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# **Internal Quality Assurance System Manual**

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Version 1. Barcelona, 4 December 2017

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## General information

This version of the Internal Quality Assurance System Manual is the *first revision* of the document approved by the Governing Council on 17 June 2017 and implemented since then by the UOC.

As shown below, this document was **written** by Planning and Quality between January and September 2017, **revised** by the Vice President for Teaching and Learning and, lastly, **approved** by the Executive Board at its ordinary meeting of 4 December 2017.

## Approval schedule

Written by	Revised by	Approved by	Date approved
Planning and Quality	Vice President for Teaching and Learning	Executive Board	04/12/2017

## Revision history

Version	Date	Sections	Description of the change
1	04/12/2017		Revision of the Internal Quality Assurance System Manual and adaptation to the UOC's new reality.

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"We will work to achieve **excellence** in the educational services, teaching and research activities, and organizational processes. The voice of students, graduates and society in general must be taken into account and the academic rigour of the teaching programmes and lines of research guaranteed."

***UOC Code of Ethics***, 30 March 2017

## Presentation

From its creation, the UOC has been committed to quality, striving to achieve excellence in its teaching activity, educational services and organizational processes as a guarantee of its programmes' academic rigour.

Since its earliest days, the UOC has shown a single-minded dedication to quality and continuous improvement as cornerstones of its strategy as well as an overarching theme of its activities, setting it apart from the rest. Accordingly, the University has drawn up a quality policy and put a quality system in place, defining the processes involved in accordance with the cycle of continuous improvement it wishes to ensure. This system describes four basic steps for improving quality: plan, do, assess or review, and act accordingly, that is, improve.

Today, quality has become an integral part of the Catalan university system, opening the way toward building more transparent, participative universities focused on continuous improvement.

To assure their quality, universities must endow themselves with quality management systems, not as mere management instruments, but as tools for creating a culture of assessment and improvement. In response to this need, the UOC has designed a quality policy that sets forth the basic principles of quality management and the roles, responsibilities and guidelines that must be followed to manage the quality system governing the University's academic activity. Thus, quality has been included as an ethical principle in the UOC's Code of Ethics, understood as part of the institutional culture of the University's faculty, administrative staff and affiliated teaching staff, together with the commitment to take into account the voice of its students and graduates, involving them in improving the University's educational quality.

All of these concepts have now been included in this manual.

### **Dr Carles Sigalés**

Vice President for Teaching and Learning



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## 1. Introduction

This **Internal Quality Assurance System Manual** is the core document for the UOC's new Internal Quality Assurance System. Following an introductory section to contextualize both the manual and the institution itself, there are a series of sections and appendices that develop the different parts of the manual and which will guide people in its use.

The document is the outcome of the review and updating of the Internal Quality Assurance System in force since 2007, with the goal of adapting it to the UOC's new reality and guaranteeing its ability to respond to new strategic challenges and the various stakeholders' requirements and expectations.

## 2. The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya

### 2.1. Presentation

The UOC, the world's first online university, was conceived totally on the internet before the medium was even popular. The UOC **started operating in the 1995/96 academic year** with 206 students enrolled on its official Educational Psychology and Business Studies programmes, which were taught in Catalan. Today, more than 22 years later, it has 58,792 graduates, 54,022 students and 3,692 teachers.

The UOC was created with the support of the Government of Catalonia to provide a distance university education service in Catalan. To give structure to this initiative, it was formed as a privately managed entity (not-for-profit private foundation).

This FUOC is governed by a Board of Trustees, whose members are highly respected entities that are present throughout Catalan society: the Government of Catalonia; the Federació Catalana de Cajas de Ahorro (Catalan Federation of Savings Banks); and the Cámara Oficial de Comercio, Industria y Navegación de Barcelona (Barcelona Chamber of Commerce).

The task of the foundation is to ensure efficient, effective management and administration of the University, carrying out as many inspection, evaluation and control functions as necessary to guarantee students are provided education of the highest quality.

Once the UOC had been formed, it received unanimous recognition with Law 3/1995, of 6 April, published in the *Official Gazette of the Catalan Government* (DOGC) no. 2040 on 21/04/1995.

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

As such, the UOC is a university that provides a public service but is organized in accordance with the principles of private management. It forms part of the Catalan and Spanish public

university system. The programmes it offers are official and endorsed by the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya) [[www.aqu.cat](http://www.aqu.cat)] and the Spanish Quality Assessment and Accreditation Agency (ANECA) [[www.aneca.es](http://www.aneca.es)], which assure academic rigour and compliance with the standards required by the European university system.

## 2.2. Education at the UOC

The UOC offers education for all stages of adult life. It is the institution's objective to help people meet their educational needs throughout their lives. Consequently, the UOC has developed a two-tier course offering: the university offering (accredited and which meets the standards required by the European university system) and, in addition, an offering that goes a stage further and is focused on responding to the specific needs of professionals and companies looking to evolve (vocational training, bespoke training for companies, open courses, language courses, etc).

In both cases, it offers courses in the fields of social sciences, humanities, engineering and health, within a dynamic portfolio in constant flux with a changing environment. As a result, the UOC has students in all age groups: from 20 years old to 70.

## 2.3. The UOC model

The UOC differs from the other universities in how its students learn, in other words, thanks to its **educational model**. At the UOC, students learn by doing, as it is a model based on learning activities, on action. Thus, students are given challenges that they must surmount one by one, enabling them to acquire the skills needed for today's social and work environment. This educational model is based on the intensive use of ICTs, offering a two-fold benefit: it allows students to study wherever and whenever they while enabling them to acquire technological skills.

This entire learning process is mostly carried out in a virtual campus that integrates contents, activities and communication spaces both between students and between students and teachers. It is a multilingual campus that can be accessed from wherever students may be, a feature that fosters interculturality and contact with a wide range of professional profiles.



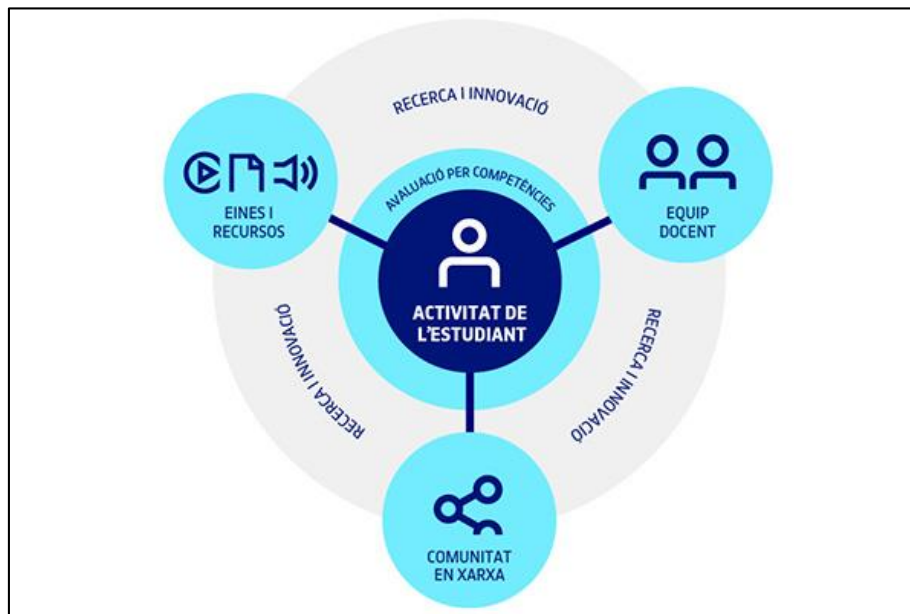


Figure 1. The UOC model

## 2.4. Research at the UOC

The UOC does not offer just education; it also carries out **research**, an activity that no quality university can be without. This research is focused on three areas. The first is our teaching innovation in online learning, the fruit of the expertise we have gained in this field after promoting this type of learning for more than 20 years. The second is research in the knowledge society, with the aim of studying the internet and the effects of the interaction between digital technologies and human activity. And, lastly, is health, with the objective of educating and empowering ordinary citizens and professionals, through the use of technology, to lead the paradigm shift in this area.

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

## 2.5. The UOC today

Throughout the years, the University has steadily expanded and **diversified its range of courses**, including courses in Spanish and English. It has improved its **educational model**, always placing the student at the centre of the learning activity. It has expanded progressively in Catalonia and Spain, with an extensive network of centres, and it has taken the leap into the international sphere, establishing a centre in Mexico as the springboard for expansion into the Latin American market. A second centre will be opened shortly in Colombia.

It has also set up three **research centres** specializing in the information and knowledge society, e-learning and eHealth, becoming an international benchmark in these fields.

At present, the UOC has a course offering of 52 programmes and takes part in 8 joint programmes coordinated by other universities within the Catalan university system. To date, 31 official programmes have been accredited.

The accreditation renewal period is 6 years in the case of the bachelor's and doctoral degrees and 4 years in the case of the university master's degrees, counting from the date on which the last accreditation was obtained.

### 2.5.1. The UOC's official programmes

The UOC has an official course offering composed of bachelor's degrees, university master's degrees and doctoral degrees, many of them in collaboration with other universities, mainly within the Catalan university system. At present, the course offering is as follows:

Faculty	Programme	Level	Accreditation
Arts and Humanities	Art	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 27/03/2017
	Social Sciences	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 06/06/2014
	Digital Design and Creation	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 03/06/2016
	History, Geography and Art History (joint degree: UOC, UdL)	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 13/07/2015
	Humanities	Bachelor's degree	Renewal: 04/05/2016
	Catalan Language and Literature	Bachelor's degree	Renewal: 20/07/2016
	Translation, Interpreting and Applied Languages (joint degree: UVic-UCC, UOC)	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 10/07/2015
	Cultural Management (joint degree: UOC, UdG)	Master's degree	Verification: 13/07/2015
	Humanities: Contemporary Culture, Literature and Art	Master's degree	Renewal: 04/05/2016
	Ancient Mediterranean (joint degree: UOC, UAB, UAH)	Master's degree	Verification: 16/07/2013

<b>Health Sciences</b>	Neuropsychology	Master's degree	Verification: 16/07/2015
	Nutrition and Health	Master's degree	Renewal: 03/10/2016
	Medical Social Work	Master's degree	Verification: 12/07/2013
<b>Information and Communication Sciences</b>	Communication	Bachelor's degree	Renewal: 13/03/2017
	Digital Design and Creation	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 03/06/2016
	Information Science	Bachelor's degree	Renewal: 13/03/2017
	Corporate Communication, Protocol and Events	Master's degree	Verification: 29/04/2016
	Strategic Management of Information and Knowledge in Organizations	Master's degree	Renewal: 13/03/2017
<b>Law and Political Science</b>	Criminology	Bachelor's degree	Renewal: 03/11/2015
	Law	Bachelor's degree	Renewal: 03/11/2015
	Public Administration and Management (joint degree: UOC, UB)	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 08/07/2015
	Electronic Administration and Governance	Master's degree	Verification: 23/03/2017
	Legal Practice	Master's degree	Renewal: 22/07/2016
	Political Analysis	Master's degree	Renewal: 27/03/2015
	Human Rights, Democracy and Globalization	Master's degree	Renewal: 22/07/2016
	Taxation	Master's degree	Renewal: 03/11/2015
<b>Economics and Business</b>	Business Administration and Management	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 02/04/2009
	Economics	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 13/07/2015

	Marketing and Market Research	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 23/04/2009
	Labour Relations and Employment	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 20/07/2009
	Tourism	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 15/03/2009
	Economic Environment Analysis	Master's degree	Verification: 05/07/2011
	Organization Management in the Knowledge Economy	Master's degree	Verification: 05/07/2011
	Occupational Health and Safety	Master's degree	Verification: 21/05/2015
	Corporate Social Responsibility	Master's degree	Verification: 28/07/2014
	Sustainable Tourism and ICTs	Master's degree	Verification: 18/06/2015
<b>Computer Science, Multimedia and Telecommunications</b>	Computer Engineering	Bachelor's degree	Renewal: 04/11/2015
	Multimedia	Bachelor's degree	Renewal: 21/12/2015
	Telecommunications Technology	Bachelor's degree	Renewal: 03/11/2015
	Multimedia Applications	Master's degree	Renewal: 04/11/2015
	Bioinformatics and Biostatistics (joint degree: UOC, UB)	Master's degree	Verification: 26/06/2015
	Data Science	Master's degree	Verification: 08/05/2017
	Mobile Application Development	Master's degree	Verification: 28/05/2015
	Computer Engineering	Master's degree	Renewal: 04/11/2015
	Information and Communication Technology Security (joint degree: UOC, UAB, URV)	Master's degree	Verification: 29/06/2011

<b>Psychology and Education Sciences</b>	Social Education	Bachelor's degree	Verification: 15/03/2009
	Psychology	Bachelor's degree	Renewal: 18/05/2016
	Learning Difficulties and Language Disorders	Master's degree	Verification: 05/07/2013
	Education and ICTs (E-learning)	Master's degree	Verification: 23/09/2015
	Employment and the Labour Market: Intervention and Coaching for Work	Master's degree	Verification: 23/09/2015
	Child and Adolescent Psychology: Intervention Techniques and Strategies	Master's degree	Verification: 14/03/2017
<b>Doctoral School</b>	Education and ICT (E-learning)	Doctoral School	Verification: 15/05/2013
	Information and Knowledge Society	Doctoral School	Verification: 10/06/2013
	Network and Information Technologies	Doctoral School	Verification: 19/09/2012

### 2.5.2. The UOC's students

The UOC's mission is to provide people with lifelong learning and education opportunities. It wants to see their higher education needs satisfied and offer them full access to knowledge, where space and time constraints are no longer an issue and personal, professional and educational responsibilities can be balanced.

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

Who are the UOC's students?

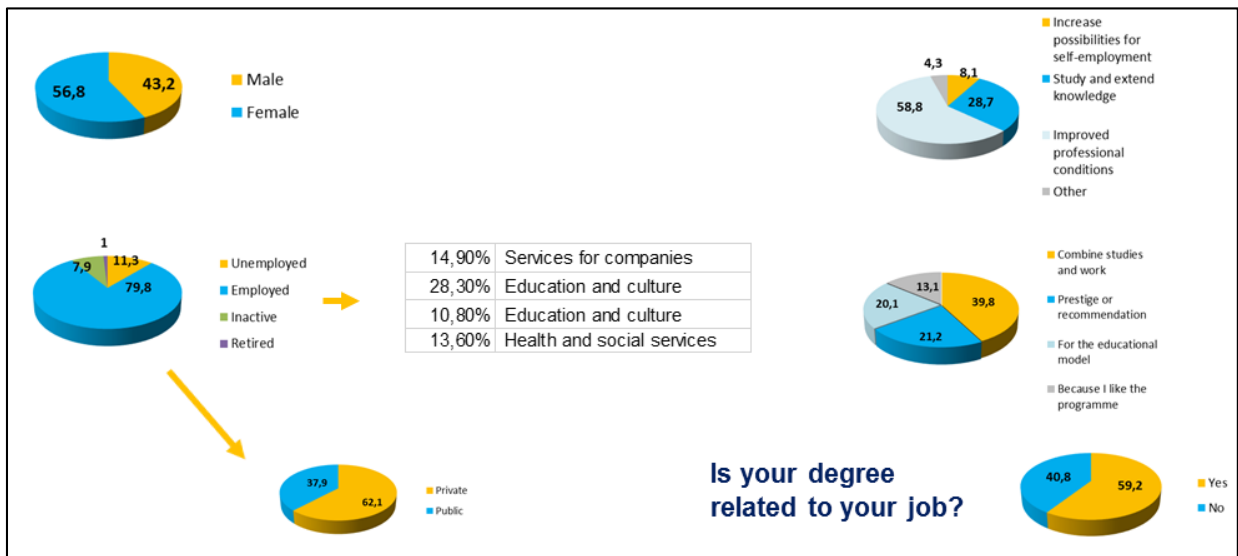


Figure 2. Profile of first-year students enrolled on official programmes in the 2016/17 academic year

The graph below shows the growth in the number of students enrolled on EHEA (European Higher Education Area) programmes.

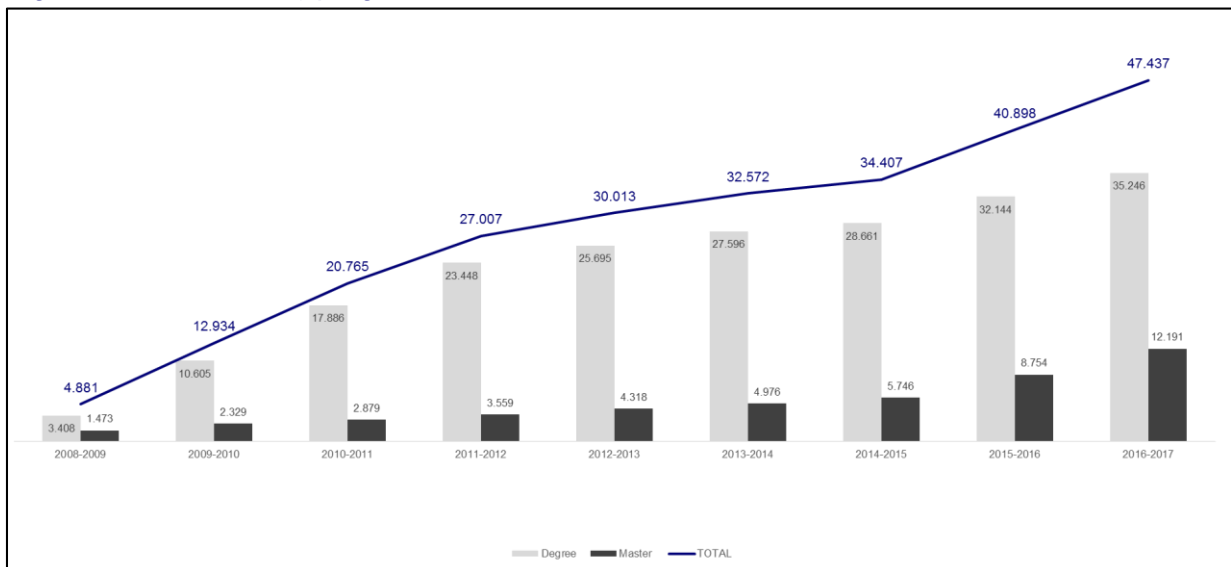
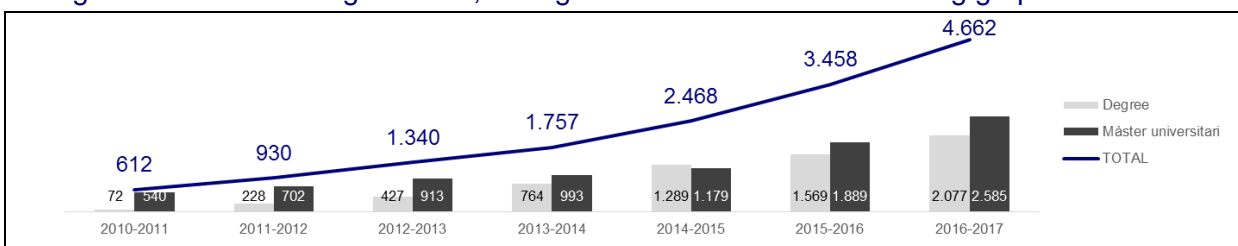


Figure 3. Growth in the number of students enrolled on official programmes

As regards the number of graduates, their growth is shown in the following graph:



**Figure 4.** Growth in the number of graduates

### 2.5.3. Research data

The UOC has 43 research groups and more than 400 researchers. It encompasses a broad range of research areas, although it has specialized experience in social sciences, health sciences, information and communication technologies, and arts and humanities.

The results are transferred to business and society in areas such as online learning; digital culture and tourism; economy, business and society; eHealth and ICT; security; and smart cities.

The UOC has set up three research centres to support its research activity:

- > Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3)
- > eLearn Center
- > eHealth Center

The **IN3** is specialized in the study of the internet and the effects of the interaction between digital technologies and human activity. The centre has a number of acknowledged research groups that undertake an extensive variety of interdisciplinary research activities.

The **eLearn Center** seeks to boost applied research focused on online learning while fostering innovation. It analyses and redesigns courses or programmes, organizes thematic sessions, studies and selects learning resources, obtains data to improve teaching practice and performs pilot tests in real-life settings.

The **eHealth Center** is an academic centre open to the world whose goal is to educate and empower professionals and ordinary citizens, through the use of technologies, to lead the paradigm shift in health. The general aim of its research is to generate knowledge for the development, implementation and assessment of technological solutions applied to fostering and improving the health of individuals and communities.

The UOC also publishes a number of academic journals that support the dissemination of open-access knowledge, namely:

- > **Artnodes**: a journal about art, science and technology
- > **BiD**: university texts on library and information science
- > **Dictatorships & Democracies**: a journal about history and culture
- > **Digithum**: a relational perspective of culture, individual and society in late modernity
- > **ETHE**: an international journal focused on technology-based higher education
- > **IDP**: a journal about internet, law and politics

### 3. Organization and governance

#### 3.1. Governing bodies

The UOC's Organizational and Operational Regulations establish the University's governing bodies, of which there are two types: single-person and collegiate.

The **single-person governing bodies** are:

- > **President:** the University's highest academic authority, he presides the Governing Council.
- > **Vice presidents:** full members of the Governing Council.
- > **General secretary:** this person acts as secretary of the Governing Council and the Strategic Committee.
- > **General manager:** full member of the Governing Council.

The **collegiate governing bodies** are:

- > **Governing Council:** its members are the president, the vice presidents, the general manager, the general secretary and one representative each for faculty, students and administrative staff. It carries out its activity in accordance with the UOC's Organizational and Operational Regulations, aligned with current legislation.
- > **Executive Board:** the University's permanent administration and management body that conducts the institution's ordinary affairs, performing all the functions delegated to it by the Governing Council.

#### 3.2. Coordination and representative bodies

Apart from the UOC's organizational structure, and because of its complexity, a number of **coordination and representative bodies** are required to facilitate communication and debate with respect to cross-functional processes.

The University's main **coordination and representative bodies** are currently the following:

- > Governing Council
- > Executive Board
- > University Council
- > Strategic Committee
- > Academic Committee



- > UOC Research and Innovation Committee
- > Programme Committee
- > Management Committee
- > Employees' Committee

The **Academic Committee** and the **Management Committee** are who guide the UOC in its endeavours. However, student participation is vital to ensure that their opinions, interests and contributions play an effective role in improving the institution. This constant search for ways to improve also takes place through the committees for individual fields of knowledge, the University Council, the Strategic Committee and the committees that have been set up in the different regions.

### 3.3. The organizational structure

The UOC's organizational structure is built on four main pillars: faculty, researchers, management and the Office of the President, who implement the objectives and policy lines established by the Executive Board.

The UOC's academic structure is organized into faculties, while the management structure is organized into departments that ensure the day-to-day running of the University. At present, the UOC has 7 faculties and a Doctoral School. The faculties are:

- > Economics and Business
- > Psychology and Education Sciences
- > Law and Political Science
- > Arts and Humanities
- > Information and Communication Sciences
- > Health Sciences
- > Computer Science, Multimedia and Telecommunications

The figure below shows the University's organization chart, identifying the various bodies and the department, faculty and research structure:

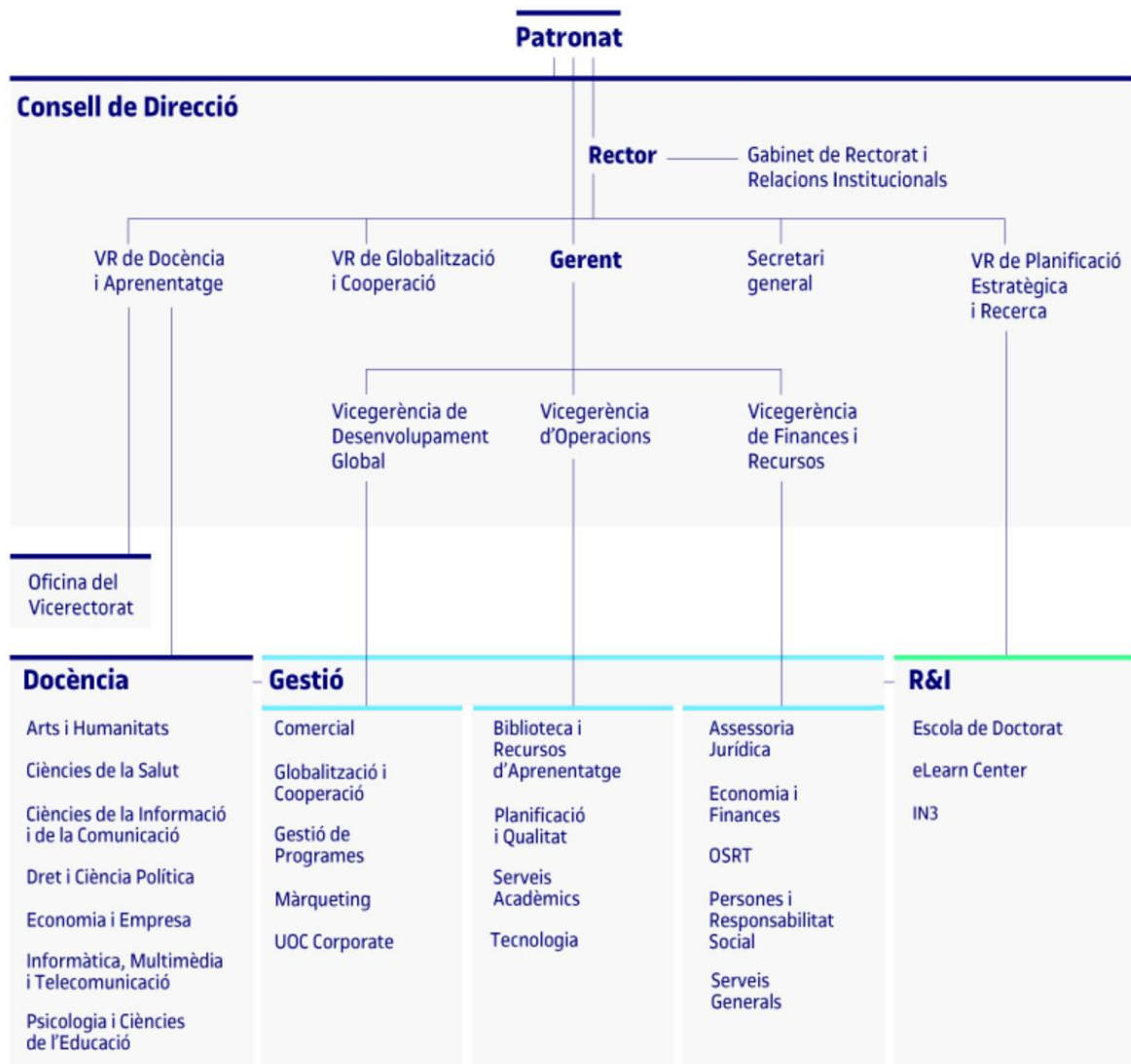


Figure 5. Basic organization chart

### 3.4. The Office of the *Sindic de Greuges*

The University also has the Office of the *Sindic de Greuges*, the office of our ombudsman. The task of the *síndic* (ombudsman) is to defend the rights and duties of all members of the University community, acting independently and autonomously from all of the institution's other bodies and authorities.

## 4. Strategic planning

Within the framework of the strategic planning process, the UOC defines, reviews and updates its mission, vision and values as key assets for the organization's development and the deployment of its strategy.

#### 4.1. Our mission

In line with its **mission**, the UOC is an innovative university that is rooted in Catalonia and open to the world. It offers people lifelong learning to help them, and society, advance, while carrying out research into the knowledge society.

Its educational model is based on personalization and student mentoring via e-learning.

#### 4.2. Our vision

As part of a network with other universities around the world, the UOC aims to drive the creation of a global space of knowledge and cutting-edge research in the knowledge society.

The UOC is innovative in its own model of education, which is student-centred, and provides quality training that can be customized, to boost competitiveness and contribute to the progress of society.

#### 4.3. Our values

The five values that govern the UOC in its work are:

- > **Commitment:** to its students, its graduates and society in general; to the quality of its services and innovation as one of the organization's constants.
- > **Respect:** for people, ideas, cultures and the world.
- > **Transparency:** in information, data and processes.
- > **Professionalism:** empowering the people who belong to the organization, acknowledging successes and learning from mistakes.
- > **Sustainability, be it economic, social or environmental,** of the activities undertaken by our organization.

#### 4.4. The Strategic Plan

In the autumn of 2013, a process of strategic reflection was begun to create the plan that was to be the University's roadmap until 2020: the **Strategic Plan 2014-2020**. This latest plan is divided into two stages: the first encompasses the period from 2014 to 2016, and the second, the period from 2017 to 2020.

The current plan, which corresponds to the second stage of the Strategic Plan from 2017 to 2020, is built on five pillars:

1. Promotion of transversality and flexibility
2. Collaborative governance with common goals
3. A strong focus on globalization
4. Increase in competitiveness and employability

## 5. Fostering research excellence

In turn, the 5 pillars are divided into **31 operational objectives**, which are grouped into **4 plans** (BE UOC, NEXT UOC, GLOBAL UOC and UOC R&I) with **19 subplans** that are rolled out through **78 actions**:

# Strategic map 2017-2020



## BE UOC

*Promote talent, organization of work, management of resources, technology, and a commitment to professional development, while delivering accountability, recognition of achievements and social awareness, and ensuring the institution's growth and sustainability.*

### 0101. Attracting and recruiting talent

Define and implement a plan to attract and recruit talent for the academic staff.

Define and implement a plan to attract and recruit talent for the administrative staff (including group companies).

### 0102. Staff: detecting, developing and gaining the loyalty of talent

Define a global talent development and retention plan through the creation of career paths and training plans.

Implement and consolidate people review for academic and administrative staff (including group companies).

Consolidate and implement an objectives-based model both at the UOC and in the group companies.

Develop the skill profile of the Research and Innovation project manager.

### 0103. Affiliated teaching staff: detecting, developing and gaining the loyalty of talent

Define and implement the integrated affiliated staff management model.

Increase the number of affiliated teaching staff with doctoral degrees who can supervise theses.

### 0104. Culture and organization

Define and implement a plan to improve the management systems.

Instill the UOC's values in the organization's culture and establish a plan to disseminate them.

### 0105. Growth and sustainability

Increase activity on official and UOC-certified programmes.

Increase UOC Corporate's activity.

Increase UOC's activity.

Increase resource capture for R&I.

### 0106. UOC\_Tech

Align the Master Plan with the Strategic Plan 2017-2020 in order to implement it.

Establish and deploy the competitive and business intelligence services, and the data analytics systems.

Develop the requirements of the Data Science Lab.

Bolster and increase the flexibility of the computer services to adapt them to the increase in the number of students, globalization and cyberthreats.

## NEXT UOC

*Improve the educational model's effectiveness and the service model's efficiency to help boost the development of students' personal and professional skills, while assuring the quality of the learning experience.*

### 0201. Transformation of teaching

Provide support based on the learning resources.

Define and develop the new LMS.

Develop and implement the NIU model.

Innovate in the design of courses focused on the student's activity.

Improve support of teaching activities.

Assess in terms of aiding competence acquisition.

Improve effectiveness in monitoring of final bachelor's/master's degree projects.

Innovate in the design of virtual internship systems.

Strengthen the ways for students to collaborate.

### 0202. Competences

Update the UOC's cross-disciplinary competences to cater for the new demands of society.

Enhance competence-based work in the design of programmes and courses.

Include competences in the final project and practicum courses.

Include the competences in the student's academic record to make them more employable and competitive.

### 0203. Cross-disciplinary approach to teaching

Increase the interdisciplinary nature of courses.

Define and implement a new concept for the recognition and adaptation of prior studies.

Design flexible pathways that allow internal mobility between programmes.

Define and implement a new concept of course relationship to foster interdisciplinary work.

Guarantee learning resources for the deployment of new programmes and update them for existing programmes.

Apply the open-access teaching material policy.

### 0204. Quality to drive change

Certify the internal quality assurance system.

Define the course catalogue in accordance with the demands of society.

Accredit the maximum quality level in the qualifications being programmed.

### 0205. Reduction in the drop-out rate

Design programmes and courses based on a unit of time. Implement focused actions during the first three semesters.

Detect the drop-out risk profile.

## GLOBAL UOC

*Drive the UOC's transformation toward a global university with greater social impact and position it in the international arena, fostering responsible research and innovation, and open knowledge.*

### 0301. The UOC model as a global point of reference

Position the learning model internationally.

Transfer the UOC model to improve educational systems around the world.

Broaden the scope of the UOC's programmes internationally.

"The UOC welcomes". Increase access to UOC courses, fostering the inclusion of underrepresented population groups and student diversity.

### 0302. The UOC in the 2030 Agenda

Make sure the UOC has a voice in internationally influential networks, organizations and debates.

Train global citizens and professionals.

Develop specific thematic projects within the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

### 0303. Knowledge open to everyone and for everyone

Develop and implement an internal policy for open and responsible research and innovation.

Open the UOC's knowledge to everyone to become leaders in open science.

Create forums and promote knowledge co-creation processes with social agents, and increase the social impact and relevance of the UOC's research.

### 0304. Evolution toward a global and social UOC

Consolidate the UOC as a responsible and sustainable workplace.

Foster global skills among the UOC's staff.

Strengthen the UOC's international offices.

Adapt internal processes and tools to that of a global, social UOC.

Measure the UOC in global and social terms.

## UOC R&I

*Improve research and innovation by developing transdisciplinary research, and foster transfer and entrepreneurship through an active relationship with the different stakeholders in society.*

### 0401. Research with scientific impact

Deploy the IN3's strategy for the period 2017-2020.

Design and roll out the UOC eHealth Centec.

Promote publication by international experts in the UOC's scientific journals.

Establish the structure and governance of research and innovation in the faculties.

Design a programme to foster translational research and innovation in e-learning.

Define the UOC's Data Science Lab.

### 0402. Transdisciplinary approach

Include interdisciplinarity as a priority and criterion for grant applications.

Create mechanisms for sharing the research being carried out in the various faculties and centres, based on their research and innovation plans.

Promote research projects that combine the interests of different faculties in areas such as e-learning, e-health and the knowledge society.

### 0403. Research partners

Set up a programme of stays in high-profile centres for researchers.

Design and obtain ITN (International Training Network) programmes.

Increase the UOC researchers' involvement in high-profile projects and initiatives.

Design a plan for the presence of the UOC's researchers in international communication media.

Establish an induction programme for visiting lecturers and stays.

Increase the number of doctoral degree co-supervision and cotutorship agreements with high-profile centres and companies.

### 0404. Valorization of knowledge

Enhance entrepreneurship among the UOC's students, particularly those performing final bachelor's and master's degree projects.

Create investment tools to engage the UOC community in funding start-ups and spin-offs.

Foster cooperation between the expertise available in the UOC community and the start-ups and spin-offs.

Develop a plan to attract e-learning entrepreneurs and potential start-ups.

Promote research transfer and valorization, particularly in less technologically-oriented fields.

Create a service catalogue targeting companies and institutions (R&I, philanthropy, etc.) that pools the UOC's expertise.

The UOC's strategy is based on 3 main priorities: **fostering talent, leading the way and generating social impact.** These priorities underlie the UOC's 4 plans, 19 sub-plans and 78 actions.

Figure 6. Strategic Map 2017-2020

#### 4.5. Strategy and quality

In its **NEXT UOC** plan, the Strategic Plan states the University's commitment to quality management through the operational subplan **Quality, driver of change**, in which three specific actions are proposed:

- > Certify the internal quality assurance system.
- > Define the course offering in accordance with the demands of society.
- > Accredite the maximum quality level in the programmes being offered.

In order for certification of the **Internal Quality Assurance System** to be attained, certain criteria must be met. These included proving that it is a mature, stable system and that all the processes have been implemented, that the centre has revised it at least once, and that an improvement plan has been put in place.

The Internal Quality Assurance System specified in this manual and described in detail in the following section and appendices is the outcome of the first revision and its purpose will be to support the rollout and full implementation of the processes contained therein.

#### 4.6. A culture of quality

References to quality management can be found in many UOC documents, including the **Code of Ethics**, where it states that quality, as an ethical principle, forms part of the UOC's **institutional culture**. In this respect, it says: "We will work to achieve **excellence** in the educational services, teaching and research activities, and organizational processes. The voice of students, graduates and society in general must be taken into account and the academic rigour of the teaching programmes and lines of research guaranteed."

Application of this ethical principle is based on the **Quality Policy**, a document which details, on the one hand, the **basic principles** for quality management at the UOC and, on the other hand, senior management's **commitment** to designing, implementing, revising and improving the Internal Quality Assurance System described in the following sections.

## 5. The Internal Quality Assurance System

### 5.1. Background

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

The manual has been revised and improved over the years, and the changes have been reflected in the follow-up reports issued by the relevant organizations.

The table below lists the key milestones attained by the UOC in its quality management over the years.

Year	Milestone
2000/2001	<b>Assessment of officially recognized degrees</b> by the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya): official <i>llicenciatura</i> degree in Humanities and official <i>llicenciatura</i> degree in Catalan Language and Literature
2002/2003	<b>Assessment of officially recognized degrees</b> by AQU Catalunya: official <i>llicenciatura</i> degree in Information Science (2nd cycle)
2004	<b>Assessment of the EFQM model (500+)</b>
2005	<b>Cross-disciplinary assessment by the European University Association (EUA)</b>
2005/2006	<b>Assessment by AQU Catalunya</b> of the library service
2006/2007	<b>Institutional assessment</b> by AQU Catalunya
2006/2007	<b>Assessment by AQU Catalunya</b> of the following degrees: official <i>llicenciatura</i> degree in Psychology, official <i>llicenciatura</i> degree in Educational Psychology, official <i>llicenciatura</i> degree in Law and official <i>llicenciatura</i> degree in Political Science
2007/2008	<b>Assessment by AQU Catalunya</b> of the following degrees: official <i>enginyeria tècnica</i> degree in Business Informatics, official <i>enginyeria tècnica</i> degree in Systems Informatics, official <i>enginyeria tècnica</i> degree in Computer Engineering, official <i>diplomatura</i> degree in Business Studies, and official <i>llicenciatura</i> degree in Market Research and Techniques
2007	<b>Certification by AQU Catalunya</b> of the Internal Quality Assurance System Manual according to the AUDIT-AQU Catalunya model for the Faculty of Law and Political Science
2008	<b>Certification by AQU Catalunya</b> of the Teaching Assessment Manual
2009	<b>Certification by AQU Catalunya</b> of the Internal Quality Assurance System Manual according to the AUDIT-AQU Catalunya model for all of the UOC's faculties
2010	<b>Institutional assessment</b> by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
2012	<b>Euro-Inf certification.</b> International Euro-Inf accreditation of six formative programmes (three bachelor's degrees and three university master's degrees) given by the UOC's Faculty of Computer Science, Multimedia and Telecommunications, awarded by the European Quality Assurance Network for Informatics Education (EQUANIE)
2014	<b>TedQual Certification</b> for the Bachelor's Degree in Tourism and the Master's Degree in Tourist Destination Strategy and Sustainable Management. This is the only international certification in education and training awarded by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations' specialized agency
2015	<b>External assessment of the official programmes for their accreditation</b> by AQU Catalunya. Five bachelor's degrees and four university master's degrees were accredited
2016	<b>External assessment of the official programmes for their accreditation</b> by AQU Catalunya. Five bachelor's degrees and five university master's degrees were accredited

2017	External assessment of the official programmes for their accreditation by AQU Catalunya. Five bachelor's degrees and seven university master's degrees were accredited
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Figure 7. Main milestones in quality management

## 5.2. The revision of the Internal Quality Assurance System: toward a new approach

As a result of the revision of the current manual and the consideration of new requirements and challenges which must be addressed, significant changes have been made to the 2009 version.

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

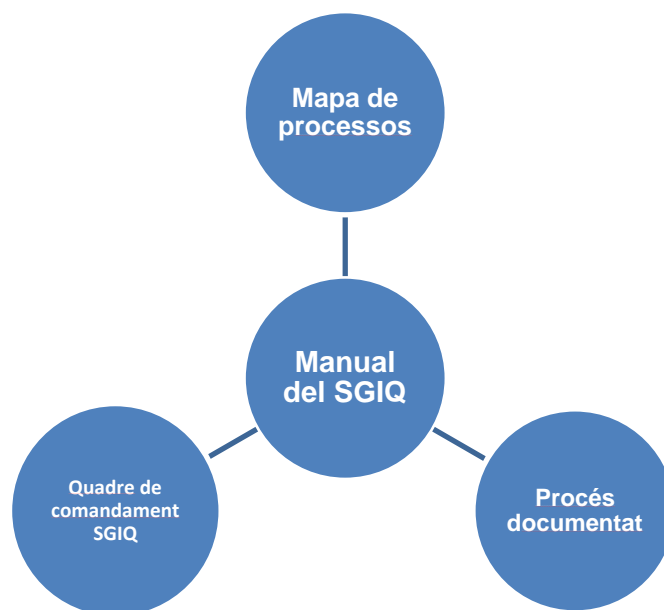


Figure 8. Structure of the Internal Quality Assurance System

### 5.2.1. Focus on processes

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

**Appendix I** of the manual shows the current **process map**. It identifies the **stakeholders** and the **processes** that the UOC has put in place to ensure that requirements and expectations translate into a fully satisfactory experience.



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

The stakeholders' requirements and expectations have been summarized in the **stakeholder map** (see **Appendix II**). They are the foundation on which process development is based, as this is the only way to guarantee the Internal Quality Assurance System's ability to satisfactorily address them. The stakeholders concerned are specified in each process. The document on **stakeholders and processes, Appendix III**, offers an overview of the processes in which each stakeholder is involved.

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

**Strategic processes:** those related with the organization's strategy and objectives, and also with its mission, vision and values. These processes are usually managed by the management team.

**Operational processes:** those that enable the organization's strategy to be rolled out. They are crucial for development of the management model and add value for the most significant stakeholders.

**Support processes:** those that facilitate the activities that make up the operational processes and, in some cases, the strategic processes.

### 5.2.2. Documented processes

Each of the processes identified on the map is implemented by means of a **documented process**, a descriptive document that includes key information for the process's functioning: mission, scope, owner, managers, description, relationship with other processes, input and output factors, documented information, indicators and flowchart.

Accordingly, **Appendix IV** provides a constantly updated list of the current processes and their revision status and the duly revised and approved **documented process** for each one.

### 5.2.3. Dashboard

In order to monitor the Internal Quality Assurance System's functioning and performance, the indicators identified for measuring each process are aggregated in a **dashboard** that gives the UOC's managers an overview of how the system is operating, thereby facilitating **decision-making**.

A sample dashboard is given in **Appendix V**: each indicator is developed according to a document containing all the relevant information, in line with that established in the corresponding process.

### 5.2.4. Regulatory compliance

In order to guarantee that the Internal Quality Assurance System complies at all times with applicable regulations, a table of **assessment processes, dimensions and standards** has been designed and included in **Appendix VI** of this Internal Quality Assurance System Manual.

### 5.2.5. Processes and responsibilities

**Appendix VII** includes the **processes and responsibilities** document. This document provides a global view of who is in charge of the different processes and who is involved in implementing them.

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

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

### 5.2.6. Technology map

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

## 6. Appendices

[Appendix I. Process map](#)

[Appendix II. Stakeholder map](#)

[Appendix III. Stakeholders and processes](#)

[Appendix IV. Documented processes](#)

[Appendix V. Dashboard](#)

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

[Appendix VII. Processes and responsibilities](#)

[Appendix VIII. Technology map](#)