Axencia para a Calidade do Sistema Universitario de Galicia (ACSUG)

Agency for Quality Assurance in the Galician University System (ACSUG)

Report of the ENQA Review Panel

Site visit April 2014

31 July 2014

Contents

1   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2014 the Axencia para a Calidade do Sistema Universitario de Galicia (the Agency for Quality Assurance in the Galician University System or ACSUG) hosted a review by a Panel appointed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The review was for the purpose of determining whether ACSUG meets the criteria for Full Membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

While recognising that any decision on ACSUG's membership of ENQA is entirely a matter for the ENQA Board, in the course of this Review the Panel has found that in all areas ACSUG substantially complies with the European Standards and that in several areas it complies fully with the Standards.

Since 2009 ACSUG has developed and carried out a substantial programme of desk-based "ex ante accreditations", of new programmes of undergraduate, masters, and doctoral studies, designed by the Galician Universities to enable them to move their educational provision to new programme structures and cycles that conform to the pattern endorsed by the Bologna Process. These reviews have been conducted by panels and standing Committees of expert and student reviewers trained, managed, supported and guided by ACSUG. For undergraduate and masters programmes the review processes are now backed by processes for annual monitoring again managed by ACSUG. A process for the (re) accreditation of programmes previously granted "ex ante accreditation" is to begin shortly which will involve ACSUG in a substantial further programme of work.

The chief means through which ACSUG oversees all its academic review activities, the Galician Committee for Reports, Assessment, Certification and Accreditation (the CGIACA), was established shortly after the 2009 ENQA Review. Within ACSUG, the CGIACA is the principal means through which it reaches independent academic assessments. It is a hard working and dedicated Committee to which ACSUG owes a great deal of its success in retaining the respect of the Galician University System for its decisions.

In addition to its academic reviews, ACSUG has supported several cycles of developmental activities on the part of the Galician Universities in areas such as staff appraisal and internal quality assurance. ACSUG has also undertaken several "Galicia-wide" surveys and research activities so that it now possesses a large store of data and information on the Galician Universities. A consequence of the staffing and other resource constraints within which ACSUG works has been that it has not been able to publish the findings of some of its valued sector-wide work in a timely way.

In both its review and developmental activities, ACSUG continues to work within a complex "ensemble" of Regional and National policies and legislation: together these set limits on its scope for individual initiative. Since 2009, the relative stability of this ensemble has provided ACSUG and the Galician Universities with a framework within which to plan their respective activities, which has been welcome. Policy stability can, however, if applied too rigidly, stifle development.

Throughout the review the Panel has noted several areas where ACSUG might usefully discuss with other quality assurance Agencies in the Autonomous Communities and Spain's National Agency for Quality Assessment and

Accreditation, ANECA, whether some responsibilities might in future be devolved to the Universities. The Panel recognises that such a development, while it would be in keeping with the founding principles of the European Standards and Guidelines would need to take place in the wider context of Regional and National policies and procedures for quality and standards in higher education. The Panel hopes that its observations will be helpful to ACSUG as it continues to develop as a mature and constructive member of ENQA.

2   GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	
Accreditation	In Spanish "Renovación De La Acreditación". As used in this report "Accreditation" refers to the process recently piloted by ACSUG to renew the accreditation of programmes and qualifications originally made ex ante through the Verification process (see below).
ACSUG, the Agency	Axencia para a Calidade do Sistema Universitario de Galicia ((ACSUG) (in English, the Agency for Quality Assurance in the Galician University System)
ANECA	Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación [The National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain]
AQU-Cataluna	Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya [Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency]
AAC-DEVA	Andalusian Agency of Knowledge, Department of Evaluation and Accreditation
ACSUCYL	Quality Assurance Agency for the University System in Castilla y Léon.
the Board	ACSUG's Board of Directors. [This body was also referred to as the "Board of Governors" in the translation of the draft revised Statutes provided by ACSUG to support the review.]
CGIACA	[ACSUG's] Galician Committee for Reports, Assessment, Certification and Accreditation
DOCENTIA	Support Programme for Teaching Activity Assessment. A programme operated across Spain to support universities in the design and application of their own procedures for the quality assurance of teaching, and to foster support and development for academic teaching staff and recognition of their expertise. In Galicia this programme is operated by ACSUG.
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher

	Education
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 3rd Edition Helsinki, 2009 [the European Standards and Guidelines]
ESU	European Students' Union
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
FIDES-AUDIT	A voluntary programme of reviews conducted to enable (in this case) centres within the Galician Universities to design and develop their own internal quality assurance procedures. The review process operated by ACSUG uses the AUDIT methodology developed jointly by ACSUG, ANECA, and AQU Catalunya, which subsumes the FIDES process developed by ACSUG in 2007 which was similar in its approach to AUDIT.
the Review Panel, the Panel	The 2014 Review Panel
REACU	Red Española de Agencias de Calidad Universitaria [Spanish Network of University Quality Agencies]
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SUG	Sistema Universitario De Galicia(SUG) [the Galician University System]
the 2009 Report	The report of the 2009 ENQA review of ACSUG
the Galician Universities	The University of A Coruña, the University of Santiago de Compostela, and the University of Vigo. See also "SUG", above
UDC	University of A Coruña
USC	University of Santiago de Compostela
UVIGO	University of Vigo
VERIFICA; Verification	Also referred to as "The Accreditation ex Ante of Official University Degrees". A programme of desk-based reviews initially designed by ANECA in cooperation with ACSUG and AQU Cataluna. It is designed to assess the conformity of all study programmes offered in

	Spanish higher education institutions with the Bologna Process recommendations. In Galicia it is operated by ACSUG.
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

3   INTRODUCTION

This report analyses the information put forward by the Axencia para a Calidade do Sistema Universitario de Galicia (the Agency for Quality Assurance in the Galician University System (ACSUG) to show whether and how ACSUG meets the criteria for full membership of ENQA. The review process included a site visit to ACSUG in April 2014.

3.1   The reasons for commissioning the review

The review was undertaken in accordance with the provisions for an ENQA "Type A" review in order to evaluate whether ACSUG fulfils the criteria for membership of ENQA and meets the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG). The purposes of the review also included providing information to the ENQA Board enable it to judge whether it should reconfirm ACSUG's status as a Full Member of ENQA, which will also enable ACSUG to apply for its registration with the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) to be continued.

The Statutes of ENQA require all member agencies to undergo an external cyclical review, at least once every five years, in order to verify that they fulfil the membership provisions. In November 2004, the General Assembly of ENQA agreed that the third part of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) should be incorporated into the membership provisions of its (then) regulations (now statutes). Substantial compliance with the ESG thus became the principal criterion for membership of ENQA. The ESG were subsequently adopted at the Bergen ministerial meeting of the Bologna Process in 2005. The third part of the ESG covers the cyclical external review of quality assurance and accreditation agencies. The external review of ACSUG was conducted in line with the process described in *Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area* and in accordance with the timeline set out in the Terms of Reference.

3.2   Terms of reference for the review

The Terms of Reference for the external review of ACSUG by ENQA were finalised in November 2013, at which time ENQA also constituted the Review Panel (the Panel). The review was undertaken in accordance with the *Guidelines for External Reviews of Quality Assurance Agencies in the European Higher Education Area*, and with the "ENQA Code of Conduct for Review Experts", which sets out the principles of integrity and good review practice for external reviews. The ENQA Review Panel received a teleconference briefing from the ENQA Secretariat on these and other operational and procedural matters on 28 March 2014.

3.3   Appointment of the Review Panel

The membership of the Panel for the external review of ACSUG (the Review Panel, or the Panel) was as follows:

Name	Position
David Cairns (Secretary)	Director, Quality Assurance Research for Higher Education Ltd, UK. Former Assistant Director, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, UK.
Fiona Crozier (Chair)	Director of the Quality Promotion Unit, University College Cork, Ireland.
Nadja Kiiskinen	PhD student at University of Helsinki Laboratory of neurobiology (Member nominated by the European Students' Union).
Jana Moehren	Head of International Office at ASIIN, Germany
Andrejs Rauhvargers	Secretary General of the Latvian Rectors' Council and Professor at the Faculty of Education at the University of Latvia (Member nominated by the European University Association).

3.4   The Review process

To support the review ACSUG prepared a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and a dossier of supporting information. The Panel also had access to the report of the external review of ACSUG conducted by ENQA in 2009; ACSUG's follow-up report to ENQA in November 2011; and ENQA's response to that report, which was sent to ACSUG in February 2012.

After receiving the SER and ACSUG's supporting information, each Panel member compiled a commentary on these items, which was shared with the other members of the Panel. Based on a synthesis of the Panel's commentaries the Secretary and Chair proposed a schedule of meetings to ACSUG for the review visit and requested further information to enhance its understanding of ACSUG's arrangements. The schedule of meetings was agreed with ACSUG before the review visit and can be found at Appendix 1, page 63 of this report. The list of attendees that is included with the schedule was compiled for the Panel by ACSUG.

Before the review visit, the Panel also requested further supporting information to assist it to deepen its understanding of ACSUG's work. This additional information was provided before the visit. A list of the supporting information initially provided by ACSUG and the additional information sought by the Panel can be found at Appendix 2, page 67.

Before the review visit the Review Panel asked ACSUG to arrange for it to receive a briefing on ACSUG and the Galician and wider context for its work from an independent expert on higher education in Galicia. This took place immediately before the visit, where the independent expert was supported by an

interpreter provided by ACSUG. This contextual briefing and all subsequent meetings during the review visit were conducted in English. In almost all the meetings during the site visit discussions were assisted by the same interpreter. The Panel wishes to express its gratitude to the independent expert for his briefing and to the interpreter for his assistance throughout the visit.

The review visit itself took place from 29-30 April, in the course of which the Review Panel held 13 meetings with more than 70 individuals, including the Galician Minister for Education and Culture. The Panel wishes to express its particular gratitude to the Minister and to all those who made time to meet it to help it to extend its understanding of ACSUG's work including the reviewers and experts who work with ACSUG, many of whom had travelled from across Spain to meet the Panel.

3.5 The SER for the 2014 review

The SER and the supporting information it referred to were submitted to ENQA and the Review Panel as digital documents in March 2014, in accordance with the schedule for the review previously agreed between ENQA and ACSUG. Some weeks later ACSUG also submitted a "layout copy" of the SER, which was visually enhanced, but contained the same information as the previous document. The Panel observed that in the present financial climate, and for future reviews, the production of such visually enhanced documents might be omitted without in any way impairing the effectiveness of the review process.

The Panel noted that the 2009 report had commented that ACSUG's SER had been largely descriptive and lacking in evaluation and self-analysis. Similarly, the Panel for the present review found the 2014 SER to be largely descriptive and lacking in critical self-evaluation. It contained much valuable factual information that was usefully supplemented by the supporting evidence; some basic information that would have been helpful had not, however, been included. For example, before the site visit the panel was unable to identify how, in practical terms, ACSUG conducted its reviews, or how it identified expert reviewers to undertake academic review and evaluation work on its behalf. Nor did the SER indicate the full scope of ACSUG's positive contributions to the activities of ENQA (see below, page 57).

3.5.1 How the Panel reached its findings and the production of this report

Throughout the site visit and particularly at the end of the second day of the visit, members of the Review Panel discussed the evidence for the compliance of ACSUG with ESG and the ENQA membership criteria. The Panel reached a broad consensus on each criterion.

Following the site visit the Secretary and the Chair prepared a draft report, which was circulated to the members of the Review Panel for further discussions and clarifications before submitting the draft to ACSUG for it to identify errors of fact for correction. The final report was prepared from the draft report, taking into consideration ACSUG's comments on the draft and the observations of the review panel on those comments and proposed changes.

The final report is based on the 2009 Report; the progress report ACSUG submitted to ENQA in 2011 and ENQA's response; the Self Evaluation Report prepared by ACSUG; its Annexes; the additional documents provided by ACSUG

for the Panel before the site visit; information gathered through meetings during the site visit; and ACSUG's comments on the draft report.

3.6 Main findings of the 2009 ENQA review

The report of the 2009 ENQA review of ACSUG (the 2009 Report) recommended to the ENQA Board that the Agency should be granted full membership for five years while expressing a number concerns and reservations. Consequently, the 2009 Report recommended that ENQA should require ACSUG to submit a report on its progress towards dealing with various (specified) weaknesses in its arrangements.

The 2009 Report praised the scope of ACSUG's activities and the professionalism and commitment of its staff, while observing that the policy framework that bound together the work of Spain's National quality assurance agency for higher education, the Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación (ANECA), and the work of quality assurance agencies in the Autonomous Communities of Spain, including Galicia, had only recently stabilised. The 2009 Report noted this "stop-go" policy context when stating that ACSUG had not been able to provide the ENQA reviewers with reports of institutional and programme level reviews to show how it was working with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and the Galician Universities.

The 2009 Report expressed concerns about the formal independence of academic decision-making in ACSUG because the Committee of ACSUG through which judgements about academic matters are made, the Galician Committee for Reports, Assessment, Certification and Accreditation (the CGIACA), had only recently been established and met for the first time shortly after the 2009 review visit. The 2009 Report therefore commented that there had been insufficient supporting evidence for the ENQA review panel to establish whether, through the CGIACA, ACSUG's arrangements for making evaluations were sufficiently independent of external influence to meet the expectations of the European Standards and Guidelines, specifically ESG 3.6, and the ENQA criteria for membership.

In addition to its recommendation to the ENQA Board that ACSUG be granted full membership, the 2009 Report made a further six recommendations about aspects of the Agency's activities, as follows

- ACSUG should initiate a process leading to inclusion of international expert[s] in the review panels

- ACSUG should consider the possibilities and the advantages for the follow-up process of the involvement of external experts. They could bring relevant issues regarding the universities improvement plans and the development of the subsequent measures

- [that ACSUG should modify and expand] the CGIACA by involving academic representatives, professionals and students and all of these to be appointed in their personal capacity. Further some members should come from outside Galicia, and the inclusion of international academic representatives should be considered

- [that ACSUG should implement] formal and systematic mechanisms for feedback from universities submitted to assessment processes

- [that] an ethics board is appointed to oversee the adherence with the no conflict of interest principle

3.7 ACSUG's response to the report of the 2009 ENQA review and the 2011 Progress Report to ENQA

In its progress report to ENQA in 2011 ACSUG dealt with each of the above topics. With respect to extending the membership and composition of the CGIACA, ACSUG viewed it as imperative that the membership of the Committee "should be comprised of persons who have a thorough knowledge of the Galicia University System (SUG), as well as solid experience and recognized prestige in the university community, considering the … impact their decisions have on the university community". It was ACSUG's view in 2011, therefore, that ensuring that the members of the CGIACA possessed a high level of local knowledge was more important than that its membership should extend to academic experts from outside Galicia and Spain. See below, page 47.

The 2009 Report recommended the introduction of a follow-up process to external reviews carried out by ACSUG. In its 2011 response to ENQA, ACSUG referred to the brevity in 2009 of its experience of conducting external reviews of institutions in the SUG and confirmed that in 2011 it had introduced follow-up arrangements for the external reviews it had conducted since 2009. Likewise, the Progress Report stated that the recommendation that it should establish means to secure feedback from the Universities that it had reviewed had also been put into effect.

The 2009 Report had also recommended the establishment of an "ethics board … to oversee the adherence with the no conflict of interest principle." In its 2011 Progress Report to ENQA, ACSUG described its existing Advisory Council as performing the function of an "ethics board", stating that "among other functions, [it] is responsible for overseeing the transparency and independence of the ACSUG in the activities it carries out". In its 2011 Progress Report to ENQA, ACSUG also explained that the role of the Director of ACSUG with respect to the Advisory Council was largely formal and that it had arranged matters so that he "should leave the meetings when the Advisory Council makes decisions and recommendations".

In February 2012 ENQA briefly responded to ACSUG's Progress Report and restated its view that it would be "in the interest of [ACSUG] to involve international experts in the CGIACA" and that such participation "would add value to the local knowledge and would bring a broader perspective and experience to the deliberations".

The 2014 Panel took particular note of the comments and reservations of the 2009 Panel, together with the contents of the Progress Report, and ENQA's response to it, when undertaking the present review.

3.8 The place of ACSUG in the quality assurance structure of higher education in Spain and in Galicia

In Spain, the Constitution confers exclusive authority and competence for the public promotion and coordination of scientific and technological research and the regulation of academic and professional qualifications on the State. Responsibilities for these matters and for the quality assurance of higher education are defined in Organic Laws enacted at National level in 2001 and 2007 and by Laws enacted by the responsible authorities in Spain's Autonomous Communities.

The 2001 and 2007 Organic Laws also regulate relations between the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA) and the quality assurance agencies for higher education that 10 of Spain's 17 Autonomous Communities have also established. In addition to ANECA, four of the agencies established by Spain's Autonomous Communities are also members of ENQA, of which one is ACSUG, the others being: the Andalusian Agency of Knowledge, Department of Evaluation and Accreditation (AAC-DEVA); the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya); and the Quality Assurance Agency for the University System in Castilla y Léon (ACSUCYL).

Where the Autonomous Communities have established quality assurance agencies it is the latter that have the responsibility for monitoring and reviewing higher education institutions, the programmes of studies they offer and the fitness of university teaching staff to carry out their duties.

3.8.1 The University System of Galicia (SUG) and ACSUG

Since 1989, higher education in the Autonomous Community of Galicia, has been regulated by various Laws enacted by the Parliament including the Law 11/1989, on the Regulation of the Galician University System (SUG); Law 6/2001 on the creation and recognition of universities and university centres (subordinate units within universities); Law 1/2003 on social councils within the Galician Universities; and Law 2/2003 concerning the Galician University Council.

More recently, Law 6/2013 of the Galician Parliament sought to consolidate the position of the Galician Universities within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), stimulate research in the University sector, and set requirements for greater institutional efficiency and effectiveness on the part of University managements.

The 2009 Report described how the University of A Coruña (UDC), the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC) and the University of Vigo (UVIGO) had been formed out of the former University of Santiago de Compostela and its regional campuses, following the enactment of Law 11/1989 of the Regional Parliament. Together the three Universities comprise the "Galician University System" as most recently defined in Law 6/2013 "notwithstanding any other university that may be legally created by the Parliament of Galicia in the future". In this Report the terms "the Galician Universities" and the "Galician University System" are used interchangeably.

Under the terms of Law 6/2013 the Regional Government of Galicia is responsible for coordinating the Universities in terms of their planning, improvements in quality, the designation and creation of new centres within the Universities; modifications and closures of programmes of studies that have

previously been officially recognised; cooperation between the Universities in study programmes, research, and innovation. The Regional Government discharges these responsibilities through its Ministry of University Affairs.

Law 6/2013 also states that within the Autonomous Community of Galicia it is ACSUG that is responsible for the quality assessment of the Galician Universities.

3.8.2 Note on University "centres"

Throughout ACSUG's SER and supporting evidence the Panel encountered the term "university centre" in a variety of contexts. In the course of the review visit, ACSUG helpfully clarified that it used the term "centre" to refer to the locus of a review in a University.

Typically, the Universities in the Galician system consist of numerous subordinate units that might be titled "faculties" or "schools". When organising its review activity ACSUG works with "centres" for a particular type of academic activity, that are located within a subordinate unit of a University whether that is a faculty or a school.

3.8.3 Note on "qualifications" and "programmes"

In the documents that it prepared to support the present review ACSUG described its processes in terms linked to "qualifications". In other jurisdictions the term "qualification" typically refers to the certificate or award that a student receives on completing their programme of studies which entitles them to describe themselves as the holder of a Bachelors award, a Masters award, and so on. Discussing, for example, Verification, the 2009 Report referred to that process as the Verification of programmes; likewise, reports on other Spanish higher education quality assurance agencies have also regarded the Verification, Monitoring and Accreditation processes they operate as processes linked to programmes. In this report the Panel has followed that usage.

3.8.4 Developments in the Galician Universities and ACSUG since the 2009 Report

The 2009 Report noted that the site visit for that review had taken place as ACSUG and the Galician Universities were about to implement a sustained programme of work to implement the academic structures of the Bologna process. The 2009 Report was finalised as the consequences of the Global Financial Crisis were beginning to be felt in Spain and its Autonomous Regions, including Galicia. The 2014 Panel was therefore pleased to find abundant evidence that in the period since 2009 ACSUG, working with the Galician Universities, has undertaken a substantial programme of work to embed key elements of the Bologna process in the Galician Universities and to enable them to participate more fully in the European Higher Education Area.

3.9 ACSUG in its Regional and National Context

In conducting this review of ACSUG the Review Panel has benefited from reading the corresponding ENQA report from the first round of Agency reviews, which was published in 2009. The information in that report on the European, National and Regional (Galician) contexts, within which ACSUG continues to work, together with ACSUG's own self evaluation report (SER) and supporting documents, has enabled the Panel to conduct more informed explorations on the

changes that have taken place in the intervening years within ACSUG and the environment within which it works. This is in keeping with the more developed nature of the second round of ENQA's reviews of its Member Agencies.

That being so, on this occasion the ENQA review Panel was aware that some of the questions it asked of its hosts, members of the Government of the Autonomous Community, and of the Galician Universities, related to the National context within which ACSUG works. Likewise, some of the views the Panel reached, and which are set out in this report, relate to the National context for higher education and quality assurance in Spain. For example, the Panel suggests on several occasions, that certain activities carried out by ACSUG might, in other contexts, be undertaken at university-level. The Panel readily acknowledges that ACSUG works within a complex policy, legislative, and regulatory environment. Nonetheless, it hopes that ACSUG will feel able to use the observations in this report to discuss matters relating to the application of the European Standards and Guidelines with its fellow Agencies in the Autonomous Communities across Spain and with the Spain's National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation, ANECA. It is the Panel's sincere hope that such a debate, regardless of its outcome, will be beneficial.

3.10   The main functions of ACSUG

In its SER ACSUG described its main functions as

- to develop coordination in quality assurance between the Galician Universities

- to evaluate the quality of institutions centres and education leading to officially recognised qualifications and [their] own qualifications taught by Universities and University centres of higher education [see above]

- to evaluate the quality of University teaching staff in the Galician University System as well as to develop policies that lead to an improvement in the quality of their work

- to evaluate the quality of the research undertaken in the Galician University System

- to conduct surveys and analyses of the Labour Market Integration of University graduates from the Galician University System

- to draft quality assessment reports for the universities, the education authorities, social and economic organisations and society in general

At the time of the present review other functions and activities undertaken by ACSUG included

- participating in the work of ENQA

- undertaking quality assurance activities in Spain at the request of Autonomous Communities outside Galicia that have not established their own quality assurance agencies

- undertaking quality assurance activities outside Spain on a not-for-profit basis when invited to do so, for example, by Universities in Peru

Each of the above activities was described in the SER and in items in the supplementary evidence that ACSUG provided to support the present review.

3.11 The governance and management of ACSUG

The SER provided a helpful guide to the governance and management of ACSUG which described how the President and Board of Directors; the Galician Committee for Reports, Assessment, Certification and Accreditation (CGIACA) and the Advisory Council contributed to ACSUG's work.

3.11.1 The ACSUG President and Board of Directors

The President of ACSUG is appointed by the Council of the Regional Government of Galicia "from amongst people of recognised standing in the University field". The President Chairs meetings of the Board of Directors and is responsible, among other matters, for ensuring that ACSUG's goals are attained and that it works within its own statutes.

The Board of Directors itself comprises the President and members drawn from the Galician Universities, the Regional Government, and "members of the academic scientific and business communities". The Director of ACSUG the Chair of the CGIACA and a student representative are also members of the Board of Directors. See below, pages 46-47.

3.11.2 The Galician Committee for Reports, Assessment, Certification and Accreditation (CGIACA)

According to the SER the CGIACA is "the highest assessment body of ACSUG and operates with complete independence". Its responsibilities include overseeing the evaluation, certification, and accreditation tasks assigned to ACSUG. The CGIACA is the sole body authorised to issue reports of reviews that ACSUG has undertaken.

Individual members of the CGIACA are appointed by the Board of Directors from nominations made by the Galician Universities and by existing members of the CGIACA and the Board of Directors. The Chair of the CGIACA is appointed by the Head of the Department of the Regional Government responsible for University affairs, on the nomination of the ACSUG Board of Directors.

In 2014 the Director of ACSUG acted as the non-voting Secretary of the CGIACA but changes were about to be implemented to that arrangement and those for operation of the CGIACA. These will include the appointment of a non-voting Secretary, separate from the Director, to be responsible to the CGIACA; for there to be an increase to the membership CGIACA from six to eight; to "admit international members" to the CGIACA, and to include among its members a "representative from the business community" and a student. The work of the CGIACA and its contributions to ACSUG are discussed at several points elsewhere in this report. At the time of the review ACSUG was preparing to enlarge the membership of the CGIACA to consist of the Chair and eight "outstanding members of the national and international academic and scientific community … one person from the professional or business sphere … and one Galician University system student" (see below, page 47).

3.11.3 The ACSUG Advisory Council

According to the SER the Advisory Council is charged to deliberate on and analyse ACSUG's activities and to resolve "any controversies that may arise in relation to the compliance of ACSUG's procedures and actions with [ACSUG's] regulations ... [and] Code of Ethics and the Code of Good Practice". This aspect

of the work of the Advisory Council as an "appeals committee" is discussed further elsewhere in this report (see below, page 56).

3.11.4   ACSUG internal management arrangements

The executive management of ACSUG is led by its Director, who is responsible overall for the conduct of external relations, for the support of ACSUG's reviewers and review activities and for its good management.

To support its principal operational activities ACSUG has established three Units with responsibility respectively for Programmes, Teaching Staff, and Management – in the latter case, chiefly of its own activities.

The Programmes Unit oversees the work of ACSUG in "verifying, monitoring, amending and accrediting" programmes of study leading to officially sanctioned qualifications; "for evaluating the design and certification of the internal quality assurance procedures adopted in the centres, for praising centres outside the Spanish University System, for developing the university teaching staff appraisal programme … [DOCENTIA] … and for the labour market integration surveys of … [Galician University System] graduates".

The Teaching Staff Unit manages ACSUG's contributions to processes in Galicia for approving the qualifications of University teaching staff prior to their formal appointment and for developing the DOCENTIA programme for appraising University teaching staff already in post.

The Management Unit supports the internal management of ACSUG and the work of the Director.

3.11.5   ACSUG's Expert and Student Reviewers

ACSUG's various review and evaluation activities are carried out on its behalf by panels of academic expert reviewers, student reviewers and a smaller number of expert reviewers drawn from the professions and business. The Panel noted that the expert reviewers that work with ACSUG are largely drawn from outside Galicia other than where they are independent professional experts, outside the Galician Universities or expert reviewers participating in the DOCENTIA or FIDES-AUDIT developmental review processes.

3.12   The engagement of ACSUG with the ENQA membership provisions and the ESG

ACSUG's engagement with the ENQA and the European Standards and Guidelines were briefly described in the SER. They included

- participating in ENQA projects, such as "Transparency of European Higher Education through public quality assurance reports" (EQArep)

- regularly attending and participating in ENQA workshops

- regularly attending and participating in ENQA member Assemblies and Annual general Assemblies

- attending and participating in ENQA working groups, including the "Internal Quality Assurance Group" from 2008 and its work on performance indicators; the Working Group on the Impact of Quality Assurance" established in 2012 and the Working Group on the "Involvement of Stakeholders in Quality Assurance Procedures", also established in 2012.

Findings

4 FINDINGS

4.1 a. ENQA criterion 1 / ESG Part 2: External quality assurance processes b. ENQA criterion 1 / ESG 3.1, 3.3: Activities

ESG Reference: 2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures **ENQA Criterion 1**
Standard: External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines
Guideline(s): The standards for internal quality assurance contained in Part 1 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. It is important that the institutions' own internal policies and procedures are carefully evaluated in the course of external procedures, to determine the extent to which the standards are being met. If higher education institutions are to be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal quality assurance processes, and if those processes properly assure quality and standards, then external processes might be less intensive than otherwise.

4.1.1 ENQA criterion 1 / ESG Part 2: External quality assurance processes

The SER stated that in working with the Galician Universities ACSUG sought to "enable the institutions to improve their internal control processes, which will undoubtedly lead to a quality improvement across the [Galician University System] as a whole".

Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines sets out Standards and associated Guidelines for higher education institutions in the following area

- Policy and procedures for quality assurance
- Approval monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards
- Assessment of students
- Quality assurance of teaching staff
- Learning resources and student support
- Information systems, and
- Public information

The SER provided a tabular analysis of how ACSUG's various external quality review activities take into consideration the effectiveness of institutions' internal procedures in each of these areas but did not describe or analyse how this worked in practice. Through requesting additional information and discussing these matters with members of ACSUG, expert and student reviewers, and staff and students in the Galician Universities, the Panel therefore sought to deepen its understanding of ACSUG's external review methods and how they relate to Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

The ACSUG review activities listed in the SER included

- Verifying the suitability of newly proposed programmes to lead to the qualification that students completing successfully will secure
- Monitoring the implementation of study programmes that have been verified

- Verifying proposed modifications to previously verified programmes

- Accrediting continuing programmes that have been verified, and are being monitored, to continue to be offered

- FIDES-AUDIT: a voluntary programme of reviews conducted to enable (in this case) departments within the Galician Universities to design and develop their own internal quality assurance procedures. The review process operated by ACSUG uses the AUDIT methodology developed jointly by ACSUG, ANECA, and AQU Catalunya, which has subsumed a process similar to AUDIT developed by ACSUG in 2007. As operated by ACSUG the programme retains the title FIDES-AUDIT.

- Teaching staff accreditation: reviews of the qualifications of teaching staff prior to confirmation of appointment by one of the Galician Universities

- Assessment of applications by individual teaching staff for "salary bonuses" for curricular excellence.

- DOCENTIA: a programme operated across Spain by ANECA and the quality agencies of the Autonomous Communities. Institutions choose to participate in the DOCENTIA programme on a voluntary basis. As operated by ACSUG the DOCENTIA process is designed to improve the quality of teaching by supporting institutions as they develop their own procedures a) for the quality assurance of teaching and b) for the development and appraisal of teaching staff

The Panel was told by expert reviewers that whenever ACSUG introduced a new review or evaluation process it customarily undertook a pilot project to test the proposed methodology and its operation before the new process was deployed operationally. The Panel viewed this approach as commendable and good practice.

4.1.2   Verification of qualifications programmes and curricula

The Verification process is a desk-based review process which is also referred to in translations of some documents seen by the Panel as "The Accreditation ex Ante of Official University Degrees". At the time of the 2009 ENQA review Verification was about to commence; the 2009 Report was therefore unable to comment on the operation of Verification reviews.

In the English version of its 2014 SER ACSUG described the focus of the Verification process as one of verifying qualifications. As described in ACSUG's handbooks and guidance, and confirmed to the Panel by expert reviewers and students, the Verification process consists of a detailed review of the curriculum for a proposed programme of study to lead to a particular qualification to check, among other matters, that the proposed programme and the title of the qualification to which it is to lead, are well matched.

According to the SER, a positive Verification outcome, issued by a quality agency that is a member of ENQA and on the Register maintained by EQAR, is necessary before a University in Spain (including in Galicia) can submit a proposed new programme for entry onto the Register of Universities, Centres and Qualifications (RUCT), maintained by the Spanish authorities, and for approval by the Regional Government. If the Regional Government gives the programme its approval this enables the relevant Galician University to admit students to programmes that the Regional Government will fund. There are also Verification procedures for

doctoral programmes to ensure that the centres offering such programmes have the necessary staff and resources to offer them responsibly.

The SER described the rationale for adopting the Verification procedure as to "ensure new courses are developed in accordance with the EHEA criteria, the qualifications framework and that the competences and the course content are consistent with each other, in accordance with the study plans of the different disciplines". In practice this has meant that the Verification process has sought to ensure that Universities in Spain (and for ACSUG, in Galicia) have adopted the principles of the Bologna process in terms of degree structures, credits and levels, internal quality assurance, and so on.

ACSUG provided the ANECA Support Guide for "The Accreditation ex Ante of Official University Degrees" (that is, Verification) as part of the supporting information it provided with the SER. This requires those submitting proposals for the Verification of programmes to include information on the "system(s) used for evaluating the learning outcomes achieved in the modules/topics/ subjects".

As noted above and as described to the Panel by expert and student reviewers and members of the Galician Universities, the Verification process consists of a desk-based review of the curriculum proposed for a new programme of studies and its consistency with the title of the qualification to which the programme leads (see below). This description is consistent with the contents of the sample Verification reports that ACSUG provided for the Panel in English translations.

Verification reviews are conducted by standing Committees of suitably qualified academic experts in the relevant field, convened and administratively supported by ACSUG. The membership of each standing Committee is determined by the CGIACA which selects individuals from a list of suitable qualified individuals prepared for it by ACSUG officers drawing on a nation-wide database of existing or potential reviewers. Reviewers who are newly-appointed to the standing Committees are invited to attend training days, run by ACSUG, that are widely advertised and are open to interested academics and students to attend; such training events therefore also serve to recruit further expert and student reviewers.

The criteria followed for the conduct of Verification processes are set out in Protocols developed by the "Spanish Network of University Quality Agencies", REACU, which ACSUG follows. ACSUG has provided comprehensive guidance documents for the Verification process (developed by ANECA) for those preparing a Verification proposal for Bachelors and Masters programmes, and proposals for doctoral programmes. These documents were included in the additional supporting evidence ACSUG provided at the Panel's request.

Experts who had conducted Verification reviews for ACSUG described a system of discipline-based panels of subject expert reviewers drawn from across Spain. The CGIACA told the Panel that the criteria that reviewers/Members of the standing Committees are asked to apply when reviewing a proposal for Verification are decided in advance of each round of Verifications by the CGIACA, which subsequently checks for itself that the criteria have been applied.

The SER did not provide information on how ACSUG identified suitable experts to undertake Verifications, or how the reports of Verifications were produced. The expert reviewers who met the Panel and members of the CGIACA, described how the members of the various standing Committees are identified by ACSUG from a nationwide database of Spanish experts. The Panel was told that applications

from individuals to be placed on this database of potential reviewers are automatically filtered by the database software, to check that the applicant meets the necessary criteria to be a reviewer (see below). The database is periodically refreshed when ANECA and the quality agencies for the Autonomous Communities issue invitations via email, posters, or through their web sites, for suitable qualified individual to be nominated by their institutions or to self-nominate.

To be considered for inclusion on the database of expert reviewers used by ACSUG, individuals need to satisfy published criteria for academic experience and expertise that include a minimum of 18 years experience of teaching and research in their specialist field. The Panel was told that should ACSUG need to make up a review panel or Committee to Verify, Monitor or Accredit a programme in an extremely specialised area it may circularise ANECA and the quality agencies in the other Autonomous Communities with a request for nominations. ACSUG's arrangements to train its expert and student reviewers are described elsewhere in this report (see below, page 31)

For each Verification of a proposed programme, individual reviewer/members of the standing Committees receive the curriculum electronically for their analysis. This analysis is initially undertaken by the individual reviewer, who then submits their report on each Verification proposal to ACSUG, via a web-based information system, that uses standard reporting templates.

Periodically throughout the year, each standing Committee meets at the ACSUG offices to reach a collective view on the proposals that individual expert members have previously and individually reviewed. For each such meeting of a standing Committee an ACSUG member of staff acts as the secretary and it is they who compile detailed reports of each Verification review from the written and oral comments of the experts. Reports of each Verification and the recommendations of the standing Committees are considered by the CGIACA at its regular meetings and it is the CGIACA which makes the final recommendation on each proposal for Verification and approves the publication of the report on the ACSUG web site. ACSUG also expects Verification reports to be published by the relevant University. Student reviewers, told the Panel that in addition to the work that standing Committees undertake through meetings there is extensive communication between members and with ACSUG via emails.

The Panel was told that the Chairs of each of the standing Committees are periodically brought together by ACSUG to review the criteria employed when making judgements in the Verification process in order to ensure that the various standing Committees apply the criteria approved by ACSUG through the CGIACA for making judgements consistently. This is a sensible quality control arrangement (see also below, page 29).

Appeals arrangements and feedback linked to the Verification process and procedures for lodging against the findings of Verification reviews are discussed elsewhere in this report (see below pages 52 and 55).

Since the 2009 ENQA review ACSUG has completed the Verification of more than 115 undergraduate degree programmes, 226 Masters programmes, and 83 doctoral programmes. This represents a substantial and (in terms of the typical academic cycle) rapid shift from programmes organised on traditional lines to programmes and qualifications that are in line with the Bologna principles that

underlie the European Higher Education Area. The panel considers that ACSUG and the Galician Universities are to be congratulated on this achievement.

The Panel observes that through the Verification process ACSUG, (operating under agreed Regional protocols, previously agreed at National level with ANECA), undertakes externally a process that in other jurisdictions across the EHEA is more typically an institutional responsibility.

4.1.3 Monitoring of programmes

Before 2010 the legislative framework for higher education in Galicia constrained ACSUG to employ a variety of methods to monitor and review programmes and qualifications. Since 2010, procedural and legislative changes within Spain and Galicia have allowed ACSUG, working within nationally agreed protocols, to take sole responsibility for the external review of officially recognised higher education qualifications (and provision) across the Autonomous Community.

ACSUG's Annual Reports for 2010 and subsequently were provided as part of its supporting evidence for the review. ACSUG also provided a flow chart of the annual monitoring process at the Panel's request. Together, they document how, starting with a pilot project in 2010, the number of officially Verified programmes being monitored by ACSUG has changed. For 2013, the SER reported that in 2011, nine programmes had been monitored and that likewise in 2012 and 2013 respectively 188, and 94 programmes had been monitored.

ACSUG informed the Panel that the Galician Universities submit annual Monitoring Reports to it on each of their Verified programmes. Where the original Verification for the programme has recommended that there be follow up, Monitoring Reports are subject to particularly close scrutiny. For other programmes not subject to such recommendations ACSUG carries out at least one detailed evaluation of the Annual Monitoring reports submitted for the programme between initial Verification and (re)-Accreditation. Where a Monitoring Report is evaluated and found to be unsatisfactory, ACSUG follows this up with the relevant Centre and University.

Monitoring is conducted on behalf of ACSUG by panels of experts drawn from the same nation-wide database used by ACSUG to identify suitably qualified Verification and other reviewers. When published, Monitoring Reports include: an appraisal of compliance with the programme as originally Verified; comments on the follow-up to any actions required in the Verification Report and any subsequent monitoring reports; good practice identified by the expert panel and recommendations to the University. The outcome of a qualification/ programme monitoring evaluation is binary: the University or its Centre (note, not the programme) is either "compliant" or "non-compliant" with the requirements of the monitoring process. After 2011, programmes/ qualifications that lead to graduate awards have also been included in the annual monitoring that ACSUG conducts.

The Panel observes that as with the Verification process, the Monitoring process performed by ACSUG undertakes externally a process that in other jurisdictions across the EHEA is more typically an institutional responsibility.

4.1.4 Accreditation of programmes

The 2009 Report noted that in 2012 ACSUG was planning to introduce a process for the Accreditation of programmes that had previously been Verified for a

period of six years. The SER for the present review described how a "moratorium" of two years had been approved "at national level" in 2013 "in order to set up the accreditation renewal system for [programmes]". The SER also reported, however, that in the interim ACSUG had introduced a pilot Accreditation scheme to "establish whether our current tools are adequate and to introduce improvements into future processes".

During the site visit the Panel was able to discuss with the Director and staff of ACSUG its conduct of the pilot Accreditations and its plans for the operational introduction of programme Accreditations. The Panel was also able to discuss these matters with expert reviewers (including students) who had been involved in the 17 pilot Accreditation exercises that ACSUG has conducted across of Galician Universities, and with members of some University centres that had hosted the pilot Accreditations. It learned that the scope of the pilot Accreditation process had included all the matters covered by the Verification and monitoring processes, together with an analysis of how learning outcomes were being adopted and used in the programme.

The Panel learned how the pilot Accreditation process had been conducted. For each Accreditation of a programme, or group of cognate programmes from the same University Centre, the members of an expert Accreditation panel – comprising reviewers from outside Galicia and including student reviewer members – had been identified and confirmed by the CGIACA. The Panel was told that for Accreditations, with the additional component of the site visit, student reviewers would not normally drawn from outside Galicia.

For the pilot Accreditation process individual members of the Accreditation panel had analysed the documents provided by the University Centre in which the programme was based (for University "Centres" see above, page 15). This analysis phase had been followed by a site visit to the University Centre hosting the Accreditation, undertaken by the whole Accreditation panel and supported by experienced ACSUG officers.

As with the Verification process, reports of the findings of panels undertaking the pilot Accreditations had been drafted by the ACSUG officer(s) in attendance from the written and oral comments of panel members; they had then been sent to the host University Centre to be checked for accuracy. After any necessary amendments the corrected report had been sent to the CGIACA to be read and checked before confirmation. The reports of the pilot Accreditations had not been published but those produced from the fully operational version of the Accreditation process would be issued and ACSUG would also expect them to be published by the relevant University.

In its discussions with the Director and staff of ACSUG, members of the CGIACA and members of the Board the Panel explored the practical implications for ASCSUG and its staff of expanding its existing review activities to include Accreditations. The panel was told that the Pilot Accreditations had yielded much helpful information that it would use to manage the demands of the process on ACSUG's organisational resources including its staff and reviewers. Staff, when pressed on this matter, anticipated that colleagues from across ACSUG would be called on to support their colleagues in the Programme Unit and were confident that ACSUG had the resources and staff to cope with the additional work. Members of the Board of ACSUG told the Panel that they had enquired into this matter and had been assured that ACSUG had sufficient resources to deliver this

additional review process and work within the budget provided by the Regional Government. If, however, ACSUG was given additional tasks it would need further resources and the Board would not hesitate to take the matter to the Regional Government.

The Panel accepts ACSUG's assurances that it has carefully assessed the resources it will need to carry out the additional work that will be required to bring the Accreditation process into full operation and the Agency's confidence that its staffing and financial resources are sufficient for its present tasks. Elsewhere in this report the Panel comments on the need for the Agency to adopt a more strategic approach to planning and encourages ACSUG and its Board in their commitment to move to planning the Agency's work on a five-yearly cycle (see below, page 43). As part of this process of moving towards a more strategic approach to the discharge of its responsibilities, the Panel also encourages ACSUG consider how it might initiate a conversation with the quality Agencies of the other Autonomous Communities and the National Agency, ANECA, in order to explore whether and how to devolve more of the operational aspects of responsibilities for quality assurance to the Universities, thereby effecting economies in its own activities and enhancing the autonomy of the Universities.

Conclusions

Substantially compliant

Commendations

The Panel wishes to commend the following

- ACSUG's practice of piloting each new review method in order to test the methodology and its own support arrangements before the method is deployed operationally and make adjustments (page 21)

- The procedure employed by the CGIACA and ACSUG whereby the Chairs of each of the standing Committees are periodically brought together to review the criteria employed when making judgements in the Verification process in order to ensure that the various standing Committees apply the criteria approved by ACSUG consistently (page 23)

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that ACSUG should

- consider how it might initiate a conversation with the quality Agencies of the other Autonomous Communities and the National Agency, ANECA, in order to explore whether and how to devolve more of the operational aspects of those responsibilities to the Universities, (page 26)

4.2 Development of external quality assurance processes

ESG Reference: 2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes ENQA Criterion 1
Standard: The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible (including higher education institutions) and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.
Guideline(s): In order to ensure clarity of purpose and transparency of procedures, external quality assurance methods should be designed and developed through a process involving key stakeholders, including higher education institutions. The procedures that are finally agreed should be published and should contain explicit statements of the aims and objectives of the processes as well as a description of the procedures to be used.   As external quality assurance makes demands on the institutions involved, a preliminary impact assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the procedures to be adopted are appropriate and do not interfere more than necessary with the normal work of higher education institutions.

The section of the 2009 Report that addressed this Standard, and the accompanying Guidelines, stated that the ACSUG Board of Directors approved the annual activities of ACSUG which were then published on ACSUG's web site and that the "strong representation of the universities and of local government in the Board of Directors should ensure that these institutions consider themselves to be co-owners of the [relevant] process".

ACSUG's SER for the present review followed the views expressed in the 2009 Report. This shed an interesting light for the Panel on the functions of the Board and the requirements of individual members of the Board. The SER also described how ACSUG communicated the aims and objectives of its current review processes to members of the Galician Universities and mentioned the pilots it was undertaking for the Accreditation of programmes that it was proposing to undertake.

What the above accounts did not convey to the Panel, however, was how the aims and objectives of each of its review processes were determined by ACSUG in advance, and how ACSUG took into account transnational expectations and requirements and those of the National and Regional frameworks within which it works when drawing up proposals to be put to the CGIACA, the Board and the Galician Universities for comment, and before seeking the Board's approval. ACSUG's practice of piloting new review methods enables it to "consult" practitioners about proposed review methods and procedures before it commences operational reviews but the Panel was unable to learn whether the piloting process also enabled participants and the Galician Universities to contribute to shaping the aims and objectives of new review methods and procedures.

In the course of the site visit, members of ACSUG and its Board of Directors told the Panel that in the near future it was intended that ACSUG would introduce a more long-term and strategic approach to planning its activities, including its reviews. As it moves to adopt this strategic approach to planning its work, the Panel recommends ACSUG to consider how, when setting the aims and objectives of new external quality assurance processes it could undertake consultations specifically linked to such proposals more widely across the

Galician Universities and stakeholders, rather than rely on undertaking such consultations within existing meetings, and <u>before</u> asking the Board of Directors to adopt its proposals.

<u>Conclusions</u>

Substantially Compliant

<u>Recommendations</u>

The Panel recommends

- that as part of its move to adopt a more strategic approach to planning its activities that ACSUG should consider how, when setting the aims and objectives for new external quality assurance processes it could undertake consultations specifically linked to its proposals for changes to its review methods more widely across the Galician Universities and stakeholders rather than rely on undertaking consultations within existing meetings and before asking its Board of Directors to approve them (page 27).

4.3 ENQA criterion 1 / ESG 3.1, 3.3: Activities

ESG Reference: 3.3 Activities **ENQA Criterion 1 cont.**
Standard: Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis
Guideline(s): These may involve evaluation, review, audit assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the agency

4.3.1 Programme level external quality assurance activities

In 2009, the ENQA report found that the "stop and go" policy framework within which ACSUG was constrained to operate had resulted in it launching external assessment activities, only to have to terminate them before being able "to implement periodic reviews or complete follow-up procedures". In contrast, the SER for the present review was able to report that ACSUG had completed the Verification of more than 400 programmes, carried out as part of a continuing annual programme of activities considered elsewhere in this report (see pages 21-24). Likewise, ACSUG was able to point to its continuing and substantial programme of programme Monitoring (see above, pages 24-24). In addition, ACSUG is also supporting the continuing and voluntary programme FIDES-AUDIT (see page 34), the DOCENTIA programme (see page 35) and a process for evaluating claims by University academics that their performance of their duties entitles them to additional or bonus payments (see page 35).

The panel considered that with the introduction of the Accreditation process, when it is rolled out in Galicia, ACSUG was unquestionably undertaking external quality assurance activities at programme level.

4.3.2 Institutional level external quality assurance activities

The Panel notes that ACSUG has yet to introduce an external quality assurance review process for Universities as a whole, as the FIDES-AUDIT process described elsewhere in this report is applied to University centres only (see below, page 34). As ACSUG continues to develop its approach to the external

quality assurance of the Galician University system, the Panel recommends that it should explore with its stakeholders whether they would welcome proposals for the external review of Universities as whole academic communities and corporate entities responsible for the quality of their programmes and the academic standards of the awards to which they lead.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Fully Compliant

<u>Recommendations</u>

The Panel recommends that ACSUG

- explore with its stakeholders whether they would welcome proposals for the external review of Universities as whole academic communities and corporate entities responsible for the quality of their programmes and the academic standards of the awards to which they lead (page 29)

4.4 ESG Part 2.3 Criteria for Decisions

ESG Reference: 2.3 Criteria for decisions procedures **ENQA Criterion 1 cont.**
Standard: Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.
Guideline(s): Formal decisions made by quality assurance agencies have a significant impact on the institutions and programmes that are judged. In the interests of equity and reliability, decisions should be based on published criteria and interpreted in a consistent manner. Conclusions should be based on recorded evidence and agencies should have in place ways of moderating conclusions, if necessary.

4.4.1 Publication of criteria for use in evaluations

The 2009 Report noted that the criteria that ACSUG reviewers employ when making their evaluation decisions were published on the Agency's web site "prior to the implementation of the processes". The 2009 Report also noted the process described elsewhere in this report whereby the Chairs of the various panels involved in conducting reviews are brought together periodically by ACSUG to ensure that they share a common understanding of the criteria to be employed for the reviews and the practices to be followed by review panels

As part of the supporting information that it provided to support the review, ACSUG provided the team with digital copies of the Protocol and Guidance documents that are used as points of reference by Universities and their Centres when preparing for reviews and by the review committees and (for the Accreditation process) to support the pilot reviews The Panel learned that in 2014, in addition to the processes the CGIACA was independently checking on the adoption and the use of the appropriate criteria by ACSUG reviewers (see above, page 23).

Student and expert members of ACSUG review Committees and panels who met the ENQA Panel referred confidently to the guidance documents available to them and commented on their use in the context of the training that ACSUG provides for its reviewers.

Fully Compliant

4.5 ESG Part 2.4 Processes fit for purpose

ESG Reference: 2.4 Processes fit for purpose **ENQA Criterion 1 cont.**
Standard: All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.
Guideline(s): Quality assurance agencies within the EHEA undertake different external processes for different purposes and in different ways. It is of the first importance that agencies should operate procedures which are fit for their own defined and published purposes. Experience has shown, however, that there are some widely-used elements of external review processes which not only help to ensure their validity, reliability and usefulness, but also provide a basis for the European dimension to quality assurance. Amongst these elements the following are particularly noteworthy: • insistence that the experts undertaking the external quality assurance activity have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task • the exercise of care in the selection of experts • the provision of appropriate briefing or training for experts • the use of international experts • participation of students • ensuring that the review procedures used are sufficient to provide adequate evidence to support the findings and conclusions reached • the use of the self-evaluation/site visit/draft report/published report/follow-up model of review Recognition of the importance of institutional improvement and enhancement policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality.

4.5.1 ACSUG requires that experts undertaking the external quality assurance activity have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task

In its SER ACSUG described how it took particular notice of the profiles of those undertaking reviews on its behalf. In its discussions with ACSUG members of staff, members of the CGIACA and ACSUG expert and student reviewers, the Panel was able to confirm that the various role specifications that ACSUG uses when recruiting reviewers are set out and determined by the CGIACA. When recruiting reviewers from experts currently employed by higher education institutions ACSUG will only consider individuals with substantial experience in the relevant field.

4.5.2 Care is taken by ACSUG in the selection of experts

The composition and appropriateness of ACSUG review panels and Committees (including for DOCENTIA and FIDES-AUDIT) is ultimately decided by the CGIACA. Members of the CGIACA who met the Panel were able to describe the detailed attention that is given to proposals by ACSUG for the membership of review panels and Committees.

The 2009 Report did not comment on how ACSUG satisfied itself that the academic and professional experts who undertake reviews on its behalf are appropriately qualified and have the necessary experience to undertake the tasks required of them. On the basis of the information available to the Panel it is satisfied that for each of its review methods ACSUG, through the CGIACA, is able to show that it sets clear standards against which to identify and appoint experts and students to undertake reviews on its behalf.

4.5.3   Experts are provided with appropriate briefing or training

In its SER ACSUG referred at several points to the training that it provides for expert reviewers. From its discussions with members of ACSUG, of the CGIACA and expert and student reviewers the Panel learned that when ACSUG has identified potential reviewers they are contacted and invited to attend a training workshop for the relevant review method. For the higher volume review activities such as Verification (and, in due course, Accreditation) workshops take place several times each year and are organised in Santiago de Compostela and, where experts from Galicia are involved, in several locations across the Autonomous Community.

Expert reviewers who met the Panel consistently praised the quality of the training that ACSUG provides for its reviewers, including those who participate in Verification reviews. Student reviewers who met the Panel were warmly appreciative of the training they had received on beginning to work with ACSUG and they and expert reviewers described ACSUG's routine use of emails and telephone contacts to support them throughout their work. The Panel commends ACSUG for the training and support it provides for its expert and student reviewers. The Panel especially commends ACSUG for its good practice in arranging to train its student and expert reviewers together.

4.5.4   International experts are included in the evaluation panels

The 2009 Report noted that at that point the membership of ACSUG's review panels did not include international experts. The Report pointed to some of the advantages to ACSUG and higher education in Galicia of including international experts in review activities, while noting the importance of having experts from outside Spain as participants in review panels who are "well informed about the Spanish and Galician situations". The 2009 Report recommended that "ACSUG should initiate a process leading to inclusion of international expert[s] in the review panels".

The responses of ACSUG to this recommendation and ENQA's reply to that response are noted on page 13 of this report. In the SER, ACSUG noted that the sources to which it refers when members are chosen for panels of expert and student reviewers and standing Committees include the names of international assessors although this point was not confirmed when the Panel followed it up during the visit.

In its meetings with members of ACSUG, the CGIACA and the Board of Directors the Panel sought to explore ACSUG's position on this matter. The panel noted ACSUG's insistence that it is essential that each of the reviewers on whom it relies has an excellent understanding of the context for higher education in Galicia and of Galicia as an Autonomous Community of Spain. It also noted that, in three cases, ACSUG had been able to recruit reviewers from outside Spain who met its criteria in terms of subject expertise, experience, knowledge of the

local and national context for higher education and facility with the language. They had been recruited by ACSUG through recommendations from other quality assurance agencies that are members of ENQA. Throughout its discussions of these matters with ACSUG the Panel was also aware that since the beginning of the Global Financial Crisis in 2008-09 ACSUG and all other public bodies in Spain, including Galicia, had been constrained to operate within carefully controlled budgets (see also below, Financial resources, page 43).

The Panel also met members of the Advisory Committee that ACSUG has established, who told it that it had two international members: one from Italy and one from the UK. Members of the CGIACA who met the Panel told it that ACSUG particularly sought out reviewers and other contributors to its work who had previous or current international experience.

Overall, the Panel considers that ACSUG has been mindful of ENQA's view that the inclusion of expert reviewers (and student reviewers) from outside Spain would strengthen the Agency's capacity to undertake its responsibilities. ACSUG's response to ENQA's advice has remained consistent: that it needs to give priority to the capacity of the expert reviewers it employs to operate competently in the languages and contexts of Galicia. In this context, the Panel noted the number of reviewers from across Spain who participate in ACSUG's review activities and that their participation helped to mitigate the risk of particularism affecting the progress, outcomes and credibility of ACSUG's reviews. The Panel also recognises that ACSUG is an active participant in the work of ENQA; it recommends that ACSUG should continue to seek ways in which reviewers and other from outside Spain and other international experts can contribute to the Agency's reviews and its work more generally.

4.5.5 Students are enabled to participate in the work of the evaluation panels

The 2009 Report noted the steps that ACSUG had taken to include students in the membership of its evaluation and review panels and described the ways open to them to become involved in the work of ACSUG.

Student reviewers who met the Panel in the course of the present review warmly endorsed the content and suitability of the training that was provided for reviewers by ACSUG. They noted appreciatively that as student reviewers they were trained in the same workshop sessions as the expert reviewers. This seemed to the Panel to represent a practical demonstration of the importance ACSUG attaches to having students actively participate in its review and evaluation work, and to be commendable.

4.5.6 ACSUG ensures that the review procedures it uses are sufficient to provide adequate evidence to support the findings and conclusions reached

ACSUG's SER for the present review did not describe how it could be sure that the evidence adduced through its review procedures is sufficient to support the findings and conclusions in its reports. The Panel therefore sought additional documentary information from ACSUG on this matter and explored it further with members of ACSUG, the CGIACA, and expert and student reviewers during the site visit.

Full time members of ACSUG's staff work with the standing Committees performing Verification reviews and accompany the panels of reviewers who undertake FIDES-AUDIT reviews. The participation of its staff in these activities enables ACSUG to be confident that reviewers seek the information they need to reach their findings and that in doing so they follow the criteria that the CGIACA has approved for the particular exercise. ACSUG also informed the Panel that finalised review reports are checked for consistency and sufficiency by the CGIACA which would always give special attention to a review report where the reviewers were reported to have failed to reach a consensus finding.

Members of the CGIACA subsequently confirmed to the Panel that it checked a sample of review reports for accuracy. They also confirmed that where the members of a review panel had been unable to reach a consensus the report would be given detailed consideration. As ACSUG and the CGIACA continue to develop the Agency's procedures for this area the Panel encourages ACSUG to explore with fellow ENQA agencies how they have approached the matter of checking the sufficiency and adequacy of the evidence on which reviewers have based their findings.

4.5.7 ACSUG uses the self-evaluation/ site visit/ draft report/ published report/ follow-up model of review

As with the above topic, neither the 2009 Report or the SER commented on whether ACSUG uses the self-evaluation/ site visit/ draft report/ published report/ follow-up model of review. In the case of Verification which is a desk-based review process, there is no site visit and it did not appear to the Panel that the submission of a new proposal for Verification would include a critical self assessment of the proposal by its proposers.

The Verification process provides for a draft report of the evaluation to be shared with the proposing University and the relevant Centre, and for a summary of the outcomes of Verification reviews to be published on the ACSUG web site. During the site visit the Panel was told that ACSUG also expects the proposing University to publish the report on its own web site. For Verifications, there is explicit follow-up through the Monitoring and the Accreditation processes.

The Accreditation process which ACSUG has recently piloted will provide for a site visit and the Panel understands that the process will include arrangements for the provider to receive a draft report to check its accuracy, for the finalised report to be published and for the findings of the review to be followed up subsequently. Again, the Panel is not clear from the information it has seen whether the operational Accreditation process will require the submission to include an explicit critical retrospective self-evaluation by the relevant Centre when the Accreditation process is finally implemented.

Other review processes supported by ACSUG such as FIDES-AUDIT are voluntary and undertaken to support institutional improvement. Final reports from these processes are sent to the relevant University for its information. From the supporting evidence that ACSUG provided with the SER there does not appear to be a requirement for an explicit retrospective critical self-evaluation to be provided by the relevant Centre as part of the FIDES-AUDIT process, which seems a curious omission in a process designed to evaluate quality assurance arrangements.

In view of the largely descriptive character of the SER for this review and the limited evidence for ACSUG's capacity for critical self-analysis that was mentioned the 2009 Report and in this report (see above, p. 11), the Panel recommends that ACSUG should consider (if appropriate in association with the quality Agencies of the other Autonomous Communities and the National Agency, ANECA) how it might ensure the inclusion of an explicit element of retrospective critical self-evaluation in submissions for each of the external review processes it operates, in order to encourage the exercise of critical self-evaluation on the part of the subjects of its reviews and more generally.

4.5.8   ACSUG recognises the importance of institutional improvement and enhancement policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality.

4.5.8.1   The FIDES-AUDIT programme

The 2009 Report treated FIDES-AUDIT as a form of external review, on a par with the Verification process. Having described the circumstances under which the FIDES-AUDIT programme had been introduced by ACSUG, the 2009 Report referred to FIDES-AUDIT as a programme that "consists of two steps i. ACSUG provides assistance to the universities to set up their internal quality assurance system, ii. which then will be assessed by an external review panel". The 2009 Report considered that this created a situation whereby "ACSUG could more or less be delivering to the universities the internal quality assurance framework later to be assessed by ACSUG itself".

In its 2011 response to the 2009 Report ACSUG did not refer to these seriously critical remarks about the nature of the FIDES-AUDIT process, while in the SER for the present review ACSUG described FIDES-AUDIT in almost identical terms to those used in the 2009 Report adding that, together with ANECA and another of the higher education quality assurance Agencies for the Autonomous Communities, UNIBASQ, ACSUG had developed a "Model for the Certification and Implementation of the Quality Assurance Systems" which had subsequently been piloted. The SER reported that ACSUG had since invited applications for the Certification of the Implementation of the Quality Assurance Systems" of Centres in the Galician Universities.

Reviewing the basis for the FIDES-AUDIT initiative the Panel considered that FIDES-AUDIT might more properly be considered a form of centrally determined developmental initiative for quality assurance and enhancement, rather than as an external review process. The Panel shares the reservations of the authors of the 2009 Report about the FIDES-AUDIT programme. The panel finds it puzzling that ACSUG should coach University Centres in how to develop quality assurance systems, a task which might reasonably be thought in other jurisdictions to be a University's own responsibility. It also finds it puzzling that ACSUG does not appear to have considered the possibility that its dual role as coach and referee in the FIDES-AUDIT process might involve a conflict of interest.

The Panel invites ACSUG to reflect carefully on the concerns expressed about the FIDES-AUDIT process in the 2009 Report, and in this report. In this context, the Panel recommends that ACSUG should seek to initiate a conversation with the quality Agencies of the other Autonomous Communities and the National Agency, ANECA in order to consider jointly whether, in the interests of supporting the academic autonomy of the Universities greater responsibility for the development of internal quality assurance systems should be devolved to the

Universities while the respective Agency retains responsibility for the quality assurance of the University's internal quality arrangements.

4.5.8.2   The DOCENTIA programme

The DOCENTIA programme has now been in operation since 2007. The 2009 Report described it as a programme to provide support for the Universities (in this case in Galicia) as they designed and implemented processes for "the evaluation of teaching staff performance". The DOCENTIA programme had been jointly developed by ANECA and the higher education quality assurance agencies in the Autonomous Communities.

The SER described the DOCENTIA programme in almost identical terms to those used in the 2009 Report, commenting that each of the three Galician Universities had achieved favourable evaluations of their systems for assessing their teaching staff in 2007, with ACSUG monitoring their implementation of their assessment models in the subsequent two years prior to "the final stage of certifying them". It noted that two of the three Galician Universities had carried out three implementations of teaching staff evaluations while the third had only undertaken one implementation, in 2010, and had since been reviewing its procedures.

During the site visit the Panel met expert reviewers who had contributed to DOCENTIA programme and individuals who had been evaluated by their Universities using the procedures developed through the programme. As with the FIDES-AUDIT programme of work, it seemed to the Panel that the DOCENTIA programme represented a centrally-determined developmental initiative delivered through ACSUG; at the same time it could be viewed as a substantial external intervention in the internal affairs of the Universities.

The Panel was told that a self-evaluation was a core element of the DOCENTIA process. Individuals who had been reviewed via DOCENTIA confirmed that they had been given detailed guidance by their University on how to draw up a self-evaluation that was comprehensive, included all the relevant data about their teaching activities and would be clear to the evaluators reading it.

As ACSUG continues to develop its portfolio of activities the Panel encourages it to discuss with other quality Agencies in the Autonomous Communities and the National Agency, ANECA, at what point it might be possible to step back from involvement in the DOCENTIA process and devolve responsibility for assessing their teaching staff back to the Universities, thereby enabling ACSUG to focus its resources on the external quality assurance of the Universities themselves and their programmes.

4.5.8.3   Teaching staff accreditation and assignment of salary bonuses for teaching staff

The SER described how ACSUG provided academic evaluation services to enable the Galician Universities to discharge their legal responsibilities to confirm the qualifications and experience of the staff they wish to appoint to teaching positions. There is also a process in the Galician Universities whereby teaching staff who can demonstrate "excellence" in teaching against a range of defined and published criteria may apply for the payment of a salary bonus. In each case, the evaluation of the academic merits of prospective appointees and of the cases made by applicants for salary bonuses are evaluated by academic experts

identified by ACSUG from the national database of reviewers and supported by ACSUG staff.

The Panel considers that whatever the merits or otherwise of ACSUG's involvement in these processes, selecting appropriate reviewers to join evaluation panels and supporting the work of the panels represented a substantial call on ACSUG's resources (see below, page 44).

Conclusion

Substantially Compliant

Commendations

The Panel commends ACSUG for

- its approach to the training and support of all its reviewers (page 31)

- its provision of joint training for expert and student reviewers which represents a practical demonstration of the importance it attaches to the participation of students in its review work (pages 31 and 32).

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that ACSUG should

- continue to seek ways in which expert reviewers from outside Spain and other international experts can contribute to the Agency's reviews and its work more generally (page 32)

- consider how it might include a requirement for an element of retrospective critical self-evaluation in all of the external review processes it operates, in order to encourage the exercise of critical self reflection on the part of the subjects of its reviews (page 34)

- initiate a conversation with the quality agencies of the other Autonomous Communities and the National Agency, ANECA, in order to consider whether, in the interests of supporting the academic autonomy of the Universities, greater responsibility for the development of their internal quality assurance systems should be devolved to them while ACSUG (and its fellow Agencies) retains responsibility for the quality assurance of the Universities' internal quality arrangements (page 34)

4.6 ESG Part 2.5: Reporting

> **ESG Reference:** 2.5 Reporting procedures
> **ENQA Criterion 1 cont.**
>
> **Standard:**
> Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.
>
> **Guideline(s):**
> In order to ensure maximum benefit from external quality assurance processes, it is important that reports should meet the identified needs of the intended readership. Reports are sometimes intended for different readership groups and this will require careful attention to structure, content, style and tone. In general, reports should be structured to cover description, analysis (including relevant evidence), conclusions, commendations, and recommendations.
> There should be sufficient preliminary explanation to enable a lay reader to understand the purposes of the review, its form, and the criteria used in making decisions. Key findings, conclusions and recommendations should be easily locatable by readers. Reports should be published in a readily accessible form and there should be opportunities for readers and users of the reports (both within the relevant institution and outside it) to comment on their usefulness.

4.6.1 The format of evaluation reports and their contents

The 2009 Report citing the SER for that review stated that "The report published by ACSUG usually follows a structure set out by the guidelines, protocols and criteria established in advance for each processes". The SER for the present review used the same words.

The SER stated that the format that ACSUG typically follows for its reports is to begin with a description of the purpose of the report and the process followed to produce it; a description and analysis of the activity under review, with "any relevant evidence"; the conclusions reached through the review process including a formal statement of findings, where required; where the review process allows, recommendations for improvement.

The 2009 Report commented that for that review no reports "were available in English" but that "Spanish-reading" members of that panel had been able to confirm that the findings of ACSUG reports were "published in a suitable and accessible format". For the present review the Panel asked ACSUG to provide a sample of reports in translation: those provided included the report for a Verification and a research evaluation. Members of the Panel with a good reading knowledge of Spanish also considered a sample of other ACSUG reports.

The Panel discussed the format and accessibility of ACSUG's published reports with students, members of staff and expert reviewers during the site visit. All considered that the reports ACSUG produces are easy to read and to use. The Panel agrees with this view.

4.6.2 The intended readership for the evaluation reports

The SER did not comment on what ACSUG considered to be the intended readership of its reports. It did, however, state that ACSUG "aims to make all the relevant information available, in so far as possible, to all interested parties, in accordance with its code of ethics, while taking account of current legislation

with regards to personal data protection'". It also stated that ACSUG considered that it was "important to listen to the opinion of the recipients of the reports in order to establish whether they are fit for purpose". The SER provided detailed descriptions of the post-review evaluations of review reports that ACSUG undertakes and how it seeks feedback from the recipients of its reports for improvement purposes.

During the visit the Panel discussed the readership of ACSUG reports with expert and student reviewers, members of ACSUG's staff, members of the CGIACA, and members of the Galician Universities. From these conversations the Panel came to the view that ACSUG considered that staff and students in the Universities and University Centres constituted the primary readership for its review reports.

Those members of the Galician Universities and of ACSUG who met the Panel told it that review reports were sent by ACSUG to the central University authorities. Occasionally, a particular University may authorise one of its Centres to deal directly with ACSUG; it was more usual, however, for the University authorities to use ACSUG's reports to check that the Centre that had been reviewed was performing satisfactorily and to work closely with that Centre to deal with any deficiencies that had been highlighted by the ACSUG report. Those with whom the Panel discussed the reception of ACSUG reports by the Galician Universities were convinced that the reports were making a positive contribution to the improvement of the Universities' overall performance.

Before and during the review visit, the Panel browsed the ACSUG web site where the Agency publishes reports of Verification reviews that it has undertaken and reports of subsequent programme modifications. Reports on developmental FIDES-AUDIT and DOCENTIA reviews, and other activities where ACSUG provides experts to advise on employment and salaries for individuals do not appear to be published, which is understandable.

Reflecting on the information that it had gathered about the impact of ACSUG's reports the Panel considered that the reports that ACSUG compiles are making a positive and commendable contribution to the enhancement of higher education across the Galician Universities.

The reports that ACSUG shared with the Panel were detailed and technical: this is in keeping with ACSUG's assessment that the Universities and their Centres constitute the primary readership for its reports. However, as students studying and planning to study at a Galician University, the parents and sponsors of students, and the employers of graduates from the Galician Universities become more sophisticated users of information and data about Universities and their programmes, the Panel recommends that ACSUG should check periodically what the information needs of such users are, and how its reports can better meet those needs. The Panel makes further observations about ACSUG's reporting activities elsewhere in this report (see page 41).

4.6.3   The process of producing the evaluation report

As noted elsewhere in this report, the SER did not describe the process of producing an evaluation report; however, from its discussions with members of ACSUG, expert and student reviewers, and the CGIACA, the Panel learned that at the end of a review, expert and student reviewers worked with experienced members of ACSUG's staff to draft the findings from the review. The ACSUG staff subsequently complete a draft report of the review, while remaining in

frequent contact via email and telephone with the Chair of the relevant standing Committee or review panel and other members. Draft review reports are sent to the Universities for comment and for the correction of factual errors before they are presented to the CGIACA for its consideration. If the finalised draft report is accepted by the CGIACA it is then issued to the University. The Panel was told during the visit that ACSUG expected the Universities to publish the outcomes of ACSUG reviews on their web sites.

Conclusions

Fully Compliant

Commendations

The Panel commends ACSUG for

- the positive contribution that its review reports are making to the enhancement of higher education across the Galician Universities (page 38)

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that ACSUG

- consider how it might communicate the findings of its review reports to a wider readership as students, parents and sponsors, and employers become more sophisticated users of information and data about Universities and their programmes (page 38)

4.7 ESG Part 2.6 Follow-Up Procedures

ESG Reference: 2.6 Follow up-procedures **ENQA Criterion 1 cont.**
Standard: Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.
Guideline(s): Quality assurance is not principally about individual external scrutiny events: it should be about continuously trying to do a better job. External quality assurance does not end with the publication of the report and should include a structured follow-up procedure to ensure that recommendations are dealt with appropriately and any required action plans drawn up and implemented. This may involve further meetings with institutional or programme representatives. The objective is to ensure that areas identified for improvement are dealt with speedily and that further enhancement is encouraged.

The 2009 Report found that ACSUG's follow up to its reviews was "problematic" while noting that the Verification procedure that ACSUG was about to introduce would be linked to a Monitoring process "so that in the future the consistency of the follow-up procedure carried out by ACSUG will hopefully be improved". In its 2011 response to ENQA, ACSUG reported that from "2011, the evaluation by ACSUG of the yearly follow-up of Galician university degrees is compulsory. There are 400 university degrees in Galicia, whose monitoring process will be assessed by the ACSUG."

In its SER for the present review, ACSUG identified the annual Monitoring of Verified qualifications and their subsequent (re)-Accreditation as the procedures that ensured that University Centres respond to the recommendations made in the reports of Verification reviews. In response to a request for further

information from the Panel, ACSUG provided a flow chart diagram to illustrate the various stages of the annual Monitoring process for programmes. The details of ACSUG's annual Monitoring process are considered elsewhere in this report (see above, page 24).

Once annual Monitoring reports have been confirmed by the CGIACA they are delivered back to the Universities. At the same time a report on the conduct of the monitoring process and suggestions for improvements and a report on the programmes monitored by their subject area is provided for the "Spanish University System". In due course, when the operational version of the Accreditation process commences, it will provide a further source of evidence about how the Galician Universities and their Centres are responding to the reports of external evaluations.

Conclusion

Fully Compliant

4.8 ESG Part 2.7 Periodic Reviews

ESG Reference: 2.7 Periodic reviews **ENQA Criterion 1 cont.**
Standard: External quality assurance of institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.
Guideline(s): Quality assurance is not a static but a dynamic process. It should be continuous and not 'once in a lifetime'. It does not end with the first review or with the completion of the formal follow-up procedure. It has to be periodically renewed. Subsequent external reviews should take into account progress that has been made since the previous event. The process to be used in all external reviews should be clearly defined by the external quality assurance agency and its demands on institutions should not be greater than are necessary for the achievement of its objectives.

In 2009, the ENQA report noted that even though ACSUG had only recently commenced the programme Verification process it was possible to see that with annual Monitoring and the promised Accreditation process this would meet the standard for undertaking external quality assurance reviews of programmes or institutions on a cyclical basis – in this case a cycle of six years.

With respect to the FIDES-AUDIT and DOCENTIA processes, the 2009 Report considered that these did not appear to be undertaken on a cyclical basis as the processes did not follow regular cycles. As noted elsewhere in this report, the present Panel does not consider that the DOCENTIA and FIDES-AUDIT processes should be viewed as periodic external reviews, while acknowledging their importance as developmental processes and that they take place cyclically.

The Panel considers that the Verification, annual Monitoring and Accreditation processes operated by ACSUG together constitute a comprehensive system of periodic reviews at the programme level. In its meetings with members of ACSUG and members of the Galician Universities the Panel was told that ACSUG is now accumulating valuable data and information about programmes and, incidentally, Universities and the Galician University System as a whole, which could be of great value to policy makers in the Autonomous Community, the Universities and subject/discipline communities (see page 42, "System-Wide

Analysis"). In due course the accumulation of this data and information by ACSUG about the individual Galician Universities will also make it possible for the Agency to offer them University-wide, holistic analyses of their quality management arrangements.

Conclusion

Fully Compliant

4.9   ESG Part 2.8 System-Wide Analysis

ESG Reference: 2.8 System-wide analysis **ENQA Criterion 1 cont.**
Standard: Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments, etc.
Guideline(s): All external quality assurance agencies collect a wealth of information about individual programmes and/or institutions and this provides material for structured analyses across whole higher education systems. Such analyses can provide very useful information about developments, trends, emerging good practice and areas of persistent difficulty or weakness and can become useful tools for policy development and quality enhancement. Agencies should consider including a research and development function within their activities, to help them extract maximum benefit from their work

In 2009, the ENQA report found that ACSUG published an Annual Report and had produced a series of system-wide reports on the Agency's external quality assurance activities.

The SER described ACSUG's activities under this heading in terms of periodic reports of its activities that it makes to its President and Board of Directors; papers to highlight important issues in higher education; and its contribution to an annual report on quality assessments in Spanish universities. The SER also referred to reports that ACSUG had published on the outcomes of Verifications of Bachelors and Masters programmes that the Agency had undertaken but provided no further information on what might be seen as an important insight into the character of the programmes being put forward by the Galician Universities, and the responses the Universities have been adopting to the adjustment of their programmes to operate within the European Higher Education Area.

The SER also referred to the Annual Reports that ACSUG publishes on its own activities (which the Panel found provided detailed and informative overviews of the various review and development activities undertaken during the previous year) and the reports that the Agency has published from its Labour Market Integration project. The latter are intended to provide annual reports on the transition from study to employment of graduates from the Galician Universities. The SER stated that initially, the surveys underpinning these Labour Market Integration reports had focused on "university graduates in diplomas/degrees/engineering" but ACSUG later clarified that this should be understood as meaning all graduates.

The SER described the information provided by the Labour Market Integration surveys as providing insights into the views of graduates on their satisfaction

with their education; the competencies acquired through their studies; average time before finding their first job related to their qualification and factors to be considered in finding employment. The Panel considers that this exercise provides stakeholders in higher education in Galicia, including the Regional Authorities and the Galician Universities with valuable information and that ACSUG is to be commended for developing the Labour Market Integration Study and the associated reports.

The publication of reports from the Labour Market Integration Study is an "annual activity" but the most recent report from the Labour Market Integration Study is that for 2010. Members of ACSUG told the Panel that reports had been delayed because ACSUG lacked sufficient staff to compile such a complex report in a shorter timescale and support other necessary activities.

Members of the Galician Universities with whom the Panel discussed the Labour Market Integration Reports considered that they provided an "indirect demonstration of the quality of the human resources that we are training" and that the Universities and their staff "need more of this type of information". Other stakeholders told the Panel that the reports from Labour Market Integration Study provided an important link between ACSUG and employers.

The Panel considers that the work ACSUG has undertaken under the umbrella of its Labour Market Integration Study is important and is valued by stakeholders in higher education in Galicia and by ACSUG's Board of Directors. The Panel recommends that ACSUG and its Board of Directors take all reasonable steps to enable the Labour Market Integration Study to continue.

At the same time, the Panel urges ACSUG to extend its existing system-wide analysis and reporting through bringing together data and information from the reports of its Verification, Monitoring and Accreditation reviews to support policy-makers, Universities, and subject and discipline communities across the Galician University System (see page 40). As this would be of particular benefit to policy-makers in the Government of the Autonomous Community, the Panel urges ACSUG and its Board of Directors to consider seeking additional funding from that source to support this most valuable work.

Conclusions

Fully Compliant

Commendations

The Panel commends ACSUG for

- its development of the Labour market Integration Study and associated reports (page 42)

4.10 ENQA criterion 2 / ESG 3.2: Official status

ESG Reference: 3.2 Official status **ENQA Criterion 2.**
Standard: Agencies should be formally recognized by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.
Guideline(s): -

In 2009, the ENQA report found it "evident that ACSUG operates on a clear and established legal basis and is recognised by competent Galician authorities. It is further evident from the documentation that ACSUG complies with the requirements inherent in its legal basis".

For the present review, ACSUG provided a concise digest of the status of ACSUG under Spanish Law and within the Law of the Autonomous Community of Galicia. It reported that, by the enactment of Law 6/2013 of the Autonomous Community ACSUG is recognised as the body responsible for quality assurance matters within the Galician University System (as defined in that Law).

The enactment of Law 6/2013 has required ACSUG to make some changes to its own statutes to conform with the requirements of the legislation. At the time of the present review, ACSUG and its advisers had drafted new statutes for the consideration of the Board of Directors and the CGIACA. The draft of the new statutes was provided by ACSUG for the Panel which is satisfied that they preserve the academic independence of the CGIACA as ACSUG's supreme academic decision-making body and preserve the authority of ACSUG itself.

Conclusion

Fully Compliant

4.11 ENQA criterion 3 / ESG 3.4: Resources

ESG Reference: 3.4 Resources **ENQA Criterion 3**
Standard: Agencies should have adequate and proportionate resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organize and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures *and staff (Addition by ENQA for ENQA criterion)*
Guideline(s):

4.11.1 Financial resources

In 2009, the ENQA report found that funding for ACSUG came principally from the Galician Universities and the Autonomous Community of Galicia. For the present review ACSUG provided details of its income and expenditure for 2011-

13 and projections for 2014. These details also included statements of ACSUG's expenditure on work with international bodies and assessments in South America. The latter are self-funding and have been on a not-for-profit basis (see below). ACSUG's finances are subject to annual external audits by the Regional Government

Overall, the Panel accepted ACSUG's representations that that its annual budget was sufficient to enable it to meet its current responsibilities. The Panel was, however, concerned to note that resource constraints had inhibited ACSUG from undertaking valuable work on the Labour Market Integration Survey which As ACSUG plans to undertake a necessary programme of Accreditation reviews, which will involve site visits and incur greater expense than the Verification reviews they follow, the Panel questions whether ACSUG will need to seek additional resources from the Regional Government.

When it met ACSUG's Board of Directors the Panel asked about the Agency's strategic plans and how it planned to fund its growing programme of activities. The Panel was told that until the present ACSUG had planned its activities on an annual basis and had been able to manage within the funds it had been allocated but that it was aware that it would need to adopt a more strategic approach and plan ahead for several years. The Panel was told that ACSUG had not previously found it necessary to produce a strategic plan, business plan or multi-year forecast budgets. The Panel recommends that in order to plan its capacity to deliver its growing programme of external reviews ACSUG should set out a five year strategic plan and forecast budgets for presentation to its Board of Directors, that can be published together with an updated version of its Mission Statement (see below, page 46). The Panel recognises that giving effect to this recommendation may require changes to ACSUG's draft statutes which as provided by ACSUG require only the presentation of annual budgets.

4.11.2   Human resources

In 2009, the ENQA report noted that ACSUG's staff establishment consisted of 16 persons, 11 of whom were on permanent contracts. The 2009 Report noted with approval that since 2006 there had been a steady increase in the number of full-time staff and that staff turnover was low. The 2009 Report also commented on the need for ACSUG staff to have a better command of spoken English to enable them to play a more active part in the work of ENQA and refer to the large body of works on quality in higher education available in English. It also called for attention to be given to continuing professional development to enable ACSUG's staff to enhance their professional and higher degree qualifications.

At the time of the present review, ACSUG employed the same number of staff as it had in 2009 and the SER pointed to the low turnover among its staff as a strength. ACSUG staff who met the Panel told it about the support the Agency was providing to enable them to develop their English language skills. The Panel was pleased to note the readiness of ACSUG staff to engage it in discussions in English and encourages them to continue to develop their language skills and professional and academic qualifications.

Overall, the Panel found that ACSUG's staff constituted its most significant asset and that their professional, administrative, and support skills had been the key to ACSUG's ability to deliver an increasingly demanding and complex set of quality and other services for the Galician University System. The Panel

commends ACSUG for having recruited and retained such a professional body of staff.

The SER provided information on ACSUG's international activities, in organising external programme reviews with Universities in South America. Members of ACSUG student and expert reviewers who met the Panel told it that these exercises offer valuable opportunities to gain experience of how higher education is offered elsewhere in the world and to assist with its improvement. Senior members of staff told the Panel that such activities offered a way to recognise the professional competence of ACSUG's staff and reviewers and were good for morale. The Panel recognises and accepts these arguments and wishes ACSUG well as it continues with these and other international activities. Nonetheless, organising, managing and participating in such international review activities represents an "opportunity cost" to ACSUG. Had time permitted during the review visit, the Panel would have liked to explore with ACSUG whether the basis on which it had calculated the funding it needed to receive to support its "not for profit" international activities had included funds to take on additional staff so that the staffing for ACSUG's core activities had not been in any way reduced.

Substantially Compliant

Commendations

The Panel commends ACSUG for

- having recruited and retained a highly professional body of staff (page 44)

Recommendations

The Panel recommends to ACSUG

- that in order to safeguard its capacity to deliver its growing programme of external reviews it should set out a five year strategic plan and forecast budgets for presentation to its Board of Directors (page 44 - see also page 46).

4.12   ENQA criterion 4 / ESG 3.5: Mission statement

ESG Reference: 3.5 Mission statement

ENQA Criterion 4

Standard: Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement

Guideline(s): These statements should describe the goals and objectives of agencies' quality assurance processes, the division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and historical context of their work. The statements should make clear that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the agency and that there exists a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statements are translated into a clear policy and management plan.

In 2009, the ENQA report found that ACSUG had developed a "commendable" Mission Statement that combined "external quality assurance activities external quality assurance activities with a focus on ACSUG's role as disseminator of knowledge and experience among universities and stakeholders" The 2009 Report also commented, however, on the absence from ACSUG's Mission Statement of a clear indication of the "division of labour with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions" and "documentation as to how the statements of the mission are translated into a clear policy and management plan" as described in the Guidelines for this Criterion. ACSUG's 2011 progress report to ENQA does not refer to these matters.

ACSUG's present Mission and Vision statements were provided in the SER and are published on ACSUG's web site. As in 2009, while ACSUG's Mission Statement sets out its goals and objectives it does not contain material that would make it consistent with the Guidelines for this Criterion; for example, it does not set out the division of labour and responsibilities between itself and the Universities, or explain how its Mission "is translated into a clear policy and management plan".

The Panel recommends that ACSUG should update its Mission Statement to take account of the Guidelines that accompany ENQA Criterion 4/ESG 3.5 and publish the updated Mission Statement, setting out the division of labour and responsibilities between itself and the Universities and explaining how its Mission is translated into a clear policy and management plan via its Strategic Plan.

Conclusion

Substantially Compliant

Recommendation

The Panel recommends that ACSUG

- should update its Mission Statement to take account of the Guidelines that accompany ENQA Criterion 4/ESG 3.5 and publish the updated Mission Statement, setting out the division of labour and responsibilities between itself and the Universities and explaining how its Mission is translated into a

clear policy and management plan via its Strategic Plan (page 46) (see also page 44)

4.13   ENQA criterion 5 / ESG 3.6: Independence

ESG Reference: 3.6 Independence **ENQA Criterion 5**
Standard: Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders
Guideline(s): An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as • its operational independence from higher education institutions and governments • is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts); • the definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are undertaken autonomously and independently from governments, higher education institutions, and organs of political influence; • while relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency

4.13.1   Operational independence from higher education institutions and government guaranteed by official documents

The 2009 Report expressed concern that the membership of the Board and the CGIACA "are characterized by a heavy participation of high level representatives of the local government and of the three universities…. The 2009 Report noted that when

> "the ENQA Board decided in 2007 to grant ACSUG candidate membership of ENQA the Board recommended that, in order to fulfil the criteria for full membership ACSUG should take into account that its constitution and structure and especially the actual membership of the Board of Directors do not allow for a sufficient degree of independence. The Board based this observation on its view that if an agency is comprised of those it whom reviews, it cannot be seen to be independent of them."

In an extended discussion of this matter the 2009 Report noted, however, the importance ACSUG attached to its creation of the CGIACA and the expansion of its role. The 2009 Report expressed continuing reservations about the independence of the CGIACA since its members were all drawn from the Regional Government and the Galician Universities and it was not clear at the time whether members of the CGIACA were appointed to their positions in their individual capacities or as representatives of their employers.

The 2009 Report noted that the work ACSUG had undertaken up to that point had largely been developmental and undertaken in cooperation with the Galician Universities. It observed that in such a context, mutual trust between ACSUG and those it reviewed "is a natural and positive result" but that as ACSUG undertook external Verification reviews in the coming years it was not impossible that the conduct of these ex ante "accreditations" might "create conflicts with universities or even regional government".

In one of its most significant findings, the 2009 Report stated that it found "that the structure of ACSUG, especially the CGIACA composition, does not guarantee ACSUG full independency." It recommended, therefore "modifying and expanding the CGIACA by involving academic representatives, professionals and students and all of these to be appointed in their personal capacity. Further some members should come from outside Galicia, and the inclusion of international academic representatives should be considered".

As noted earlier, in its 2011 progress report to ENQA, ACSUG argued that through the development of the CGIACA it had created a body that was "ultimately responsible" for evaluation reporting and that it considered it necessary that this body "should be comprised of persons who have a thorough knowledge of the Galicia University System, as well as solid experience and recognized prestige in the university community, considering the transcendence and impact their decisions have on the university community (not only with regard to the accreditation of degrees, but also of professors)". It also argued that through the creation of its Advisory Council it had introduced a body to which the CGIACA would be required to explain itself should it ever decide to overrule the findings of an expert review panel. The work of the Advisory Council is discussed elsewhere in this report (see below, page 57).

ENQA's response to this 2011 progress report focused on the need for the membership of the CGIACA to include representatives from outside Galicia and representatives of students and other professionals. In the SER for the present review, ACSUG reported that following the enactment of Law 6/2013 of the Galician Parliament it had reframed its statutes, that the membership of the CGIACA was to be increased from six to eight persons, and that its future membership "will be composed basically of members from the national and international academic and scientific community, but the presence of a person from the professional or business sphere will be guaranteed, along with that of a university student".

In its planning for this review, the Panel was aware that the ENQA requirement for quality assurance agencies seeking membership or its renewal to be able to demonstrate their independence is a fundamental of the European Standards and Guidelines, and that it was essential to determine whether ACSUG had responded satisfactorily to the matter and was able to demonstrate its independence. The Panel therefore requested a draft copy (in translation) of the new Statutes that ACSUG was about to adopt. The Panel also discussed the matter of ACSUG's independence from the Regional Authorities and the Galician Universities with those it met during the site visit and especially the President and the Director of ACSUG, members of the Board of Directors (who included the Galician Minister for Education and Culture) and members of the CGIACA.

Through the meetings it held during the site visit the Panel was able to understand more fully the substantial and invaluable contribution to ACSUG's

work that the members of the CGIACA have made since the Committee was founded, shortly after the last ENQA review visit. As noted elsewhere, the CGIACA meets at least once each month. It selects the membership of review panels and the standing Committees that undertake Verifications, and it reviews all the reports they make before they are published. The CGIACA also agrees the protocols for review activities and monitors the conduct of the various review panels and standing Committees to ensure that they have followed the protocols and procedures set for them. Overall, the Panel considers that the dedication of the members of the CGIACA to the work they undertake for ACSUG is central to the Agency's operation and its capacity to make independent academic judgements and is highly commendable.

Under ACSUG's proposed revised Statutes, the Chair of the CGIACA is to be appointed on the nomination of ACSUG's Board by the head of the department in the Regional Government that is responsible for university matters. When appointed, the Chair of the CGIACA will become an *ex officio* member of ACSUG's Board. ACSUG's proposed revised Statutes provide for members of the CGIACA to appointed by ACSUG's President, in their capacity as Chair of ACSUG's Board. Members of the CGIACA are to be chosen by ACSUG's Board "from among outstanding members of the national and international academic and scientific community".

As stated in the translation provided by ACSUG for the Panel, a strict interpretation of the above membership and appointment criteria would not require that any member of the CGIACA be from outside Spain (or Galicia) but rather that the persons appointed be from the national or international scientific community, including Galicia. The proposed revised Statutes do not state who may nominate an individual to be a member of the CGIACA: this would be a helpful clarification. The Panel recommends that, as it moves to have its new Statutes enacted, ACSUG should consider whether one of the membership positions for the CGIACA should be reserved for a suitably qualified person from outside Galicia.

In making this recommendation, the Panel wishes to emphasise that it has no concerns about the probity, integrity, or academic independence of the CGIACA. The Panel considers that with the frequent meetings and heavy workload of the CGIACA, ACSUG would find it difficult to appoint a working member to the Committee who was not based in Spain. Hence, in the interests of enabling the CGIACA to continue its present high level of activity, while helping ACSUG to address ENQA's concerns that it should be able to demonstrate transparency and impartiality in the conduct of its business, the Panel suggests that ACSUG might also consider whether a membership position on ACSUG's Board should be made available to a suitably qualified person appointed from another ENQA member state.

ACSUG has recently begun to operate internationally, in South America and in central Asia, places where it will be not only a development and capacity-building agent and advocate of good practice in higher education, but an ambassador for Galicia, Spain, and ENQA. The Panel therefore considers that it is incumbent on ACSUG to be able to demonstrate to ENQA that its approach to the quality assurance of higher education embodies the spirit as well as the letter of the European Standards and Guidelines.

Conclusion

Substantially Compliant

Commendation

The Panel commends

- the dedication of the members of the CGIACA to the work they undertake for ACSUG which is central to the Agency's operations and its capacity to make independent academic judgements (page 49)

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that

- as it moves to have its new Statutes enacted, ACSUG should clarify that one of the membership positions for the CGIACA should be reserved for a suitably qualified person from outside Galicia (page 49)

4.14 ENQA Criterion 6 / ESG 3.7: External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members

ESG Reference: 3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies

ENQA Criterion 6

Standard:

The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
- an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;
- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
- a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.

Guideline(s): Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes.

Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by groups of different people.

Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency

4.14.1 External quality assurance criteria followed by ACSUG

The 2009 Report stated that "ACSUG evaluation processes involve the self-assessment phase and an external assessment by a group of experts including a student member … ACSUG prepares a summary report on every assessment process undertaken. The reports are then published on the ACSUG website".

For present review the Panel was able to confirm that for the Verification process and the Monitoring review processes ACSUG publishes guidance and protocols on its web site. It also publishes guidance to support the DOCENTIA and FIDES-AUDIT developmental processes. The Panel was not able to confirm, however, whether ACSUG publishes the criteria and guidance that CGIACA gives to those conducting reviews on behalf of the Agency.

As noted above (page 33) the Panel discussed the format and processes ACSUG follows when conducting its reviews with members of ACSUG and expert and student reviewers. For Verification reviews, it is not clear to the Panel that ACSUG's current processes for Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral Programmes Verification require a self-evaluation element. Likewise for the planned Accreditation process it was not clear to the Panel that that process will require

the University Centre making the submission to include a self-evaluation of the operation of the programme following Verification. A recommendation on the inclusion of a self-evaluation element in ACSUG review processes is made elsewhere in this report (see page 34).

On the basis of its conversations with expert and student reviewers, the Panel is able to confirm that Verification and Monitoring reviews are undertaken by panels comprising expert and student reviewers. When the operational version of the Accreditation process commences, evaluations will be undertaken by a panel of expert and student reviewers and include a site-visit. The Panel has also been able to confirm that reports of Verifications, subsequent modifications and annual Monitoring are published on the ACSUG web site but is unable to comment whether this happens routinely for every such review. As FIDES-AUDIT and DOCENTIA review activities are voluntary and developmental it is understandable that reports from these processes are not published

As noted elsewhere in this report the Monitoring and (when implemented) the Accreditation processes each act as follow-ups to the Verification process and each other.

4.14.2 Appeals procedure

The 2009 Report stated that ACSUG had an appeals procedure "in place for assessment processes that lead to formal resolution, decision or outcome". The SER for the present review stated that its "assessment processes performed, [includes] … an appeals procedure." The SER also stated that one of the functions of the ACSUG Advisory Council is to resolve "any controversies that may arise with regards to the compliance of ACSUG's procedures and actions with the standards and Code of Ethics and of Good Practice". Elsewhere, however, the SER stated that appeals against the outcome of a review can be made by lodging them with

> "ACSUG's decision-making body (CGIACA) by means of an administrative procedure (as per Law 30/1992 on Administrative Procedure). Also in existence is the option of the right to appeal before the Courts, in accordance with Law 29/1998 on Contentious-Administrative Jurisdiction".

The SER contained no further information on the form and stages of the appeals procedure or whether its outcomes were published.

In its request to ACSUG for further information the Panel asked it to provide "the appeal procedures that ACSUG has developed for use by members of the CGIACA hearing appeals". The papers ACSUG provided stated that an appeal can be made to the CGIACA against the findings of a review report but provided no information on the procedure to be followed to make an appeal, or details on the procedures that ACSUG and the CGIACA would follow when hearing an appeal. Information provided elsewhere by ACSUG stated that the procedure is for CGIACA and the assessors to reanalyse the original findings. If those who have made the appeal are not satisfied with the outcome of this procedure they may take the matter to the courts "following administrative jurisdiction".

The information above is satisfactory up to a point. As described above, it outlines the stages through which an appeal would pass but as set out in ACSUG's response, would mean that an appeal against a decision made or confirmed by the CGIACA would be heard by the same body, which would seem to contravene the "no conflict of interest" principle espoused by ACSUG.

Furthermore, the information supplied by ACSUG does not set out the grounds on which an appeal against a finding by ACSUG may be taken to the courts.

Members of ACSUG, the CGIACA, the Advisory Council and expert and student reviewers with whom the Panel discussed ACSUG's appeals procedures were aware that ACSUG has appeals procedures. They told the Panel that whenever ACSUG notified a University Centre or an individual of the outcomes of an evaluation or review it had conducted, that the relevant letter informs the recipient that they may appeal against the outcome given by ACSUG.

Overall, the information considered by the Panel did not convince it that ACSUG has a fully-developed and robust set of procedures and protocols for appeals against its findings that it could provide to an appellant and (equally important) to those who would be charged with conducting the enquiries needed to establish whether to uphold or reject an appeal against the outcomes or conduct of a review or a failure to enforce the "no conflict of interest principle". The Panel recommends that ACSUG should set out clear protocols and procedures for the conduct of appeals against the findings of its reviews and evaluations and failure to enforce the "no conflict of interest principle and publish them on its web site.

Conclusion

Substantially Compliant

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that ACSUG should

- set out clear protocols and procedures for the conduct of appeals against the findings of its reviews and evaluations and failure to enforce the "no conflict of interest principle" and publish them on its web site (page 53).

4.15 ENQA Criterion 7 / ESG 3.8: Accountability procedures

ESG Reference: 3.8 Accountability procedures
ENQA Criterion 7

Standard: Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

Guideline(s): These procedures are expected to include the following:
i. A published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website.
ii. Documentation which demonstrates that:
- the agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance
- the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts
- the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties
- the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/Board); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.

iii. A mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years *which includes a report on its conformity with the membership criteria of ENQA. (Addition by ENQA for ENQA criterion)*

4.15.1 ACSUG has a published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website

ACSUG describes its internal quality assurance arrangements in its "Quality and Environmental Goals" and its "Quality and Environmental Policy", which are published on its web site, links to which were provided in the SER. The documents available to the Panel in English did not describe ACSUG's internal quality control and quality assurance arrangements but did refer to ACSUG's procedures as having been independently certified as complying with ISO 9001:2008 and ISO 14001:2004. In the time available the Panel was unable to explore with ACSUG's staff the advantages that compliance with the relevant ISO standards had conferred on the Agency.

ACSUG is an active member of ENQA's "Internal Quality Assurance Group" which has been formed to share information and good practice between quality assurance agencies in the management of internal quality.

4.15.2 The agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts

The 2009 Report noted that ACSUG's Code of Ethics enshrined the "no conflict of interest principle" but was concerned that at that time there was no mechanism to enforce the Code of Ethics and that "the panel has not been able to identify a procedure to make a complaint related to the Code of Ethics". The 2009 Report recommended the establishment of "an ethics board to oversee the adherence

with the no conflict of interest principle". In its 2011 response to ENQA, ACSUG reported that "As regards the ethics board, the ACSUG has already this board, the Advisory Council, which, among other functions, is responsible for overseeing the transparency and independence of the ACSUG in the activities it carries out."

The role and functions of the Advisory Council in connection with appeals are described on page 52. With respect to complaints or appeals about conflicts of interest the Panel was told that no such complaints had been received by the Advisory Council and that members were unaware of the procedures that would be followed in such a case. This matter is the subject of a recommendation elsewhere in this report (see above, page 53).

4.15.3 ACSUG has mechanisms to ensure the quality of ACSUG's activities and material produced by subcontractors

The SER stated that the Agency's internal quality management system included a procedure for establishing the criteria for measuring the performance of subcontractors and suppliers. ACSUG has developed a process for pre-approving the suppliers and contractors with which it works on a regular basis and monitors their performance.

Interpreting the term subcontractor to include reviewers and review chairs, the SER noted that ACSUG evaluated the contributions of its expert and student reviewers after each engagement with them "to check that they have carried out their tasks as … specified". The SER stated that these assessments of its existing expert and student reviewers were referred to when selecting expert and student reviewers for further engagements.

The SER noted that as part of its own internal quality assurance arrangements, since 2006 ACSUG has implemented internal quality management systems that conform to ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ACSUG also follows the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), a voluntary environmental management tool developed by the European Commission to help organisations manage their environmental performance.

4.15.4 Feedback arrangements

The 2009 Report noted that in setting the terms of reference for the 2009 review the ENQA Board had observed that "The mechanisms used [by ACSUG] for the collection of feedback from the bodies that have been reviewed should be improved, and a systematic internal quality assurance mechanism introduced for the assurance of the Agency's own quality". The 2009 Report included the substance of this point in its recommendations.

In its response to ENQA in 2011, ACSUG reported that it had "implemented a systematic procedure of feedback from universities and people (mainly teaching staff) evaluated by the ACSUG" backed by procedures which it described.

In the course of the site visit, the Panel was able to confirm that the detailed procedures described in ACSUG's 2011 response to ENQA were a routine component of its review and developmental activities. For example, University centres that have participated in ACSUG reviews are invited to complete a detailed feedback questionnaire at the end of the exercise and reviewers are likewise asked to provide feedback on their experiences via structured questionnaires. The Panel was interested to note that members of academic staff

who had participated in the assessments for additional payments and the DOCENTIA process considered that they had received helpful feedback on their applications. In the time available the Panel was not able to explore with the Galician Universities, ACSUG reviewers, and ACSUG staff, how their feedback was used to improve ACSUG's procedures and operations.

4.15.5   Mandatory cyclical external review

The Panel notes that ACSUG's participation in the present review fulfils this aspect of the Guidelines.

Conclusion

Substantially Compliant

4.16   ENQA Criterion 8: Consistency of judgements, appeals system and contribution to ENQA aims

ENQA Criterion Reference: ENQA Criterion 8
ESG Reference: N/A
Standard/Guideline(s): N/A
i. *The agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgments and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even if the judgments are formed by different groups;*
ii. *If the agency makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, it should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of the agency;*
iii. *The agency is willing to contribute actively to the aims of ENQA.*

4.16.1   Consistency of judgements

In 2009, the ENQA report noted that in order to ensure the consistency of the expert reports in its Verification reviews ACSUG had arranged for the chairs of the different expert review panels (in this report standing Committees) to meet "in order to discuss possible difficulties encountered and reach consensus if necessary"

For the present review, the Panel found that the same measure was being followed to ensure that each of the standing Committees undertaking Verification and other reviews uses the relevant criteria consistently. The panel considered that this was a useful means of quality control. Likewise the Panel noted the overall quality control and quality assurance functions performed for ACSUG by the CGIACA when checking on the composition of standing Committees and review panels and when reviewing reports by those who had undertaken Verifications or other review activities. (see above, page 23)

The Panel is satisfied that the CGIACA and ACSUG are aware of the need for evaluations of the same subject domain and of individuals through the same

process to use consistent criteria and that through the CGIACA ACSUG has adopted means to ensure consistency.

4.16.2   Appeals procedure

At the time of the review visit ACSUG was about to implement changes to arrangements for the Advisory Council. The Council has formerly been chaired by the Director of ACSUG and has comprised members drawn from outside Galicia and of "acknowledged prestige in scientific, academic and business fields, either nationally or internationally". Members have formerly been appointed by the Director of ACSUG and have included representatives from business and commerce and the student body in Galicia. Appeals arrangements are also discussed elsewhere in this report (see above, page 52).

The new arrangements for the Advisory Council that ACSUG is now introducing include the appointment of an independent Chair, who will not be answerable to the Director. The new arrangements provide for the Director of ACSUG to continue to attend meetings of the Advisory Council.

In the 2009 Report noted that ACSUG had developed and adopted a Code of Ethics which embodied provisions to guard against conflicts of interest. It also noted, however, that it had been unable to identify how a complaint about a conflict of interest or breath of ethics would be made or to what body it would be directed. In its 2011 progress report to ENQA ACSUG stated that it had identified its Advisory Council as the body that would fulfil this function

In the course of the site visit the Panel discussed the work of the Advisory Council as ACSUG's ethics committee with some of its members. It learned that its membership consisted of two students, two representatives from the business sector, five academics (all from outside Galicia) and that the Council was Chaired by an independent academic member from one of the Galician Universities. Meetings of the Council are supported by ACSUG which provides papers for the meetings including copies of evaluation reports.

Members of the Council told the Panel that they meet annually with email communications between meetings when needed and that, thus far, no matters of conflicts of interest or ethics had been referred to it. Council members also told the Panel that they had received no induction or training for their role and were not sure what procedure they would follow if a conflict of interest or a matter of ethics was referred to them. The Panel recommends that ACSUG should provide clear statements and protocols, procedures and guidance for the Advisory Council to enable it to fulfil its roles.

4.16.3   Work with ENQA

In the course of the visit the Panel discussed ACSUG's contributions to ENQA with members of staff, members of the various ACSUG Committees and Boards, and expert reviewers. The Panel noted with interest that a priority for ACSUG staff was to improve their English language skills "to enable them to work more effectively with ENQA and EQAR and participate more fully in their activities" (see above, page 44). The Panel also learned from members of senior ACSUG committees that ensuring the alignment of the Galician Universities with the frameworks supporting the European Higher Education Area was a responsibility that the Regional Government had assigned to ACSUG.

ACSUG's SER described a substantial engagement with the work of ENQA and in the course of the site visit the Panel was able to learn more of this activity (see above, page 18). Overall, the Panel came to the view that ACSUG's contributions to ENQA go beyond what might be expected of an Agency of its size and resources and are commendable.

Conclusion

Substantially Compliant

Commendations

The Panel wishes to commend the following

- ACSUG's contributions to the work of ENQA, which are above and beyond what might be expected of an Agency of its size (page 58)

Recommendations

The Panel recommends that ACSUG should

- set out clear protocols and procedures for the conduct of appeals against the findings of its reviews and evaluations and failure to enforce the "no conflict of interest principle and publish them on its web site (page 53)

- provide clear statements and protocols, procedures and guidance for the Advisory Council to enable it to fulfil its roles of advising on ethics and conflicts of interest (page 57)

5   CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT

Since 2009 ACSUG has developed and carried out a substantial programme of desk-based "ex ante accreditations" (or Verification reviews) of new programmes of Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral programmes, designed by the Galician Universities to enable them to move their educational provision to new programme structures and cycles that conform to the pattern endorsed by the Bologna Process. These Verification reviews have been conducted by panels and standing Committees of expert and student reviewers trained, managed, supported and guided by ACSUG. The evidence available to the Panel suggests that this activity has been conscientiously managed by ACSUG and that the reports of the Verification reviews have been welcomed by the Galician Universities, which have found them useful.

At the time of the present review, ACSUG was also operating a process for the annual Monitoring of programmes that have previously been given "ex ante accreditation" through the Verification process. While some details of the arrangements for annual Monitoring were not completely clear to the Panel this process appears to be a helpful way for the Galician Universities to check how their new "Bologna-style" programmes are operating. Again, at the time of the review a process for the (re) accreditation of programmes previously granted "ex ante accreditation" through Verification was due to begin shortly, which will involve ACSUG in a substantial further programme of work. In the context of ACSUG's expanding commitments and the opportunities for analysing and publishing system-wide information that ACSUG is presently unable to follow through, the Panel welcomes ACSUG's recognition that it now needs to adopt a more strategic approach to planning its work and matching its commitments to its resources.

The chief means through which ACSUG oversees all its academic review activities, the Galician Committee for Reports, Assessment, Certification and Accreditation (the CGIACA), was established shortly after the 2009 ENQA Review. Within ACSUG, the CGIACA is the principal means through which it reaches independent academic assessments. The Panel considers that the CGIACA is a hard working and dedicated Committee to which ACSUG owes a great deal of its success in retaining the respect of the Galician University System for its decisions.

In addition to its academic reviews, ACSUG has also undertaken several "Galicia-wide" surveys and research activities so that it now possesses a large store of data and information on the Galician Universities, only some of which it has been able to publish due to staffing and other resource constraints. Members of the Galician Universities are keen to see more system-wide analysis undertaken by ACSUG, which should seek ways to restart its publication of reports from the Labour Market Insertion project.

As part of its commitment to Nationally agreed protocols and procedures, ACSUG has supported several cycles of developmental activities on the part of the Galician Universities in areas such as staff appraisal and internal quality assurance. In both its review and developmental activities, however, ACSUG continues to work within a complex "ensemble" of Regional and National policies and legislation which together limit its scope for individual initiative. Since 2009, the relative stability of this ensemble has provided ACSUG and the Galician Universities with a framework within which to plan their respective activities, which has been welcome. Policy stability can, however, if applied too rigidly, stifle development.

Outside Galicia and Spain, ACSUG is involved in undertaking and supporting developmental programme reviews for Universities in Peru and in working with Universities in Central Asia. The Panel notes ACSUG's assurances that these activities are being undertaken as "not for profit" ventures and acknowledges their value to ACSUG and higher education in Galicia. The Panel is sure that ACSUG will want to guard against expanding its international activities at the cost of leaving system-wide activities such as the Labour Market Insertion study and other system-wide analyses to wither.

Throughout the review the Panel has noted several areas where ACSUG might usefully discuss with the Galician Universities whether some responsibilities that it currently discharges might, in future be devolved to the Universities. The Panel recognises that such a development, while it would be in keeping with the founding principles of the European Standards and Guidelines, would need to take place in the wider context of Regional and National policies and procedures for quality and standards in higher education in Spain. The Panel hopes that these observations will be helpful to ACSUG as it continues its development as a mature and constructive Agency.

5.1   Overall Findings

The external Review Panel draws the following conclusions:

ENQA criterion 1/ ESG Part 2 External quality assurance processes; activities	Substantially compliant
ESG 2.1 Use of internal quality assurance procedures	Substantially compliant
ESG 2.2 Development of external quality assurance processes	Substantially compliant
ESG 2.3 Criteria for decisions	Fully compliant
ESG 2.4 Processes fit for purpose	Substantially compliant
ESG 2.5 Reporting	Fully compliant
ESG 2.6 Follow-up procedures	Fully compliant
ESG 2.7 Periodic reviews	Fully compliant
ESG 2.8 System-wide analysis	Fully compliant
ENQA criterion 1/ ESG 3.1, ESG 3.3: Use of External Quality Assurance in higher education	Substantially compliant
ENQA Criterion 1/ ESG 3.1, ESG 3.3: Activities	Fully compliant
ENQA Criterion 2/ ESG Reference: 3.2 Official status	Fully compliant
ENQA Criterion 3/ ESG Reference: 3.4 Resources	Substantially compliant
ENQA Criterion 4/ ESG Reference: 3.5 Mission statement	Substantially compliant
ENQA Criterion 5/ ESG Reference: 3.6 Independence	Substantially compliant
ENQA Criterion 6/ ESG Reference: 3.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes	Substantially compliant
ENQA Criterion 7/ ESG Reference: 3.8 Accountability procedures	Substantially compliant
ENQA Criterion 8 Consistency of judgments, appeals system and contributions to ENQA aims	Substantially compliant

5.2 Commendations and Recommendations

<u>The Panel commends ACSUG for</u>

- its practice of piloting proposed new review methodologies before their operational deployment (page 21)

- its practice of convening the Chairs of each of the standing Committees that undertake its Verification reviews to review the criteria employed when making judgements in order to ensure that the various standing Committees apply the criteria approved by ACSUG through the CGIACA for making judgements in a consistent manner (page 23)

- the training and support it provides for its expert and student reviewers (page 31)

- its practice of training student reviewers in the same workshop sessions as its expert reviewers which represents a practical demonstration of the importance it attaches to having students actively participate in its review and evaluation work (page 32)

- the reports that ACSUG compiles on its reviews which are making a positive contribution to the enhancement of higher education across the Galician Universities (page 38)

- developing the Labour Market Integration Study that it undertakes and the associated reports it has published (page 42)

- its recruitment and retention of a highly professional body of staff (page 44)

- the dedication of the members of the CGIACA to the work they undertake for ACSUG which is central to the Agency's operations and its capacity to make independent academic judgements (page 49)

- its contributions to the work of ENQA which go beyond what might reasonably be expected of an Agency of its size and resources (page 58)

<u>The Review Panel also makes the following recommendations. That ACSUG should</u>

- consider how it might initiate a conversation with the quality agencies of the other Autonomous Communities and the National Agency, ANECA, in order to explore whether and how to devolve more of the operational aspects of responsibilities for quality assurance to the Universities, including the Galician Universities, thereby effecting economies in its own activities and enhancing the autonomy of the Universities (page 26)

- as part of its move to adopt a more strategic approach to planning its activities consider how, when setting the aims and objectives for new external quality assurance processes it could undertake consultations specifically linked to such proposals more widely across the Galician Universities and stakeholders <u>before</u> asking its Board of Directors to approve them (page 27)

- explore with its stakeholders whether they would welcome proposals for the external review of Universities as whole academic communities and corporate entities responsible for the quality of their programmes and the academic standards of the awards to which they lead (page 29)

- continue to seek ways in which reviewers from outside Spain and other international experts can contribute to the Agency's reviews and its work more generally (page 32)

- consider, if appropriate in association with the quality agencies of the other Autonomous Communities and the National Agency, ANECA, how it might ensure the inclusion of an element of retrospective critical self-evaluation in submissions for each of the external review processes it operates, in order to encourage the exercise of critical self reflection on the part of the subjects of its reviews (page 34)

- reflect carefully on the concerns expressed about the FIDES-AUDIT process in the 2009 Report and this report and seek to initiate a conversation with the quality agencies of the other Autonomous Communities and the National Agency, ANECA in order to consider jointly whether, in the interests of supporting the academic autonomy of the Universities, including the Galician Universities, greater responsibility for the development of internal quality assurance systems should be devolved to the Universities while the Agency retains responsibility for the quality assurance of the University's internal quality arrangements (page 34)

- check periodically the information needs of students, sponsors employers and Universities as users of its reports, and how its reports can better meet their needs (page 38)

- set out a five year strategic plan and forecast budgets for presentation to its Board of Directors in order to plan its capacity to deliver its growing programme of external reviews ACSUG should (page 44)

- update its Mission Statement to take account of the Guidelines that accompany ENQA Criterion 4/ESG 3.5 and publish the updated Mission Statement, setting out the division of labour and responsibilities between itself and the Universities and explaining how its Mission is translated into a clear policy and management plan via its Strategic Plan (page 46)

- consider as it moves to have its new Statutes enacted whether one of the membership positions for the CGIACA should be reserved for a suitably qualified person from outside Galicia (page 49)

- set out clear statements protocols and procedures for the conduct of appeals against the findings of its reviews and evaluations and publish them on its web site (page 53)

- provide clear statements and protocols, procedures and guidance for its Advisory Council to enable it to fulfil its roles (page 57)

APPENDIX 1 - SCHEDULE FOR THE REVIEW VISIT

Monday 28 April 2014	
Time	**Meeting**
18.30-19.30	Briefing for the Panel by an independent adviser on higher education policy and governance in Galicia, identified for the ENQA panel by ACSUG Celso Rodríguez Fernández, University Professor of Algebra, University of Santiago de Compostela (USC)
Tuesday 29 April 2014	
09.00-09.45	*The Director of ACSUG* José Eduardo López Pereira
10.45-12.00	*Members of the staff of ACSUG* Luis Carlos Velón Sixto, Quality Manager and coordinator of the evaluation process; Isabel Belmonte Otero, Programmes Technician; María Dolores Castro Pais, Programmes Technician; María Carmen Fernández Montes, Programmes Technician; María Paula Ríos de Deus, Programmes Technician; Lucía Bouso Montero, Teaching Staff Technician; Francisco Rico Rey -Teaching staff technician
14.00-15.00 Meeting 1	Members of the CGIACA. Miguel Angel Santos Rego, Chairman, University Professor of the Theory and History of Education, University of Santiago de Compostela (USC); María José Bravo Bosch, Vocal. University Professor of Romanic Law, University of Vigo (UVIGO); María Antonia Señarís Rodríguez, Vocal, University Professor of Inorganic Chemistry, University of A Coruña (UDC); Luis Castedo Ribas, Vocal. University Professor of Signal Theory and Communications, UDC; María Bastida Domínguez, Vocal, University Professor of Business Organization, USC.
14.00-15.00 Meeting 2	*Members of the ACSUG Advisory Council*. María Caridad Sánchez, University Professor of Veterinary Science at the University of Zaragoza (Member drawn from outside Galicia); Manuel Jaime Martínez Rapela, Representative on the Council of the Business Sector.

15.45-16.45	*Students currently studying at Galician Universities with experience of ACSUG reviews and activities.*
	Marta López López -Student of Arts and Humanities, UVIGO, Member of the degrees evaluation committees of ACSUG; Alejandro Vecino Aguirre, Student of Legal and Social Sciences at the USC, Member of the degrees evaluation committees of ACSUG, Member of external panel to evaluate Centres at the University UANCV, Perú; María Carmen Fernández Lago, Student of Sciences at the UVIGO, Member of the degrees evaluation committees of ACSUG, Javier Puga Alonso, Student of Engineering, UVIGO, Member of the degrees evaluation committees of ACSUG, participated as an evaluator in the certification of the FIDES-AUDIT programme in the University Centre of Industrial Design at UDC, Member of external panel to evaluate Centres at the University UANCV, Perú; Antonio José Souto Gestal, recently graduated as a PhD student in Health Sciences, UDC, Member of the degrees evaluation committees of ACSUG, Member of external evaluation committees appointed by ACSUG to assess the Peruvian universities of USMP and UANCV; Nuria Rebollo Quintela Doctoral Student UDC, Member of the commission of the DOCENTIA programme in UDC and Evaluator in the Commission of the Certification, Monitoring and Design of the DOCENTIA programme for Spain; Pablo Malvárez Álvarez- Student Member of the ACSUG Board of Directors.
17.00-18.00	*Expert reviewers who have worked with ACSUG on: research assessments; Qualification Assessments; Verifications of Programmes; Teaching Staff Assessments and Teaching Performance Assessments.*
	Academic reviewers of programmes and FIDES-AUDIT.
	Laureano González Vega, University Professor of Algebra, Cantabria University. President of one of the degrees accreditation committee and president of the FIDES-AUDIT review panel; Paloma Sobrado Calvo, University Professor of Optometry, Murcia University, Reviewer in the FIDES-AUDIT programme and member of the degrees evaluation committee of ACSUG in the health sciences area; Román Álvarez Rodríguez University Professor of English Philology, Salamanca University, Reviewer in the Teaching Staff Salary bonuses assessments and member of the degrees evaluation committee of ACSUG in the humanities area.
	Academic reviewers of teaching staff and research
	Rafael Caballero Fernández, University Professor of Mathematics, Malaga University. Reviewer in the Teaching Staff and Teaching staff salary bonuses Assessments and evaluator in the research assessments; Clara Salueña Pérez- University Professor of Fluid Mechanics, University Rovirai Virgil, evaluator of ACSUG in Teaching staff salary bonuses Assessments and research assessments; Amparo Alonso Betanzos, University Professor of Computing Sciences, UDC. Reviewer in the teaching performance assessment of the University of Oviedo, President of the Architecture and

	Engineering Committee of the Teaching Staff Assessment.
	Academic reviewer participating in international evaluations.
	Pablo Díez Baños, University Professor of Pathology and Animal Health, USC, President of the Galician Veterinary Sciences Academy, Reviewer in the teaching performance assessment of the University of Oviedo, President of one of the ACSUG review panels of the evaluation process at the University UANCV in Perú.
	ACSUG reviewers drawn from the professions
	Marta González Moldes - Professional auditor at the Trillium Consulting company, Santiago of Compostela. Reviewer, in the FIDES-AUDIT programme, University Centres in Peru and member of the degrees evaluation committee of ACSUG in the Architecture and Engineering area; Antonio Miguel de Ron, Researcher at the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), evaluator of PhD programmes and member of the degrees evaluation committee of ACSUG in the Sciences area.
Wednesday 30 April 2014	
09.00-10.00	*Members of the Galician Council of Universities*
	Miguel Rodríguez Bugarín- University Professor of Civil Engineering, UDC; Senén Barro Ameneiro- University Professor of Electronics and Computer Science, USC; Encarnación González Vázquez, University Professor of Marketing Investigation, UVIGO.
10.30-11.30 Meeting 1	*Representatives of stakeholders in the work of ACSUG, identified by the Agency*
	Rosa Crujeiras and Pedro Faraldo- Representatives of the statistical analysis group; Beatriz Valcárcel Aguiar, rpresentative of the working group about the master's labour insertion; Fernando Suárez Lorenzo, representative of the labour market insertion study on computer engineering; President of the Professional College of Computer Engineering, Galicia.

10.30-11.30 Meeting 2	Members of teaching staff at Galician Universities who, between them, have been subject to or participated in a) Teaching Staff Accreditation b) evaluation for bonus; c) the DOCENTIA process. Pablo Díaz Fernández- University Professor of Veterinary Science at the USC in the Campus of Lugo, assessed in the Teaching staff accreditation process; Victoria Otero Piñeiro- University Professor of Applied Mathematics, UDC assessed in the Teaching staff accreditation process; Manuel GuisadoTato: University Professor of Marketing and Business Organization, UVIGO, aassessed in the curricular excellence process; Fernando López Alsina: University Professor of Medieval History, USC, assessed in the curricular excellence process; María Jesús Lorenzo Modia- English Philology University Professor at the UDC. She has been evaluated in the DOCENTIA process; Margarita Estévez Saa, University Professor of English Philology, USC evaluated in the DOCENTIA process.
12.30-13.30	*The President of ACSUG and members of the Board of Directors* María Patrocinio Morrondo Pelayo -ACSUG President; Jesús Vázquez Abad - Galician Minister of Education and Culture; José Alberto Díez de Castro, General Director of Universities; Xosé Luís Armesto Barbeito, Rector of UDC; Ignacio Barcia Rodríguez,Vice.-Rector for Quality, UVIGO; Ernesto Pedrosa Silva, Chairman of the Social Council of UVIGO; Benita Silva Hermo- Vice-Rector for Social Responsibility and Quality, USC; Francisco Campos Freire, Vocal appointed from the academic and scientific community University Professor of Journalism, USC; José Carlos de Miguel Domínguez- Vocal appointed from the academic and scientific community, University Professor of Quantitative Economics, USC.
13.30-14.30	*The Director of ACSUG and staff of ACSUG* José Eduardo López Pereira, Director; María Patrocinio Morrondo Pelayo, ACSUG President; Luis Carlos Velón Sixto, Quality Manager and coordinator of the evaluation process; Isabel Belmonte Otero, Programmes technician; María Dolores Castro Pais, Programmes technician; María Carmen Fernández Montes, Programmes technician; María Paula Ríos de Deus, Programmes technician; Lucía Bouso Montero, Teaching staff technician; Francisco Rico Rey, Teaching staff technician; Aitor Martínez Lafuente, Technician in economic matters and human resources
16.30-17.00	*Oral feedback of ENQA review team's findings with respect to ACSUG and the ENQA Standards and Guidelines* José Eduardo López Pereira, Director; María Patrocinio Morrondo Pelayo, ACSUG President; Luis Carlos Velón Sixto, Quality Manager and coordinator of the evaluation process.

APPENDIX 2 – SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Provided with the SER

		2012 ACSUG Ann Report Optimised.pdf
E1	ESP	Ley 6.2013 Sistema universitario de Galicia.pdf
E10	ENG	Protocol evaluation Bach. & Master.pdf
E10	ENG	Support Guide accreditation Bach. & Master.pdf
E10	ESP	Guia evaluación Grado & Master.pdf
E11	ENG	Protocol for evaluation Doctoral.pdf
E11	ENG	Support Guide accreditation Doctoral.pdf
E11	ESP	Guia evaluación Doctorados.pdf
E12	ESP	Proc. Modificación Grados y Master.pdf
E13	ESP	Guia Seguimiento Grado y Master.pdf
E14	ESP	Informe seguimiento Grado y Master.pdf
E15	ESP	Guia renovación Grados y Master.pdf
E16	ENG	AUDIT guide to evaluation.pdf
E16	ESP	Guia dise¤o SGC Fides-Audit.pdf
E17	ESP	Guia certificación SGC FIDES-AUDIT.pdf
E18	ESP	Decreto 55.2004 consolidado.pdf
E19	ESP	Disp. Adic. 27 de la Ley 3.2002.pdf
E2	ESP	RD 1393.2007 consolidado.pdf
E20	ESP	Decreto 266. 2002 contratación.pdf
E21	ESP	Protocolo contratación prof. colaborador.pdf
E22	ESP	Protocolo consolidación prof. colaborador.pdf
E23	ESP	Orden 16.10.2006 protocolo excelencia curricular.PDF
E24	ENG	Docentia evaluation model.pdf
E24	ESP	Guia evaluación.pdf
E25	ESP	Guia implantación.pdf
E26	ESP	Docentia. Procedimiento de certificación.pdf
E27	ESP	Base de datos convenios (Database of agrreements).xlsx
E29	ESP	Galician plan for RIG 2011-2015.pdf
E29	GAL	Plan galego I2C 2011-2015.pdf
E3	ENG	summary of RD 99.2011.pdf
E3	ESP	RD 99.2011 doctorado consolidado.pdf
E30		Link international.pdf
E31		Link conferences.pdf
E32		Link documentation.pdf
E33	ENG	process programmes.pdf
E33	ENG	process teaching staff.pdf
E34	ENG	2009 Annual Report.pdf
E34	ENG	2010 Annual Report.pdf
E34	ENG	2012 Annual Report rotated 3.pdf
E34	ENG	2012 Annual Report rotated.pdf
E34	ENG	2012 Annual Report.pdf
E34	ESP	2009 Memoria Actividades.pdf
E34	ESP	2010 Memoria Actividades.pdf
E34	ESP	2011 Memoria Actividades.pdf
E34	ESP	2012 Memoria Actividades.pdf
E34		Link web anual reports.pdf
E35	ESP	Gestión asesores expertos.pdf
E36	ESP	Compromiso confidencialidad.pdf
E37	ENG	Code of Ethics.pdf

E37	ESP	Código • tico.pdf
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E39		Link web surveys result.pdf
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E41	ENG	Staff.pdf
E41	ESP	Personal.pdf
E42	ESP	PFSUG 2011-2015.pdf
E43	GAL	Inventario 31.12.2012.pdf
E44	ESP	Decreto 270.2003 regulador ACSUG.pdf
E45	ENG	Appendix 2 Quality Policy.pdf
E45	ESP	Anexo 2 Politica de calidad.pdf
E46	GAL	Obxectivos de calidade 2009.pdf
E46	GAL	Obxectivos de calidade 2010.pdf
E46	GAL	Obxectivos de calidade 2011.pdf
E46	GAL	Obxectivos de calidade 2012.pdf
E46	GAL	Obxectivos de calidade 2013.pdf
E46	GAL	Obxectivos de calidade 2014.pdf
E46	GAL	Obxectivos medio ambiente 2009.pdf
E46	GAL	Obxectivos medio ambiente 2011.pdf
E46	GAL	Obxectivos medio ambiente 2012.pdf
E46	GAL	Obxectivos medio ambiente 2013.pdf
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E47	ENG	Map of management system processes.pdf
E47	ESP	Mapa de procesos.pdf
E48	ENG	Former ACSUG statutes.pdf
E48	ESP	Estatutos creacion ACSUG.pdf
E49	ESP	Reglamento funcionamiento CGIACA.pdf
E5	ESP	Ley Org nica 1.1981 Estatuto de Autonomia de Galicia.pdf
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E52	GAL	Acta RT 08-03-10 Ed1.pdf
E52	GAL	Acta RT 12-02-09 Ed1.pdf
E52	GAL	Acta RT 12-07-12 Ed1.pdf
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E52	GAL	Acta RT 15-01-10 Ed1.pdf
E52	GAL	Acta RT 19-12-12 Ed1.pdf
E52	GAL	Acta RT 23-07-10 Ed1.pdf
E52	GAL	Acta RT 23-09-11 Ed1.pdf
E52	GAL	Acta RT 30-03-11 Ed1.pdf
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E53	ENG	Indicators summary 2014.xls
E6	ENG	Amendment of the Organic Law 6.2001.pdf
E6	ENG	Organic Law 6.2001 on Universities.pdf
E6	ESP	Ley Org nica 6.2001 de Universidades. consolidado.pdf
E7	ENG	ACSUG Statutes.pdf
E7	ESP	Estatutos ACSUG.pdf
E8	GAL	proyecto nuevo Estatuto.pdf
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Additional information supplied by ACSUG at the request of the Panel

AE1	ING	Proyecto nuevos estatutos ACSUG eng.pdf
AE1	ESP	Proyecto nuevos estatutos ACSUG espanol.pdf
AE10	ESP	REPORT CONSOLIDATION RESEARCHING GROUPS 2013.pdf
AE10	ESP	REPORT EMERGING RESEARCH GROUP 2013.pdf
AE10	ESP	REPORT POSTPHD ASSESSMENT.pdf
AE10	ING	REPORT POSTPHD ASSESSMENT.pdf
AE11	ESP	E35 - ESP - Gestión asesores expertos.pdf
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AE13	E13	ESP - Guia Seguimiento Grado y Master PUNTO 5.pdf
AE13	ING	DIAGRAMA_FLUXO_SEGUIMENTO.pdf
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AE14	ESP	material-ESP-SGC-Renovacion Acreditación.pdf
AE14	ESP	material-ESP-Verificación_Modificación.pdf
AE14	ESP	SCHEDULE-ESP-JORNADA DE FORMACION 13.02.pdf
AE14	ESP	feedback_-ING-RESUMO_ENCUESTA_FORMACI_N_.pdf
AE14	ING	SCHEDULE-ING-JORNADA_DE_FORMACI_N_13_.pdf
AE15	ING	stakeholders-ACSUG bodies.pdf
AE16	ESP	independencia.pdf
AE16	ING	independencia.pdf
AE17	ING	stakeholders.pdf
AE18-	ESP	E49 - ESP - Reglamento funcionamiento CGIACA articulo 8.pdf
AE18	ESP	ART. 8 REG. CGIACA.docx
AE18	ESP	CGIACA_agreements_apeal_procedure.pdf
AE19	ESP	E15 ESP - Extracto Guia renovación Grados y Master criterio 6.pdf
AE19	ESP	E15 - ESP - Guia renovación Grados y Master.pdf
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AE2	ESP	Programa visita informatica espa¤ol.pdf
AE2	ESP	Programa visita Teleco espa¤ol.pdf
AE2	ING	Programa_visita_informatica.pdf
AE2	ING	Programa_visita_Teleco.pdf
AE20	ESP	ACSUG Explanation.pdf
AE20	ING	ACSUG Explanation.pdf
AE20	ESP	E2 ESP - RD 1393.2007 consolidado.pdf
AE20	ESP	Monitoring protocol CURSA.pdf
AE20	ESP	Monitoring protocol REACU.pdf

AE22	E37	ENG - Code of Ethics.pdf
AE23	ESP	Evaluations procedures.pdf
AE23	ING	Evaluations procedures.pdf
AE24	ING	ACSUG Annual Report 2012.pdf
AE24	ESP	informe_calidadenunis12_130724.pdf
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AE4	ESP	Consideraciones para la visita G I Dise¤o espa¤ol.pdf
AE4	ESP	Programa Visita Fac.pdf
AE4	ESP	Programa Visita G¦ H¦ USC espa¤ol.pdf
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AE7	E16	ENG - AUDIT guide to evaluation.pdf
AE8	ESP	IF_ETeleco_UVigo.pdf
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AE9	ING	IP_M_MARKETIG_COM_Y_CONSULT_USC.pdf
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AE24	ESP	AVANCE_IL0809(USC).xls
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