



The Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion
of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties

SELF-EVALUATION REPORT 2013



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INTRODUCTION

Efforts have been made to ensure that AVEPRO's self-evaluation process was very inclusive, involving all the Agency's staff, members of the Scientific council and Board of directors and different stakeholders. It has not been a simple journey but, it has brought to light some unique aspects that characterize the Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties. These mainly concern:

- the Holy See's higher education system, which foresees the presence of Ecclesiastical faculties in many European and non-European countries and therefore requires the coordination of different legal systems and structures, while maintaining unity at system level;
- the presence of academic institutions connected to specific religious orders, which consequently offer a particular contribution to research and teaching within the framework of the Holy See's higher education system;
- a multilevel model of governance that has to take into account the joint work of the extensive series of actors involved (Vatican Secretary of State, Congregation for Catholic Education, Episcopal conferences, local Bishops, religious orders, various national institutions, as well as the academic institutions themselves);
- the strength of a network and an extensive grid of relations at a technical level and from the point of view of logistic support (think, for example of the Nunciatures present throughout the world) that permit and facilitate the circulation of information and the identification of experts for the evaluations;
- the coexistence (within the framework of a common orientation), and the simultaneous presence in many countries, of Catholic Faculties and Universities alongside Ecclesiastical ones.

Thus the Agency's quality promotion and evaluation activities have focused primarily on reinforcing forms of dialogue and collaboration with the various institutions, by seeking to understand the various scenarios involved. In fact, our faculties can be autonomous or fully part of the state university framework, rendering further analysis necessary from both a regulatory and a simply relational viewpoint.

A final remark: above all, this task has represented an opportunity for the Agency to learn. Its presence at events and contacts with other Agencies and supranational organizations, such as ENQA, INQAAHE, EUA, ESU and the BFUG, have contributed to defining AVEPRO's own structure and work.

We hope to have identified the various areas in which improvements can be made and to be increasingly seen by the academic institutions as an Agency whose purpose is to facilitate their (and therefore also our) task.

Fr. Franco IMODA, SJ
President



1. THE HOLY SEE'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

1.1. The nature of Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions

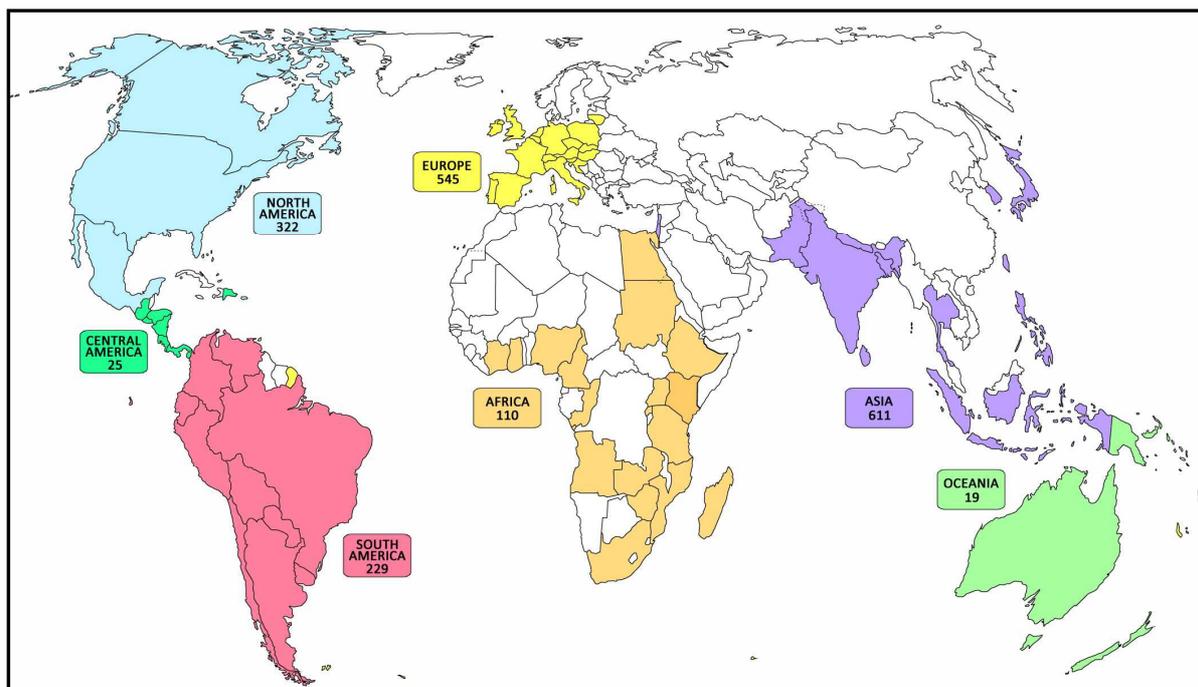
The centers for Higher Education of the Catholic Church are classified according to their purpose and the content of their academic programs: (1) Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties, and (2) Catholic Universities and Faculties. An Ecclesiastical Faculty can either be a free-standing Institution, be inserted within an Ecclesiastical or a Catholic University, or be inserted within another public or a private University.

	Regulation	Type of Institution
Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties	Apostolic Constitution <i>"Sapientia christiana"</i>	<i>Universities</i>
		<i>Athenaeums</i>
		<i>Faculties</i>
		<i>Other Institutions: Affiliated, Aggregated, Incorporated, Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences (HIRS)</i>
Catholic Universities and Faculties	Apostolic Constitution <i>"Ex corde ecclesiae"</i>	<i>Universities</i>
		<i>Various Faculties</i>

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Apostolic Constitution <i>"Sapientia christiana"</i>	
<i>Universities</i>	Theology Philosophy Canon Law + 1 or more
<i>Athenaeums</i>	Theology Philosophy or Canon Law + 1 or more (included Affiliated, Aggregated, Incorporated, Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences /HIRS)
<i>Other Faculties</i>	Christian archaeology, Biblical studies and ancient Eastern studies, Church history, Christian and classical literature, Liturgy, Missiology, Sacred Music, Psychology, Educational science or Pedagogy, Religious science, Social sciences, Arabic studies and Islamology, Mediaeval studies, Oriental Ecclesiastical studies, "Utriusque iuris" (both canon and civil law)





Map 1. Presence of the Centers for Higher Education of the Catholic Church around the world (According to information supplied by INDEX, Editio 2005, *Universitates et alia Instituta Studiorum Superiorum Ecclesiae Catholicae* – CEC)

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	Africa	North America	Central America	South America	Asia	Europe	Oceania	World total	
“Sapientia christiana”									
Theology	7	11	0	14	12	96	1	141	Theology
Philosophy	3	3	0	7	7	29	0	49	Philosophy
Canon Law	0	2	0	1	1	19	0	23	Canon Law
Other	2	1	0	1	4	37	0	45	Other
John Paul II Institutes*	1	2	0	1	1	2	0	7	John Paul II Sections
Affiliated Institutes	70	15	4	47	47	164	2	349	Affiliated Institutes
Aggregated Institutes	2	0	0	3	6	14	0	25	Aggregated Institutes
Incorporated Institutes	0	1	0	0	0	11	0	12	Incorporated Institutes
“Ex corde ecclesiae”	19	279	18	87	533	45	16	997	“Ex corde ecclesiae”
Other Institutes	6	8	3	68	0	128	0	213	Other Institutes
Country total	110	322	25	229	611	545	19	1861	

Table 1. Presence of the Centers for Higher Education of the Catholic Church around the world (According to information supplied by INDEX, Editio 2005, *Universitates et alia Instituta Studiorum Superiorum Ecclesiae Catholicae* – CEC)

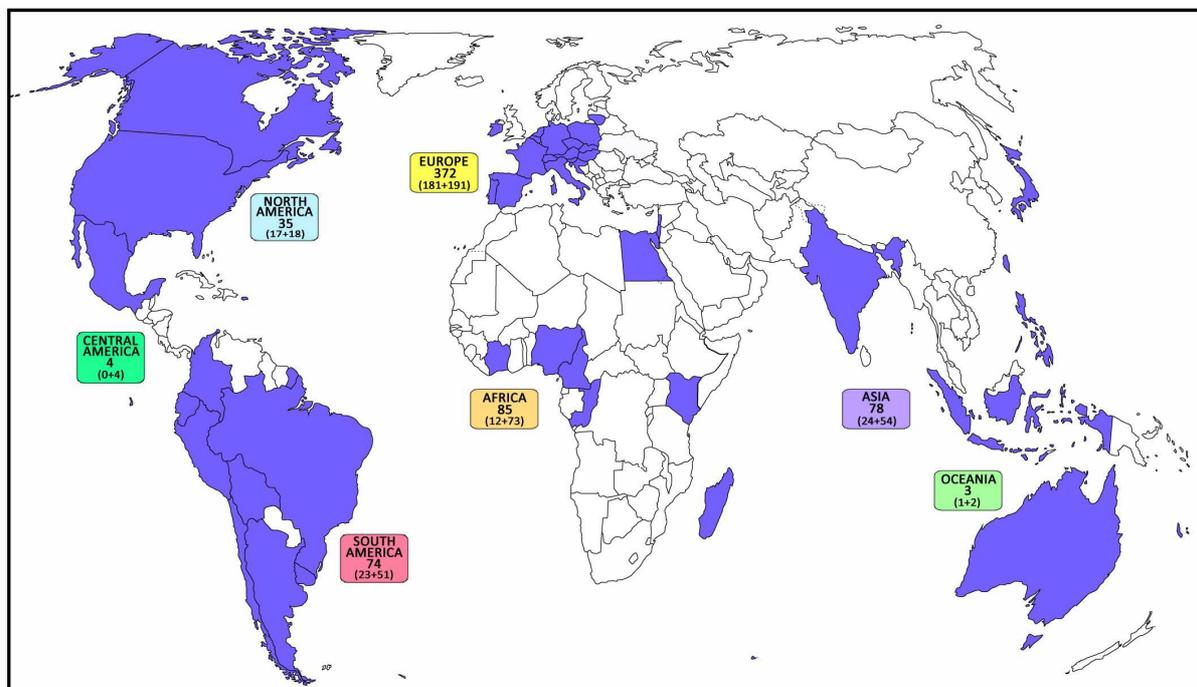
*The Pontifical John Paul II Institute for studies on marriage and family was founded in 1981, according to the provision of the Apostolic Constitution *Magnum Matrimonii Sacramentum*. The Institute contributes to philosophical, theological and pastoral reflections upon marriage and the family, with help of the various human sciences. The Institute has its headquarters at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, and six sessions abroad.

1.2 Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions

Ecclesiastical *Universities* are required to have not less than four Faculties, of which three must be Theology, Canon Law and Philosophy. Ecclesiastical *Athenaeums* also have not less than four Faculties but Theology, Canon Law and Philosophy are not compulsory. The systematic study of the different areas of a discipline and specific methodology is deputed to the Ecclesiastical *Faculties*, which can be part of: an Ecclesiastical University or a Catholic University (see below); a State or private University not belonging to the Catholic Church; or they can be autonomous Institutions. Ecclesiastical *Institutes* can be either: *affiliated* to a Faculty and award first cycle degrees; *associates* of a Faculty and award first and second cycle degrees; or they can be *incorporated* in a Faculty and award second and/or third cycle degrees. The Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences (HIRS) award first and second cycle degrees as associates of a Faculty of Theology and their professional aims seek to meet the needs of contemporary society (cf. CCE, Reform of the Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences, art. 3). Faculty *Centres* are classified as Institutes “*ad instar Facultatis*” and provide grants.

Ecclesiastical Institutions comply with the regulations of the “Code of Canon Law” and the “Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana*”.

Apostolic Constitution “ <i>Sapientia christiana</i> ”	Title granted
Other Higher Education Institutes (connected to Faculties)	Affiliated Institutes I cycle
	Aggregated Institutes I and II cycle
	Incorporated Institutes II and/or III cycle
	Others Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences



Map 2. Presence of Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions around the world (According to information supplied by INDEX, Editio 2005, *Universitates et alia Instituta Studiorum Superiorum Ecclesiae Catholicae – CEC*)

	Africa	North America	Central America	South America	Asia	Europe	Oceania	Total	Total (groups)
Theology	70	11	0	14	12	96	1	141	473
Affiliated Institutes	50	13	5	40	33	158	2	301	
Aggregated Institutes	0	0	0	1	5	13	0	19	
Incorporated Institutes	0	1	0	0	0	11	0	12	
Philosophy	30	3	0	7	7	29	0	49	95
Affiliated Institutes	20	2	0	6	13	5	0	46	
Aggregated Institutes	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Canon Law	0	2	0	1	1	19	0	23	29
Affiliated Institutes	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	
Aggregated Institutes	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	4	
Other	2	1	0	1	4	37	0	45	47
Affiliated Institutes	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Aggregated Institutes	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
John Paul II Institutes	1	2	0	1	1	2	0	7	7
General total								644	
									+ 7 John Paul Institutes

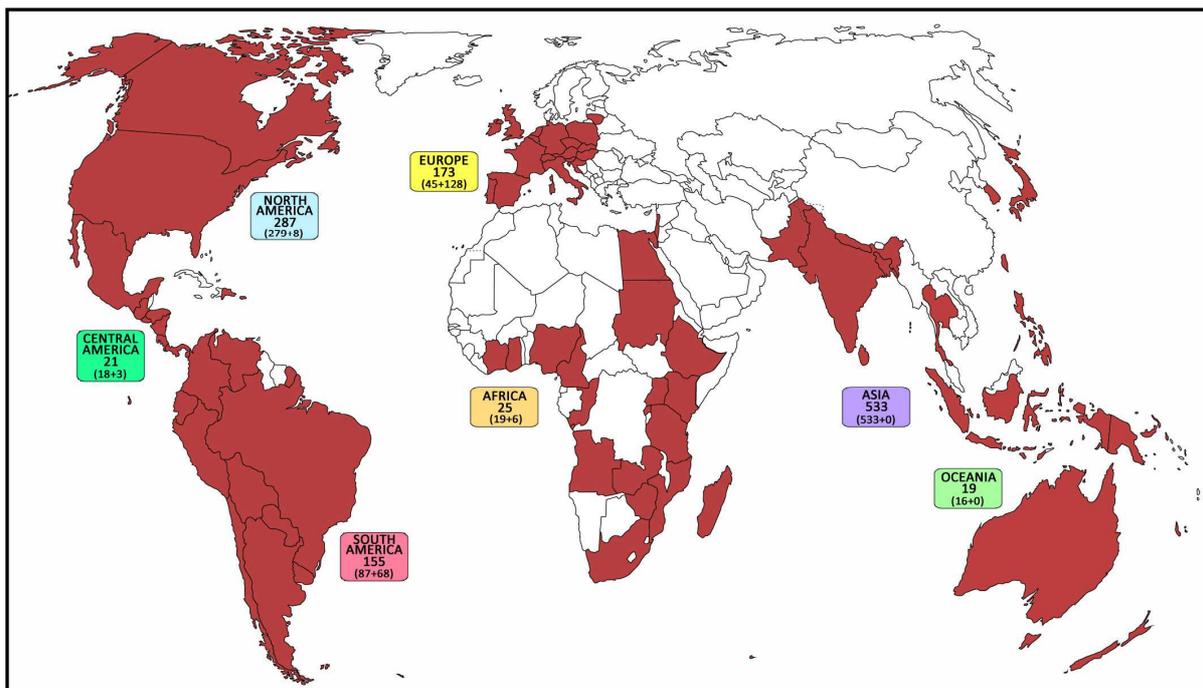
Table 2. Presence of Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions around the world (According to information supplied by INDEX, Editio 2005, *Universitates et alia Instituta Studiorum Superiorum Ecclesiae Catholicae – CEC*)

On the basis of international conventions or agreements, recognition of the degrees awarded for non-ecclesiastical use is delegated to the countries in which they are awarded.

1.3 Catholic Universities

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Catholic Universities differ from Ecclesiastical Institutions in that their Faculties are identical to those of State or private Universities rather than to those of the Catholic Church. Their degrees are awarded and recognized in accordance with the laws and regulations in force in the countries in which they are placed.



Map 3. Presence of Catholic Universities around the world (According to information supplied by INDEX, Editio 2005, *Universitates et alia Instituta Studiorum Superiorum Ecclesiae Catholicae – CEC*)

1.4 Scope and size of the System (in Europe)

The distinguishing characteristics of Ecclesiastical Faculties and Catholic Universities are determined by their core values and by the strategic objectives of their mission. Those who work in these Institutions are inspired by this mission and aware that such objectives should be harmonized with the quality of teaching and research. For this reason both quality assurance and quality improvement are intrinsically linked to the specific mission of these Institutions. Self-evaluation and external evaluation help to improve teaching and research, as well as all the necessary services, and help to increase awareness that employees are working in a particular Institution that also provides a service to the Church. Nevertheless, it has to be underlined that all these Institutions are autonomous at Institutional level and benefit of Academic freedom.

1.5 Academic studies in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties: qualifications and degrees

The Holy See's degrees and other qualifications are issued exclusively by Ecclesiastical Institutions. To guarantee the homogeneity of the higher education system, the degrees and qualifications are the same the world over, even if issued by Institutions situated in different countries.

"The academic degrees conferred by an Ecclesiastical Faculty are: Baccalaureate, Licentiate, and Doctorate." (cf. SapChr, 47 §1).

"Special qualifications can be added to the names of these degrees according to the diversity of Faculties and the order of studies in the individual Faculties." (cf. SapChr, 47 §2).

This qualifications do not have the same prestige and legal recognition as the Holy See's academic degrees as defined in § 1.

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The Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* nonetheless permits the use of other expressions to indicate the academic degrees:

Academic degrees can be given different names in the Statutes of the individual Faculties, taking account of the university practice in the local area, indicating, however, with clarity the equivalence these have with the names of the academic degrees above and maintaining uniformity among the Ecclesiastical Faculties of the same area. (cf. SapChr, 48).

Especially in Europe, but increasingly worldwide, certain common structures and parameters ensure comparability of the levels of academic degrees. They usually correspond to the three cycles also used by ecclesiastical legislation, i.e.:

I Cycle	Usually lasts a minimum of 3 years. For the Faculty of Theology, due to the inherent connection between philosophy and theology, the first academic cycle takes at least 5 years of philosophical-theological studies. This cycle provides a basic introduction to the subject and its scientific methodology. If completed successfully, the first cycle ends with a baccalaureate degree (<i>baccalaureatus</i>) or another equivalent degree as established by the Faculty's Statute. Usually, the first cycle foresees 180 ECTS.
II Cycle	Lasts a minimum of 2 years and consists in the beginning of a specialized field of study. If completed successfully, this cycle ends with a licentiate (<i>licentia</i>). A licentiate is required in order to teach in seminaries for the formation of priests (cf. <i>SapChr</i> , 50). Usually, the second cycle foresees 120 ECTS.



III Cycle

Lasts an appropriate length of time (normally at least 3 years) and implies the completion of scientific education, entailing the writing, defense and publication of a doctoral dissertation that effectively contributes to the advancement of science. This cycle ends with a doctorate (*doctoratus*). The doctorate is necessary to teach in an Ecclesiastical Faculty.

In preparing *Qualifications Frameworks* (QF) at all levels, as well as degree programs, including the assignment of the relative academic qualifications/degrees, both the whole program and individual courses must effectively correspond to the level of the relative cycle.

Concerning the Holy See's "general higher education policy", apart from the minimum requirements established by the canon law in force, the competent ecclesiastical authorities also carefully consider the specific requirements of the country in which an Institution's academic activities are performed. Even in the absence of a formal/legal obligation, the Catholic Church seeks to ensure *at least* the same standards as the educational system of the country in question. This principle is explicitly applied by the *Sapientia christiana* (cf. *SapChr*, 32 §1).

For some positions, additional post-doctoral qualifications may be required.

In consideration of various local customs, academic titles can have different names in the Statutes of individual Faculties. Nonetheless, they must clearly specify what the equivalent degree would be according to the above-mentioned academic terminology, and always maintain uniformity with other Ecclesiastical Faculties in the same area.

Concerning admission requirements to Ecclesiastical Faculties, the following rules apply: "Ecclesiastical Faculties are open to all, whether ecclesiastics or laity, who can legally give testimony to leading a moral life and to having completed the previous studies appropriate to enrolling in the Faculty" (*SapChr*, 31). "To enroll in a Faculty in order to obtain an academic degree, one must present that kind of study title which would be necessary to permit enrollment in a civil University of one's own country or of the country where the Faculty is located" (*SapChr*, 32,1). "The Faculty, in its own Statutes, should determine what, besides what is contained in § 1 above, is needed for entrance into its course of study, including ancient and modern language requirements" (*SapChr*, 32,2).

Admission to the second cycle implies having successfully completed the first cycle or other studies that are considered by the Faculty to be equivalent. Admission to the third cycle normally requires a licentiate in a related academic field.

For third cycle studies, students must usually know two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue.

1.6 Connected Institutions and the Diploma supplement

Another peculiarity of the qualifications and academic degrees awarded by the Holy See concerns the use of the instrument of affiliations and other connections between an Institution of higher education and a "mother" Faculty. This instrument – through which the faculty issues its own qualifications – demands even greater transparency, and in this context the Diploma Supplement plays a fundamental role as an instrument of transparency and information.

To guarantee coherence between the practices of the various Faculties in relation to their *Incorporated, Aggregated, Affiliated or Connected Institutions* and facilitate the international recognition of the relative qualifications, the Congregation for Catholic Education has established the following guidelines for the correct use of the *Diploma supplement*, regarding studies carried out in these Institutions:

- Firstly, it must be highlighted that the academic degree (and the corresponding qualification or diploma) is always issued by the “mother Faculty” and must correspond to the Faculty’s own profile and degrees.
- This principle means that responsibility for the correctness and quality of degrees, qualifications and diplomas remains with the “mother Faculty”, which must develop and maintain appropriate instruments to ensure that these criteria are respected and the same conditions as studies carried out in the Faculty itself.
- The form of the *Diploma supplement* and the precise criteria for its compilation must scrupulously correspond to those applied to similar programs offered by the Faculty itself.
- In these cases the *Diploma supplement* must bear both the name of the Faculty and the name of the Affiliated Institution.
- This Document must include (under art. 2.4., according to the UNESCO model) the official name, city/town and state in which the Institution running the course is based, in the original language.
- The “other information” (usually reported under art. 6 of the Document) must indicate (very briefly) the Quality Assurance procedures implemented in both the mother Faculty and the Affiliated Institution, as well as the Agency or Authority that performed the external evaluation, and the date of the last evaluation.

1.7 The Academic Community

Those who are in charge of governing Ecclesiastical Universities have a very particular task due to their complex structure. Effectively, all components contribute to their governance in different ways and forms. The quality of governance is judged by its ability to give a voice to all its components and involve them in determining the way the Institution should proceed.

This section is a short overview of the Universities/Faculties’ structure and governance, and of their individual and collegial Authorities.

The Chancellor represents the Holy See to the University or Faculty and vice versa. He promotes the continuation and progress of the University or Faculty and fosters its communion with the local and universal Church (cf. *SapChr*, 12), whereby he ensures its full ecclesial nature. Usually the Chancellor is a Bishop or, in some cases, a Cardinal.

Where conditions favor such a position (e.g., when the University/Faculty has been founded and canonically erected by a religious community), it is also possible to have a Vice-Chancellor, whose authority is determined in the Statutes (cf. *SapChr*, 13).

The Chancellor supports the Institution by promoting scientific advancement, and by enforcing the Statutes and the norms of the Holy See.

The Rector is the person who presides over a University; the President is the person who presides over an Institute or Faculty that exists separately (cf. *SapChrOrd*, 13).

The Rector/President:

- directs, promotes, and coordinates all the activity of the academic Community;
- represents the University, or the Institute or Faculty existing separately;
- convokes the Council of the University, or of the Institute, or of the Faculty existing separately, and presides over it according to the norms of the Statutes;
- supervises the financial administration;
- reports to the Chancellor on Institutional matters of greater import;

- sends a statistical report to the CCE every year, according to the outline provided by the Congregation (cf. *SapChrOrd*, 14).

The Dean is the person who presides over a Faculty that is part of a University (cf. *SapChrOrd*, 13).

He:

- promotes and coordinates all the activities of the Faculty, especially matters regarding studies;
- provides for the needs of the above with due speed;
- convokes the Council of the Faculty and presides over it;
- admits or dismisses students in the name of the Rector according to the norms of the Statutes;
- reports to the Rector on what the Faculty has done or proposed;
- executes the decisions of higher Authorities (cf. *SapChrOrd*, 15).

Academic Authorities are normally chosen from the Teachers who are permanent members of the Faculty and who have a well-established reputation in university life (cf. *SapChr*, 17). The Rector and the President are appointed, or at least confirmed, by the Congregation for Catholic Education (cf. *SapChr*, 18). The Statutes determine the term of office of the Rector and President and all positions of academic Authority, their selection procedure, and how many times they can be reconfirmed in their positions (cf. *SapChrOrd*, 13). The Statutes should also cover the membership of collegial Authorities and their selection procedure, i.e., the members of the Council and the duration of their term of office.

The collegial Authorities that are commonly found in academic Institutions are the Council of the University, often called the Academic Senate, and the Council of the Faculty. They express the Institution in its entirety, as every sector is represented in these bodies. There are also a Finance Committee, a Board of Teachers, and a Board of Students (or their equivalents). These and other executive bodies, Committees and/or Boards are expressions of the participation of the academic Community in the running of the Institution.

The University/Faculty Council serves as a forum for discussion and advises individual Authorities on general issues concerning the entire Community (e.g., quality assurance, strategic plans, changes in academic structure, revision of Statutes and regulations, relationships with external Institutions, relationships with affiliated Institutes and other entities dependent on the Institution, etc.).

The Board of Teachers performs the important task of making proposals and assessments concerning the academic programs, taking action on curricula, teaching arrangements and interdisciplinary coordination.

Teachers make available the results of investigations performed individually, collectively, and in dialogue with colleagues throughout the world with the just freedom that ecclesial research enjoys. Teachers educate in each and every interaction with Students. However, this is only truly beneficial to Students' integral and systematic formation when it is in full harmony with all the members of the teaching staff and expresses their common passion to be educators.

Students organize themselves into free associations providing for a wide range of needs that arise in community life. However, they also make their voices heard in the Institution's government through freely elected representatives. As a whole students form a body, which is generally known as the Students' Assembly, or set up a fully-fledged entity, which is often called the Board of Students. These are made up of ordinary students (i.e., those who are matriculated in academic degree programs) who:

- discuss academic questions related to Students of the Faculty,
- submit proposals concerning the life of the Faculty to competent bodies, and
- elect delegates to serve on the other University/Faculty's collegial bodies.

Evidence

- ▶ *INDEX*, Editio 2005, *Universitates et alia Instituta Studiorum Superiorum Ecclesiae Catholicae* – Congregation for Catholic Education 2005
- ▶ *Quality Culture, a Handbook for Ecclesiastical Faculties* – Congregation for Catholic Education (2012)



2. AVEPRO - THE HOLY SEE'S AGENCY FOR THE EVALUATION AND PROMOTION OF QUALITY IN ECCLESIASTICAL UNIVERSITIES AND FACULTIES

2.1 The Agency

The Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (AVEPRO), established by the Pope Benedict XVI on 19 September 2007, is an Institution connected to the Holy See, as provided by arts. 186 and 190-191 of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*.

The Agency's duty is to promote and develop a culture of quality within the Academic Institutions that depend directly on the Holy See and ensure they possess internationally valid quality criteria. The Holy See's adhesion to the Bologna Process (which took place on 19 September 2003, during the meeting of the European Union Ministers of Education in Berlin) was determined by its desire to pursue and achieve certain objectives included in the Process, such as:

- respect for the specificity and diversity of the various University systems;
- creation of a common European Higher Education Area to encourage the involvement of University Institutions in an international dimension;
- focus on quality as a value intrinsic to and necessary for research and innovation in Universities.

AVEPRO conforms its activities to the European Standards and Guidelines, the INQAAHE Guidelines of good practice in QA, as well as other international agreements concerning rules and procedures for the evaluation of quality in higher education. The Agency collaborates with Academic Institutions in defining internal procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching, research and services, which is done through the development and use of appropriate operational tools (guidelines, questionnaires, databases, information networks, etc.). AVEPRO also organizes external evaluation procedures for individual Academic Institutions and arranges visits to them by experts.

In accordance with the Agency's independent nature, it collaborates with all actors interested in the life and progress of Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties: the Institutions themselves, the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Episcopal Conferences (which could be considered as potential employers), all regional, national and international authorities, and all those who work in the various dioceses of countries in which Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions are based.

Although to date the Agency is only responsible for QA in the Ecclesiastical Faculties, it seems appropriate to mention that other Institutions (e.g. Catholic Universities) could be evaluated by AVEPRO in the future. To this end, it would be necessary to define methods and procedures, following framework agreements signed by Government authorities. In this context, the potential achievement of ENQA full membership status could facilitate the whole process.

2.2 Vision, mission, aims and objectives

The mission of the Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (AVEPRO), established on 19 September 2007, is to promote and develop a culture of quality within the Academic Institutions that depend directly on the Holy See and ensure they possess internationally valid quality criteria, as established by the Bologna Process.

AVEPRO provides its services to Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties, which have been erected or approved by the Congregation for Catholic Education and have the power to confer academic degrees under the authority of the Holy See (cf. *CIC*, cc. 815-817). In other words, AVEPRO sees a future where its drive for quality and close collaboration with the Ecclesiastical Institutions has come to fruition and they are recognised as world class for many reasons, including their focus on and commitment to quality in all their activities.

In accordance with the norms of the Holy See on higher education and this vision, the Agency operates within a spirit of leadership and independence, transparency and accountability, respect for the traditions and ethos of individual Institutions, flexibility and responsiveness to change and evidence-based decision making.

AVEPRO's immediate aim is to work in close harmony with Ecclesiastical Faculties and Universities across the world, in accordance with the framework established by the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* (April 15, 1979), to develop a robust process of quality assurance that meets the *European Standards and Guidelines* (ESG).

In keeping with the overall purpose of the Bologna Process, AVEPRO's goal is to training the Ecclesiastical Institutions in developing internal quality assurance processes, that is a culture of quality in all their activities, including teaching, research and services. This is a task that requires close collaboration between the Agency and the Faculties scattered all around the world. It has been necessary for AVEPRO to undertake an extensive training programme covering the now well-established standard approaches to the management of modern higher education Institutions: workshops on key developments with guidance notes and skills training; a model of strategic planning framework incorporating QA; databases and other instruments for the use of the Institutions, with scope for local contextualization. In addition, AVEPRO facilitates mobility arrangements and the accumulation of credits for part-time students and continuing education, exploiting the potential of ECTS.

AVEPRO will keep stakeholders informed of this evolving process in an open and transparent way, while identifying best international quality practices and promoting recognition of the quality brand of the Ecclesiastical Faculties (in the evidence a list of stakeholders).

AVEPRO is aware of the complexity of the challenge it faces. The Agency must assist Ecclesiastical Institutions to position themselves in this new higher education landscape by developing an effective and coherent QA process; one that emphasises continuous improvement, fosters a quality culture in all activities, and satisfies the highest international standards and guidelines. Building on its central role in the statutory review procedures, it will develop and drive collaborative initiatives across the sector, take the lead in cooperating with higher education partners around the world.

The complexity of the challenge is added to by the range of actors involved. The Institutions are spread across the world, with many different languages. They vary widely in size, organization, specific mission, cultural background, national context and also in their relation to the national system of the Country in which they are located (cf. chapter 1).

The main objectives of the Agency could be summarised as follows:

- ✓ Ensuring the structure and organization of AVEPRO are sufficient to achieve its goals and objectives, and to secure adequate resources (financial, human, etc.) to support ongoing activities

- ✓ Strengthening self-evaluation structures and procedures (internal evaluations) in Ecclesiastical Faculties
- ✓ Optimization of external evaluation procedures and modes of performance
- ✓ Organization of evaluation cycles on a national basis
- ✓ Communication and Institutional relations

2.3 AVEPRO's internal organization: structure and operation

AVEPRO provides its services to Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties, which have been erected or approved by the Congregation for Catholic Education and have the power to confer academic degrees under the authority of the Holy See (cf. *CIC*, cc. 815-817).

In accordance with the norms of the Holy See on higher education, the Agency enjoys full autonomy to carry out its activities.

The Agency is composed of:

- the President;
- the Board of Directors;
- the Scientific Council.

It also comprises the Director and other staff members. Moreover, the Agency uses the services of external experts.

The President is appointed by the Pope for a five-year term. The appointment is renewable only once. The President runs and represents the Agency.

The members of the Board of Directors are appointed for a five-year term, renewable only once, by the Pope, to whom they are proposed by the President of the Agency. They have qualifications and experience both in academic areas and in the specific field of quality promotion. They should also reflect, as far as possible, the various competences as well as the diversity and geographical extension of the Church.

The Board of Directors is composed of a minimum of five and a maximum of ten members.

The following are members by right: the Director of the Agency (with the function of secretary), a representative of the Congregation for Catholic Education, and a student representative, indicated by the President every year.

Observers can take part in the meetings of the Board of Directors, on invitation of the President.

The Board of Directors, chaired by the President of the Agency, approves the main orientations and supervises the activities of the Agency, as well as monitoring its results. The Board ordinarily gathers at least once a year, when summoned by the President. It can be called upon to gather on other occasions, according to necessities identified by the President; various means of communication can be used to convene Board meetings.

The decisions of the Board of Directors are valid if a majority of members are present and if the absolute majority of the members present give their approval.

The members of the board of Directors in 2013 are:

- Fr. Franco Imoda SJ (President)
- Fr. Friedrich Bechina FSO
- Sjur Bergan
- Paolo Blasi
- Riccardo Cinquegrani (Director)
- Mgr. Piero Coda
- Fr. Philippe Curbelié
- Jan Sadlak
- Fr. Mario Tomljanovic (student)



The members of the Scientific Council who are not members by right are appointed for a five-year term, renewable only once, by the Pope, to whom they are proposed by the President, after consultation with the Board of Directors. They are distinguished by their wealth of knowledge and prudence, academic experience, and specific expertise in the field of quality promotion. They are chosen, as far as possible, to reflect the various components and the geographical extension of the Church.

The Scientific Council is composed of a minimum of ten and a maximum of twenty members.

The following are members of the Scientific Council by right:

- the President of the Rectors' Conference of Pontifical Universities or his delegate;
- a delegate of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU - FIUC);
- a delegate of the Federation of European Catholic Universities (FECU - FUCE);
- a representative of the students of Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties.

The following are invited to the meetings of the Scientific Council as observers:

- the Director of the Agency;
- a delegate of the Section for Relations with States of the Secretariat of State;
- a delegate of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

The President can also invite other observers.

The Scientific Council, chaired by the President of the Agency, helps him in the fulfilment of the Agency's activities. It gathers at least twice a year in plenary session, summoned by the President. The President can also summon members of the Scientific Council when he considers it convenient.

The Scientific Council provides reasoned advice on the modalities used for quality assessment, as well as on the choice and preparation of the experts in charge of evaluations.

The Scientific Council can also be asked by the President of the Agency to express its opinion and advice about single external evaluations that have been or will be carried out, or on any other question.

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The members of the Scientific Council in 2013 are:

- Fr. Franco Imoda SJ (President)
- Lieven Boeve
- John Davies
- Peter Jonkers
- Stephan Kampowski (Student)
- Don McQuillan
- Pascal Mueller-Jourdan
- Sigrid Mueller
- Fr. Slawomir Nowosad
- Mgr. Luis Romera
- Emanuela Stefani
- Mgr. Guy-Réal Thivierge
- Fr. Gabino Uribarri, SJ

The Director of the Agency is appointed by the President of the Agency with the approval of the Secretariat of State and of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See. The Director, in accordance with the indications and instructions of the President:

- coordinates the activities of the office and staff for the fulfilment of the programs and tasks of the Agency;
- takes care of the administration of the Agency.

The staff of the Agency is hired by the President of the Agency, with the approval of the Secretariat of State and of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See, from persons, who are

distinguished by virtue, prudence, proper experience and science, as confirmed by adequate qualifications.

Experts for the external evaluation of Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions are appointed for a five-year term by the President of the Agency, after consultation with the Congregation for Catholic Education, on the strength of their scientific competence as well as academic experience.

The names of Experts are added to a list from which they are selected for individual evaluations. This list must be composed of a number of persons sufficient to carry out all the planned evaluations in a reasonable period of time and in the main languages. The Agency has the task of composing the teams of experts for individual evaluations.

2.4 AVEPRO's (inter)national position

AVEPRO is the Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties and, as such, its activities are global. In other words, the "national" dimension of the Agency should be considered a "universal" dimension. We are aware that this makes the Agency somewhat unique in the field of quality assurance agencies.

Nevertheless AVEPRO adapts its methodological frameworks to and follows the main findings of several international projects, in order to keep its QA processes in line with the best practices in Europe; it also maintains its international presence with the intention of contributing to the development of new frameworks for the EHEA. The Agency's international dimension is developed through different types of activities.

Concerning Institutional relations, AVEPRO cooperates, mainly at European level, with agencies and entities aimed at providing added value to the higher education system. The Agency has been an affiliate member of ENQA since December 2007 and cooperates and takes part in the events organised by INQAAHE (a worldwide association of over 200 organisations, most of them QA agencies), which is active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education.

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In its international activities AVEPRO interacts with several stakeholders (cf. Annex 5), including:

- the Congregation for Catholic Education, which is, in compliance with the Code of Canon Law (c. 816) and the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, the body of the Holy See that has been entrusted with the authority to govern and coordinate training and higher education. It cannot issue laws or general decrees having the force of law, or derogate from the prescriptions of current universal law, except in individual cases and with the specific approval of the Pope (cf. *Pastor Bonus*, 18).
- *Episcopal Conferences* have the right to establish Catholic Universities or, at least, Faculties devoted to teaching and researching the most varied subjects, fully respecting their scientific independence (cf. *CIC*, c. 809; *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 3). Episcopal Conferences take responsibility for the quality of teaching and must oversee its assurance through adequate measures (which imply evaluation and accreditation). It is the duty of the Episcopal Conferences to carefully follow the life and progress of Ecclesiastical Institutes of higher education, as well as that of Ecclesiastical Universities/Faculties (cf. *SapChr*, 4; *SapChrOrd*, 5). Moreover, Episcopal Conferences are particularly concerned with the scientific and ecclesial status of Institutes, Universities and Faculties, and support University activities. They establish dedicated commissions for the purpose of fulfilling these duties. Thus, the Episcopal Conferences are directly involved in the processes of accreditation and evaluation.
- The *Chancellor* promotes the continuation and progress of the Ecclesiastical University or Faculty (cf. *SapChr*, 12; *SapChrOrd*, 18). Hence, he is responsible for quality assurance, which also means improving the quality of teaching and research. For this purpose, he must introduce



adequate measures and see to their implementation. Where conditions favour such a post, it is also possible to have a *Vice-chancellor*, whose authority is determined in the Statutes (cf. *SapChr*, 13,2). Usually, the *local Ordinary* is the Chancellor of Ecclesiastical Universities or Faculties that are located under his jurisdiction; therefore, he must be familiar with the duties of a Chancellor. If the Chancellor is someone other than the local Ordinary, the statutory norms establish how the Ordinary and the Chancellor carry out their respective offices (cf. *SapChr*, 14). Cooperation between the two is essential.

In accordance with the norms of current Church law and of the international agreements in the area of higher education of which the Holy See is a signatory party, AVEPRO enjoys total independence in carrying out its activities.

Given the complexity of the challenges facing AVEPRO, the Statute allows for the creation of regional components across Europe. Article 4.1 states that AVEPRO “can be articulated into more regional subcomponents in order to meet particular necessities or requests from various countries or geographical areas”. At the moment AVEPRO, the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Secretariat of State are discussing the position of AKAST which could become an AVEPRO Regional Branch in Germany.

2.5 Human resources policy and financial position

The fact that AVEPRO is an Institution connected to the Holy See, under arts. 186 and 190-191 of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, implies that the Agency can receive support (also in terms of human resources and services) from other Holy See Institutions. Moreover, the structure of the Agency (as previously described in par. 2.3) allows AVEPRO to receive concrete support from its board of directors, from the scientific council and from the nominated experts. The core staff of AVEPRO is composed as follows:

- President;
- Director;
- Head of Administration.

There are two other employees; one with the function of Review Manager, and an Administrative Secretary.

It has to be considered that AVEPRO is an organization that needs to update continuously its way of interaction with the complex group of HEIs which are spread around the world.

Therefore, the Scientific Council has suggested a staff policy articulated as follows:

Core Staff

- Chief Executive Officer
- Director of Development and Planning
- Reviews Manager
- Administrative Secretary

Additional expertise

A small core office needs associate/adjunct staff to undertake continuing roles, which do not justify full-time appointments, but do require continuity. These include:

- National contact points (on behalf of AVEPRO);
- Review group coordinators, who manage visits and produce AVEPRO reports;

- expert advisers, who produce, in consultation with HEIs, brief quality guidelines for HEIs on, e.g., research degrees, student questionnaires, exploitation of credit systems, strategic planning, etc.

These are likely to act as ad hoc on-going strategic advisers for the President and Chief Executive, to help steer the direction of AVEPRO and its committees.

Assistance from the Vatican / outsourcing

It is assumed that AVEPRO may rely on various offices in the Holy See, for publishing, PR, legal and financial services, but:

- AVEPRO's operational independence must be respected
- if there are any financial obligations or implications, they should be known in advance
- outsourcing may be another option.

The norms of the Holy See provide that the Agency can review its staff resources with the Secretariat of State after a five year trial period. This period ended in September 2012 and AVEPRO has already sent a request to the Secretariat of State to increase the numbers of permanent staff.

Concerning the Agency's financial position, it should be mentioned that the expenditures involved in the ordinary administration of the Agency concerning staff, secretariat management, as well as expenses for its premises, are taken care of by the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See (APSA); the expenses incurred in external evaluation processes are, as a rule, borne by the Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions involved.

The President, having consulted the Director, presents a budget plan to the APSA before 20 September each year. The proposed plan should be accompanied by a brief report. The President of the Agency receives the balance sheet from the APSA before the twentieth of February of each year. The President of the Agency, having consulted the Board of Directors and, when useful or so planned, the Scientific Council, can adopt specific measures concerning the organization and operation of the Agency, especially in relation to staff, administration and accountancy, office organisation, preparation of experts, as well as the expenses to be borne by the Institutions involved in external evaluations.

2.6 History and milestones: activities undertaken since September 2007

From January to December 2008, AVEPRO ran a pilot project on internal quality assurance and quality improvement. For maximum initial impact, two Ecclesiastical Faculties in Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain, covering a variety of Institutional types, were chosen to participate in the project. Guidelines were prepared, based on best practice as developed by the EUA over recent years, to facilitate and guide the Institutions in establishing appropriate procedures. They detailed the various steps in the evaluation and review process, and the way in which these steps are organized and managed: the preparation of a self-evaluation report by the Faculty, the site visit and report by a team of peers, and the follow-up and implementation of recommendations for improvements via an action plan. Upon completion of the pilot project, AVEPRO has used the experience gained to amend the Guidelines and to formulate a coherent and comprehensive plan for the implementation of internal quality assurance systems in Ecclesiastical Institutions across Europe.

In 2008 the Agency's main activities included:

- Pilot Project (cf. Report of activities 2007-2008)
- Participation in international events
- Contact with the various stakeholders: Roman Universities and Faculties, students, etc...
- Internal organization and strategic plan



- Work in common with the Congregation for Catholic Education on:
 - Statute of the Agency
 - Website
 - Database of Ecclesiastical Faculties
 - Handbook for Ecclesiastical Faculties
 - Description of the system of Ecclesiastical studies

The main activities of the Agency in 2009 included:

- Conclusion of the Pilot Project and beginning of the Follow-Up phase
- Internal organization and strategic plan
- Setting up of the Board of Directors (appointed in September) and the Scientific Council (not yet appointed)
- Organization and beginning of the work concerning evaluation with the seven Roman Pontifical Universities
- Contact with Lithuania: Quality Assurance Agency (SKVC) and Ecclesiastical Faculty of Kaunas
- Work on the various guidelines: modifications and translations
- Preparation of the website
- Work in common with the Congregation for Catholic Education: Bologna Process Commission, Circular Letter number 7 from the Congregation about AVEPRO,
- Participation in international events: INQAAHE international Conference, Fourth European Quality Forum

The main activities of the Agency in 2010 included:

- Contact with the General Secretary of the General Committee of the Roman Universities in view of the evaluation of Roman Institutions
- Sending of the *"Letter to all European Ecclesiastical Institutions"* in order to establish a first direct contact with all the Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties in Europe and provide practical information on procedures regarding the evaluation and promotion of quality and its implications within the Institutions
- Rome: information seminar on internal evaluation with Roman Ecclesiastical Faculties
- Definition of AVEPRO Strategic Plan: Organization of the Scientific Council and the Board of Directors meetings (September 2010)
- Self evaluation: state of the art in Roman Faculties and plan for Institutions located in Italy
- External Review: definition of general criteria and procedures
- First meeting of the Scientific Council of AVEPRO
- Second meeting of the Board of Directors
- Preparation of the CD-ROM to be delivered at the seminar organized by the Congregation for Catholic Education *"The Ecclesiastical Faculties and the Bologna Process: Review and Prospects"*
- Meeting with Rectors and Deans of French Ecclesiastical Faculties in order to define procedures for the evaluation of the French Ecclesiastical Faculties
- Seminar organized by the Congregation for Catholic Education *"The Ecclesiastical Faculties and the Bologna Process: Review and Prospects"*

The main activities of the Agency in 2011 included:

- Internal organization and strategic plan
- Training Seminar for external evaluation experts in France
- External evaluation in France (twelve Faculties) and Lithuania (one Faculty)
- Meetings with all the Ecclesiastical Faculties located in Italy on QA topics

- Seminar with the Roman Institutes (Pontifical Universities and Athenaeums) on the state of the Art of the QA process
- Meetings of the Board of Directors and meetings of the Scientific Council
- Meetings with the Congregation for Catholic Education
- Development of the AVEPRO website: translation of the documents into German and Spanish in view of their publication online
- Participation in international events

The main activities of the Agency in 2012 included:

- English and German version of the web-site
- Meeting with Deans of Italian Ecclesiastical Faculties in view of the evaluation process
- Follow-up seminar with the Ecclesiastical Faculties in France
- Realization of training material for experts involved in the evaluation processes
- External evaluation in France (one Faculty) and Austria (three Faculties)
- Meetings of the Board of Directors and meetings of the Scientific Council
- Meetings with the Congregation for Catholic Education
- Developing of an E-learning project for experts involved in the evaluation processes
- Preparation of AVEPRO self evaluation report in view of the application for ENQA full membership
- Participation in international events

2.7 The future: developments, expectations and strategic plans

AVEPRO's future development will focus on the consolidation of its achievements in the previous years of activity, seeking, where possible, to improve upon the organization, management and realization of its evaluation activities.

In general terms, the strategic items upon which the 2013-2014 plan is based are:

- ✓ The Agency's organization and governance;
- ✓ Strengthening self-evaluation structures and procedures (internal evaluations) in Ecclesiastical Faculties;
- ✓ Optimization of external evaluation procedures and modes of performance, acting above all on the identification, selection and training of experts;
- ✓ Organization of evaluation cycles on a national basis;
- ✓ Communication and institutional relations.

Each item will have its own general and specific goals and objectives, which will be pursued through ad hoc activities and projects.

Every two years the Agency designs a strategic plan, which is constantly monitored by the Councils. A synthesis of the next strategic plan is described in the following summary.



	YEAR	2013				2014			
	QUARTER	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
AVEPRO ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE									
Ensure the structure and organization of AVEPRO are sufficient to achieve its goals and objectives									
Establish respective positioning between AVEPRO and potential Regional branches									
Establish respective positioning between AVEPRO and national QA agencies									
Prepare for membership of ENQA									
STRENGTHENING SELF-EVALUATION STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES (INTERNAL EVALUATIONS) IN ECCLESIASTICAL FACULTIES									
Development of operational processes									
Update of support and training									
Follow-up and monitoring of effectiveness									
OPTIMIZATION OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND MODES OF PERFORMANCE									
Development of supporting documentation									
Establishment of a regular cycle of external reviews on a national/regional basis for the various categories of Institutions									
Establishment of the external review panel									
Development of support for the external review									
Follow- up and monitoring									
ORGANIZATION OF EVALUATION CYCLES ON A NATIONAL BASIS									
Define, in agreement with the CCE, in which countries it may be of interest to carry out evaluations in the years 2013-14 and 2015-16									
Carry out the external evaluation phase at the Pontifical Universities and Athenaeums in Rome									
Support the Italian Ecclesiastical Faculties involved in the self-evaluation process									
COMMUNICATION AND INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS									
Keep the website up to date									
Provide information to all stakeholders on AVEPRO's activities and operations									

Table 4. *Developments, expectations and strategic plans*

Evidence

- ▶ Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* (1988)
- ▶ Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* of Pope John Paul II on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (1979)
- ▶ Minutes of the Board of Directors
- ▶ Minutes of the Scientific Council
- ▶ Mission statement
- ▶ Regional branches
- ▶ Report of activities 2007-2008
- ▶ Report of activities 2009
- ▶ Report of activities 2010
- ▶ Report of activities 2011
- ▶ Report of activities 2012
- ▶ Staff policy
- ▶ Statutes
- ▶ Strategic plan 2010-2012
- ▶ Strategic plan 2012-2014



3. SWOT-ANALYSIS: AN OVERVIEW OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

3.1 The method adopted by AVEPRO

AVEPRO performed its SWOT analysis in collaboration with all members of the Agency's two Councils, as well as the Agency staff. The Agency also received contributions from relevant stakeholders (see annex 5).

At the beginning of November 2012 AVEPRO sent a message to the Council members asking them to participate in the exercise. The Agency staff carried out the analysis at the same time. After about two weeks a series of contributions were received and organized into four thematic areas, covering:

- organization and capacity
- instruments relating to activities
- resources
- external credibility and relations

Using a technique similar to the Delphi social sciences method, a second version of the contributions divided into the four areas was sent out to everyone participating, with the aim of checking whether there was general agreement and/or any further observations to add. Again, the coordination team gave participants two weeks' time to send in their comments.

Finally, on 20 December 2012 the SER Committee met. This Committee is composed of some members of each Council and part of the Agency's staff and has the task, amongst others, of agreeing on a final version of the SWOT analysis to include in the Self-Evaluation Report.

The outcome of this exercise is shown in the table below. The Agency now has the task of seeking to enhance the opportunities and limit, wherever possible, the undesirable effects deriving from a lack of attention to weaknesses and threats, emerging also after the external evaluation visit.



3.2. Main findings of the SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	
Organization & Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steady progress on systematization of efforts • AVEPRO shows a great sensitivity to the very different local situations in which theological Faculties operate • Flexibility with regard to different countries and contexts • Among the Ecclesiastical Faculties in the world a sense of urgency with regard to Quality Assurance has been growing since AVEPRO was founded • The Agency's ability and willingness to learn from experiences
Instruments Related To Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good Strategic Plan, and steady although partial progress on its realization • AVEPRO's guidelines and other documentations for Quality Assurance are state of the art • The AVEPRO Quality Assurance processes, both internal and external, satisfy the European Standards and Guidelines, INQAAHE requirements, its Statutes and other International conventions • Good start on training programmes for HEI • Clear distinction between Quality Assurance and accreditation • Pilot projects to test out methodologies
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong commitment of the present staff and councils • AVEPRO has a competent, hardworking staff • Not being a large Institution, AVEPRO works in a fresh and new way, not being dependent on a very large staff
External Credibility & Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear willingness to live up to international standards • Being a relatively new Institution, it is genuinely open to other national councils (committees) and their professionals • AVEPRO has successfully established its name and reputation within the field of Ecclesiastical European Institutions • The AVEPRO procedures are fully transparent and open to public scrutiny (cf. website); all documents are available • Well structured Councils (high level international Experts) • AVEPRO is international in a unique way (similarly to the Church's educational experience and Institutions, covering nations and countries across Europe and the world); the members of its Councils can share their knowledge and home experience with the Agency and thus make an exceptional contribution • AVEPRO is fully committed to the Bologna Process
WEAKNESSES	
Organization & Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult to operate in so many countries with the modest financial means and staff which AVEPRO has at the moment
Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate database on Institutions – as a whole, and specific HEI

Related To Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of mutual agreements between AVEPRO and some national QA Agencies in Europe
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak financial basis of the Agency and its operations • Too few full-time employees (another side of being a small Institution)
External Credibility & Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not yet being full member of ENQA • AVEPRO's position is not yet established enough among other Holy See Institutions of the Roman Curia • The apparent independence of the Ecclesiastical Institutions; their often weak response to questionnaires and other correspondence from AVEPRO; the difficulty experienced by AVEPRO in persuading them to engage with the QA procedures and processes in a timely and professional fashion • AVEPRO takes into account a general consideration about the Bologna Process in Europe, which is sometimes viewed as too strongly unifying and thus depriving higher education Institutions of their legitimate autonomy

OPPORTUNITIES

Organization & Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AVEPRO can make a real contribution to the quality culture of the Ecclesiastical Institutions in higher education • Challenge of harmonizing and improving QA efforts in Ecclesiastical HEI in accordance with international good practice • Through the evaluation process AVEPRO can, over time, bring the Ecclesiastical Institutions into line with best practice in modern lay Universities in the areas of planning, governance, academic standards • Foster quality improvement in Ecclesiastical Institutions in higher education • Develop a flexible culture of quality improvement, adapted to different countries and situations • Challenges to creatively modernize the strategic and quality related operations of Ecclesiastical HEI • Great variety of countries and legislations to be considered and worked with
Instruments Related To Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and (to some extent) research at Ecclesiastical Institutions of higher education based on internationally acknowledged criteria
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of support for HEI not yet developed e.g. Notes of Guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - doctorates - strategic planning - credit transfer and mobility
External Credibility & Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through its QA processes, which are aligned with those of ENQA and EUA, AVEPRO can become an important partner in the drive to create a quality culture in HEIs across Europe • Imperative of raising quality credibility and recognition of Roman Catholic HEI <i>vis à vis</i> other HEI and states • To make the Church (pastors, leaders) more aware of the importance of Universities in Church life (e.g. for the task of new evangelization) • To make HE Ecclesiastical Institutions more visible and involved in University

education and research at large

- To foster sound dialogue between faith and reason (religion and science) in an international forum

THREATS

Organization & Capacity

- Scale of the job
 - number of Roman Catholic Higher Education Institution
 - different categories/needs/sophistication
 - lack of QA tradition and culture in many HEI

Possible lack of clarity between:

- Problem of competence *vis à vis* national bishops' conferences – dangers of
 - overload for HEI
 - different quality regimes
 - different AVEPRO approaches
- Role of AVEPRO and national QA agencies
- The large diversity with regard to (tradition in) Quality Assurance among the different Ecclesiastical Institutions
- The linguistic and contextual diversity
- Failure to achieve ENQA full membership

Instruments Related To Activities

- AVEPRO's QA reports may not be perceived as relevant both to Church life and respective Universities' existence and academic activity

Resources

- Insufficient funding and low staff levels in the Executive will make it extremely difficult to carry through the mission and goals of AVEPRO. The strategic plan calls for a variety of steps, not least "missionary work" across the world. Without appropriate budget and staff crucial activities will have to be at least postponed.

External Credibility & Relations

- Independence of action *vis à vis* Congregation for Catholic Education and other Ecclesiastical Institutions and/or resources (cultural truth)
- Other national QAA with greater capacity and sophistication
- Lack of collaborative engagement by the Faculties, even those in Rome
- Gap between the expectations of some Ecclesiastical authorities with regard to AVEPRO's capacity to intervene with national accreditation agencies (eg specific agreement, necessity to avoid the potential overlapping of evaluation procedures..)
- AVEPRO may remain an "internal Ecclesiastical Institution" if not recognized internationally



4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE ESG FOR THE EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

4.1 Use of internal QA procedures

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.

GUIDELINES

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

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AVEPRO compliance

The external QA review processes organised by AVEPRO takes into account the effectiveness of the internal QA processes described in section 1 of the ESG and in the INQAHE Guidelines of good practice in QA. Moreover, the AVEPRO guidelines provide clear and definite indications concerning the internal and external QA processes, which also aim to support the HEIs in implementing other aspects of the Bologna Process, such as the use of learning outcomes in the qualification framework, the implementation of qualification recognition, the promotion of ECTS and other tools to support transparency.

The Ecclesiastical Institutions vary in size, from a single Faculty to full Universities with four or more faculties. Whatever the unit chosen for quality evaluation, whether it is an academic department, Faculty, academic programme, service department (such as the library or computing centre), or University, the basic steps in the procedures are essentially the same.

Put simply, the process for Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement comes down to answering four fundamental questions. These questions also form the basis of the Institutional Evaluation Programme of the European University Association:

- What are you trying to do?
- How are you trying to do it?
- How do you know it works?
- How do you change in order to improve?



These questions lead to reflection on AVEPRO's mission, aims, objectives and strategic priorities; on the systems and procedures in place and their suitability for fulfilling the mission; on the routine quality measures in use, including feedback from students, staff, employers, and all stakeholders; and on strategic planning procedures and the capacity to change and meet new challenges.

Establishing a suitable internal infrastructure in each Institution is an indispensable first step in organizing a QA process. For a University, or other large multi-faculty Institution, experience shows that:

- A high level institutional *Quality Committee*, reporting to the Senate, should be established to oversee the quality process and to set and maintain strong policy leadership
- The Chair of the committee should be either the Rector or Vice-Rector for academic affairs
- All members of the committee should have a strong enthusiasm for the quality effort
- The committee must have the unreserved and highly visible support of the head of the Institution, otherwise the interest of the staff will flag and the work will not flourish
- The executive function should be carried out by a Director of Quality Assurance (DQA), and a Quality Assurance Office established in the Institution with appropriate resources to support the work of the DQA
- The DQA should also be a highly regarded member of the Institution's academic community, be secretary of the Quality Committee, and thus have a strong voice in the formulation of quality policy
- The Institution should develop a robust institutional database of performance across various domains: student admission and progression, research output, etc.
- These structures should ensure that QA activities are closely connected to the entity's strategic planning procedures, which are crucial in developing joined up thinking.

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Of course many Ecclesiastical Institutions are quite small in terms of the number of faculties or number of students and in that case it would be unreasonable to impose such a heavy infrastructure. Common sense should dictate the appropriate scaled-down version suitable for these smaller Institutions.

The role of the Quality Office normally includes:

- Providing professional support for the development of the Institution's policy in relation to quality assurance and improvement, in line with good international practice
- Driving new initiatives designed to resolve issues arising repeatedly in review reports
- Promoting a sense of ownership in individual departments and units of the Institution's quality assurance and improvement systems and procedures
- Supporting departments and units in implementing internal and external quality review processes
- Publishing review reports and other relevant reports
- Working with other Institutions and with AVEPRO to improve cooperation in QA activities.

The process for internal quality assurance provides a critical self-evaluation and a review of all elements of the work carried out by the unit under review, and of a variety of aspects of the students' and other users' experience.

The components of the methodology are:

- A *Self-Evaluation Report (SER)*, prepared under appropriate headings detailing the work and activities of the unit. The emphasis is on reflection, analysis and an honest critique.
- An *international "site visit commission"*, or *peer review group*, reads the self-evaluation report and spends a number of days on a site visit to the unit. The review group, which is

composed of external experts, completes a report on their findings that emphasises recommendations for improvement.

The review group report is made available to relevant parties and published on the web.

There is systematic follow-up by the unit with a view to implementing the recommendations. This is monitored by the unit and the DQA.

It is important to emphasise certain crucial aspects of the process. The SER will not be published. This will encourage the unit to carry out a critical, and sometimes painful, self-analysis, or better still an examination of conscience. The review is of the unit and not of individuals. When a review has been completed a report will emerge which will not identify any individual by name. Follow-up will be prompt and an action plan will be prepared and implemented.

During the self-assessment, the review, and the follow-up procedures members of the unit will at all times respect the integrity of the process and the sensitivities of colleagues. Members of all committees involved in the process should adhere to a policy of Dignity and Respect in all transactions associated with the process. It must be remembered at all times that “the University or Faculty forms (...) a community” so that “all the people in it must feel co-responsible for the common good” (*Sapientia christiana*, Art. 11) and the cohesion of the academic community.

The self evaluation process is valuable to the individual unit and to the Institution as a whole because:

- It presents detailed information about the unit, and the collective perception of staff and students of their role not only in the Institution but also in social and cultural development and, where appropriate, in the international community.
- It presents a succinct but comprehensive statement of the unit’s view of its strategic objectives and capacity to deliver them.
- It shows the quality systems and processes which are already in place and permits an assessment of their effectiveness.
- It provides a comprehensive self-critical analysis of the activities of the unit and provides a springboard for improvement and development.
- It helps the unit to identify and analyse the unit’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and allows it to suggest appropriate remedies where necessary.

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Evidence

- ▶ Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* of Pope John Paul II on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (1979)
- ▶ AVEPRO Briefing note
- ▶ Internal evaluation Quality Assurance Guidelines for Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties
- ▶ *Quality Culture, a Handbook for Ecclesiastical Faculties* – Congregation for Catholic Education (2012)
- ▶ SER Notes of guidance for Faculties and service Units



4.2 Development of external quality assurance processes

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.

GUIDELINES

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.

AVEPRO compliance

AVEPRO has developed several guidelines related to the QA processes since its establishment. These guidelines were shared with some European Ecclesiastical Institution during the Pilot Project the Agency ran in the Academic years 2008-2010. Moreover, the two Councils of the Agency (Scientific Council and Board of Directors) have given their opinion on the procedures and guidelines. All the documentation, including the steps of the internal and external evaluation, is available on the AVEPRO website in three different languages (Italian, English, German). A fourth version – Spanish – is close to publication and the French version of the website is being translated.

In keeping with the *European Standards and Guidelines*, which state that “external quality assurance of Institutions and/or programmes should be undertaken on a cyclical basis” (*Standards and Guidelines*, 2.4.7 Periodic Reviews) every five years AVEPRO organizes and manages an external evaluation of each Ecclesiastical Institution to review the success and effectiveness of the internal quality systems in place. The procedures used for the external QA process mirror those used for the internal process, but the weight of these procedures reflects and is proportional to the size of the Institution involved:

- The Institution prepares a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) using a methodology agreed between AVEPRO and the Institution.
- AVEPRO appoints a review group consisting of international experts who read the SER, visit the Institution over a number of days, and write a report which will be published.
- The report recognizes the importance of institutional enhancement policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality, and makes recommendations for improvement. The report normally includes confirmation of the validity and accuracy of the SER, affirms (or not) any proposed directions for the development of the Institution, and makes recommendations for further action both for the Institution and its governing authorities.
- The site visit report is published on the web site including eventual addenda and or comments made by the Institution and sent to the main stakeholders (Chancellors, Rectors, Deans, Bishops’ Conference, Congregation for Catholic Education etc.)
- The Institution prepares an action plan based on the review report, and progress in the implementation of the plan is monitored by AVEPRO.

It is important to note here that the ESG insists that “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" (*Standards and Guidelines*, 2.4.6 Follow-up Procedures). In accordance with this statement, AVEPRO monitors the implementation of the Quality Improvement Plans and, in some cases (e.g. France) organizes *ad hoc* meetings and seminars in order to gain feedback from both the Institutions and the experts involved in the process of evaluation.

Evidence

- ▶ CCE *Circular letters* (Circular letter n° 3, Circular letter n° 5, Circular letter n° 7)
- ▶ Letter to all European Institutions
- ▶ Peer review and site visit
- ▶ *Quality Culture, a Handbook for Ecclesiastical Faculties* – Congregation for Catholic Education (2012)
- ▶ Quality Improvement Plan
- ▶ Questionnaires for self-evaluation
- ▶ Time scale for the quality review of a unit



4.3 Criteria for decisions

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.

GUIDELINES

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.

AVEPRO compliance

All of AVEPRO's QA procedures are described in the guidelines and other documents the Agency have realized and are available on the website.

AVEPRO's immediate aim is to work in close harmony with the Ecclesiastical Faculties and Universities across Europe, in accordance with the framework established by the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* (April 15, 1979), to develop a robust process of quality assurance that satisfies the requirements of the Bologna Process and meets the *European Standards and Guidelines* (ESG) as well as the INQAAHE Guidelines of good practice in QA. It has to be underlined that the objective of the overall QA procedures is not related to any form of accreditation and thus does not lead to formal decisions. Moreover, the aim of the evaluation is to foster a quality culture in the Ecclesiastical faculties and realize quality improvement plans and the strategic plans on a regular basis. Any administrative decision that produces formal consequences for the Holy See's Higher education Institutions comes from the Congregation for Catholic Education. Nevertheless, in the framework of the Bologna Process Commission (a commission established within the Congregation for Catholic Education) a project is being evaluated with the aim of substituting the *Relatio triennis* (a formal document that each Institution has to send to the Congregation every three years, concerning the state of the art of the academic life in the Institution) with the site visit report made by an evaluation team appointed by AVEPRO.

Evidence

- ▶ General principles on external review
- ▶ *Quality Culture, a Handbook for Ecclesiastical Faculties* – Congregation for Catholic Education (2012)
- ▶ Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* of Pope John Paul II on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (1979) Special norms – *Ordinationes*
- ▶ Statutes

4.4 Processes fit for purpose

STANDARD

All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

GUIDELINES

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:

- a) insistence that the experts undertaking the external quality assurance activity have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task;
- b) the exercise of care in the selection of experts;
- c) the provision of appropriate briefing or training for experts;
- d) the use of international experts;
- e) participation of students;
- f) ensuring that the review procedures used are sufficient to provide adequate evidence to support the findings and conclusions reached;
- g) the use of the self-evaluation/site visit/draft report/published report/follow-up model of review;
- h) recognition of the importance of institutional improvement and enhancement policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality.

AVEPRO compliance

The identity of Ecclesiastical Universities/Faculties is determined by their founding values and by the strategic aims that characterize their mission. Their vision and mission express the vocation of a specific country, culture, or charism, which is enshrined in the ultimate goal they strive to reach and in the motivations and choices through which they project themselves into the future. The people who are part of these Institutions and those who collaborate with them are inspired by the vision and mission because these offer a common goal towards which they can direct their energies. Indeed, an Ecclesiastical Academic Institution's mission describes and includes the ways and strategies through which it pursues its goals, as it remains faithful to the charism and values which determine its identity. Both quality assurance and quality improvement processes focus on this faithfulness: they verify the consistency between institutional aims and the realistic achievement of strategic goals, as well as the resources and tools that are used for that purpose. Reviewing a University/Faculty's vision and mission, through internal and external evaluations, can lead to improvements in the education they can offer along with their related services and, at the same time, increase awareness concerning the Institution's identity. By preparing strategic plans, Universities/Faculties chart their course to better fulfilling their vocation in research, education, and in the services they provide to Students, Church and society.

Following this introduction it seems appropriate to argue that QA methodology at AVEPRO is based on the interaction generated between the criteria established in the ESG, the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* and the Statutes of the Faculties themselves.

The European model of quality assurance in higher education (self-evaluation, site visits, review and follow-up reports) applies in all external QA processes carried out by AVEPRO. There is also a fitness of

purpose between the review procedures proposed by the Agency in the programme and the objectives, which enables the results and conclusions that are drawn to be based on objective evidence.

Members of the external review panels are selected by the Agency's main QA bodies, following consultation with the Congregation for Catholic Education, on the basis of pre-defined profiles that comply with the nature and objectives of the review processes.

The panels that review programmes of study and Institutions are usually made up of three or four experts: one expert in quality assurance, preferably from outside the higher education system of the Country in which the Faculty lies, one expert in the subject in question, and one from a different field of study. The fourth member of the site visit team is a student. It should be underlined that students have been part of the teams since September 2012.

AVEPRO disseminates the reports on each QA process via the Agency's website.

In accordance with the ESG, AVEPRO includes external experts in its QA processes.

These experts are selected on the basis of independence, objectivity and no-conflict-of-interest and they are appointed for a five-year cycle.

More in detail, it is possible to argue that AVEPRO's compliance can be seen in the following:

a) experts undertaking the external quality assurance activity have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task

AVEPRO experts come normally from academia: the chairs of the review teams are usually former University Rectors or key stakeholders in the field of education (former ministers or Presidents of Rectors' Conferences, experts active in International Organizations). Experts active in the specific field of the Faculty are chosen from a database established by the Agency. Individual experts are allowed to submit their candidature. The database is constantly updated and the President only appoints experts that are listed in the database for site visits.

b) care is exercised in the selection of experts

The experts for external evaluation of Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions are appointed for a five-year term by the President of the Agency, after consultation with the Congregation for Catholic Education, on the strength of their scientific competence as well as academic and ecclesial experience. The names of experts are entered into a list from which they are selected for single evaluations. This list must be composed of a number of persons sufficient to carry out all planned evaluations in a reasonable period of time and in the main languages.

c) experts are provided with appropriate briefing or training

AVEPRO has been developing a specific training strategy based on three main instruments: A) ad hoc seminars B) Notes of Guidance for external evaluators C) e-Learning training programme for external evaluators. The combination of these three offers a wide spectrum of tools and helps the Agency cover one of its most strategic activities.

d) international experts are used

As previously mentioned, experts involved in site visit are selected from a database. The names are usually suggested by the most relevant stakeholders (members of the two Councils, members of the Bologna Process Commission etc.) and, since the Holy See's Higher Education system has Faculties in all five continents, the experts suggested come from all over the world. Moreover, the criteria the Agency follows in setting up teams for external evaluations are the following:

- at least one expert should have considerable scientific knowledge in the main field of the Faculty;

- at least one expert should have considerable knowledge in Quality Assurance;
- at least one expert should be not living in the country in which the evaluation will take place.

e) *students participate*

The composition of both governing bodies of the Agency (Board of Directors and Scientific Council) foresees the presence of one student as full member. Moreover students' participation in AVEPRO evaluation processes is guaranteed by the fact that a student takes part in every site visit team (since September 2012).

f) *AVEPRO ensures that the review procedures used are sufficient to provide adequate evidence to support the findings and conclusions reached*

In accordance with international best practice AVEPRO:

- operates an external review process consistent with Part 2 of the Standards outlined in the ESG.

In particular, in its report the evaluation commission should:

- Confirm and comment on the details of the self-evaluation report
- Provide an overview of the present state of the Institution
- Comment briefly on each aspect of the Institution's activities
- Acknowledge achievements and quality where they exist
- Point out unambiguously any deficiencies or inadequacies in management and operations that might be eliminated or ameliorated
- Identify critical resource limitations (if any) that bar the way to achieving improvements
- Comment on all plans for improvements that the unit has made in the self-evaluation report
- Emphasize the recommendations for improvement that the review group considers appropriate.

To achieve these, the AVEPRO external review process seeks to:

- be open, transparent and evidence-based
- reinforce institutional diversity by remaining flexible and adaptable
- be consistent and operate in a collaborative spirit – reinforcing an Institution's continuous quality assurance processes
- communicate the review process clearly and in a manner easily understood by a wide range of external stakeholders, including students
- support the Ecclesiastical Faculties in their commitment to quality enhancement through its developmental approach.

g) *the self-evaluation/site visit/draft report/published report/follow-up model of review is used*

In accordance with the ESG, AVEPRO procedures follow the scheme based on cyclical institutional evaluations. This method implies a self evaluation made by the Higher Education Institution, followed by a site visit. The site visit team is appointed by the Agency and produces a draft report. The Institution is invited to respond to the report within 15 days and after that the report is published on the web. The Institution is expected to draft a Quality Improvement Plan taking into consideration the recommendations made by the evaluation team. All relevant stakeholders will be involved in the follow-up process, which will lead to another evaluation cycle

h) *the importance of institutional improvement and enhancement policies is recognised as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality*



As previously mentioned, AVEPRO decisions do not imply any formal consequence for accreditation. Nevertheless, twelve months after the site visit, the Institution is asked to produce a follow-up report (incorporating the institutional quality improvement plan). The follow-up report should provide a commentary on how the review findings and recommendations have been discussed and disseminated throughout the Institution's committee structure and academic units, and comment on how effectively the University is addressing the review outcomes. The report should identify the range of strategic and logistical developments and decisions that have occurred within the Institution since the publication of the review report, and should address each of the key findings and recommendations that the reviewers presented.

Evidence

- ▶ SER External review format
- ▶ *Quality Culture, a Handbook for Ecclesiastical Faculties* – Congregation for Catholic Education (2012)
- ▶ Statutes



4.5 Reporting

STANDARD

Reports should be published and 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.

GUIDELINES

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.

AVEPRO compliance

The reports recognise the importance of institutional enhancement policies as a fundamental element in the assurance of quality, and make recommendations for improvement. The site visit reports normally include confirmation of the validity and accuracy of the SER, affirm (or not) any proposed directions for the development of the Institution, and make recommendations for further action both for the Institution and its governing authorities. The external evaluation results in a written report that is clear and easy to read, in a way that the judgments and suggestions contained in it can be immediately identified. Since the Holy See has seven official languages, AVEPRO tends to accept final reports if written in one of them; nevertheless, the Agency requires English to be used whenever possible. Once finalized, the final report is sent to the Faculty. The Faculty usually has 15 days in which to highlight any clerical or factual errors. If the Faculty does not respond within 15 days, the report is considered finalised and it is ready to be published. If the Faculty integrates the report with corrections of clerical errors or specific statements on factual issues, this integration will merge with the site visit report and be part of the final report that will be published.

External evaluation reports are published on the Agency's website.

Evidence

- ▶ AVEPRO Briefing note
- ▶ Form for external evaluation
- ▶ General principles of external review
- ▶ SER External review format
- ▶ Statutes



4.6 Follow-up procedures

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.

GUIDELINES

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.

AVEPRO compliance

Follow-up is an integral part of the QA process. The decisions on improvement that are made following self-evaluation and review provide a framework within which the unit can upgrade its strategic plan and continue to work towards the goal of developing and fostering a quality culture. Thus the final step for the unit is the preparation and implementation of an effective Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The purpose of this plan is to enable the unit to benefit from the self-reflection and hard work put into the SER, and from the expert advice contained in the review report.

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Recommendations usually fall into four categories:

1. matters which are completely under the control of the Institution, involving: academic affairs related to programmes, teaching, research, scholarships; organisation; administration; others
2. shortcomings in services, procedures and facilities which are beyond the control of the Institution
3. inadequate staffing, facilities and other resources that require capital or recurrent funding
4. it is important to include recommendations that involve extra funding even if there is no immediate prospect of such funding becoming available - this information will enable AVEPRO, over time, to build a database on resources needed across the sector.

In each of the above mentioned categories the QIP should establish:

- a prioritised list of goals that can be realistically achieved in the following year, with details of how this will be done, who will be responsible and, where feasible, the measurable outcomes
- a prioritised list of longer term goals that can be achieved over the coming three years, with details of how this will be done, who will be responsible and, where feasible, the measurable outcomes
- estimates of the capital and recurrent costs of resources required to implement recommendations.

The Quality Committee and the Director of Quality Assurance will monitor progress each year and report their findings to the Senate.

The preparation of the QIP should be a very positive exercise that focuses on quality improvement by identifying strategies for change, and by making a sustainable case for any additional resources required to implement the recommendations of the review Report.

The QIP should be completed within three months of receipt of the final report and submitted to the appropriate governance bodies for consideration and approval in the context of the University or Faculty's strategic planning and budgeting. AVEPRO and other appropriate entities should receive a copy of the plan, as well as annual progress reports on implementation.

Quality improvement plans have an importance over and above their effect on the individual Institutions. Over time they will enable AVEPRO to gain an overview and build a database on key areas that affect the quality of all Ecclesiastical Institutions. They will identify the strengths of the system and highlight common areas of concern, with indications on how these may be confronted.

Evidence

- ▶ AVEPRO Briefing note
- ▶ Quality Improvement Plan
- ▶ Time scale for the quality review of a unit



4.7 Periodic reviews

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.

GUIDELINES

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.

AVEPRO compliance

To reiterate the description given concerning the previous standards, AVEPRO has established a cycle of continuous institutional reviews. The duration of these cycles, which are laid down by the review procedures, is public.

In accordance with the guidelines developed by AVEPRO, Institutions are expected to inform the Agency at least one year before the suggested dates for the external review. This means that an Institution starts the preparations for the SER approximately two years before the site visit. It is presumed that, after the first cycle of evaluation, each Institution will be reviewed every five years. In order to fulfill this task (which derives from the “spirit” of the ESG), AVEPRO will need to increase its resources.

Evidence

- ▶ AVEPRO Briefing note



4.8 System-wide analyses

STANDARD

Quality assurance Agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments, etc.

GUIDELINES

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.

AVEPRO compliance

In various ways, AVEPRO aims at formulating general conclusions and analyses on the basis of the assessments it organizes. In particular, the Agency organized a Seminar in France (after the site visits) in order to obtain feedback from both the Experts involved and the Deans and Rectors of the Institutions. The meeting was organized with the support of the Congregation for Catholic Education, the French Bishops' Conference, UDESCA (the Union of the five French Catholic Universities), and all the Institutions involved in the evaluation process.

In addition, AVEPRO also draws general conclusions about its approach and working methods. To this end, it invites representatives of evaluation teams to its Scientific Council meetings with the aim of discussing and improving methods, techniques and tools for evaluation.

The Agency has developed specific questionnaires to provide feedback on the process, with the aim of involving relevant stakeholders.

Moreover, AVEPRO has drawn up a report describing and analysing the Holy See's Higher Education System in Europe. Considering the presence of Ecclesiastical Institutions in 18 different countries in Europe (and many more in the rest of the world, as described in part 1 of the present Report), the report findings have been used in scheduling the activities of the Agency and in drafting part of the AVEPRO Strategic plan.

AVEPRO is also in the process of drafting reports on other matters, including:

- SYSTEM REPORTS: for a more in-depth study of a particular issue (e.g. PhD)
- STUDIES: support has been given for studies to be carried out on specific aspects of higher education systems in specific countries (e.g. Italy).

Moreover, AVEPRO will realize its own "Quality Improvement Plan" (at least at the end of the first cycle of evaluation), in order to consider some changes (in terms of models, methods and procedures) with respect, for example, to the QA-related infrastructural expectations for smaller Institutions and the use of different working languages in the evaluation process.

Evidence

- ▶ QA in Ecclesiastical Institution in Europe
- ▶ Questionnaires: impact evaluation



5. COMPLIANCE WITH THE ESG FOR THE EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

5.1 Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education

STANDARD

The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.

GUIDELINES

The standards for external quality assurance contained in Part 2 provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. The standards reflect best practices and experiences gained through the development of external quality assurance in Europe since the early 1990s. It is therefore important that these standards are integrated into the processes applied by external quality assurance agencies towards the higher education Institutions.

The standards for external quality assurance should together with the standards for external quality assurance agencies constitute the basis for professional and credible external quality assurance of higher education Institutions

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AVEPRO compliance

The previous section of this report describes how the standards in Part 2 of the ESG are implemented by AVEPRO and consequently how the Agency also takes them into account with regard to Part 3.

Moreover, AVEPRO operates in accordance with a Strategic Plan, which includes:

- Work coordinated with higher education Institutions;
- The development of activities to disseminate a culture that recognizes the importance of and accountability concerning quality in higher education, training sessions for people involved in internal and external review processes, and an e-learning project aimed at training experts involved in external evaluations;
- International action by the Agency in the form of participation and involvement in international networks such as ENQA and INQAAHE;
- Constant development of support materials published on the website;
- Advice to the Universities and Ecclesiastical authorities.

Evidence

- ▶ Report of activities 2007-2008
- ▶ Report of activities 2009



- ▶ Report of activities 2010
- ▶ Report of activities 2011
- ▶ Report of activities 2012
- ▶ Strategic plan 2010-2012
- ▶ Strategic plan 2012-2014



5.2 Official status

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.

AVEPRO compliance

The Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (AVEPRO) was erected by the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI through an official document signed on 19 September 2007. The Agency is an Institution linked to the Holy See, according to the rules defined in art. 186 and 190-191 of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*.

The abovementioned articles of this Apostolic Constitution foresee that within the framework of the Holy See's Institutional architecture "There are certain institutes, some of ancient origin and some not long established, which do not belong to the Roman Curia in a strict sense but nevertheless provide useful or necessary services to the Supreme Pontiff himself, to the Curia and the whole Church, and are in some way connected with the Apostolic See" (art. 186). "In their constitution and administration, all these Institutions of the Roman Church are governed by their own laws" (art. 190). Being part of a national system, even if the Agency and all the Institutions connected to the Holy See are independent, "these institutes, according to their own regulations, come within the competence of the Secretariat of State or of other agencies of the Roman Curia" (art. 191).

Moreover, according to the Statutes, "the Agency aims at promoting the quality of research and teaching and evaluates the attainment of adequate international standards on the part of the Academic Institutions of the Catholic Church" (Statutes, art. 1, § 2); "it performs its service towards Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties that, erected or approved by the Congregation for Catholic Education, have power to confer academic degrees under the authority of the Holy See" (Statutes, art. 1, § 3).

"The Agency has its legal head office in the Vatican City State and it is endowed with public canonical juridical personality and Vatican civil juridical personality" (Statutes, art. 1, § 5,4).

While complying with current canonical norms and with international agreements in matters of higher education which the Holy See is a signatory of, the Agency is fully autonomous in the development of the activities planned in the Statute. To this end, it develops, updates and puts into effect adequate measures and courses of action for the attainment of institutional goals (Statutes, art. 2, § 1).

Being the Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties implies that AVEPRO's activities are global. In other words, the "national" dimension of the Agency should be considered a "universal" dimension. This aspect also generates concrete implications with respect to the "legal" dimension; the Agency conducts its activities in compliance with international conventions, agreements and initiatives which the Holy See adheres to.

Evidence

- ▶ Acta apostolica sedis – 6 January 2009
- ▶ Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* (1988)



- ▶ *Quality Culture, a Handbook for Ecclesiastical Faculties* – Congregation for Catholic Education (2012)
- ▶ Statutes



5.3 Activities

STANDARD

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or program level) on a regular basis.

GUIDELINES

These may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the Agency.

AVEPRO compliance

AVEPRO was founded in Summer 2007. Since the beginning of 2008 the Agency has regularly carried out activities connected with external quality assurance at institutional level. More specifically, a three phase program of implementation has been adopted:

- Realization of a pilot project in four different countries;
- Realization of a methodological framework;
- Definition of the entire procedures and start-up of the evaluation process in different countries.

A Pilot Project to experiment and adapt evaluation procedures was carried out in 2008, involving 8 European Faculties. This enabled the Agency to prepare a number of basic guidelines, which are already being used in its work with the Ecclesiastical Institutions. Besides, questionnaires for internal evaluation have been collected and reviewed to be offered as templates.

At the end of each stage AVEPRO has arranged a system of feedback with the different stakeholders involved. Regarding the guidelines and the structure of the evaluation process, the Faculties involved in the pilot project have given their feedback, which has been taken into account in order to define better the documents and methodology.

Having defined its procedures, methods and tools, AVEPRO carried out a cycle of evaluation (internal and external) involving several Ecclesiastical Faculties throughout Europe (starting in 2010 with internal evaluations in France and Lithuania). Specifically:

- ✓ 2011 External evaluation in France and Lithuania
- ✓ 2012 External evaluation in France and Austria
- ✓ 2013 External evaluation in Spain and Italy

At the end of the evaluation cycle (2010 – 2012) Faculties and experts involved were asked for their feedback regarding the whole procedure and the organization of the process as a whole. AVEPRO intends to foster and strengthen this mode of interaction with the actors involved.

It has to be stressed that the methodological architecture foresees a five year evaluation cycle.

Evidence

- ▶ AVEPRO Briefing note
- ▶ General principles on external review
- ▶ Internal evaluation Quality Assurance guidelines for Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties

- ▶ Questionnaires: impact evaluation
- ▶ Report of activities 2007-2008
- ▶ Report of activities 2009
- ▶ Report of activities 2010
- ▶ Report of activities 2011
- ▶ Report of activities 2012
- ▶ SER External review format
- ▶ Statutes
- ▶ Strategic plan 2010-2012
- ▶ Strategic plan 2012-2014



5.4 Resources

STANDARD

Agencies should have adequate and proportional 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.

AVEPRO compliance

The presence of Ecclesiastical Faculties in 18 different European countries means that both the Holy See Higher education system and the structure of the QA processes require a particular form of organization. Moreover, the Agency has decided, with the support of both Councils, to act and to foster the process of evaluation following a “national” approach. Within this framework, in 2010 the Agency supported the Self Evaluation phase in France and in Rome (not a country, but the place in the world with the highest concentration of Ecclesiastical Faculties); in 2011 the external evaluation phase took place in France and the internal evaluation phase was organized in Italy and Austria; in 2012 some of the Austrian Faculties and a few in France underwent external reviews and in 2013 the Faculties located in Italy will be evaluated by an AVEPRO commission.

Within this framework, the Agency organizes a maximum of 14 Faculty reviews per year, decides (according to its strategic plan) where to act in the following two years, and carries out its ordinary administration, e.g. delivering training materials (also including an e-learning path for experts) and updating its website. Thanks to the support of both Councils (which give advice from both scientific and managerial viewpoints), the Agency has fulfilled its own mandate until now. Being an Institution connected with the Holy See (art. 186 *Apostolic Constitution “Pastor Bonus”*), the Secretary of State is the Authority that determines and approves the Agency’s organizational chart. The composition of the organization chart can be revised at least every five years. AVEPRO has sent a proposal to the Secretary of State aimed at increasing the number of employees.

It has to be mentioned that, thanks to its peculiarity, AVEPRO can be supported by a huge number of Institutions (ecclesiastical and not) in its activities. For example, the National Bishops’ Conferences of the countries in which the Agency is planning to carry out site visits frequently cooperate in different ways (e.g. offering infrastructures for training sessions, supporting the cost of publication of specific materials, covering the organization of coffee breaks and meals during meetings, and so on). Other Institutions, such as the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU – FIUC), have supported AVEPRO by providing (and bearing the cost of) professional translators, who have contributed to realizing the Spanish and French versions of the website. It has to be underlined that the presence and the support of this worldwide network gives the Agency the possibility to improve on or redistribute its own activities and financial allocations.

Concerning the financial resources the expenditures involved in the ordinary administration of the Agency related to staff, secretariat management, as well as expenditures for premises, are taken in charge by the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See (APSA).

The charges incurred in external evaluation processes are as a rule assumed by the Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions involved.

The President of the Agency, after hearing the Board of Directors, and, when useful or so planned, the Scientific Committee, can adopt specific measures concerning the organisation and operation of the Agency, especially in relation with staff, administration and accountancy, office organisation, preparation of experts, as well as the charges to be assumed by the Institutions involved in external evaluations.

In conclusion, the human and financial resources are adequate in order to realize the current number of external evaluation processes, but would not be sufficient if the Agency were to increase the number of evaluations.

Evidence

- ▶ Budget 2011
- ▶ Budget 2012
- ▶ Budget 2013
- ▶ E-learning training course
- ▶ Minutes of the Board of Directors
- ▶ Minutes of the Scientific Council
- ▶ Report of activities 2007-2008
- ▶ Report of activities 2009
- ▶ Report of activities 2010
- ▶ Report of activities 2011
- ▶ Staff policy
- ▶ Statutes



5.5 Mission statement

STANDARD

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

GUIDELINES

These statements should describe the goals and objectives of agencies' quality assurance processes, the division of labor 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.

AVEPRO compliance

The mission of the Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (AVEPRO), established on 19 September 2007, is to promote and develop a culture of quality within the Academic Institutions that depend directly on the Holy See, and ensure that they possess internationally valid quality criteria, as established by the Bologna Process. AVEPRO's activities are regulated by the Apostolic Constitution Sapiientia Christiana and the Agency conforms to the European Standards and Guidelines, as well as other international agreements concerning rules and procedures for the evaluation of quality in higher education. The Agency collaborates with Academic Institutions in defining internal procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching, research and services, which is done through the development and use of appropriate operational tools (databases, information networks). AVEPRO also organizes external evaluation procedures for individual academic Institutions and arranges visits to them by experts. In accordance with the Agency's independent nature, it collaborates with all actors interested in the life and progress of Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties: the Institutions themselves, the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Episcopal Conferences, all regional, national and international authorities, and all those who work in the various dioceses of countries in which Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions are based.

The goals of AVEPRO are listed in article 5 of the Statutes: "within the limits of its competency and capacity, the Agency carries out more particularly the following activities according to the requirements of time and place":

1. it supports Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions in developing the quality of research and teaching;
2. in common with the Academic Institutions involved, it defines, develops and updates procedures for the internal and external evaluation and assessment of quality, in compliance with Ecclesiastical and civil, judicial and practical requirements at regional, national and international levels;
3. a) it plans the external assessment of quality in single Academic Institutions;
b) it carries out such assessment through the visits of experts;
c) it collects and publishes the final reports;
4. it defines and suggests improvements after external assessment;
5. it favors the circulation of information in the academic field;
6. it selects and prepares experts for site visits;
7. it fosters the use of adequate means for the promotion of quality, including a database of the Academic Institutions involved in the field of activities of the Agency.

Evidence

- ▶ Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* of Pope John Paul II on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (1979)
- ▶ E-learning training course
- ▶ SER External review format
- ▶ Internal evaluation Quality Assurance guidelines for Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties
- ▶ Mission statement
- ▶ Statutes
- ▶ Website



5.6 Independence

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.

GUIDELINES

An Agency will need to demonstrate its independence through measures, such as:

- a) its operational independence from higher education Institutions and governments is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts);
- b) 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;
- c) 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.

AVEPRO compliance

The independence of the Agency is defined in the AVEPRO Statutes, which have been published in "*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*" (Latin for "*Acts of the Apostolic See*": the official gazette of the Holy See. This contains all the principal decrees, encyclical letters, decisions of Roman Congregations and notices of ecclesiastical appointments).

More specifically, the Agency's independent responsibility for its own operations is guaranteed by article 1 § 1 of the Statutes, which affirms that "while complying with current canonical norms and international agreements in matters of higher education which the Holy See is part of, the Agency is fully autonomous in the development of the activities planned in the Statute. To such aim, it develops, updates and puts into effect adequate measures and courses of action for the attainment of Institutional goals".

Experts for the external evaluation of Ecclesiastical Academic Institutions are appointed for a five-year term by the President of the Agency, on the strength of their scientific competence and academic experience. The names of experts are entered into a database from which they are selected for individual evaluations. The database is composed of a sufficient number of persons to carry out all planned evaluations in a reasonable period of time and in the main languages. According to the Statutes, art 11 § 3, the Agency has the task of composing the teams of experts for individual evaluations.

It has to be underlined that relevant stakeholders are consulted not only during the implementation of the QA process but also in the phase of defining guidelines and procedures. In particular, the Scientific Council of AVEPRO, chaired by the President of the Agency, helps him fulfill the activities of the Agency. The contribution of relevant stakeholders is guaranteed by the presence of members by right (art. 9 of the Statutes), including: the President of the Rectors' Conference of Pontifical Universities or his delegate, a delegate of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU - FIUC), a delegate of the Federation of European Catholic Universities, and a representative of the students of Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties. Nevertheless, the Agency recognizes that, during its early experiences of composing evaluation panels, not enough students were involved. Starting from the evaluation organized in Autumn 2012, every panel includes the presence of a student.



Concerning the ownership of the reports and as adhering to the principle of the formative nature of the process, the review group expresses its recommendations in a positive manner that encourages quality improvement. The final outcomes remain the responsibility of the Agency.

The Agency uses the services of experts (art. 6 § 3 of the Statutes) especially for the external evaluation of Institutions; therefore experts act on the behalf of the Agency, which is responsible for the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes.

Evidence

- ▶ Acta apostolica sedis – 6 January 2009
- ▶ AVEPRO Briefing note
- ▶ Guidelines for peer review and site visit
- ▶ Statutes



5.7 External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies

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) a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
- b) an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the Agency;
- c) publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;
- d) 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.

GUIDELINES

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.

AVEPRO compliance

AVEPRO processes, criteria and procedures are pre-defined and available on the Agency's website in four (soon to be five) different languages. As described above, the QA processes designed by AVEPRO uphold the spirit of the EHEA and are based on processes involving self-evaluation, a subsequent external review by a panel of experts, publication of a final report and a follow-up procedure to evaluate any enhancement measures proposed.

The external assessments (or review reports) are published on the website. After the site visit the Institution visited drafts a "Quality Improvement Plan" in order to define the way in which the recommendations will be implemented. In a virtuous system, the definition of the QIP should represent a sort of bridge between two evaluation cycles. Moreover, the aim of this part of the procedure is to foster dialogue and interaction between the Agency and the Institution, according to the common aim of the ongoing enhancement of quality in the Holy See's higher education system.

The methodologies designed by the Agency are aligned with the purpose and objectives of the reviews, while also serving as professional orientation for those who participate in internal and external review processes, so that the ensuing conclusions and decisions are the result of a coherent and consistent method of work.

Even if the decisions taken by the Agency (based on the review report) do not produce any formal consequences, the Agency's review processes provide for an appeals procedure, in order to facilitate interrelationship between the review panels and the units being evaluated.

Evidence

- ▶ AVEPRO Briefing note



- ▶ SER External review format
- ▶ Internal evaluation Quality Assurance Guidelines for Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties
- ▶ Quality Improvement Plan



5.8 Accountability procedures

STANDARD

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

GUIDELINES

These procedures are expected to include the following:

1. A published policy for the assurance of the quality of the Agency itself, made available on its website;
2. Documentation which demonstrates that:
 - a) the Agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
 - b) the Agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts;
 - c) 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;
 - d) 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.
3. A mandatory cyclical external review of the Agency's activities at least once every five years

AVEPRO compliance

AVEPRO is legally required to produce annual reports for the Secretary of State and the Congregation for Catholic Education (Statutes, art. 13 par. 3), in which it accounts for its activities, revenues and expenses. AVEPRO is also obliged to obtain formal approval of its annual financial statements from the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See (Statutes, art.12).

Concerning the guidelines for internal and external evaluations, the two Councils give their suggesting amendments. The Institutions themselves are asked to give their feedback on the documents used.

AVEPRO is putting in place a structure for measuring the effectiveness of its entire system. The Agency, like every Institution of the Holy See, has in place a system of evaluation regarding its staff and the organization in general. It should also be mentioned that the Agency has formalized specific procedures and mechanisms for collecting opinions, feedback and recommendations for improvement, albeit not yet fully implemented. One of the possible reasons for this lack of implementation is the limited number of employees and the frequent exchange of opinions and suggestions deriving from the working method adopted in the Agency. As mentioned in the SWOT analysis "Not being a large Institution, AVEPRO works in a fresh and new way, and it is not dependent on a very large staff": this implies a high level of circulation of information and feedback concerning the division of sharing responsibilities.

Evidence

- ▶ Questionnaires: impact evaluation
- ▶ Statutes



Annex 1. LIST OF EVIDENCES

- ▶ Acta apostolica sedis – 6 January 2009
- ▶ Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* (1988)
- ▶ Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* of Pope John Paul II on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (1979)
- ▶ Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* of Pope John Paul II on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (1979) Special norms – *Ordinationes*
- ▶ AVEPRO Briefing note
- ▶ AVEPRO Letter to all European Institutions
- ▶ Budget 2011
- ▶ Budget 2012
- ▶ Budget 2013
- ▶ *Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE) Circular letters* (Circular letter n° 3, Circular letter n° 5, Circular letter n° 7)
- ▶ E-learning training course
- ▶ Form for external evaluation
- ▶ General principles on external review
- ▶ Guidelines for peer review and site visit
- ▶ *INDEX*, Editio 2005, *Universitates et alia Instituta Studiorum Superiorum Ecclesiae Catholicae* – Congregation for Catholic Education (2005)
- ▶ Internal evaluation Quality Assurance Guidelines for Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties
- ▶ Minutes of the Board of Directors
- ▶ Minutes of the Scientific Council
- ▶ Mission statement
- ▶ QA in Ecclesiastical Institution in Europe



- ▶ *Quality Culture, a Handbook for Ecclesiastical Faculties* – Congregation for Catholic Education (2012)
- ▶ QIP Notes of guidance
- ▶ Questionnaires: impact evaluation
- ▶ Questionnaires for self-evaluation
- ▶ Regional branches
- ▶ Report of activities 2007-2008
- ▶ Report of activities 2009
- ▶ Report of activities 2010
- ▶ Report of activities 2011
- ▶ Report of activities 2012
- ▶ SER External review format
- ▶ SER Notes of guidance for Faculties and service Units
- ▶ Staff policy
- ▶ Statutes
- ▶ Strategic plan 2010-2012
- ▶ Strategic plan 2012-2014
- ▶ Time scale for the quality review of a unit
- ▶ Website

Annex 2. ACRONYMS

- ▶ **APSA** Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See
- ▶ **AVEPRO** Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties
- ▶ **CCE** Congregation for Catholic Education
- ▶ **CIC** Codex iuris canonici / Code of Canon Law
- ▶ **DQA** Director of Quality Assurance
- ▶ **ECTS** European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
- ▶ **EHEA** European Higher Education Area
- ▶ **ENQA** European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
- ▶ **ESG** European Standards and Guidelines
- ▶ **EUA** European University Association
- ▶ **FECU/FUCE** Federation of European Catholic Universities / Fédération des Universités Catholiques Européennes
- ▶ **HEI** Higher Education Institution
- ▶ **HIRS** Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences
- ▶ **IFCU/FIUC** International Federation of Catholic Universities / Fédération des Universités Catholiques
- ▶ **INQAHE** International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
- ▶ **QA** Quality Assurance
- ▶ **QAA** Quality Assurance Agency
- ▶ **QAO** Quality Assurance Office
- ▶ **QIP** Quality Improvement Plan
- ▶ **SapChr** Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* of Pope John Paul II on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (1979)



- ▶ **SapChrOrd** Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* of Pope John Paul II on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (1979) Special norms – *Ordinationes*
- ▶ **SER** Self-Evaluation Report
- ▶ **SKVC** Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras / Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (Lithuanian Quality Assurance Agency)
- ▶ **SWOT analysis** Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis

Annex 3. ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTIONS IN EUROPE – UPDATED 2012

The information in this annex illustrates the situation in the European Ecclesiastical Faculties as of December 2012 and is the product of research carried out by AVEPRO.

The official data available to date are reported in chapter 1 and refer to *INDEX, Editio 2005, Universitates et alia Instituta Studiorum Superiorum Ecclesiae Catholicae of the Congregation for Catholic Education*.

Any discrepancies between the data contained in chapter 1 and the data provided here are to be attributed to the different periods of collection.



	INSTITUTIONS in the country	Number of Faculties
AUSTRIA	7	8
BELGIUM	3	4
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	1	1
CROATIA	4	4
CZECH REPUBLIC	2	2
FRANCE	9	16
GERMANY	25	26
HOLY SEE	19	56
HUNGARY	1	1
IRELAND	2	5
ITALY	11	11
LITHUANIA	1	1
MALTA	1	1
NETHERLANDS	1	1
POLAND	12	23
PORTUGAL	1	2
SLOVAKIA	1	1
SLOVENIA	1	1
SPAIN	11	16
SWITZERLAND	4	4
	117	184

Ecclesiastical Institutions in Europe

- 1 First Cycle
- 2 Second Cycle
- 3 Third Cycle

AUSTRIA

Two Faculties - autonomous

- Theologische Fakultät “Katholisch-Theologische Privatuniversität” Linz (Linz): Faculties of Theology (1, 2, 3) and Institut für Kunstwissenschaft und Philosophie (1, 2, 3) (Austria)

Two Faculties within a State University

- Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Paris Lodron Universität (Salzburg): Faculty of Theology (1, 2, 3) and Päpstliches Philosophisches Institut (1, 2, 3) (Austria)
- Theologische Fakultät der Leopold-Franzes-Universität (Innsbruck): Faculty of Theology (1, 2, 3) and Institut für christliche Philosophie (1, 2, 3) (Austria)

Single Faculty - autonomous

- Internationales Theologisches Institut für Studien zu Ehe und Familie (Trumau): Faculty of Theology (1, 2, 3) (Austria)
- Philosophisch-Theologisch Hochschule “Benedikt XVI” des Stiftes Heiligenkreuz (Heiligenkreuz): (1, 2, 3) (Austria)

Single Faculty within a State University

- Katholische-Theologische Fakultät der Universität Wien (Wien): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1, 2, 3) (Austria)
- Theologische Fakultät der Karl-Franzes-Universität (Graz): Faculty of Theology (1, 2, 3) (Austria)

BELGIUM

Two Faculties within a Catholic University

- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Leuven): Faculties of Theology and Canon Law (1,2,3) (Belgium)

Single Faculty - autonomous

- Institut d'Etudes Théologiques (Faculté de Théologie) (Brussels): (1,2,3) (Belgium)

Single Faculty within a Catholic University

- Université Catholique de Louvain (Louvain la Neuve): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Belgium)

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Single Faculty within a State University

- Katolički bogoslovni fakultet u Sarajevu (**Sarajevo**): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1,2,3) (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

CROATIA

Single Faculty - autonomous

- Filozofski Fakultet Družbe Isusove (Zagreb): Faculty of Philosophy (1,2,3) (Croatia)

Single Faculty within a State University

- Katolički bogoslovni fakultet u Splitu (Split): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Croatia)
- Katolički bogoslovni fakultet u Zagrebu (Zagreb): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Croatia)
- Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Katolički bogoslovni Fakultet u Dakovu (Dakovo): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Croatia)

CZECH REPUBLIC

Single Faculty within a State University

- Cyrilometodská teologická fakulta Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci (Olomouc): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Czech Republic)
- Katolická teologická fakulta University Karlovy (Praga): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Czech Republic)

3

FRANCE

Three or more Faculties - autonomous

- Institut Catholique de Paris (Paris): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy, Canon Law, Social Sciences and Economics (1,2,3) (France)
- Institut Catholique de Toulouse (Toulouse): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy and Canon Law (1,2,3) (France)

Two Faculties - autonomous

- Centre Sèvres – Facultés Théologique et philosophiques des Jésuites (Paris): Faculties of Theology and Philosophy (1,2,3) (France)

Two Faculties within a Catholic University

- Université Catholique de Lyon (Lyon): Faculties of Theology and Philosophy (1,2,3) (France)

Single Faculty - autonomous

- Faculté de Théologie Notre Dame (Paris): Faculty of Theology (1,2, 3) (France)

Single Faculty within a Catholic University

- Fédération Universitaire et Polytechnique de Lille, Association d'Ecoles Supérieures et de Facultés Catholiques (Lille): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (France)
- Université Catholique de l'Ouest (Angers): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (France)

Single Faculty within a State University

- Faculté de Théologie Catholique de l'Université de Strasbourg (Strasbourg): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1,2,3) (France)

GERMANY

Two Faculties within a Catholic University

- Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt KU (Eichstätt): Faculties of Theology (1, 2, 3) and Philosophy and Pedagogy (1) (Germany)

Two Faculties within a State University

- Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (München): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) and Klaus-Mörsdorf-Studium für Kanonistik (2,3) (Germany)

Single Faculty - autonomous

- Hochschule für Katholische Kirchenmusik und Musikpädagogik (Institutum Superioris Musicae Sacrae)(Regensburg): (1,2) (Germany)
- Hochschule für Kirchenmusik der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart (Stuttgart): (1) (Germany)
- Hochschule für Philosophie – Philosophische Fakultät S.I. (München): (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule Sankt Georgen/Frankfurter Theologische Fakultät (Frankfurt am Main): (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule Vallendar (Vallendar): (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Theologische Fakultät Fulda (Fulda): (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Theologische Fakultät Paderborn (Paderborn): (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Theologische Fakultät St. Augustin (Sankt Augustin): (1, 2, 3) (Germany)

Single Faculty within a State University

- Fachbereich Katholische Theologie der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität (Mainz): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Fachbereich Katholische Theologie der Universität Regensburg (Regensburg): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1, 2, 3) (Germany)

- Fakultät für Katholische Theologie der Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg (Bamberg): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1,2) (Germany)
- Katholische Theologische Fakultät der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität (Münster): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen (Tübingen): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität (Bonn): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Universität Augsburg (Augsburg): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1,2) (Germany)
- Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Universität Passau (Passau): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1,2) (Germany)
- Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Ruhr-Universität Bochum (Bochum): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Universität Passau (Passau): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Universität Würzburg (Würzburg): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Theologische Fakultät der Albert-Ludwigs-Universität (Freiburg im Breisgau): Faculty of Theology (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Theologische Fakultät Erfurt (Erfurt): Faculty of Theology (1, 2, 3) (Germany)
- Theologische Fakultät Trier (Trier): Faculty of Theology (1, 2, 3) (Germany)

HOLY SEE

Three or more Faculties - autonomous

- Pontificia Università “Antoniana” (Rome): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy, Biblical Sciences (1,2,3), Archeology and Canon Law (2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificia Università della Santa Croce (Rome): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy, Canon Law (1,2,3) and Social Communication (2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificia Università Gregoriana (Rome): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy, Canon Law, Church History, Missiology, Social Sciences, Institute of Psychology (1,2,3) and Institute of Spirituality (2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificia Università Lateranense (Rome): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy, Canon Law, Utriusque Iuris Institute, Civil Law (1,2,3), Pastoral Institute Redemptor Hominis (Italy)
- Pontificia Università Salesiana (Rome): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy, Canon Law, Science of Education, Social Communication, Christian and Classical Literature (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificia Università San Tommaso d’Aquino “Angelicum” (Rome): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy, Canon Law, Social Sciences (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificia Università Urbaniana (Rome): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy, Missiology (1,2,3) and Canon Law (2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificio Ateneo “Regina Apostolorum” (Rome): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy and Bio-Ethics (1,2,3) (Italy)

- Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo (Rome): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy (1,2,3) and Liturgy (2,3) (Italy)

Two Faculties - autonomous

- Pontificia Facoltà Teologica e Pontificio Istituto di Spiritualità "Teresianum" (Rome): Faculties of Theology (1,2,3) and Pontificio Istituto di Spiritualità (2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificio Istituto Biblico (Rome): Faculties of Sacred Scriptures and Ancient Oriental Studies (2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificio Istituto Orientale (Rome): Faculties of Oriental Church Sciences and Oriental Canon Law (2,3) (Italy)

Single Faculty – autonomous

- Pontificia Facoltà di Scienze dell’Educazione “Auxilium” (Rome): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificio Istituto “Giovanni Paolo II” per studi su matrimonio e famiglia (Rome): (2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificia Facoltà Teologica “Marianum” (Rome): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificia Facoltà Teologica “S. Bonaventura” (Rome): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra (Rome): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana (Rome): (2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d’Islamistica (Rome): (2,3) (Italy)

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HUNGARY

Two Faculties within a Catholic University

- Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem (Budapest): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) and Faculty of Canon Law (1,2) (Hungary)

IRELAND

Three Faculties - autonomous

- Saint Patrick’s College (Maynooth): Faculties of Theology (1,2,3), Canon Law and Philosophy (Ireland)

Two Faculties within a State University

- The Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy (Dublin): Faculties of Theology and Philosophy (1,2,3) (Ireland)

ITALY

Single Faculty - autonomous

- Facoltà di Diritto Canonico “San Pio X” (Venice): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Istituto Universitario “Sophia” (Loppiano): (2,3) (Italy)
- Facoltà Teologica del Triveneto (Padua): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Facoltà Teologica dell’Emilia Romagna (Bologna): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Facoltà Teologica dell’Italia Centrale (Florence): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Facoltà Teologica dell’Italia Meridionale (Naples): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Facoltà Teologica dell’Italia Settentrionale (Milan): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Facoltà Teologica di Sicilia (Palermo): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Facoltà Teologica Pugliese (Bari): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificia Facoltà Teologica della Sardegna (Cagliari): (1,2,3) (Italy)
- Pontificio Istituto Ambrosiano di Musica Sacra (Milan): (1,2,3) (Italy)

LITHUANIA

Single Faculty - autonomous

- Katalikų Teologijos Fakultetas (Kaunas): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Lithuania)

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MALTA

Single Faculty within a State University

- Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta (Msida): (1,2,3)(Malta)

NETHERLANDS

Single Faculty within a Catholic University

- Katholieke Theologische Faculteit Tilburg en Utrecht: Faculty of Catholic Theology (1,2,3) (Netherlands)

POLAND

Four Faculties - autonomous

- Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Warsaw): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy , Canon Law and Family Studies (1,2,3) (Poland)

- Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie (Krakow): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy , Church History and Social Sciences (1,2,3) (Poland)

Three Faculties within a Catholic University

- Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II (Lublin): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy and Canon Law (1,2,3) (Poland)

Two Faculties - autonomous

- Akademia Ignatianum w Krakowie (Krakow): Faculties of Philosophy (1,2,3) and Pedagogy (1,2) (Poland)

Single Faculty - autonomous

- Papieski Wydział Teologiczny we Wrocławiu (Wroclaw): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Poland)
- Papieski Wydział Teologiczny w Warszawie (2 sections: St. John the Baptist and Bobolanum) (Warsaw): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Poland)

Single Faculty within a State University

- Wydział Teologiczny Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza (Poznan): Faculty of Theology (Poland)
- Wydział Teologiczny Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu (Torun): Faculty of Theology (Poland)
- Wydział Teologiczny Uniwersytetu Opolskiego (Opole): Faculty of Theology (Poland)
- Wydział Teologiczny Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego (Szczecin): Faculty of Theology (Poland)
- Wydział Teologii Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie (Olsztyn): Faculty of Theology (Poland)
- Wydział Teologiczny Sekcja w Tarnowie (Tarnow): Faculty of Theology (Poland)
- Wydział Teologiczny Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach (Katowice): Faculty of Theology (Poland)

PORTUGAL

Single Faculty within a Catholic University

- Universidade Católica Portuguesa (Lisbon): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Portugal)

SLOVAKIA

Single Faculty within a State University

- Katolícka univerzita v Ružomberku (Kosice): Faculty of Theology (1,2, 3) (Slovakia)
- Prešovská univerzita v Prešove (Prešov): Faculty of Greek-Catholic Theology (Slovakia)
- Rímskokatolícka cyrilo-metodiská bohoslovecká fakulta (Bratislava): Faculty of Theology (1,2) (Slovakia)

SLOVENIA

Single Faculty within a State University

- Teološka Fakulteta v Ljubljani (Ljubljana): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Slovenia)

SPAIN

Three or more Faculties - autonomous

- Universidad Eclesiastica “San Damaso” (Madrid): Faculties of Theology (1,2,3), Canon Law (1,2,3), Philosophy (1,2,3) and Christian and Classical Literature “San Justino” (Spain)

Three Faculties within a Catholic University

- Universidad de Navarra (Pamplona): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy (1,2,3) and Canon Law (2,3) (Spain)
- Universidad Pontificia “Comillas” (Madrid): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy (1,2,3) and Canon Law (2,3) (Spain)
- Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca (Salamanca): Faculties of Theology, Philosophy (1,2,3) and Canon Law (2,3) (Spain)

Single Faculty - autonomous

- Facultad de Filosofía de Catalunya (Universitat Ramon Llull)(Barcelona): (1,2,3)(Spain)
- Facultad de Teología “San Vicente Ferrer” (Valencia): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Spain)
- Facultad de Teología de Catalunya (Barcelona): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Spain)
- Facultad de Teología de Granada (Granada): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Spain)
- Facultad de Teología de San Esteban (Salamanca): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Spain)
- Facultad de Teologia del Norte de España (Burgos y Vitoria): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Spain)

Single Faculty within a Catholic University

- Universidad Católica de Valencia “San Vicente Mártir” (Valencia): Faculty of Canon Law (Spain)
- Universidad de Deusto (Bilbao): Faculty of Theology (1,2,3) (Spain)

SWITZERLAND

Single Faculty - autonomous

- Facoltà di Teologia di Lugano (Lugano): (1,2,3) (Switzerland)
- Teologische Hochschule Chur (Chur): (1,2,3) (Switzerland)

Single Faculty within a Catholic University

- Université de Fribourg (Fribourg): Faculté de Théologie (1,2,3) (Swiss)

Single Faculty within a State University

- Fakultät für Römisch-Katholische Theologie der Universität Luzern (Luzern): Faculty of Catholic Theology (1,2,3) (Switzerland)

Annex 4. REQUIREMENTS WITH RESPECT TO INDEPENDENCE

Introduction

AVEPRO panels are expected to assess the quality of Ecclesiastical Faculties in an authoritative, critical and independent way. Therefore, these panels must conform to high standards of quality. Safeguards are necessary to make sure that these standards can be met and to demonstrate that they are actually fulfilled.

The AVEPRO safeguards are described in this document, which contains:

- a description of the general safeguards
- a description of specific measures
- rules of conduct
- a declaration.

The independence of the panels and panel members means that their judgement is not influenced by the Institution or programme under review or by any other interested parties. An important safeguard in this respect is the disclosure procedure, which means that any potential conflict of interest, bias or undue influence is reported and undesirable effects are minimised through clear agreements. This is not only aimed at finding and preventing *actual* undesirable influences, but also to detect what could give *the impression* of undue influence. A number of evidently undesirable situations (such as financial interests) are explicitly forbidden. The rules of conduct describe how to deal with such situations.

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1. General safeguards

General safeguards regarding the independence of panels are:

- a) avoiding or counterbalancing potential bias (of a personal, organisational or academic nature) is an important consideration in the composition of the panels
- b) panel members who are (or were) committed to Institutes or programmes under review, do not participate in the assessment thereof
- c) the committee as a whole is responsible for the definitive evaluation
- d) the evaluations are presented in draft to the participating Institutes for factual correction and to check whether adequate use was made of all relevant information.

2. Specific measures

AVEPRO has also taken a number of more specific measures to guarantee the independence of the panels. First of all, AVEPRO has transparent guidelines for the composition of the panels, which describe the procedures and criteria.

Moreover, AVEPRO:



- has rules of conduct which panel members must follow during the review process. In these rules the importance of the independence of the review is stressed, the notion is defined and rules are set;
- requires that Institutes under review report any potential conflict of interest, bias or undue influence regarding candidates for panels;
- has an “independence form” for prospective panel members: by signing this declaration the members commit themselves to maintain an independent position during the review and not to allow undue influence to affect their judgment - completing and signing the independence form is a requirement for installation as a panel member.

Potential conflicts or tensions that are reported in the independence form (or by other means) are discussed and AVEPRO is free to take specific measures to avoid undesirable effects. Such measures range from completely or partially excluding a panel member from the review, to carefully counterbalancing or otherwise neutralising undesirable effects.

3. Rules of conduct for AVERPO review committees

A panel member must avoid any influence in the assessment from persons or parties committed to Institution under review, or from other interested parties.

A panel member must maintain sufficient distance from personal ideas, convictions or preferences about the academic area under review.

A panel member uses the following information for the assessment:

- the self Evaluation report and annexed documentation provided by the Institution
- any additional data provided at the request of the committee
- the interviews held in the course of the review
- observations made during site visits.

A panel member does not use information gathered in the course of the review for personal purposes. Confidential information is treated appropriately.

A panel member who is (or was) closely involved with the Institution under review, does not participate in that particular assessment or in the interviews concerned.

4. Independence form

This declaration is intended for persons nominated for appointment as a member of an AVEPRO Evaluation commission. The AVEPRO evaluation commission are expected to assess the quality of Ecclesiastical Faculties in a critical and independent way.

The independence implies:

- that the judgement is made without undue influence from the Institution or other stakeholders, and
- that the panel members judge without bias, personal preference or personal interest.

Situations that must be reported include:

- family relations or other personal relationships

- personal involvement
- confidential inside information
- peer pressure
- expected personal benefit
- conflicts or cooperation with personnel, programmes or Institutions.

Signing the declaration of independence is a requirement for installation as a member of the panel.

➤ ***Independence and Disclosure form for members of AVEPRO evaluation Commission***

1. Conflict of interest assessment

In the light of AVEPRO policies and standards, do you perceive any risk of conflict of interest or serious appearance of such conflict in your participation in the AVEPRO-review?

Yes **No**

If the answer is yes, please provide a brief description and analysis of the potential for conflict.

.....

2. Declaration about financial interests

“I declare that I have no financial links with any of the persons, programmes or Institution under review, and that I have not accepted and will not accept any financial or other remunerations from outside sources for my participation in the AVEPRO-review.

I declare that I will report any offers of such remuneration to the chairman of the review committee.”

3. Declaration of independence

“I have read the principles and rules applying to this AVERPO assessment and I declare that I will follow these to the best of my ability and that I will judge without influence from the Institution or other stakeholders, and without bias, personal preference or personal benefit.”

Name:

Committee:

Date:

Signature:

Note: If your situation with respect to potential conflict of interest changes in the course of the review, you are obligated to submit an updated disclosure statement. Information provided in this disclosure form will be restricted to authorised persons.



Annex 5. STAKEHOLDERS

AVEPRO, carrying out its activities, deals with many stakeholders.

Among them, the Agency interacts or will interact with:

- Various bodies of the Holy See (**Secretary of State, Congregation for Catholic Education, APSA** - Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See, etc.)
- **National/International organizations active in the field of the QA:** ENQA, FIUC, EUA, BFUG, ENIC-NARIC, EQAR, EURASHE, INQAAHE, ESU, CRUPR
- **QA national agencies**
- **Episcopal Conferences**
- **Institutions to be reviewed:**
 - **Chancellor:** who represents the Holy See to the University or Faculty and vice versa
 - **Vice-Chancellor:** (when the institution is erected by a religious community)
 - **Rector:** who is the person who presides over a University
 - **President:** who is the person who presides over an Institute or Faculty that exists separately
 - **Dean:** who is the person who presides over a Faculty that is part of a University
 - **Academic Community: Teachers, Students and Staff of service units; Councils of the University/Faculty**
 - **QA offices**
- **Possible Regional Branches**
- **Catholic Universities**
- **Potential future students and civil society**



