

Title of example of practice:

ANECAS's White Paper for Language, Literature, Culture and Civilisation – Guidelines for promoting quality assurance and enhancement within the EHEA framework.

Author

(i.e. details of LanQua partner submitting example of practice):

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Institution and initiating department/faculty

(i.e. where example of practice takes/took place):

Universidad Polit cnica de Valencia, Dept. of Applied Linguistics

Departments/faculties in which initiative is/was implemented/to be implemented:

All Spanish faculties offering a degree in language studies, linguistics, literature, culture, and civilisation.

Abstract

(QA question: What are/were you trying to do?)

The *White Paper for Language, Literature, Culture and Civilisation* is a reference tool aimed at laying the foundations for adapting the existing Spanish degrees in language, linguistics, literature, culture and civilisation to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This document includes not only a study of the current situation in other European countries (always related to our field of interest) and a proposal of adapted higher education degrees for Spain, but also a set of competences (both specific and transversal) that graduate students should acquire and a proposal of quality assurance mechanisms and indicators for such degrees.

We think it would be of great interest to analyse the quality assurance criteria proposed in it, as well as exploring to what extent those quality mechanisms are being implemented in Spanish universities.

To do so, we have designed a questionnaire and distributed it among language and literature teachers from different Spanish universities, which will allow us to draw some meaningful conclusions about those quality enhancement mechanisms.

Background – contextual issues giving rise to the initiative

(QA questions: Why are/were you trying to do it? / What are/were the aims and objectives?)

The National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) is a Spanish national body whose main aim is to contribute to the quality improvement of the higher education system through the assessment, certification and accreditation of university degrees, programmes, teaching staff and institutions.

Therefore, it is the authoritative body as regards quality assessment and enhancement in Spanish higher education institutions.

In the framework of the Bologna process, a network of Spanish universities supported by ANECA commissioned different groups of experts to write a series of documents (white papers) that would serve as a guideline to adapt Spanish university degrees to EHEA.

In Particular, the *White Paper for Language, Literature, Culture and Civilisation* includes some quality enhancement mechanisms that should be undertaken by Spanish Universities in order to improve the overall quality of the related degrees.

Therefore, we consider it would be greatly valuable to analyse the proposed quality assurance measures and check to what extent those mechanisms are actually being implemented, as it may well provide us with realistic information and examples that could be adapted and applied at a European-wide level.

Description of activity or initiative

(QA question: How is/was the activity/initiative implemented?)

A questionnaire was designed based on the quality enhancement mechanisms described in the *White Paper for Language, Literature, Culture and Civilisation*. Subsequently, it was sent to a number of professors and senior lecturers holding managerial posts from 10 Spanish public universities representing most regions in the country –Universidad de Alicante, Universidad de Barcelona, Universidad de Cádiz, Universidad de Jaén, Universitat Jaume I de Castelló, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Universidad de Oviedo, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Universidad Politécnica de Valencia and Universidad de Valencia– so as to check whether those suggested mechanisms are already being implemented.

We must bear in mind that this questionnaire reflects all the suggestions made by the *White Paper for Language, Literature, Culture and Civilisation* regarding quality assurance mechanisms to be implemented at “degree” level (not for a whole Faculty or University, which are definitely more extensive and address many other aspects).

The Questionnaire was as follows:



Spanish Case Study Questionnaire

Author:

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
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Person answering questionnaire

| |
|-------------|
| Name: |
| Position: |
| Department: |
| University: |
| Tel.: |
| E-mail: |
| Website: |

1) En el programa formativo puesto a disposición del estudiante consta: / *The educational programme made available to students includes:*

1.1 Nivel real de conocimientos con que ingresan los estudiantes y, en su caso, medios existentes para compensar y homogeneizar la preparación de origen. / *The actual level of knowledge with which students enter and, where appropriate, existing means to balance and homogenize their previous knowledge.*

Sí / Yes

No

NS/NC / N/A

1.2 Los objetivos del título. / *The objectives of the degree.*

Sí / Yes

No

NS/NC / N/A

1.3 Las competencias y conocimientos que se han de desarrollar y adquirir. / *The competences and the knowledge the student has to develop and to acquire.*

Sí / Yes

No

NS/NC / N/A

1.4 La estructura de los estudios con las orientaciones curriculares que pudieran haber. / *The structure of the study programme with any curricular orientations there might be.*

Sí / Yes

No

NS/NC / N/A

1.5 La organización de las asignaturas con los métodos de enseñanza y los sistemas de evaluación. / *How the subjects are organised, specifying teaching approaches and assessment systems.*

Sí / Yes

No

NS/NC / N/A

1.6 La organización administrativa y docente del centro, con especificación de las instancias en las que deben participar los estudiantes. / *The academic and administrative structure of the centre, specifying the bodies where the students are to participate.*

Sí / Yes

No

NS/NC / N/A

1.7 La normativa que regula la actividad académica durante todo el periodo de formación. / *The rules that regulate the academic activity during the entire training period.*

Sí / Yes

No

NS/NC / N/A

1.8 El perfil de los titulados y los distintos procedimientos para continuar la formación o informar sobre el acceso al mercado laboral. / *The graduates' profile and the different procedures to continue their training or get information on how to access the labour market.*

Sí / Yes

No

NS/NC / N/A

1.9 La existencia de un programa de acogida que oriente a los estudiantes de nuevo ingreso en el cumplimiento de los requisitos administrativos, etc. / *The existence of an orientation programme aimed at guiding first year students in all necessary administrative procedures, etc.*

Sí / Yes

No

NS/NC / N/A

1.10 Comentarios en relación con este punto. / *Comments relating to this point.*

2) Adecuación de los recursos docentes: / *Appropriateness of teaching resources:*

2.1 Tasa de estabilidad del cuerpo docente (en contraste con otras formas contractuales más precarias, etc.) / *Contractual stability of teaching staff (compared to other kinds of contracts which are more unstable, etc.)*

Muy buena / Very good Buena / Good Normal / Average
 Mala / Bad Muy mala / Very bad NS/NC / N/A

2.2 Existencia de una ratio profesor/estudiante adecuada. / *Existence of an appropriate teacher/student ratio.*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

2.3 Existencia de mecanismos de formación continua del profesorado. / *Existence of in-service training courses for teaching staff.*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

2.4 Existencia de mecanismos que propicien la participación real del profesorado en programas y proyectos de innovación docente. / *Existence of mechanisms enabling teaching staff to participate in educational innovation projects.*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

2.5 Existencia de mecanismos que fomenten la participación real del profesorado en programas de movilidad interuniversitaria. / *Existence of mechanisms encouraging teaching staff to participate in inter-university exchange programmes.*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

2.6 Existencia de mecanismos institucionales para prever la renovación del profesorado (por ejemplo: ampliación del programa de becas de colaboración y de investigación ligadas en mayor grado a la actividad docente y más afectadas por los programas de formación del profesorado). / *Existence of institutional mechanisms foreseeing teaching staff renovation (for instance: increasing the number of research grants relating to teaching practices and allowing beneficiaries to participate in teacher training programmes).*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

2.7 Comentarios en relación con este punto. / *Comments relating to this point.*

3) Adecuación de los recursos administrativos: / *Adjustment of the administrative resources.*

3.1 Número, estabilidad y formación del personal administrativo adecuados. / *Adequate number, stability and training of administrative staff.*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

3.2 Comentarios en relación con este punto. / *Comments relating to this point.*

4) Adecuación de los recursos materiales e infraestructuras: / *Adjustment of material resources and infrastructures.*

- 4.1 Correspondencia del espacio docente a las necesidades de la enseñanza (tamaño de aulas, horarios lectivos racionales, etc.) / *Suitability of lecture rooms/labs./halls for the teaching needs (classroom size, adequate timetables, etc.)*

Muy buena / Very good
Mala / Bad

Buena / Good
Muy mala / Very bad

Normal / Average
NS/NC / N/A

- 4.2 Número adecuado de laboratorios de idiomas, aulas de informática y espacios de trabajo para grupos de alumnos. / *Appropriate number of languages labs, IT rooms and areas where students can work in groups.*

Muy buena / Very good
Mala / Bad

Buena / Good
Muy mala / Very bad

Normal / Average
NS/NC / N/A

- 4.3 Disponibilidad de bibliotecas con fondos especializados, con suficientes ejemplares de los manuales básicos a disposición de los estudiantes, y puestos de consulta en sala proporcionados al número total de estudiantes. / *Availability of libraries with specialised books, enough copies of the basic textbooks and enough desks in proportion to the total number of students.*

Muy buena / Very good
Mala / Bad

Buena / Good
Muy mala / Very bad

Normal / Average
NS/NC / N/A

- 4.4 Existencia y mantenimiento de una infraestructura docente (ordenadores, proyectores digitales, Internet, televisiones y antenas parabólicas, videos, lectores de DVD, etc.) adecuada. / *Existence and maintenance of an appropriate teaching infrastructure (computers, LCD projectors, Internet, televisions and satellite dishes, videos, DVD players, etc.).*

Muy buena / Very good
Mala / Bad

Buena / Good
Muy mala / Very bad

Normal / Average
NS/NC / N/A

- 4.5 Existencia de espacios comunes (comedores, jardines, etc.) requeridos para garantizar una mínima calidad en la vida universitaria. / *Existence of common areas (dinning halls, gardens, etc.) required to guarantee minimal quality standards in university life.*

Muy buena / Very good
Mala / Bad

Buena / Good
Muy mala / Very bad

Normal / Average
NS/NC / N/A

- 4.6 Otros comentarios en relación con este punto. / *Other comments relating to this point.*

- 5) **Aplicación del programa formativo cuyo proceso de enseñanza se caracteriza por: / *Implementation of the learning programme whose teaching process is characterised by:***

- 5.1 La existencia de un programa de estudios claro y eficaz, que guíe al estudiante en la elección de las asignaturas con el fin de configurar adecuadamente su currículo. / *The existence of a clear and efficient syllabus which guides the student in his/her choice of subjects with the aim of shaping his/her curriculum adequately.*

Sí / Yes

No

NS/NC / N/A

- 5.2 La existencia de un programa de tutorías que aconseje al alumno en la toma de decisiones y en la resolución de problemas. / *The existence of tutorials to advise students on decision-making and problem-solving.*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

- 5.3 La concreción y divulgación de los mecanismos de coordinación y supervisión interna (por ejemplo: departamentos, comisiones académicas de titulaciones, etc.). / *The specification and publication of the internal coordination and supervision mechanisms (for instance: departments, academic committees to coordinate degrees, etc.)*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

- 5.4 La existencia de programas y guías docentes para cada asignatura donde se hagan explícitos los objetivos, los contenidos, el sistema de evaluación, etc. / *The existence of programmes and study guides for each subject indicating objectives, contents, assessment, etc.*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

- 5.5 La disponibilidad de programas de movilidad interuniversitaria nacional e internacional para los estudiantes. / *The availability of national and international inter-university student exchange programmes.*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

- 5.6 La proporcionalidad entre clases teóricas, prácticas y prácticas externas adecuada para la adquisición de las competencias y habilidades marcadas en el plan de estudios. / *The balance between theory lessons, practical lessons and internships oriented toward the acquisition of the competences and skills specified in the syllabus.*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

- 5.7 Otros comentarios en relación con este punto. / *Other comments relating to this point.*

6) Mecanismos de seguimiento de la inserción laboral de los titulados: / *Follow-up mechanisms to analyse the graduates' integration into the labour market:*

- 6.1 Existencia de mecanismos para conocer el grado de satisfacción de los titulados. / *Existence of mechanisms to find out the graduates' level of satisfaction.*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

- 6.2 Existencia de mecanismos para conocer el grado de satisfacción de los empleadores. / *Existence of mechanisms to find out the level of satisfaction of their employers.*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

- 6.3 Existencia de procedimientos para la mejora del programa formativo en función de los datos obtenidos en los apartados anteriores. / *Existence of procedures to improve the study programme taking into account the data collected in the previous items.*

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

- 6.4 Otros comentarios en relación con este punto. / *Other comments relating to this point.*

7) Evaluación de la calidad: / Quality assessment.

7.1 Existencia de mecanismos de evaluación de la calidad del programa. / Existence of mechanisms to assess the quality of the study programme.

Sí / Yes No NS/NC / N/A

7.2 Si la respuesta anterior es **Sí**, el proceso de evaluación es: / If you answered "yes" above, the quality assessment is conducted:

Sólo interno / Only internally Sólo externo / Only externally Interno y externo / Internally and externally NS/NC / N/A

7.3 Otros comentarios en relación con este punto. / Other comments relating to this point.

Evaluative comments

(QA questions: What are/were the outcomes? What is/was the impact? Is/was the activity/initiative successful? How do you know whether or not it works/worked?)

After checking the results of the completed questionnaires, it is clear that the Spanish universities surveyed are making efforts to implement effective quality assurance mechanisms, and most of these actions are taken in agreement with what was specified in the White Paper. In this sense, let us not forget that, ultimately, the White Paper was addressing the needs that had already been identified by higher education institutions, thus providing a series of recommendations aimed at all the Spanish universities offering degrees relating to these areas.

The first section of the questionnaire poses a number of questions regarding the educational programme made available by universities to students. Here, most respondents give fairly positive answers, although half of them regret that the programme does not take into account the actual level of knowledge with which students enter higher education, as well as the existing means to solve this problem (1.1). Over one third of them do not agree with the objectives of the degree (1.2) as established in the academic programme. The same number of lecturers thinks that the educational programme does not include relevant information regarding the graduates' profile and the existing means to enter the labour market (1.8).

The second section enquires about the appropriateness of the teaching resources that are available. Here again most respondents report satisfaction, except over one third of them who think that there are not enough institutional mechanisms promoting the renovation of teaching staff (2.6). Besides, one of the lecturers states that the university he works for is weak in all the aspects under consideration in this section.

The majority of respondents are satisfied with the allocation of administrative staff, as well as with the material resources and infrastructures available. Less than one third consider that the number of language labs, IT rooms, libraries and common areas are appropriate.

Regarding section five of the questionnaire, over one third of the respondents think that the syllabus is not clear and efficient enough for the students (5.1), that the dissemination of the internal coordination and supervision mechanisms (at departments, etc.) is not correct (5.3), and that the balance between theory lessons, practical lessons and internships is not adequate (5.6).

Section six deals with the issue of follow-up mechanisms to analyse the graduates' integration into the labour market. It is worth noting that the majority of the respondents are totally ignorant about the existence of these mechanisms at their universities. We can infer that this is probably due to the fact that these actions are undertaken by specific management and administrative units within universities, so teaching staff are not aware of their implementations. However, it also shows a lack of

internal communication between the different members of the university community.

Finally, section seven enquires about quality assessment. All universities have mechanisms to assess the quality of the study programme (except one of them, for which the respondent did not know whether his university had any such quality assessment mechanisms). Half of the universities are reported to implement both internal and external assessment mechanisms, whereas the rest are only internally evaluated.

In general, the results obtained are quite positive, and they show that language, literature (and related) departments at Spanish universities are taking the necessary steps to guarantee the quality of their academic programmes, at least to the extent proposed in the White Paper. Obviously, the level of implementation of these mechanisms varies from one university to another, but the overall result is more than satisfactory.

Advice to others

The results obtained through this case study could help us to compare the situation in Spain with what is being done in other European countries, so the quality assurance mechanisms implemented in Spanish universities offering degrees focusing on literature and culture can inspire other European universities.

In addition, and probably more important, we can see what European higher education institutions are doing and analyse their quality assurance mechanisms, thus finding ways of complementing and enhancing those actually undertaken in Spain.

Reflection/any other comments

QA question: Is/was that the best way to do it? Why/why not? What improvements or adjustments are needed?

The quality assurance mechanisms set forth in the *White Paper for Language, Literature, Culture and Civilisation* are a general proposal, and does not seem to include any specific consideration in the field of Literature and Culture. This may be considered as something good or bad, depending on how we see it, but taking into account that these subjects are present in different degrees it is probably better to keep it as general as possible.

The quality section at the White Paper could be improved by detailing to a higher extent the quality mechanisms that should be implemented by departments and schools offering courses on these areas, and probably establishing a set of measures to deal with those aspects that receive a poor evaluation. Templates could also be created to homogenise the information provided by Faculties/Departments and to cover all the aspects suggested in the White Paper (for instance, those regarding the information contained in the syllabus).

Further details

e.g. web links; relevant references/publications; alternative contact names

- ANECA: www.aneca.es

- White Paper for Language, Literature, Culture and Civilisation:
http://www.aneca.es/media/150244/libroblanco_lengua_def.pdf

- Universidad de Alicante: www.ua.es
- Universidad de Barcelona: www.ub.es
- Universidad de Cádiz: www.uca.es
- Universitat Jaume I de Castelló: www.uji.es
- Universidad de Jaén: www.ujaen.es
- Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED): www.uned.es
- Universidad de Oviedo: www.uniovi.es
- Universidad de Santiago de Compostela: www.usc.es
- Universidad Politécnica de Valencia: www.upv.es
- Universidad de Valencia: www.uv.es