



QA IN ECCLESIASTICAL INSTITUTION
IN EUROPE



AVEPRO

AVEPRO
Scientific Council - Board of Directors
September 2010

COUNTRY	INSTITUTIONS in the country	Number of Faculties	QUESTIONNAIRES	
			RETURNED	VALID ¹
AUSTRIA	8	9	5	6
BELGIUM	3	4	2	4
CROATIA	4	4	1	1
FRANCE	8	15	9	15
GERMANY	25	26	7	7
IRELAND	2	3	1	2
ITALY	28	62	19	41
LITHUANIA	1	1	1	1
MALTA	1	1	1	1
NETHERLANDS	1	1	1	1
POLAND	12	23	11	12
PORTUGAL	1	2	1	1
CZECH REPUBLIC	2	2	1	1
SLOVAKIA	2	2	1	1
SLOVENIA	1	2	1	2
SPAIN	12	18	10	15
SWITZERLAND	4	4	4	4
HUNGARY	1	2	2	2
	116	181	78	117

Questionnaires REQUIRED → 181
Questionnaires RETURNED → 78
VALID¹ questionnaires → 117

¹ The number of **VALID** questionnaires is obtained considering that **some of the questionnaires filled in and returned contained data referring to more than one Faculty**, and that **in some cases questionnaires were sent both by the University and by at least one Faculty**. In detail:

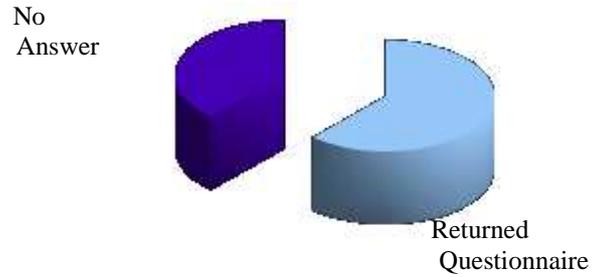
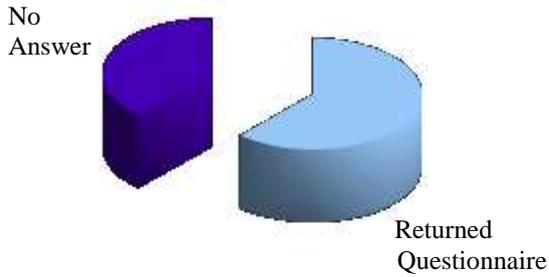
- Questionnaires containing data referring to 1 single Faculty → 65
- Questionnaires containing data referring to 2 Faculties → 7
- Questionnaires containing data referring to 3 Faculties → 4
- Questionnaires containing data referring to 4 Faculties → 5
- Questionnaires containing data referring to 5 Faculties → 1
- Questionnaires containing data referring to 6 Faculties → 1



➤ **GENERAL response rates**

Institutions → 62%

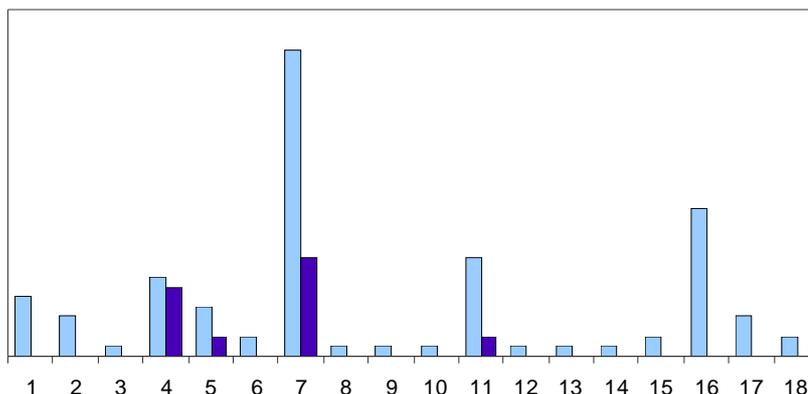
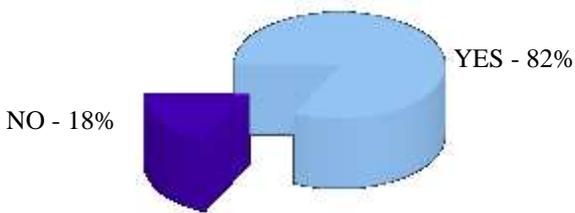
Faculties → 64%



➤ **FACULTY response rates within the countries**

- **France**, Belgium, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Slovenia, Switzerland, Hungary → 100%
- **Spain** → 83%
- **Italy**, Austria → 67%
- Ireland → 66%
- **Poland**, Portugal, Czech Republic, Slovakia → 50%
- **Germany** → 30%
- Croatia → 25%

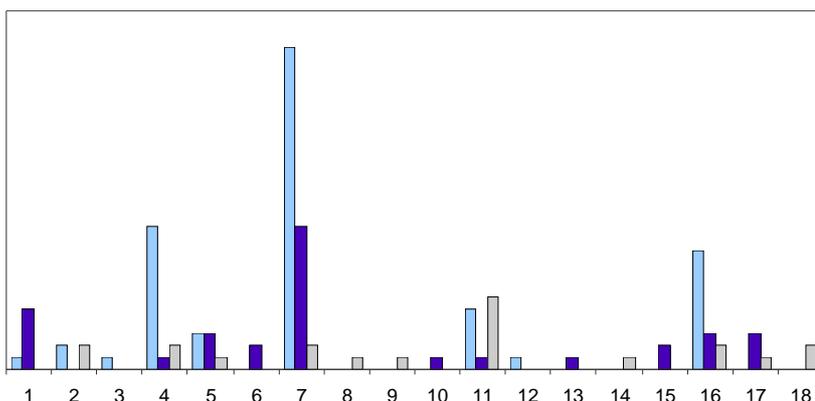
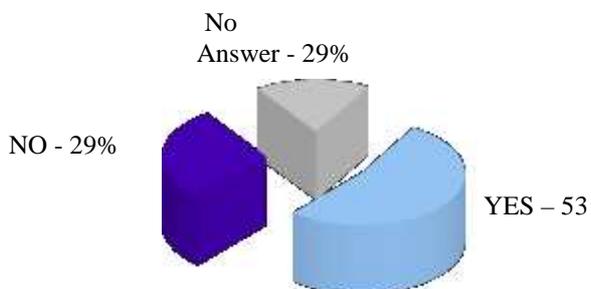
➤ **INSTITUTIONS that have already set up QA infrastructures**



1. AUSTRIA
2. BELGIUM
3. CROATIA
4. **FRANCE**
5. **GERMANY**
6. IRELAND
7. **ITALY**
8. LITHUANIA
9. MALTA
10. NETHERLANDS
11. **POLAND**
12. PORTUGAL
13. CZECH REPUBLIC
14. SLOVAKIA
15. SLOVENIA
16. **SPAIN**
17. SWITZERLAND
18. HUNGARY

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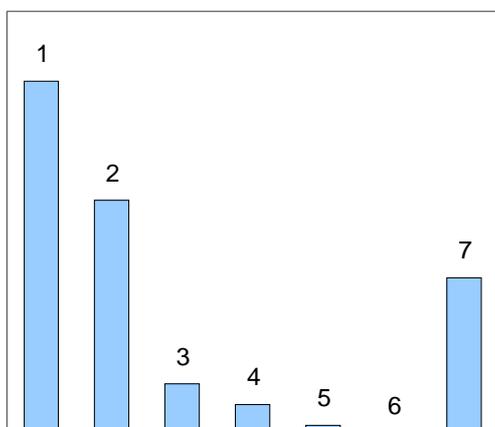
➤ **INSTITUTIONS that would find an information session on QA useful**



1. AUSTRIA
2. BELGIUM
3. CROATIA
4. **FRANCE**
5. **GERMANY**
6. IRELAND
7. **ITALY**
8. LITHUANIA
9. MALTA
10. NETHERLANDS
11. **POLAND**
12. PORTUGAL
13. CZECH REPUBLIC
14. SLOVAKIA
15. SLOVENIA
16. **SPAIN**
17. SWITZERLAND
18. HUNGARY

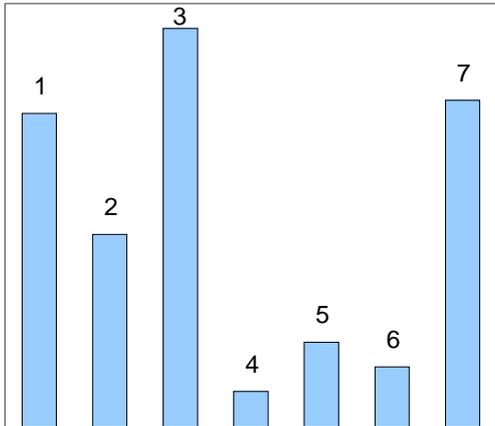
➤ **Approximate CALENDAR of evaluation processes in the Ecclesiastical Faculties, as described in the AVEPRO guidelines**

SETTING UP of Quality Assurance Infrastructures



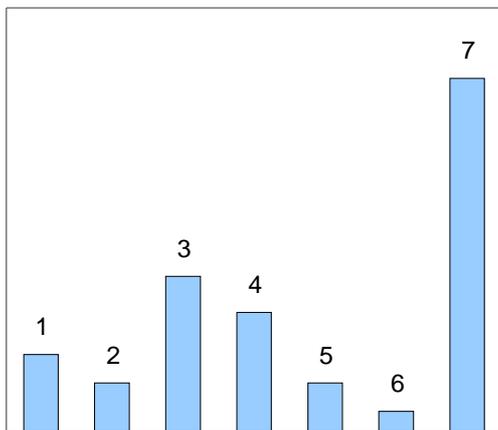
1. Before 2010 → 48%
2. 2010 → 28%
3. 2011 → 6%
4. 2012 → 3%
6. 2013 → 1%
6. Regularly → 0%
7. No data received → 19%

SELF-EVALUATION process in the various units



1. Before 2010 → 22%
2. 2010 → 14%
3. 2011 → 28%
4. 2012 → 3%
5. 2013 → 6%
6. Regularly → 4%
7. No data received → 23%

FOLLOW-UP and Quality Improvement Plans



1. Before 2010 → 9%
2. 2010 → 6%
3. 2011 → 19%
4. 2012 → 15%
5. 2013 → 6%
6. Regularly → 3%
7. No data received → 42%



General Considerations

1. Ecclesiastical Faculties perceive the existence of a “Culture of Quality Assurance” within their structures. Eight-two percent of Faculties declare that they have already begun a process of Quality Assurance (QA) evaluation at an institutional level.
2. **This “Culture” is not homogenous** from the point of view of countries or the type of faculty.
3. The analysis concerning **what kind of evaluation** has been carried out has revealed a broad variety of scenarios, that go from filling in questionnaires about study programmes to the awarding of ISO 9001 Certificates and compliance with the criteria and standards of national accreditation agencies.
4. In several cases, the performance of evaluations is connected with State or regional obligations, which also affect the functioning of our Faculties. In these countries, choices and procedures adopted by the Faculties have been oriented and directed by national agencies for Quality Assurance and/or Accreditation.
5. National agencies operating in these countries have directed and oriented choices and procedures for Quality and Accreditation adopted by the Faculty
6. Faculties in almost all countries emphasize the importance of not duplicating evaluation processes between national agencies and AVEPRO.
7. In some cases - Lithuania, Spain - joint solutions for Quality Assurance can be reached between AVEPRO and national Agencies.
8. The five countries with a “higher density” of Faculties – Italy, Spain, Germany, France and Poland – represent five different situations.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Legislative “strength” / National agency</i>	<i>Request for support from AVEPRO</i>
ITALY	LOW	HIGH
SPAIN	HIGH	MEDIUM
GERMANY	HIGH	LOW
FRANCE	HIGH	HIGH
POLAND	MEDIUM	MEDIUM



The geographic/linguistic distribution of the institutions could lead to the establishment of territorial divisions - “regional branches” - as follows:

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Number of Faculties</i>
ITALY, Malta, Switzerland (Italian area)	64
SPAIN, Portugal	20
GERMANY, Austria, Switzerland (German area)	36
FRANCE, Belgium (French area), Switzerland (French area)	19
POLAND, East European Countries	36
Ireland, Netherlands, Belgium (Flemish area)	6
<i>Total number of Faculties</i>	181

This general framework prompts the following considerations:

- in one of the abovementioned cases (Ireland, Netherlands, Belgium (Flemish area)) the number of Faculties does not justify the presence of a Regional Office; AVEPRO will be in charge of the whole evaluation procedure;
- in the other cases, it may well be that a particular ecclesiastical institute, whether separate from a State university or part of it, is subject to the overlapping requirements of AVEPRO and the State agency. This can create obvious problems related to an excess of external audit activity for the institute, and a duplication of efforts to meet varying information requirements. Moreover, institutes risk being subject to two different Q regimes with distinct *modus operandi*: an accreditation agency with a tick-box licensing-oriented approach, compared with AVEPRO’s QA approach, aimed at institutional improvement and development.

This scenario implies some challenges that require a variety of specific policies, such as:

- A. an agreement is reached whereby AVEPRO institutional audits are recognised by the State agency for its own purposes; this implies that AVEPRO is considered reliable, that it is accredited, and that it can include relevant national audit criteria in its own standards;
- B. an agreement is reached whereby national agency institutional audits are recognised by AVEPRO for its own purposes, assuming that there are no insurmountable contradictions in the criteria employed and that the QA direction pursued by the institutes as a result of the AVEPRO philosophy is recognised by the national agency;
- C. joint audits are carried out, with appropriate joint membership, agreed criteria and auditing approach, and transparent means of reporting. A favourable verdict would thus satisfy both parties, and recommendations for improvement would be appropriately identified;
- D. an international agreement governing the relationship between the national agency and AVEPRO is signed by State authorities (the Secretary of State in the case of the Holy See).



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One of the three approaches above could work in each particular national setting. The following is a hypothetical list of which type of agreement could be applied where:

Country	<i>Types of agreement possible in the short term</i>	<i>Types of agreement possible as full members of ENQA & EQAR</i>
Austria	B	A
Belgium	B	B
Croatia	A	A
FRANCE	D	A
GERMANY	B/C	B/C
Ireland	C	B
ITALY	A	A
Lithuania	B	A
Malta	C	A
Netherlands	B	C
POLAND	B	A
Portugal	B	A
Czech Republic	B	A
Slovakia	C	C
Slovenia	C	C
SPAIN	B	A
Switzerland	B	A
Hungary	C	C



Remarks concerning individual countries

➤ AUSTRIA

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

Individual institutions must work continuously to develop and manage QA structures.

The quality of education, research and teaching in each institution is monitored by the **OAR/AAC² - Österreichischer Akkreditierungsrat / Austrian Accreditation Council**.

The OAR/AAC is a state authority that assesses the quality of private universities through accreditation, as well as supporting the promotion of quality in these institutions.

Accreditation is a formal and transparent process, providing internationally compatible standards to assess whether institutions and/or programmes offered at university level comply with minimum quality requirements.

In Austria State recognition, which is obtained through accreditation, is required to run a private university with the right to offer educational programmes leading to an academic degree.

The accreditation process defines the status and recognition of institutions and academic programmes for certain periods - evaluation involving experts from outside the institution every 5 years, self-evaluation of each institution every 2.5 years.

Accreditation in the field of higher education gives society and all stakeholders involved a guarantee that the quality of teaching and learning meets international threshold standards. At the same time accreditation increases transparency in a complex market of national and international education providers.

Core functions of accreditation are:

- Protection of students against courses that do not achieve certain targets and results (employability, international recognition of degrees, etc.);
- Transparency and comparability of qualifications, resulting in increased opportunities in education and the job market both at home and abroad;
- Facilitating international mobility, through the mutual recognition of programmes and parts of programmes and the improvement of graduates' competitiveness in the European labour market;
- Ensuring fair conditions between educational institutions competing for students, as well as for public and private funds.

It is a crime to offer educational programmes leading to academic degrees without accreditation³. Accreditation by a foreign accreditation agency is not a substitute for accreditation by the Austrian Accreditation Council.

² Information available on the OAR website: www.akkreditierungsrat.at

³ Penalty in accordance with § 116 of the University Act 2002 and § 146 of the Criminal Code



The OAR has been a full member of ENQA⁴ - the *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* - since 2001.

Specific aspects

The *Katholisch-Theologische Privatuniversität Linz (KTU)* states that "We are convinced that quality assessment and management is a very important matter and AVEPRO is an important step to improve the quality of ecclesiastical educational institutions. As we have mentioned previously, we are obliged by State law to carry out intensive quality assessment and management. This is essential in order to hold the status of an accredited private University. To avoid a double structure of quality evaluation and management, implying a great deal of effort and cost, we maintain that the two processes of quality assessment and management should be made as compatible as possible. This remark may concern the other Austrian theological faculties in a similar way."

The *Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Universität Wien* reports that it set up international evaluation structures in 2006, providing for international assessment of research, teaching, management and administration every five years. In 2003 the University of Vienna set up an infrastructure for the internal evaluation of teaching.

➤ BELGIUM

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

The country's particular legal situation means that different rules in the field of education are applicable to the different language communities in the country.

The reference agency for the French language community is **AEQES⁵ - Agence pour l'Evaluation de la Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur** (organisé ou subventionné par la Communauté française)⁶.

AEQES is not an accreditation Agency. Its main missions are:

- the independent planning of QA procedures in higher education for the French language community;
- the organization of scheduled assessments.

Its aim is to gradually improve teaching practices, highlighting the best ones, and to highlight any shortcomings and problems to be addressed, putting proposals to policy makers for improvements to the overall quality of higher education in the French language community.

4 Information available on the ENQA website: www.engq.net

5 Information available on the AEQES website: www.aeqes.be

6 Agency for the evaluation of quality of higher education in the French language community of Belgium



The Flemish language community has more than one reference agency: **VLHORA**⁷ *Vlaamse Hogescholenraad - Flemish Council of University Colleges* and **VLIR-QAU** *Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad - Flemish Interuniversity Council Quality Assurance Unit*.

Specific aspects

The *Faculté de Théologie de l'Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL, Louvain-la-Neuve)*, which has been one of the top 200 universities in the major international rankings for several years, reports that it has already developed a significant culture of quality. The university is funded by the Belgian State and therefore it has already carried out an evaluation following **AEQES** procedures.

While the university's academic authorities understand the need to undergo two evaluation processes (the national AEQES evaluation and the Holy See/AVEPRO evaluation) they hope it will be possible to find ways to maximize resources and minimize the duplication of work and activities. In this context three specific problems areas need to be taken into consideration:

1. In the Belgian system the abovementioned risk of overlap between the two evaluation procedures is rendered more complex by the fact that cycle I and cycle II assessments are managed by the national agency, while cycle III assessments (structured in an interdisciplinary way into doctoral schools) are managed by the National Fund for Scientific Research. Thus, the presence of several institutional actors involved in quality assessment is a potentially difficult aspect to manage.
2. Concerning internal evaluation, some units do not depend on the Faculty – e.g. research activities are carried out through independent institutes that are evaluated by the Academic Vice-Rector, following guidelines provided by the national agency. Even some non-academic units (e.g. libraries) have a similar level of independence from the Faculty. These specificities must be taken into account when it comes to implementing the model of quality assessment suggested by AVEPRO.
3. The third problem area concerns the fact that not all students who attend the Faculty gain ecclesiastical qualifications: we therefore need to know whether the assessment by AVEPRO concerns the whole range of courses or only some.

➤ CROATIA

National framework

The national law provides for structures/procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

Specific aspects

The *Katolički bogoslovni fakultet Sveučilišta u Splitu*⁸ reports that quality assessment structure provided for by State law - the “*Centre for Quality Assurance*” - has been present at the University of Split since 2005.

Every five years the Faculty carries out the evaluation and improvement of the individual courses that make up the degree programmes. Once per semester the Dean and his/her deputy organize

⁷ Information available on the VLHORA website: www.vlhora.be

⁸ Faculty of Theology at the University of Split



meetings with the staff and various departments of the Faculty aimed at improving the quality of the educational process.

➤ CZECH REPUBLIC

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

➤ FRANCE

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country..

The evaluation agency - **AERES**⁹, *Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur* - is very active.

AERES is an AAI - *Autorité Administrative Indépendante* - created by the French programme law on research of 2006 (operational since March 2007) to improve the quality of research and higher education, in line with the recommendations of the European Union and the Bologna Process. AERES is responsible for the evaluation of higher education and research institutions, research organizations and units, programmes and degrees, as well as for validating staff evaluation and procedures, and may also participate in the evaluation of foreign or international research and higher education organizations.

AERES' actions are based on a European and international perspective:

- using foreign experts from different backgrounds;
- ensuring its international visibility and opening up to other quality assurance cultures;
- cooperating with other quality evaluation actors around the world;
- developing reflection and international experience within the agency.

AERES is a full member of **ENQA**¹⁰ - *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*, and is registered in the **EQAR**¹¹ - *European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education*.

The **EQAR** publishes and maintains a *Register of Quality Assurance Agencies* that substantially comply with the **ESG** - *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance*, in order to provide the public with clear and reliable information on Quality Assurance Agencies operating in Europe.

9 Information available on the AERES website: www.aeres-evaluation.fr

10 Information available on the ENQA website: www.enqa.net

11 Information available on the EQAR website: www.eqar.eu



Specific aspects

Evaluation structures are only present in some of the institutions that answered the questionnaire - *Institut Catholique de Paris, Faculté de Théologie de Lille, Faculté de Théologie Catholique de Strasbourg.*

Given the lack of existing QA structures in the other institutions, **there is complete agreement on the utility of holding information sessions.**

The *Institut Catholique de Toulouse* has stated its availability as a possible venue for any information sessions.

L'*Institut Catholique de Paris* reports that it plans to establish a quality assurance mechanism that meets both AVEPRO and AERES criteria. So far the institute has carried out detailed quality assessments concerning courses and teachers, and has created a *Directory of Research Evaluation of research groups* according to AERES criteria.

The Institute plans to set up QA structures that meet AVEPRO criteria by the academic year 2010-2011.

La *Faculté de Théologie de la Fédération Universitaire et Polytechnique de Lille* reports that the Catholic University of Lille has been involved in a process of QA promotion for some years. One Faculty is in the process of obtaining **ISO 9001** certification, while other Faculties are gradually starting the procedure.

The Dean asks if it would be possible to have AVEPRO documents written in French.

➤ GERMANY

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

With regard to the Ecclesiastical Faculties, accreditation by **AKAST¹² - Agentur für Qualitätssicherung und Akkreditierung kanonischer Studiengänge in Deutschland - Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Programmes of Studies in Germany** - is widespread.

AKAST is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the quality of study programmes and the teaching of Catholic theology, as well as promoting the European Higher Education Area. The agency carries out an *accreditation procedure* through which it analyzes the purpose, internal structure and general conditions of courses of study.

The objective of the accreditation process is the assessment and detection (accreditation) of quality in each study programme, through self-evaluation and documentation by the University, and on-site inspection by a group of external experts. In the AKAST procedure, the decision to award accreditation is based on transparent criteria, which can be found in the "*Guidelines for the Accreditation of Study Programmes*".

¹² Information available on the AKAST website: www.akast.info



These in turn are based on the "*Criteria for Accreditation of Degree Programmes*" of the *Accreditation Council*. AKAST's main activities are:

- accreditation of courses of study of Canon Law;
- organization of information sessions on accreditation procedures for experts, Church staff and collaborators, and representatives of universities and different faculties;
- establishment and maintenance of contacts and cooperation, projects and events with partners within Germany and abroad;
- information and publications.

Specific aspects

The *Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Universität Bonn*, which is connected to AKAST, reports that the Faculty of Theology has developed a programme of university education that complies with the standard guidelines of the *Bundesland Nordrhein-Westfalen - North Rhine-Westphalia State Guidelines on Didactics in Higher Education*, which are verified by external experts.

The *Theologische Fakultät der Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt* has no connection with AKAST. It will put QA structures in place from the academic year 2010-2011.

The *Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule SVD St. Augustin* reports that there is currently no QA structure within the institution, and does not provide any additional data.

The *Munich School of Philosophy* reports that, due to the limited staff currently available at the institution and already involved in meeting the requirements of the Bologna Process, they will not be able to set up the QA structures requested by AVEPRO until at least 2013.

➤ HUNGARY

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

Specific aspects

The *Pázmány Péter Catholic University (PPCU)* reports that its *Faculty of Information Technology* has developed a *Quality Assurance Handbook* based on **ISO-2009**.

In 2009 the University produced a Handbook based on a *National Centre of Excellence in Higher Education Prize* developed by the Ministry of Education.

In 2001 an evaluation was successfully completed at PPCU by the *National Committee on Accreditation*. The same procedure was repeated in March 2010.

The PPCU has also drawn up a request for funding from the EU Operational Programme on Social Mobility/Renewal (TÁMOP 4.1.1.) to develop an institutional QA system based on **ENQA**¹³ standards and guidelines.

¹³ Information available on the ENQA website: www.enqa.net



➤ IRELAND

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

Specific aspects

The *Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy* reports that it has been developing QA procedures since the academic year 2004-2005, as it is a *Recognised College of the National University of Ireland*.

➤ ITALY

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

The evaluation agency ANVUR¹⁴ - *Agenzia Nazionale per la Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca - National Agency for the Evaluation of the University System and Research* - is active in this country.

ANVUR is currently in the process of being structured¹⁵. It is a public institution with the aim of promoting a culture of quality and excellence in the Italian university and research system. To this end, the agency is responsible for evaluating the programmes offered and the results of teaching and research.

ANVUR is intended to replace other bodies responsible for evaluating the university and research systems, in particular the CNVSU - *Comitato Nazionale per la Valutazione del Sistema Universitario - National Committee for the Evaluation of the University System* and CIVR - *Comitato di Indirizzo per la Valutazione della Ricerca - Committee for the Evaluation of Research*.

The CNVSU¹⁶ is an institutional body of the *Ministry of Education, University and Research* (MIUR) with the task of:

- establishing general requirements for the assessment of universities' activities;
- preparing an annual assessment of the university system;
- promoting the experimentation, application and dissemination of assessment methodologies and practices;
- determining the nature of the information and data that evaluation teams within universities are required to communicate;
- implementing an annual programme of external evaluations of universities or individual educational structures;

¹⁴ Information available on the ANVUR website: www.anvur.it

¹⁵ The Agency's statute is effective from June 11, 2010

¹⁶ Information available on the CNVSU website: www.vsu.it



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- carrying out technical assessments following proposals from new public and private universities, in view of acquiring authorization to issue degrees with legal value;
- prepare reports on the implementation and results of planning;
- prepare studies and documentation on the state of university education, the state of implementation of the protection of the right to study, and on access to university courses;
- prepare studies and documentation for the definition of allocation criteria for the additional financial resources portion of ordinary operating funds;
- on behalf of the Ministry: carry out consultancy, investigations and evaluations, and define standards, parameters and technical regulations - in relation to the different activities of the universities and to the projects and proposals they submit.

The Committee is an independent body that interacts autonomously with the universities and the Ministry. It has a technical-administrative secretariat, a specific category of expenditure in the budget of the Ministry and may appoint expert groups, organizations or companies to conduct specialized research and studies.

The **CIVR** is a steering committee for the evaluation of research. It was set up by the MIUR and is entrusted with the tasks of defining general criteria for the evaluation of the results of research and promoting the experimentation of new methods of assessment, in support of the quality of national scientific research. The CIVR's activities include initiatives such as: the testing and dissemination of methodologies and practical techniques for assessment; the definition of general criteria for assessments carried out by research organizations and scientific institutions; the formulation of criteria for creating special internal evaluation committees in research bodies; and the planning and realization of external evaluations of research institutions that are supervised or funded by public administrations, as well as research programs/projects coordinated or funded by them, in agreement with the government/public administrations.

Moreover, the CIVR evaluates the effectiveness of state intervention regarding applied research, in order to help improve the quality and quantity of industrial research and support its practical application and its consequences in economic-financial terms and on employment.

In 2004, the CIVR coordinated the first national assessment of research (a government initiative), in the form of a project evaluating the production of scientific excellence in the entire Italian research system.

Specific aspects

The *Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis* reports that "the information from AVEPRO about processes of quality certification and self-evaluation as directed by the Bologna Follow-up has been well received and the University has promptly organized itself to this end. However, concerning other Faculties that may have made less progress on QA issues, it would be useful to know - through communications and meetings - the current status of QA evaluation in Catholic institutions, and in European institutions in general, to better understand the actions that the Agency may adopt in future in order to implement procedures for improvement in higher education and with regard to current standards in Bologna Process signatory countries".

This University is currently organizing the next meetings of the *Quality Assurance Office (QAO)* for self-evaluation in teaching and administrative areas, and is studying a detailed timetable for QA procedures to be realized in the academic year 2010/2011.



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Furthermore this University is organizing meetings with other Pontifical Universities to exchange views and experiences on QA issues, and it has established preliminary contacts with companies experienced in the collection and processing of large quantities of data for the provision of the service (following the appointment by QAO of a pool of computer experts to assess the technical specifications required of machinery and equipment for the collection and processing of questionnaires).

The *Pontificia Università Urbaniana* maintains that an information session on the promotion of quality is not necessary at present, but that it would be useful to promote forms for the exchange of views, suggestions and information among the *Quality Managers* of the Pontifical Universities of Rome.

The *Pontificia Facoltà di Scienze dell'Educazione "Auxilium"* has taken part in a **PILOT PROJECT** with AVEPRO.

The *Pontificio Ateneo "Regina Apostolorum"*, in the belief that an information session on quality promotion is necessary, also suggests organizing one or two meetings a year for the *Quality Managers* of faculties and universities, in order to foster the exchange of practices and experiences.

The *Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo* states that, concerning the information sessions for Ecclesiastical Faculties, they would appreciate it if the same questionnaires could be sent to all Faculties, to speed up the process of internal evaluation.

The *Pontificio Istituto Giovanni Paolo II per Studi su Matrimonio e Famiglia* reports that, in the process of implementing the new regulations, quality will also be evaluated in the different sections that comprise the Institute - USA, Mexico, Spain, Brazil, Benin, India.

The *Pontificia Facoltà Teologica della Sardegna* believes that an information session seems to be not only useful but necessary. It suggests that it would be good to organize it in the reasonably near future.

The *Facoltà Teologica del Triveneto* has established a *Self-Evaluation Committee*, which has indicated to headquarters and the individual institutions the **procedures for programming courses according to ECTS credits**, and introduced corresponding evaluation forms for courses and teaching, to be filled in by students and teachers.

The Faculty also claims that: "We believe that it is important to strengthen connections and communication between AVEPRO and the individual institutions. The launch of the website, which we hope will happen soon, will certainly speed up communication". "We have had the opportunity to get to know the work of MIUR concerning QA, and we particularly appreciated the **seminars on the individual aspects of the Bologna Process, especially concerning evaluation**. We think that something similar would also be of use to the Ecclesiastical Faculties".

➤ LITHUANIA

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.



The evaluation agency **SKVC / CQAHE¹⁷** - *Studijų Kokybės Vertinimo Centras - Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education* is active in Lithuania.

Specific aspects

The *Kataliku Teologijos Fakultetas - Faculty of Catholic Theology* has sent detailed information on the situation in the country.

AVEPRO has not been included in the list of agencies mentioned in the *Lithuanian Law on Education*. Therefore, study programmes in this Faculty will be evaluated by SKVC, which will invite AVEPRO experts to participate in the evaluation.

The Faculty has raised the question of the compatibility of the SKVC evaluation with the evaluation requested by AVEPRO, since the SKVC evaluation only refers to courses, while the AVEPRO evaluation explicitly requires an assessment of the entire Faculty.

➤ MALTA

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

Specific aspects

The *University of Malta* created an *internal quality promotion structure¹⁸* soon after the launch of the Bologna process. The mechanisms of quality promotion in the Faculty of Theology are in line with those of the University.

The University of Malta has established a *Program Validation Committee - PVC* (a permanent subcommittee of the University Senate), which is assisted in its tasks by the *Academic Programs Quality and Resources Unit - APQRU*.

The APQRU, established in 2007, works as the administrative arm of the PVC. It provides administrative support to teaching staff in the planning stages of new and revised courses, to ensure that the processes established to guarantee the quality of results are followed. The APQRU facilitates the provision of advice in connection with physical resources and other costs associated with academic programmes, as well as QA and improvement activities aimed at promoting a culture of commitment to excellence in the provision of academic services.

➤ NETHERLANDS

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

¹⁷ Information available on the SKVC website: www.skvc.lt

¹⁸ Information available on the University website: www.um.edu.mt



The **NVAO**¹⁹ - *Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie - Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders* is the accreditation organization, established by an international treaty, that ensures the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders.

The NVAO is a full member of **ENQA**²⁰ - *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*, a member of **ECA**²¹ - *European Consortium for Accreditation*, and a member of **INQAAHE**²² - *International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education*.

The **ECA** was founded in 2003 with the aim of achieving mutual recognition of accreditation decisions. Twelve mutual recognition agreements between ECA members were signed in 2007, and the Consortium was renewed in 2008.

The ECA project involved **ENIC/NARIC**²³ - *European Network of Information Centres / National Academic Recognition Information Centres* of member countries, in order to strengthen the link between accreditation decisions and the recognition of qualifications.

INQAAHE²⁴ is a global association of some 200 organizations involved in the theory and practice of QA in higher education. The great majority of its members are quality assurance agencies, which operate in many different ways, although the Network also welcomes other organizations with an interest in QA in higher education (as associate or institution members).

The main purpose of the Network is to collect and disseminate information on current and developing theory and practice in the assessment, improvement and maintenance of quality in higher education. Through this information-sharing and other means, the Network is intended to:

- promote good practices in the maintenance and improvement of quality in higher education;
- facilitate research into the practice and effectiveness of quality management in higher education;
- be able to provide advice and expertise to contribute to the development of new quality assurance agencies;
- facilitate links between accrediting bodies especially insofar as they operate across national borders;
- assist members in determining the standards of institutions operating across national borders;
- permit better-informed international recognition of qualifications;
- be able to assist in the development and use of credit transfer schemes, in order to enhance the mobility of students between institutions within and across national borders;
- help members be alert to dubious accrediting practices and organizations.

19 Information available on the NVAO website: www.nvao.net

20 Information available on the ENQA website: www.enqa.net

21 Information available on the ECA website: www.eaconsortium.net

22 Information available on the INQAAHE website: www.inqahe.org

23 Information available on the ENIC/NARIC NETWORK website: www.enic-naric.net

24 Information available on the INQAAHE website: www.inqahe.org



AVEPRO

Specific aspects

The *Tilburg School of Theology* reports that the University of Tilburg is funded by the State, and therefore the Faculty of Theology must respect the standards and procedures required by the NVAO.

In 2003 all the Faculty's programmes gained accreditation from the *Dutch State Quality Assurance Office*. In 2005 an external evaluation of research was carried out, in accordance with the guidelines of the *Dutch Organization for Scientific Research*. In 2009 a medium-term assessment of research took place, and in 2010 a medium-term assessment of teaching will be carried out. These two medium-term evaluations are in preparation for an external evaluation that will be carried out in the next few years by the *Dutch Organization for Scientific Research*.

The Dean of the Faculty suggests that "AVEPRO should first contact the State agency to see whether and how they can work together or, alternatively, AVEPRO should make an additional request for information from the State agency concerning the ecclesiastical aspects of education in the Faculty".

➤ POLAND

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

The **PAK²⁵ - Państwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna - State Accreditation Committee** was established in 2001 and is the only statutory body with responsibility for assessing the quality of higher education in Poland. Its opinions and / or resolutions are legally binding.

PAK is a full member of **ENQA²⁶ - European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education** and is registered in **EQAR²⁷ - European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education**.

PAK is an independent institution working to improve quality within the Polish higher education system. The primary objective of the Committee is to support public and non-public Polish higher education institutions in the development of educational standards in line with the best models adopted in the European and global academic area. These activities aim to ensure that graduates of Polish higher education institutions rank high in the national and international labour market, and to enhance the competitiveness of Polish higher education institutions as European institutions.

The State Accreditation Committee fulfils its mission by conducting obligatory assessments of the quality of education and giving opinions on the applications for authorisation to provide degree programmes submitted by higher education institutions. The overriding value guiding the work of the Committee is the objectivity of such assessments and opinions. The Committee takes care to ensure that its assessments leave - within the limits of the legislation in force - ample space for autonomous initiatives promoting innovation in teaching and a culture of high quality education.

25 Information available on the PAK website: www.pka.edu.pl

26 Information available on the ENQA website: www.enqa.net

27 Information available on the EQAR website: www.eqar.eu



As an institution financed exclusively by public funds and concerned with the public good, the State Accreditation Committee acts with a sense of responsibility for decisions taken, building its credibility through professionalism in the activities undertaken, adherence to the principle of openness and transparency of the procedures applied, the precision of statements justifying the resolutions adopted and respect for academic traditions. The State Accreditation Committee is a platform for co-operation and dialogue between all parties interested in working to ensure the quality of higher education. The Committee is involved in cooperative initiatives in this area, also in the international arena. It actively cooperates with other accreditation commissions and their international umbrella organisations for the implementation of the Bologna Process and the creation of a European Higher Education Area. Acting on the belief that the quality and effectiveness of education make a substantial contribution to the country's socio-economic development, the State Accreditation Committee considers that it is its duty to work for the academic community, students and employers, and cooperates with State authorities and public administration bodies in this area.

There is also a special agreement between the State and a small number of universities - the *Agreement of Polish Universities Concerning the Quality of Education*²⁸.

This agreement provides for the:

- creation of educational quality standards at the universities involved, in line with EU standards;
- improvement of the quality of education;
- promotion of high quality courses of study and the higher education institutions that offer them.

In accordance with a *Resolution of the Conference of Rectors of Polish Universities (CRPU)*, the **UKA-UCA**²⁹ *Uniwersytecka Komisja Akredytacyjna - University Accreditation Commission* - was established in 1998. The goals of the UKA-UCA are to create a system of accreditation of university courses and uniform quality standards for education in universities.

UKA-UCA and PAK are alternatives: PAK procedures are not applied in the Universities that have adhered to the Agreement of Polish Universities Concerning the Quality of Education.

Specific aspects

The response rate in Poland, which is lower than in other countries, should be evaluated, taking into account both the objective difficulties of linguistic communication - in some Faculties the only language of communication is Polish - and the various problems related to the country's political history, as some institutions were established only recently.

The *Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow* – formally the *Pontifical Academy of Theology* - reports that its Faculties have been repeatedly accredited by the **UCA-UKA**, as established by an agreement signed by the Rectors of Polish Universities on *Quality in Education*:

- *Faculty of History and Cultural Heritage* in 2003 and in 2009;
- *Faculty of Philosophy* in 2001 and in 2007;
- *Faculty of Theology* in 2000 and in 2005;

28 Agreement amended in October 1999 and November 2005.

29 Information available on the UKA website, including a list of the Universities party to the agreement: www.uka.amu.edu.pl



- Faculty of Social Sciences - only established in February 2008 and consequently still in the organizational phase.

The *Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow*, in accordance with the *Agreement of Polish Universities Concerning the Quality of Education*, is not linked with PAK.

The *John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL)* sent a detailed questionnaire valid for its three Faculties and the Institute of Canon Law. The University reports that it has established a *Senate Committee for Didactics and Education* that verifies the correctness of formal and functional courses of study, extends the availability of additional courses and updates the forms of specialization courses/post-graduate education.

The University also helps its students by providing information and economic and spiritual support.

The *Faculty of Theology at the Nicolò Copernico University of Torun* is part of a State University. Since its creation in 2001, it has established procedures for quality assessment (both internal and external). In ten years it has passed two independent evaluations by **PAK** (2005 and 2010).

The person that filled in the questionnaire for this faculty maintains that, in practice, PAK plays the same role that is proposed by AVEPRO concerning the group of international experts. The PAK Commission is composed of experts from other theological faculties in Poland.

The *Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Warsaw* has not yet activated a quality control structure and believes that an information session would be helpful.

➤ PORTUGAL

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

The evaluation agency **A3ES³⁰ - Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior - Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education** - was established in 2007 as a private foundation and is totally independent in its decisions. A3ES's mission is to help improve the quality of higher education in Portugal, through the evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions and their courses. The objectives of A3ES are to:

- develop quality assessment of the performance of higher education institutions and their courses of study;
- establish accreditation criteria in order to translate them into qualitative appreciation, and define the consequences of evaluation in relation to the functioning of institutions and courses;
- promote the accreditation of institutions and courses of study in order to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements for their recognition;
- provide society with information about the quality of performance of higher education institutions;
- promote the internationalization of the evaluation process.

³⁰ Information available on the A3ES website: www.a3es.pt



A3ES is a full member of **ENQA**³¹ - *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*.

For the qualifications obtained to be valid, the single courses provided within each Faculty need to be registered with the accreditation agency.

Specific aspects

The *Faculdade de Teologia da Universidade Católica Portuguesa* - with centers in Lisbon, Braga and Porto - states that its key needs are currently:

- a clear definition of what is meant by "Quality Assurance" in relation to the daily activities of the Faculty;
- motivation of staff and students;
- the implementation of procedures to facilitate data acquisition and standardized analysis.

➤ SLOVAKIA

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

The QA process is part of the general accreditation required by the Ministry of Education.

Specific aspects

The *Rímskokatolícka Cyrilometodská bohoslovecká fakulta v Bratislave - Roman Catholic Faculty of Theology in Bratislava* established QA structures in Spring 2010.

➤ SLOVENIA

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country.

Specific aspects

The *Faculty of Theology at the University of Ljubljana* (including the Maribor branch) works closely with the German language Theological Faculties connected with the agency **AKAST**. The Faculty has also signed nine cooperation agreements with universities - Graz, Trnava, Fribourg, Catholic Universities in Leuven, Lublin, Regensburg, K. W. Warsaw, Ružemberok and Papal Theological Academy Krakow.

³¹ Information available at ENQA website: www.enqa.net



➤ SPAIN

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional Agency is active in this country.

The evaluation Agency ANECA³² - *Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación- National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation* - was established in 2002 to contribute to improving the quality of the higher education system through the assessment, certification and accreditation of university degrees, programmes, teaching staff and institutions. ANECA's areas of competence are:

- providing society with information about the achievement of universities' aims;
- enhancing the improvement of university teaching, research and management activities;
- fostering the monitoring of performance in Higher Education institutions following objective and transparent processes;
- providing public administrations with appropriate information for decision-making within the scope of their authority.

The main objective of the *Action Plan 2009* proposal is to ensure the active participation of ANECA in:

- verifying, prior to its official recognition, that every course leading to a first or second cycle degree conforms to guidelines of the Ministry of Education and Science.
- assessing the academic merits of potential teaching staff; this assessment must be undertaken by committees that meet the requirements laid down in the Organic Law amending the *Spanish Universities Act*.

The ANECA system for the evaluation of universities in Spain provides criteria for the internal evaluation of faculties that are adapted to the characteristics of the Ecclesiastical Faculties.

In accordance with the Bologna Process, all university degrees can be established and developed only after a quality review.

ANECA is a full member of ENQA³³ - *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*, a member of ECA³⁴ - *European Consortium for Accreditation*, and is registered in the EQAR³⁵ - *European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education*.

ANECA was the first European member of INQAAHE³⁶- *International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education*.

Specific aspects

32 Information available on the ANECA website: www.aneca.es

33 Information available on the ENQA website: www.enqa.net

34 Information available on the ECA website: www.eaconsortium.net

35 Information available on the EQAR website: www.eqar.eu

36 Information available on the INQAAHE website: www.inqahe.org



AVEPRO

The *Facultad de Teología de Catalunya* reports that it established QA structures in 2006 with good results "the most important fact is the application of the Bologna Process in our Faculty, with a significant improvement in teaching and the content of individual theological subjects".

The *Facultad de Filosofía de Catalunya* reports that "it is essential to provide as much information as possible to deal successfully with this ongoing task of quality promotion that we have been working on in our faculty, especially during the last academic courses. We are open to any type of seminar in this sense, and again place at AVEPRO's disposal our experience, as an ecclesiastical organization providing a community service recognized for academic purposes, in order to contribute to the mission of quality education³⁷".

The *Facultad de Teología del Norte de España* underlines that "external evaluation should never forget the great differences - in the economic potential, support staff, numbers of students and professors, etc. - between State Universities, Catholic Universities and Faculties of Theology with two or more branches³⁸".

The *Facultad de Teología de Granada* reports that it began the process of self-evaluation in 2006, following a circular from the Congregation for Catholic Education, as agreed with the *Council of Deans of Theology in Spain and Portugal*.

The Faculty also suggests that "to avoid the duplication of efforts, [self-evaluation] should be coordinated by the *Committee/Council of Deans of Theology in Spain and Portugal*³⁹".

The *Universidad Pontificia Comillas de Madrid* reports that all institutes of the university have followed a self-evaluation process and an external evaluation process based on ANECA criteria. In line with the Bologna Process, all university degrees have to undergo a quality review before they are introduced and developed. Ecclesiastical degrees have been evaluated following the guidelines of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

The *Facultad Eclesiástica de Filosofía de la Universidad de Navarra* reports that "to verify the improvements suggested in the recent self-assessment, it seems appropriate to wait another few years before a second internal evaluation. On the other hand, it seems necessary to wait for the guidelines of the Congregation on the implementation of the Bologna Process for Philosophy Studies, before proceeding with self-evaluation⁴⁰".

37 "Nos parece imprescindible proporcionar toda la información posible para poder encarar con garantías de éxito esta tarea continua de la promoción de la calidad en la que llevamos comprometidos desde nuestra fundación, con especial insistencia en los últimos cursos académicos. Estamos abiertos a cualquier tipo de seminario encaminado en esta dirección, a la vez que nos ponemos, una vez más, al servicio de la AVEPRO, por si nuestra experiencia, como institución eclesiástica que ofrece un servicio reconocido civilmente a efectos académicos, pudiese ayudar en esta misión formativa de la calidad."

38 "Aunque se contempla en la "Nota informativa", la Evaluación externa no debería olvidar nunca la gran diferencia que existe en posibilidades económicas, en personal auxiliar, en número de estudiantes y profesores, etc. entre las Universidades estatales, las Universidades católicas y las Facultades de teología con dos o más sedes."

39 "Sería oportuno actuar bajo la coordinación de la Junta de Decanos de Teología de España y Portugal para evitar la dispersión".

40 "Con el fin de verificar las mejoras propuestas en la todavía reciente Autoevaluación nos parece conveniente esperar unos años antes de proceder a realizar una segunda evaluación interna. Por otro lado, nos parece necesario esperar las directrices de la Congregación acerca de la implantación del Proceso de Bologna a los estudios de Filosofía, antes de proceder a la autoevaluación de esos estudios".



The *Facultad de Teología de la Universidad de Navarra* reports that the University of Navarra followed a self-evaluation process in the academic year 2007/2008, based on criteria provided by **ANECA, duly adapted to the characteristics of the Ecclesiastical Faculties**, with the help of the *Comisión de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación de la Universidad de Navarra*.

This Faculty is currently providing the necessary facilities for cycles I and II of the **EEES⁴¹–Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior** system, and is continuing work on the *Improvement Plan* of the previous evaluation. As this evaluation was conducted in 2007/2008, it seems prudent to wait at least a year before carrying out the next internal evaluation, in order to assess the effectiveness of the Bologna Plan and the Improvement Plan.

The *Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca (UPSA)* reports that all institutes of the University have followed a process of self-evaluation and external evaluation, conducted in accordance with **ANECA** criteria and in line with the directives of the *Plan Nacional de Calidad de las Universidades*. This process was necessary to gain **EEES** accreditation for UPSA. The evaluation process began in October 2002 with an internal evaluation; external evaluation took place from October 2003 and ended in 2004 with the corresponding *improvement plan* for the Faculty, which officially ended in 2006 and was subsequently extended.

The *Facultad de Teología at UPSA* reports that its evaluation process was based on **ANECA** criteria, **duly adapted to the characteristics of the Ecclesiastical Faculties**.

The Faculty believes that information sessions would be useful in the future, following experimentation of the changes to the Faculty necessary to adapt to the demands of the **EEES**.

➤ SWITZERLAND

National framework

The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities. At least 1 national/regional agency is active in this country..

The Swiss system provides for the accreditation of all university institutions by the **OAQ⁴²** - in Italian *Organo di accreditamento e di garanzia della qualità delle istituzioni universitarie svizzere*, in German *Organ für Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung der Schweizerischen Hochschulen*, and in French *Organe d'accréditation et d'assurance qualité des hautes écoles suisses*.

The OAQ began its work on 1 October 2001. In accordance with the relevant legal provisions, the OAQ has been charged with assuring and promoting the quality of teaching and research at Swiss academic institutions. To this end the OAQ carries out quality evaluations, establishes guidelines for internal quality assurance at academic institutions and provides the relevant services. The OAQ fulfils a number of tasks relating to quality assurance and accreditation upon the request of the

41 Information available on the EEES website: www.eees.es

42 In English: *Centre of Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss Universities*.
Information available on the OAQ website: www.oaq.ch



SUK/CUS⁴³ *Schweizerische Universitätskonferenz / Conferenza universitaria svizzera / Conférence universitaire suisse / Swiss University Conference.*

The SUK/CSU is the body responsible for coordinating the university-related activities of the federal government and cantons throughout Switzerland:

In carrying out its responsibilities, the **OAQ**:

- develops guidelines and quality standards for academic accreditation in Switzerland and carries out accreditation procedures on the basis of guidelines introduced by the SUK/CUS;
- participates in international collaboration in the field of accreditation and quality assurance;
- may participate in an advisory role in evaluations carried out by the universities under their own responsibility and organize evaluations of specific disciplines in consultation with the **CRUS** - *Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities*;
- carries out quality evaluations on behalf of the **SER** - *State Secretariat for Education and Research* as part of the qualifying procedure for financial support stipulated by the *Federal Law on Financial Aid to Universities and Cooperation in Matters Relating to Universities*.

The qualifying procedure stipulated by the *Federal Law on Financial Aid to Universities and Cooperation in Matters Relating to Universities* requires *Quality Audits* on the quality assurance systems to be carried out at all cantonal universities every four years.

Accreditation is a formal and transparent process that uses defined standards to assess whether institutions and/or programmes offered at university level comply with minimum quality requirements. Accreditation increases the national and international visibility of university performance and can provide students, representatives of universities, politicians, employers and the general public with guidance and support for decision-making. The purpose of accreditation is also to achieve international recognition and to improve the comparability of degrees.

In Switzerland, unlike in other European countries, the accreditation system operates on a voluntary basis. In accordance with the *Cooperation Agreement between the Federal Government and the University Cantons*, accreditation may be granted to public or private university-level institutions or programmes. In line with international regulations and practices, the procedure consists of three stages: a self-evaluation carried out by the university unit is followed by an external appraisal by an independent group of experts. The decision whether or not to grant accreditation is made by SUK/CUS following a recommendation by the OAQ. The decision is based on all the available documentation (self-evaluation report, experts' report, opinion from the university) and may be "yes", "no" or a "yes under conditions". Unconditional accreditation is valid for seven years. Universities that have not yet started operating or have only recently begun operating can apply for preliminary accreditation, which expires after three years. Private applicants undergo preliminary evaluation by the OAQ on the basis of a published list of criteria. If the candidate passes the preliminary evaluation, the OAQ proceeds in the accreditation process. If the candidate fails, the SUK/CUS rejects the application for accreditation.

The OAQ is a full member of **ENQA**⁴⁴ - *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* and member of **INQAAHE**⁴⁵ - *International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education*.

43 The CSU coordinates activities related to Universities of the Confederation and Cantons at a national level.

44 Information available on the ENQA website: www.enqa.net



The OAQ is one of the founding members of **ECA**⁴⁶ - *European Consortium for Accreditation* and held the presidency in December 2004.

On the occasion of the annual meeting of the ECA in December 2004 the OAQ signed the ***Code of Good Practice*** together with representatives of seven other European Countries. The Code regulates the implementation of accreditation procedures in the Higher Education Area with common standards and formulates concrete requirements concerning the internal quality management of an accreditation agency. The signing of the *Code of good practice* is considered a basis for the future cross-border recognition of accreditation decisions.

In September 2003 the OAQ signed a bilateral cooperation agreement with the Spanish **ANECA**⁴⁷ - *Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación*. The aim of this agreement is to promote collaboration on accreditation and QA procedures and to institutionalize a reciprocal exchange of experience and information.

In the summer of 2002 the OAQ put forward a proposal to form a ***regional accreditation network comprising the national accreditation agencies of Germany, Austria and Switzerland (D-A-CH)***. These bodies signed a cooperation agreement on 15 July 2003, which governs their close collaboration on matters of accreditation. Their objective is to achieve mutual recognition of national accreditation decisions.

The OAQ is a member of **JQI**⁴⁸ - **the Joint Quality Initiative**, an international network founded in 2001 that brings together twelve countries (national quality assurance agencies and representatives of education ministries). The aim of this network is to develop generic descriptors for the qualifications attained at bachelor, master and doctor level/in the first, second and third cycle that will be valid throughout Europe. A major outcome of the work done by this network are the “*Dublin Descriptors*”, approved in 2002. This document regulates (independently of disciplines) the skills and abilities that a candidate with a bachelor or master /first, second or third cycle degree should possess.

Specific aspects

The *Facoltà di Teologia di Lugano (FTL)* sent full details of its QA System, which are also available on the Faculty’s well-structured website.

Since the academic year 2001/2002, and especially following the accreditation received from the Swiss University Conference on 24 February 2005, the FTL has developed an increasingly comprehensive and effective **QMS - Quality Management System**, which primarily affects teaching and research, as well as student services, internal communication, and equal opportunities. For each of the areas mentioned the QMS is regulated in accordance with processes defined and approved by the competent authorities of the FTL, which are published in the *Internal guidelines for quality assessment* of the FTL.

45 Information available on the INQAAHE website: www.inqaahe.org

46 Information available on the ECA website: www.eaconsortium.net

47 Information available on the ANECA website: www.aneca.es

48 Information available on the JQI website: www.jointquality.nl



AVEPRO

The QMS is the responsibility of all members of the Faculty. In particular the main actors are: the Quality Service team for data collection and operational support, the Dean/Rector and Department Heads for the interpretation of the data collected and ordinary decisions, the Faculty Board and the Council of tenured professors for the key decisions and special issues. This means that the information collected by the Quality Service team during evaluation processes is interpreted and systematically used by the governing bodies of the FTL in strategic decision-making. The QMS is a dynamic approach and subject to continuous improvement.

The Fakultät für Römisch-katholische Theologie der Universität Luzern is connected with **AKAST**⁴⁹ and maintains that *“Our Internal Quality Assurance process will be followed by AKAST”*.

⁴⁹ Information available on the AKAST website: www.akast.info