
Internal Quality Assurance System Manual

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Version 03

Version log

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"We strive for excellence in our educational services, teaching and research activities, and organizational processes. The voice of our students, our graduates and society at large must be heard, while also ensuring academic rigour in our teaching programmes and lines of research."

UOC Code of Ethics, 30 March 2017

Foreword

Since it was founded, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) has been a digital native institution committed to the quality and academic rigour of its educational programmes. As a result of this approach, quality forms the basis of its activity, in regards to both the teaching and the related educational services and administrative processes.

For this reason, the University has its own quality policy, which guides the assessment and improvement of the institution and its internal quality assurance system (IQAS). The manual and the processes that form part of this system are aligned with the Catalan university system's quality requirements, and include a spirit of continuous improvement as the backbone to strategy and academic policy.

Over this period, the University has created and integrated a Quality Committee with representatives from its main stakeholders and governing bodies. It has included quality as a basic principle in its code of ethics, as well as gender perspective in the system through the development of cross-cutting skills. All this has helped build an increasingly transparent, participatory, diverse, inclusive and sustainable UOC.

Thanks to this firm commitment to maintaining and raising quality levels in all areas of the university activity, on 1 March 2022, UOC was awarded institutional accreditation by the Spanish Universities Council, making it the first university in Catalonia to obtain institutional accreditation for all its official university master's and bachelor's degree programmes.

This manual, the university's trajectory and the internal quality assurance system reflect the institution's dedication to quality. At the same time, in an increasingly unpredictable and changing environment, they act as the incentive to address current and future challenges through continuous improvement.

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Introduction

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya's (UOC) Internal Quality Assurance System was designed online following European quality standards. It sets out the fundamental principles of quality management, the functions and responsibilities of quality managers, the role of stakeholders and the compulsory guidelines to follow in developing the University's academic quality assurance system.

The ***Internal Quality Assurance System Manual*** is the core document of the University's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). Following an introductory section that puts the manual and institution into context, there are a series of sections and appendices that provide details on the different parts of the manual and which should serve as a guide for its use.

The UOC's Internal Quality Assurance System has been in force since 2007. Since then, it has been continuously reviewed and updated to ensure that it meets the University's ever-evolving needs, responds to new strategic challenges and addresses the stakeholders' requirements and expectations. The present document is the most recent outcome of this process.

1. The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

1.1. Introduction

The UOC was created with the support of the Government of Catalonia to provide a fully online university education service. To give structure to this initiative, a privately managed entity (namely, a not-for-profit private foundation) was formed, giving rise to the Fundació per a la Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (FUOC).

The FUOC is governed by a [Board of Trustees](#) whose members are highly respected entities with an extensive presence in Catalan society. These include the Government of Catalonia; the Federació Catalana de Caixes d'Estalvis (Catalan Federation of Savings Banks); the Cambra Oficial de Comerç, Indústria, Serveis i Navegació de Barcelona (Barcelona Chamber of Commerce); and the Corporació Catalana de Mitjans Audiovisuals (Catalan Broadcasting Corporation, CCMA).

The FUOC's mission is to ensure efficient, effective management and administration of the University, conducting such inspection, assessment and control functions as may be necessary to guarantee optimal quality of the education process.

Once formed, the UOC received unanimous recognition with Law 3/1995, of 6 April, published in the *Official Journal of the Government of Catalonia* (DOGC) no. 2040 on 21 April 1995.

In this Law, the UOC is constituted as a public university with public prices, financed by the Government of Catalonia but structured using a private law construct and subject to parliamentary oversight.

As such, the UOC is a university that provides a public service but is organized in accordance with the principles of private management. The programmes it offers are official and endorsed by the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya) [www.aqu.cat] and the Spanish Quality Assessment and Accreditation Agency (ANECA) [www.aneca.es], which assure academic rigour and compliance with the standards required by the European university system.

Over the years, the University has gradually expanded and diversified its catalogue of programmes and courses, even offering some in other languages. It has also improved its educational model, always placing students at the centre of learning. It began by expanding its presence across Catalonia and Spain, setting up an extensive network of UOC centres, followed by eventually consolidating its presence in a number of Ibero-American countries as well, such as Mexico and Colombia.

Finally, it has set up three research centres specializing in the information and knowledge society, e-learning and e-health, becoming an international benchmark in these fields.

Follow this link to see some relevant [facts and figures](#).

1.2. Gender perspective at the UOC

Aligned with AQU Catalunya's *General framework for incorporating the gender perspective in higher education teaching*, UOC fosters initiatives that lead to equality policies, an organizational culture that favours gender equality and an inclusive perspective by which the University's communication, image and language use, moves away from the traditional androcentric approach.

For this reason, UOC has created the Equality Unit, whose goal is to develop equality policies especially from a gender diversity perspective. Its main purpose is to ensure equal treatment and opportunities between women and men, including all who identify as LGBTI, and to combat situations involving sexual harassment and discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression. -

UOC incorporates the gender perspective in its teaching by considering the interdisciplinary competency known as **global ethical commitment**, which implies acting honestly, ethically, sustainably, socially responsibly and respectfully towards human rights and diversity, both in academia and the professional world.

1.3. Diversity, inclusivity and commitment at the UOC

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a central pillar of the UOC's pursuit to position itself as a global university. Accordingly, it is facing the world's greatest challenges head-on by generating knowledge that can be used to help our societies progress.

The UOC's equal-opportunity and inclusive approach to higher education has been designed to ensure that no one is left behind. What's more, its programmes aid students in becoming socially responsible citizens with a global outlook. The University also engages in research that has a social impact and forges alliances with academic and cultural institutions, international agencies and organizations from the voluntary sector.

The UOC champions higher education as a right that everyone should be able to enjoy under equal conditions. To this effect, the University is able to leverage its quality e-learning model to open up quality higher education and training opportunities to anyone with the drive to learn.

As a result, UOC prides itself in being a diverse and inclusive university with a strong commitment towards the Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda (Quality Education).

1.4. The UOC model

The UOC's [educational model](#) has been the University's hallmark since its beginnings. It was created with the goal of offering an effective solution for the educational needs of people engaged in lifelong learning and to optimally leverage the potential offered by the internet to learn in a flexible environment.

By placing focus on students and their learning activities, the UOC's model makes education a hands-on experience. Students are confronted with challenges and must work to overcome them, although not necessarily alone. Thanks to support from teaching staff and interactions with classmates, students are able to develop the necessary skills to tackle social and work-related challenges of any kind. The educational model relies on an intensive use of information and communication technologies.

The entire learning process takes place mainly on the UOC's Virtual Campus, which provides access to the online classrooms. The classrooms are where learning really happens, as they gather professors, students, activities, resources and tools for learning all in one place. Students can access the multilingual campus from anywhere, a feature that fosters interculturality and contact with people from a wide range of professional backgrounds.

1.5. Education at UOC

UOC's mission is to provide lifelong learning and educational opportunities to all. Accordingly, its aim is to help people satisfy their higher education needs and offer them full access to knowledge by doing away with space and time constraints and fostering a balance in their personal, professional and educational responsibilities.

UOC's official programmes offer is composed of bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and doctoral programmes, many of which are organized in collaboration with other universities, mainly within the Catalan university system. It also offers a range of UOC-certified programmes that seek to meet the specific needs of professionals and businesses going through change. This includes professional training, training for businesses, open courses and language courses. Click [here](#) to see some useful facts and figures about what the educational landscape looks like at the UOC.

For both official and UOC-certified programmes, the University organizes its [programmes](#) into seven faculties: Arts and Humanities; Health Sciences; Information and Communication Sciences; Law and Political Science; Economics and Business; Computer Science, Multimedia and Telecommunications; and Psychology and Education Sciences. What's more, the University's [programmes offer](#) is constantly updated to stay on top of today's ever-changing environment.

As a result, the University has a distinctive [student profile](#) that sets it apart from the Catalan university system as a whole.

1.6. Research at the UOC

A total of 50 research groups within the University's faculties or one of its three research centres are responsible for the [UOC's research and innovation activity](#).

Its research, innovation and transfer activities are specialize in the fields of arts and humanities, social sciences, health sciences, and technology and communication. Subject areas of

particular interest revolve around identity, culture, art and society; technology and social action; globalization, legal pluralism and human rights; taxation, labour relations and social welfare; internet, digital technologies and new media; and management, information systems and services, and communication.

The overarching goal of these research areas is to achieve constant improvement and knowledge transfer. UOC fosters open knowledge, in other words, it is committed to creating a global, cross-cutting, open knowledge network.

The [R&I Reports](#) section of the UOC's R&I portal provides detailed information about the research and innovation projects undertaken by University staff, including their projects, scientific output, awards and others.

2. Organization and governance

2.1. Organizational structure

The UOC's [organizational structure](#) is divided into four large blocks: faculty, research staff, management and the Office of the President, which implement the objectives and policy lines established by the Executive Board.

The UOC's **academic structure** is organized into faculties, while the **management structure** is organized into departments that ensure the University's day-to-day operations.

Faculties are run by UOC faculty members, who handle the academic management of the programmes offered by the University and coordinate the network of affiliated teaching staff.

Administrative staff and members of the Office of the President are divided into departments and units. The units concentrate on specialized areas of activity, providing a focus point where teams can pool their knowledge. The departments group several units together and give them global direction in line with the University's objectives.

This [organization chart](#) provides an overview of the University's organizational model.

2.2. Governing, representation and coordination bodies

The UOC has set up a number of governing, representation and coordination bodies to ensure proper operation and governance. Details on each one are laid out in the following sections.

2.2.1. Governing bodies

The UOC's Organizational and Operational Regulations provide for two types of [governing body](#): single-person and collegiate.

Thus, the following bodies currently exist at the UOC:

Single-person governing bodies

- [President and vice presidents](#)
- [General secretary](#)
- [General manager](#)

Collegiate governing bodies

- [Board of Trustees](#). The Board of Trustees is the maximum authority of representation, governance and administration of the Fundació per a la Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (FUOC), in accordance with Article 14 of its Statutes. The Board of Trustees' main functions are to:

- Approve and, where necessary, amend the UOC's Organizational and Operational Regulations.
- Appoint and dismiss the president and the general manager.
- Approve the University's budget and accounts.
- Approve action plans presented by the president and assess the results.

- [Governing Council](#). The Governing Council's membership, which traditionally consisted of the president, the vice presidents, the general manager and the general secretary, was expanded in 2011 to include one faculty representative, one student representative and one administrative staff representative. This expansion was carried out in accordance with the UOC's Organizational and Operational Regulations, which was adapted to the current legislation at the time.

As part of its responsibilities, the **Governing Council** formed the **Executive Board**, a permanent administration and management body whose members are the president, the vice presidents and the general manager. These bodies are **the University's two main internal collegiate governing bodies**.

The Governing Council's functions are to:

- Ensure compliance with current legal and statutory regulations.
- Make proposals to the FUOC's Board of Trustees regarding the strategic and programming issues affecting the University.
- Guide, plan and assess University activity from an academic viewpoint.
- Establish the University's general lines of operation in all areas.

- [Executive Board](#). The Executive Board is the University's permanent administration and management body and its mission is to oversee the institution's day-to-day business. To perform this task, it undertakes all the functions delegated to it by the Governing Council, as provided for in UOC's Organizational and Operational Regulations. Among others, the Executive Board ensures that all activity within UOC complies with optimization, financial sustainability and efficiency values.

2.2.2. Representation and coordination bodies

Alongside the UOC's organizational structure, representation and coordination bodies are needed to ensure that all the UOC's courses and programmes have access to a range of resources and services that respond to the different needs of each programme's specific features.

These representation and coordination bodies must act as a conduit for communication and debate regarding cross-functional processes. They are the following:

Representation bodies

- [University Council](#). The University Council is the UOC community's highest participatory body. Its main functions are to:
 - Discuss the University's strategic lines and objectives.
 - Voice its opinion on issues that affect the University and propose initiatives it considers appropriate.
 - Discuss aspects that affect the career development of the academic and administrative staff.
 - Be heard during the president's appointment before the president is formally appointed.
 - Discuss any other matter proposed by the president, the Governing Council or the Executive Board.
- [Student Council](#). The Student Council is the students' highest representative, consultative and advisory body. It is the channel for expressing students' aspirations, requests and proposals, and its function is to promote, coordinate and defend their concerns, rights and interests.
- [Faculties Committee](#). It facilitates the participation of the students on the regular

Coordination bodies

- [Strategic Committee](#). The Strategic Committee is the University's highest coordination body: it is chaired by the president, led by the members of the Executive Board and otherwise made up of all the UOC's deans and directors. Meeting on a monthly basis, the Strategic Committee's main functions are to:
 - Address matters concerning the proposals submitted to the Governing Council for the strategic plan and objectives plans for each academic year, and to monitor and coordinate their execution.
 - Propose specific strategic actions to the president and the Governing Council.
 - Foster coordination between the University's various areas, departments, units, faculties and centres.
 - Provide its members with essential information so that they can ensure its dissemination throughout the entire organization.
- [Academic Committee](#). The Academic Committee meets once a month to address matters that have to do with the UOC's academic activity; namely, with monitoring and coordinating the activity to ensure it complies with the provisions set out in the University's strategic plans and annual objectives plans. The Academic Committee's functions are to:
 - Strategically coordinate and align the University's teaching, research, dissemination and technology transfer.
 - Promote interdisciplinary programmes.
 - Nurture the development of the academic community and its members.
 - Advise the president and the Governing Council on all areas of academic life.
- [Management Committee](#). The Management Committee is chaired by the general manager and meets once a month to:
 - Monitor administrative and managerial activity.
- [Programme Committee](#). Chaired by the Vice President for Teaching and Learning, the Programme Committee gathers every two weeks to:
 - Handle the general planning of the UOC's catalogue of programmes and courses and its academic activity.
 - Coordinate key cross-functional aspects involved in the University's academic activity.
 - Analyse and assess the outcomes of this academic activity.

- [Research and Innovation Committee](#). The Research and Innovation Committee is a collegiate body that supports and advises the Office of the Vice President for Strategic Planning and Research, which is responsible for establishing the strategies and actions derived from the UOC's research and innovation policy. Its functions are to:
 - Foster the growth and consolidation of priority research lines.
 - Oversee proposals for new R&I projects, infrastructure requests, and applications for training grants or other types of funding from external bodies, and report on their suitability.
 - Draft the annual research report and aid in carrying out the proposals for improvement that emerge as part of the review process.
 - Ensure the quality of training programmes for unseasoned researchers and propose lifelong learning initiatives for faculty and research staff.
 - Oversee the planning and grouping of research activity and support knowledge and innovation transfer to society and economic sectors at a local, national and international level, as well as supporting the exploitation of research results with the aim of nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset.
 - Propose mechanisms for assessing research activity and coordinate them after they are approved.
 - Coordinate knowledge exchange activities and foster interdisciplinary ventures.
 - Address other types of proposal and activity related with research and innovation.
- [Employees' Committee](#). Employee participation in the company is a basic right and is structured through the Employees' Committee, which is a collegiate body that represents employees' interests.

3. Stakeholder participation

The previous section described the main participatory bodies at the UOC, making special reference to the [University Council](#) given its status as the University's highest participatory body.

However, the UOC also identifies stakeholders and drives initiatives to understand their needs and expectations, get ahead of them and offer solutions (Appendix II, Stakeholder map). This is possible thanks to different forms of direct and indirect participation, as laid out in the following table:

Stakeholders	Forms of participation
Students	Governing Council University Council Student Council Quality Committee Faculty Committee Internal Assessment Committee Hearings in external assessment processes Surveys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Induction . Course assessment . Academic year assessment Queries, complaints and suggestions
Graduates	University Council Alumni network Internal Assessment Committee Hearings in external assessment processes Surveys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Satisfaction upon graduation of completed studies . Satisfaction (AQU Catalunya) . Labour Access and insertion (AQU) . PhD Graduates' perspective Queries, complaints and suggestions
Faculty	Governing Council University Council Quality Committee Faculty meetings Internal Assessment Committee Hearings in external assessment processes Surveys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Academic year assessment . Work environment Queries, complaints and suggestions People review
Affiliated teaching staff	Course coordination meetings Internal Assessment Committee Surveys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Academic year assessment Queries, complaints and suggestions

Tutors	Programme coordination meetings Internal Assessment Committee Surveys: . Academic year assessment Queries, complaints and suggestions
Research staff	University Council Surveys . Work environment
Administrative staff	Governing Council University Council Quality Committee Department meetings Internal Assessment Committee Hearings in external assessment processes Surveys: . Work environment Queries, complaints and suggestions People review
Governing Council	Monthly meeting
Board of Trustees	Semi-annual meeting Quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees' Standing Committee
Social agents: employers, sector representatives, etc.	Board of Trustees Standing Committee Expert Committee Quality Committee Internal Assessment Committee External Assessment Committee Surveys: . Employers' perspective . Internship centres Hearings in external assessment processes
Government agency responsible for public policymaking	Inter-university Council of Catalonia Programme agreement
Assessment and certification bodies	External Assessment Committee
Society	Publications, lectures, conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.

4. Strategy and quality

4.1. Strategic planning

The UOC carries out its [mission](#) and realizes its [vision](#) while respecting its [values](#). This means developing strategies that benefit its stakeholders and target its three core priorities. Although the University has kept these priorities since its beginnings, it has had to regularly tweak them to stay on top of today's ever-changing environment.

Spearheaded by the Executive Board and structured by the competent vice president in strategic planning, the [Strategic Plan](#) is shaped through a participatory process at every level of the organization. It maps out the University's strategy and helps to prioritize decision-making.

As explained above, the Strategic Committee is the body responsible for monitoring and executing the University's strategy, which it accomplishes by assessing how well the strategic objectives are being met.

4.2. Quality Policy

In keeping with the University's mission, vision and values, the [Quality Policy](#) forms the basic framework of action and support for the University's quality teaching strategy. It also expresses the commitment of the organization's highest-ranking managers to the design, implementation, review and improvement of the Internal Quality Assurance System, which is described in the following sections.

For the UOC's Quality Policy to be successful, the following basic principles must be observed:

- Ensure compliance with current legislation.
- Devise a training plan that chimes with the University's current internal skills and strategy, in order to live up to society's needs and expectations.
- Set quality management goals and use this policy as the basis for defining these goals.
- See to it that all members of the organization's staff are aware of, understand and apply the Quality Policy.
- Make the Quality Policy available to all stakeholders and set up the necessary mechanisms to ensure accountability.
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement in all areas of the UOC, so that individual and team participation and the review and fine-tuning of ongoing processes make it possible to sustainably strengthen the performance of the Internal Quality Assurance System and increase the stakeholder satisfaction.

- Encourage creativity and innovation in order to come up with new ways of learning that help professionals and citizens train to face society's emerging global challenges.
- See to it that the Quality Policy matches the institution's real state of affairs.
- Ensure that this policy is carried out in the light of sustainable development and equal opportunities.

The Quality Policy is approved, upheld, reviewed and updated in compliance with the UOC's [roles and responsibilities policy for adopting internal regulations](#).

4.3. Strategic objectives

In accordance with the UOC's Strategic Plan and Quality Policy, the competent vice president in quality-related matters is responsible for carrying out actions that help the University meet its strategic objectives for improving teaching quality.

4.4. A culture of quality

References to quality management can be found in many UOC documents, including the [Code of Ethics](#), where it states that quality, as an ethical principle, forms part of the UOC's institutional culture. In this respect, it says: "We strive for excellence in our educational services, teaching and research activities, and organizational processes. The voice of our students, our graduates and society at large must be heard, while also ensuring academic rigour in our teaching programmes and lines of research."

Since its foundation, the UOC has received the following [awards and accolades](#) in recognition of its quality.

5. The Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)

5.1. Background

In 2007, within the framework of the AUDIT programme, the UOC drew up the first *Internal Quality Assurance System Manual* for the Faculty of Law and Political Science, which was rated favourably by the rating agency. In 2009, in a new call of the AUDIT programme, the UOC renewed the system's certification and expanded its scope to all of the University's faculties.

The University constantly evolves to tackle emerging higher education challenges, as does the Internal Quality Assurance System along with it. This manual has therefore been updated and improved over the years to ensure its continued suitability with respect to the institutions real state of affairs.

UOC was granted IQAS certification on 15 April 2021 and subsequently official University Accreditation on 1 March 2022, proving that UOC complies with the responsibility of ensuring the quality of its programmes and offered services.

5.2. System governance

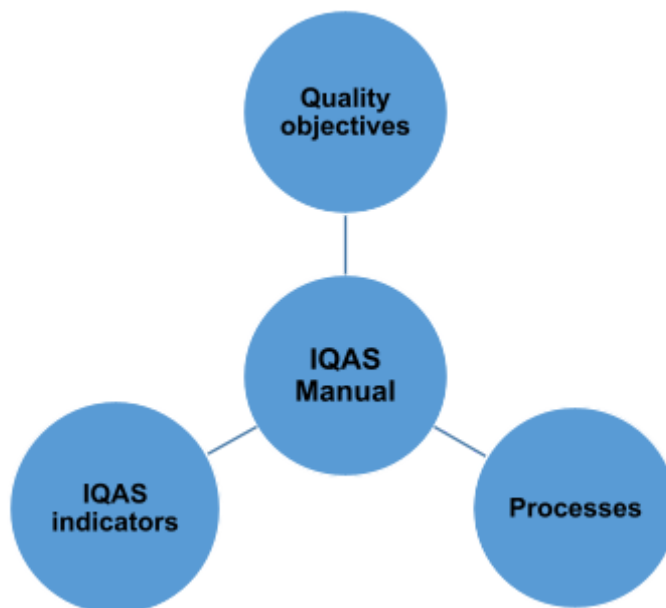
The UOC has defined its chain of command through an IQAS governance model that is built around the following bodies and individuals:

- The **Executive Board** is the body responsible for the IQAS and is represented by the competent vice president in quality-related matters. The Executive Board approves the Quality Policy and the objectives.
- The **Quality Committee**, which is chaired by the Vice President for Governance and Academic Policy, is the driving force responsible for implementing and monitoring the IQAS, which it does through the functions established in its founding document.
- The **Academic Committee** is periodically informed of the system's level of implementation and validates actions plans for its improvement.
- **Planning and Quality** coordinates the different people involved and oversees the actions that need to be carried out to ensure the system's effective implementation and continuous improvement.

- The process **owners** ensure that the system is running properly and establish monitoring and control mechanisms for its continuous improvement. They propose changes and amendments once a year to keep process-related documents up to date.
- The **Office of the Deputy General Manager for Teaching** collaborates with programme directors and their offices to ensure programme quality and sustainability.
- The **associate deans for teaching** coordinate and drive actions for improvement and teaching innovation proposed by the programme directors. They also draft an annual improvement plan for their respective faculties.
- The **programme directors** coordinate the programmes and ensure their academic quality. They also propose improvement actions for their respective programmes on a yearly basis.
- The **coordinating professors** assess teaching performance and propose improvement actions for the courses they coordinate.

5.3. Structure of the Internal Quality Assurance System

The figure below shows the structure of the current Internal Quality Assurance System:



5.3.1. Focus on processes

The Internal Quality Assurance System to which this manual refers has been designed in line with international quality standards. It prioritizes a focus on processes in a broad sense, giving particular importance to the processes linked to the established verification, monitoring, modification and accreditation framework. However, this system also aims to accommodate and integrate any other process that the UOC may identify and develop in the future.

Appendix I is a **process map** of the Internal Quality Assurance System. It identifies the stakeholders and the processes that have been developed to transform requirements and expectations into fully satisfactory experiences.

The **processes** have been structured within the map, using the following criteria determine their typology:

- **Strategic processes:** those related with the organization's strategy and objectives, and also with its mission, vision and values. The management team normally has its hand in managing these processes.
- **Operational processes:** those that enable the organization to deploy its strategy. These are crucial for developing the management model and add value to the most significant stakeholders.
- **Support processes:** those that provide scaffolding for the activities that make up the operational processes and, in some cases, the strategic processes.

These processes are rolled out using a descriptive document that includes relevant information about how the process should run. Appendix IV contains an always up-to-date list of current documented processes. The latest versions are displayed, as are the dates of approval thereof.

5.3.2. Stakeholders

The list of **stakeholders** has been drawn up by reflecting on the different types of people, groups and organizations that at one point or another come into contact with the UOC, interacting with and impacting on the University.

The stakeholders' requirements and expectations have been summarized in the **stakeholder map** (Appendix II). They are the foundation on which process development is based, as this is the only way to guarantee the Internal Quality Assurance System's ability to satisfactorily

address them. The stakeholders concerned are specified in each process. The document on **stakeholders and processes**, Appendix III, offers an overview of the processes in which each stakeholder is involved.

5.3.3. Indicators

The University's commitment to accountability and staying informed is the basis of its need for indicators. Indicators are intended to assess process performance and degree outcomes, and to aid in ensuring continuous improvement and informed decision-making.

Under the IQAS framework, the University uses a balanced set of **key indicators** (Appendix V) that measure the success of the system's deployment from different perspectives, assess trends, and pinpoint the key reasons and factors driving these trends.

With the institution's needs and expectations for each indicator in mind, certain objectives or benchmark values are set.

5.3.4. The IQAS's quality objectives

In keeping with the Quality Policy and its founding document, the **Quality Committee** proposes and monitors the **quality objectives**. These objectives, which must be ratified by the Academic Committee and subsequently approved by the Executive Board, are tied to the IQAS's **key indicators**. Likewise, they are aligned with – and contribute to – the achievement of the University's **strategic objectives** in this area, as described in Section 4.3 above.

5.3.5. Quality processes, guidelines and standards

Appendix VI, "**Assessment processes, guidelines and standards**", provides an overview of the quality standards at European level, [ESG \(2015\)](#), AQU Catalunya's dimensions and quality standards ([Guide to the Certification of Internal Quality Assurance Systems \(IQAS\) Implementation, February 2020](#)) and the UOC's IQAS processes. This table shows how the system meets benchmark regulatory requirements.

5.3.6. Processes and responsibilities

Appendix VII, **Process and responsibilities**, provides a global overview of who is in charge of the different processes and who is involved in implementing them.

The person responsible for each process heads its deployment with the support of the other people, teams and areas involved, in accordance with the levels of responsibility that have been established.

This leadership must abide by the principles set forth in the UOC's Code of Ethics.

5.3.7. Technology map

Appendix VIII shows the relationship between the processes that have been identified and the technological resources developed for this purpose or which impact on their operation. The aim is to guarantee the Internal Quality Assurance System's consistency and integration in all areas.

6. Terms and definitions

6.1. Document types

Policy: Policies describe the **general principles, roles** and **responsibilities** that govern a given matter. For example: the UOC's corporate policies (health and safety, conflicts of interest, purchasing and suppliers, etc.).

Regulation (*Normativa*): Regulations, or *normatives* in the original Catalan, regulate the requirements, specifications and parameters of a given matter, in accordance with the general principles set out in the corresponding policy. Documents that regulate aspects not expressly provided for in legal provisions and for which the organization has autonomy are also considered regulations of this type. For example: academic regulations, economic regulations and regulations for rights and duties.

Regulation (*Reglament*): Although the distinction is not made in English, regulations which the University calls *reglaments* in Catalan are documents developed under the *normativa*. For example: the regulations of the UOC's *Síndic de Greuges* (Ombudsman).

Code: Codes describe the organization's values regarding a given matter and the general guidelines on how to act. For example: the Code of Conduct and the Code of Ethics.

Plan: Plans break down the activities that are to be carried out in a certain area over a specific timescale. For example: actions plans and the Equality Plan.

Guide: Guides gather together the criteria, resources and circuits to use to unify and give coherence to a given procedure. For example: a style guide.

Manual: Manuals break down the use and inner workings of a given system or process. For example: a manual on how to use a specific ICT tool.

Documented process: Documented processes are tied to the *IQAS Manual*; all of the processes identified on the map are deployed on the basis of this type of document.

Procedure: Procedures provide detailed instructions on how to carry out a given activity.

Instruction: Instructions are precise descriptions of how to perform very specific tasks.

Template/form: Templates and forms are used as base documents for certain processes and may be used to collect data. For example: a travel form or agreement and addenda templates.

6.2. Glossary

Corrective action: Corrective actions are taken to eliminate the causes of non-compliances when these are detected in an audit.

Areas for improvement: Areas for improvement are the aspects in a given process or activity that do not work efficiently or are not up to the standard of excellence.

Input: Input refers to products or services from internal suppliers (as the result of completing other processes) or external suppliers.

Key indicator: Key indicators are units of measurement used to periodically monitor and assess an organization's or system's key variables.

Process indicator: Process indicators are units of measurement that are used to periodically monitor and assess a process's performance.

Documented information: Documented information can take the form of controlled records, templates or technological tools/platforms which are required to ensure a documented process runs and operates properly.

Stakeholder: Stakeholders are the organizations, groups or individuals that can influence the activities of a company or organization, or that may be affected by said activities.

Non-compliance: breach of a specified requirement.

Improvement plan: Improvement plans lay out the actions proposed to improve the critical aspects or weaknesses of a given activity. Each of these actions is planned out, assigned a leader, given the necessary resources and monitored using indicators.

Process: Processes are sequences of activities ordered following effectiveness and efficiency criteria. They transform input into products or services for the (internal or external) customer, while also adding value.

Management system: Management systems outline the processes, indicators and systems involved in process management and improvement. They are used to ensure that the organization can fulfil its purpose and deploy its strategy.

Output: Output refers to the products or services generated by a process that justify the existence of said process, adding value to the organization and benefiting both internal and external stakeholders.

7. Appendices

[Appendix I. Process map](#)

[Appendix II. Stakeholder map](#)

[Appendix III. Stakeholders and processes](#)

[Appendix IV. Documented processes](#)

[Appendix V. Key performance indicators](#)

[Appendix VI. Assessment processes, guidelines and standards](#)

[Appendix VII. Processes and responsibilities](#)

[Appendix VIII. Technology map](#)