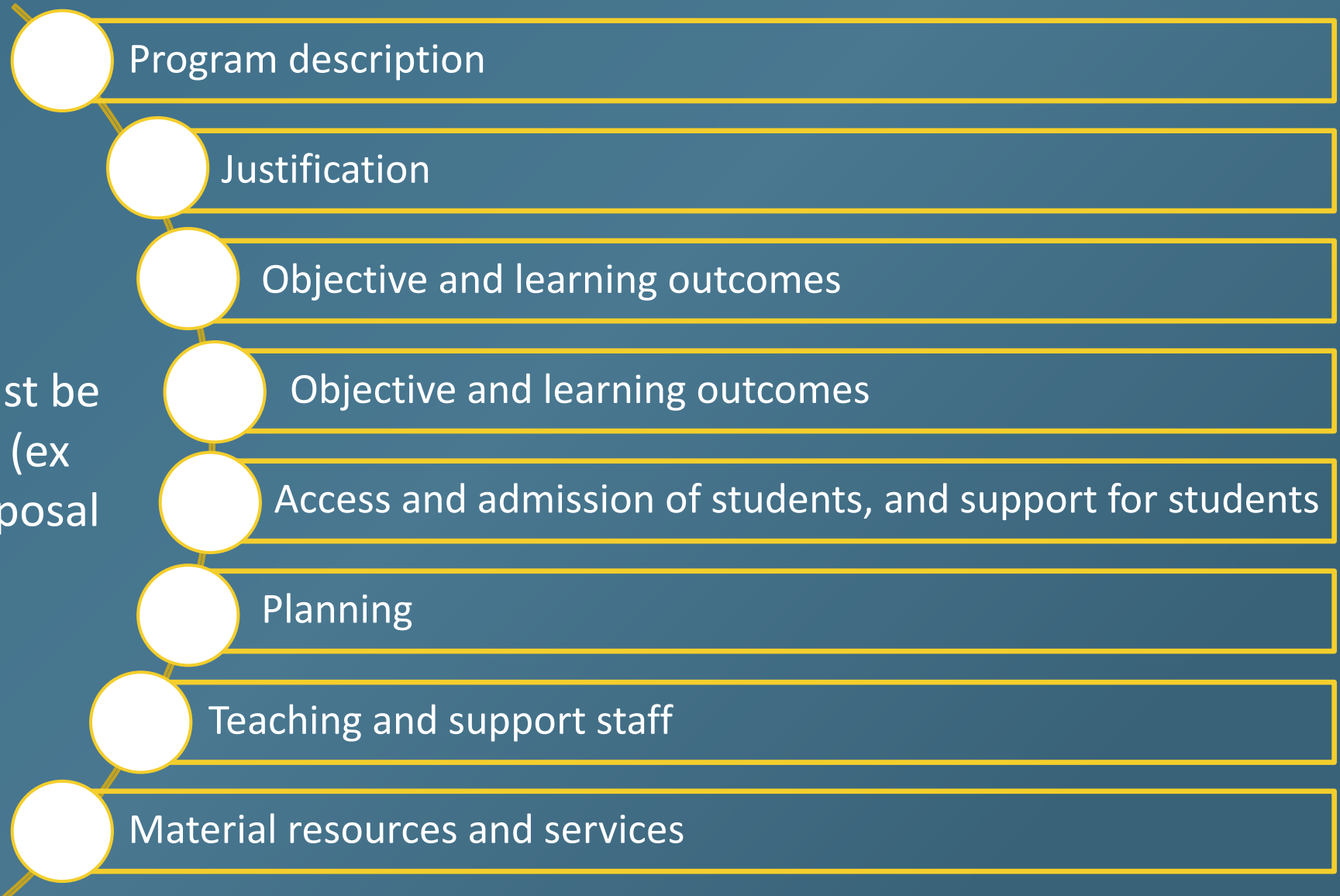
ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING OF THE EVALUATION

EVALUATION PROCESS



ASSESSMENT DIMENSIONS AND STANDARDS

The aspects that must be assessed to accredit (ex ante) a new SLP proposal



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- University and requesting center
- Denomination
- Program level
- Link with the professional specialty
 - Professional family and professional area
 - Occupations related to this training
- Total training duration (ECTS)
- Mode of teaching
- Offer of new entry places

JUSTIFICATION

Relationship with the needs of the labor market

- Description of the training needs detected
- Describe the facts that make it necessary to include the educational specialty in the Catalog of educational specialties
- Differential aspects of the recipient population that justify the need
- Analysis carried out of the specialties in the Catalog to confirm the non-existence of a registered specialty that already has the focus and content necessary to fill the jobs
- Short- and medium-term placement forecast for students trained in the new specialty

OBJECTIVE AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Objective of the program

1. Learning outcomes
 - a. Knowledge
 - b. Types of knowledge
 - c. Depth, breadth and diversity of knowledge
2. Skills
 - a. Cognitive skills
 - b. Creative skills
 - c. Problem solving
 - d. Technical and practical skills
 - e. Informative/communication skills
3. Competences
 - a. Learning environment
 - b. professional environment

ACCESS AND ADMISSION OF STUDENTS, AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

- Access routes and requirements
- Admission
- Actions to support and guide students

PLANNING

Curricular structure
Training modules

Module Name

Name		Code
ECTS:	Teaching hours:	No. order:
Objective:		
Contents:		
Learning outcomes:		
Knowledges:		
Skills :		
Competencies:		
Teaching modality:		
Teaching methods:		
Assessment methods:		

TEACHING AND SUPPORT STAFF

Adequacy and sufficiency of the teaching staff

Adequacy and sufficiency of support staff

MATERIAL RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Adequacy and sufficiency of material resources

- Minimum requirements for spaces, facilities and equipment

- Official requirements of the centers

- Online training platform

Adequacy of collaborating entities (practice centers)

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM



EVALUATION RESULTS

Final report

The report must contain at least the following information:

1. Description of the context of the title.
2. Description of the procedure used, including the experts involved.
3. Result of the ex ante accreditation.
4. Evaluation result for each of the dimensions.
5. Improvement proposals (recommendations for follow-up actions).

AQU Catalunya sends the final report to the requesting entity.



LABELS AND CERTIFICATES

EFFECTS OF THE EVALUATION

The ex ante accreditation of a PCD makes it possible to ensure that it meets the minimum requirements for the established level. This accreditation allows the process of registration of the training activity to begin in the Catalog of training specialties of the SEPE.



Finally, all the assessment reports are published on the AQU Catalunya reporting portal (<http://estudis.aqu.cat/informes>) and, later, also in the Database on External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR). When the assessed training activity obtains a favourable ex-ante accreditation report, AQU Catalunya will issue a quality label with a unique number valid for a maximum of six years. Once the programme has been accredited, it must be reviewed at least every six years according to the same dimensions. Follow-up is mandatory but is an internal process for the institution.

ASSESSMENT 2020

Collaborating in the 2020 project to assess short learning programmes were the Secretariat for Universities and Research, the Catalan Public Employment Service (SOC) and the Consortium for Lifelong Learning in Catalonia. It also received support from the Barcelona Digital Talent alliance, which includes, among others, Mobile World Capital - Barcelona.

The project assessed seven short learning programmes linked to the field of information and communication technologies taught in different Catalan universities.

Assessment reports on the design of short learning or micro-credential programmes:

- [Android mobile developer](#)
- [Cloud Deployer](#)
- [Consultor CRM](#)
- [Data Scientist](#)
- [Frontal developer](#)
- [Java Back-end web developer](#)
- [Open Source Back end web developer](#)

Vielen danke
Хвала Вам много
Gràcies

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