

A large graphic consisting of numerous concentric circles of varying shades of blue and grey, creating a tunnel-like effect that draws the eye towards the center. The circles are of different thicknesses and are arranged in a way that they appear to recede into the distance.

Quality Assurance in ISCTE-IUL

Credits

Title: Quality Assurance in ISCTE-IUL

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INTRODUCTION

We are exceptionally pleased to present this abridged edition of the internal quality assurance system.

We were only able to reach this point with the significant involvement from the majority of the ISCTE-IUL Community's members, but that alone would not have been enough. There is no such thing as successful projects without project leadership. In this case, Professor António Caetano's consistent and persevering leadership has been crucial to the attainment of the current level of quality.

In this area, as in others, the past decade has been one of sustainable growth for ISCTE-IUL, in a countercyclical movement in the context of the crisis.

For that reason, we are especially proud of the work we have been able to accomplish collectively.

Luís Reto

Reitor do ISCTE-IUL

FOREWORD

QUALITY ASSURANCE SUCCESS AT ISCTE-IUL: PATHS, TENSIONS AND TRENDS

António Caetano

Vice-Reitor para o Desenvolvimento e Inovação Institucional do ISCTE-IUL

1. ISCTE-IUL's quality assurance system has achieved a significant level of development, well reflected in the integration, already implemented, of the various subsystems that contribute towards the quality of teaching, research, operation of services, relationship with society, and the institution's operational and strategic management.

2. The various actors who ensure quality have a natural tendency to focus on the areas, or dimensions, of the system more directly related to the quality of their own performance, eventually unaware of the rationality associated to it and to its articulation with the global institutional mission and goals. A global and integrated perspective of the system as a whole shall certainly enable the understanding of fragmented aspects, and may give powerful impetus to the optimisation of their potential regarding the continuous improvement of the institution's operation.

3. The publication of this abridged version of the manual intends to provide that global perspective to the whole ISCTE-IUL community, and, simultaneously, make it available to a broader audience of eventual external interested parties.

4. Taking into consideration that, after more than eight years of intense activity, my mission in the area of quality assurance and institutional development has already reached its final stage, and, without prejudice to any objective and detailed further analysis that may be made on the dynamics of the changing process initiated in 2007, I would like to use this occasion to, in an outspokenly subjective manner, add some colourful brushstrokes to the picture in which quality assurance and organisational development have been implemented. No need to say that it is a personal, experience-based, assumedly partial and selective view of some episodes from the recent history of quality assurance implementation at ISCTE-IUL. My expectation is that these personal impressions may be useful to whomever may lead this area in the future, allowing an easier pursuance of and/or divergence from the route taken up to this point.

5. I will also draw your attention to some of the main tensions that are, from my perspective, linked to the implementation of university quality assurance, along with some of the main emerging trends in this area, and which are generating a new dynamic.

Where are we standing?

6. As will be understood after reading the Manual, ISCTE-IUL's quality assurance system is focused on the needs of the interested parties - students, faculty staff, researchers, other staff and external stakeholders; it systematically covers all relevant activities and highlights the institutional mission's macroprocesses:

- management macroprocesses, including strategic management;
- operational macroprocesses, highlighting quality assurance in teaching and learning, in research and in the interaction with society;
- supporting macroprocesses, including the various types of resources necessary to accomplish the mission.

These macroprocesses have been implemented in around seventy fully applied procedures, and includes also a general axis regarding the internationalisation of teaching and research.

7. The collective effort carried out along the last years and the vast financial investment made, both in technological systems and in human resources, have allowed us to create an integrated system able to reconcile and absorb the national and international specific higher education quality assurance guidelines, standards and requirements, in articulation with the international benchmark of quality management standardisation and certification. Quality assurance is currently the central pillar of ISCTE-IUL's institutional strategy, and it shapes all goals and activities contributing for the accomplishment of its mission.

8. The high level of integration attained, maybe unprecedented in the Portuguese higher education landscape, finds expression, for instance, in the architecture of the information and management system, almost entirely functional, which includes a set of interconnected platforms: Fénix (academic management), e-learning, "ciencia-iul" and "i-meritus" (faculty performance and appraisal), the repository of documents produced in teaching and research, the integrated library management system, SAP (human, material and financial resources management), documental management, the Internet and intranet portals, as well as business intelligence, which is underway.

9. Due to various internal and external factors, especially the accreditation processes, the area of teaching and learning was subject to special attention, highlighting, for example, the following aspects:

- standardisation of the most important processes regarding the curricular units (learning outcomes, contents, educational methodologies, etc.), class planning, teaching, summaries, attendance management, and evaluation of learning;
- widespread computerisation, through Fénix, of all aspects related to curricular units, student interface, including enrollment, payment of tuition fees, timetables, opinion surveys, and pedagogical monitoring at the middle and at the end of each semester;
- articulation of information on teaching, with the systems of feedback and continuous improvement, through the semi-annual curricular unit reports and the annual programme reports, with assessment by the respective directors, and the plan of improvement measures for the following year;
- articulation with the budgeting and cost analysis system;
- automatic articulation with the faculty performance management systems ("ciencia-iul" and "i-meritus").

10. In the scope of research units, the computerised operation of the projects' financial management is now totally implemented, through SAP, and the various online features of "ciência-iul" regarding the faculty members and researchers' scientific production are remarkable, including the automatic registration of academic article citations, as well as the information on the quality of the journals that publish articles produced at ISCTE-IUL, the possibility of carrying out quantified and longitudinal comparisons between different academic products, along with the integration of that information with the performance appraisal system ("i-meritus").

11. This level of development of the quality assurance processes and systems is connected to a set of regulations and procedures which are periodically revised and improved; it is articulated with various mechanisms which provide support to the incentive policy for research and teaching excellence (scientific and pedagogic awards); it supports the policy of transparency which has been increased over recent years, namely in what regards information about faculty time allocation and the information about the efficiency of institutional operations (revenues and costs); and enables the optimisation, in terms of efficiency and efficacy, of the organisational and operational structures and the support to the activities of teaching, research and relationship with society, as well as the internationalisation of those activities.

12. From a panoramic outlook on the systems, mechanisms, and activities carried out by faculty members and researchers, technicians and administrative and operational staff, it is possible to say that a very positive quality level has been reached, both in absolute terms, considering international standards, and in relative terms, in comparison with ISCTE-IUL's recent (and less recent) past, or in comparison with other Portuguese universities.

The system is based on organisational learning practices that require: (a) systematic reflexivity on the performance at the various institutional levels, (b) continuous improvement measures suitably monitored in what concerns their respective applying and effects, and (c) accountability in the various areas of activity.

The level attained now requires an additional effort towards improvement and innovation, in order to successfully tackle the challenges emerging from the new –social, political, economic and institutional – European and International contexts of higher education.

Where did we start?

13. In the past decade, the legislative changes associated to the implementation of the "Bologna Process" and, consequently, the requirements from regulatory authorities, especially A3ES, led to a profound reformation of organisational practices over the space of a few years. It is well known that the changes required by the Bologna process, far from denying in any way the idea of quality assurance, have initially been mainly limited to complying with formal requirements, bereft of a general and clear awareness of what really was at stake, and without anticipating the extent of its consequences.

14. Following that first stage, the formalisation of quality assurance began with the challenge issued to me by the Rector of ISCTE-IUL in 2007, leading to the creation of the "office for teaching, evaluation and quality", which subsequently evolved to the "office for studies, evaluation, planning and quality" (GEAPQ). My propensity for the manifold features of evaluation, along with my experience of over thirty years in projects focused on change and innovation at the most varied types of organisations, impelled me to accept the challenge. After the transformation of ISCTE into university institute, in 2009, and by strategic

decision of the Rector, quality assurance grew to be officially assumed at Rectory level, with the appointment of a Vice-Rector to lead the process, and that is the task I have assumed since then.

15. From the outset, the design and implementation of quality at ISCTE was integrated in an approach based on institutional quality, and assumed an important role, and a persistently bothersome one too, since the starting level was very low, similarly, indeed, to the reality of most Portuguese universities at the time. The lack of quality was not even felt as an organisational fault. A large share of the tensions raised by the implementation of quality assurance derived precisely from a culture of leniency, along with the normality ascribed to those anomalies.

16. Conflict is genetically linked to democracy, and may represent one of the main factors of organisational innovation and improvement, namely when the objective is to pursue superordinate goals at institutional level, that is, goals which transcend the various groups that struggle each other, generally to defend their specific micro-interests. Quality assurance, for its highly positive effects on the achievement of the institution's mission, and, indirectly, on its reputation, is certainly one of the most important superordinate goals a higher education institution can aim at in the current national and international context.

However, as in any process of change, throughout the implementation of quality procedures, individuals and the various groups within the organisation have a propensity to focus, in a first moment, on an estimation of gains and losses regarding their micro-interests, unable to immediately envision the superordinate goals to be achieved or, in individual cases, opposing them through a variety of politics games and respective multitude of tactics attached.

17. Just to give one example of the situation as it was in the beginning of the process, let us have a look at a "photomaton" with some organisational practices and faults, about eight years ago, at the ISCTE of that time, regarding such a basic and important element for quality assurance in teaching as the one which is known today as "curricular unit file". We observed something as peculiar as the pure and simple inexistence of written syllabi of some courses, while in other courses, the syllabi only had a few topics linked to more than a hundred bibliographic references; the majority, nonetheless, had no reference whatsoever to learning outcomes, teaching methodologies or evaluation criteria.

18. Starting from such a baseline, and especially from the culture of ordinariness ascribed to it, meant that the implementation of quality assurance would necessarily require significant changes in behaviours and in some predominant values of the institutional culture, either by this order or by iterative processes. By applying some very solid theories of change, which I had already successfully applied in other contexts, in many cases, the first step was precise and intentionally to change behaviours.

19. The culture of ordinariness ascribed to faults and the level of "satisfaction" (or, "adaptive nuisance") with the status quo was of such order that, among the dozens of organisational innovation initiatives that have been put into operation, their implementation has not had an immediate backing.

20. With the anecdotal flavour imparted by the passing of time, let us remember some prototypical episodes of the "propensity" for change revealed by some faculty members.

(a) One of the first initiatives was the launching of the first surveys on the students' opinion regarding teaching; in the name of academic freedom, several lecturers encouraged their students not to reply to the surveys. Only by the third year was the implementation regularised, and presently it is carried out every semester, providing useful information for various purposes.

(b) Another initial measure required the faculty members to load their photo into the Fénix platform; in the name of academic freedom, some faculty members refused to do it, wherefore such a simple procedure, and by the time already generalised at the best universities, took almost twelve months to complete.

(c) In coherence with the academic freedom concerning the existence, or inexistence, of the courses' syllabi, until eight years ago there was no obligation to record class summaries, or even to register the fact that classes have, or have not, been taught. One of the first measures adopted in the scope of the project to implement a quality culture at the institution was to set up a formal proceeding of mandatory class summary registration. As the existing technological platform (Fénix) was not prepared at all for that purpose, and, while its development was not concluded, it was decided to require the record of each class' summary on paper, duly signed by the teacher, and the respective submittal up to eight days after the class in boxes placed at the entrance of each building. Further to keeping an effective record of the topics taught in class, even in subjects devoid of a written syllabus, the goal was also to obtain information about the assiduity of faculty members, that is, to know how many of the almost twenty thousand classes per semester actually took place. The procedure was in force for two years, until it was possible to use the technological platform. Throughout those two years, about 20% of the faculty members did not submit any summaries. With the implementation of the faculty staff performance appraisal system, and the weighting given to this procedure, that figure has subsided and now the problem has disappeared.

(d) In the general philosophy associated to the "Bologna Process", the learning of general, or transversal, skills and their inclusion in first cycle curricular structures is a relevant requirement, which the best foreign universities had already implemented in a context totally unrelated with that reform. Its implementation at ISCTE-IUL, that needed decisions by the scientific commissions responsible for the undergraduate curricular plans, was, in the name of academic freedom, subject to all kinds of impediments, including active efforts – at various levels – to avoid its effective implementation. Nowadays, the Languages and Transversal Skills Laboratory operates regularly and is, for instance, very advanced in what concerns the innovative and indispensable offer of online courses.

How did we get here?

21. The changes implemented in recent years evidence, to a certain extent, the traditional idea that universities do not reform on their own. Without the purpose of breaking into the dense empirical knowledge which has been produced regarding this, I believe that we can, broadly, identify three stages in the evolution of ISCTE-IUL throughout the past decade. The first major change, carried out according to a "top-down" method, was entirely forced by the government, with the legislation and regulations that imposed the changes leading to the adaptation to the "Bologna process", and, subsequently, by the regulatory entity created in the meantime (A3ES).

The second stage began with the implementation of quality assurance and was developed with the mandatory enforcement – and within a legally binding deadline – of various RJIES standards, as well as the implementation of ISO 9001. Particularly the conversion to university institute, in the scope of a public foundation under private law, forced a general reconstruction of the institutional architecture and the conception of numerous regulations, which, in their majority, are related to quality assurance. The third stage began with the process of accreditation of the institution's programmes by A3ES (concluded in 2015), and has developed with the institutional assessment carried out by EUA (European University Association) in 2012, and with the assessment of the internal quality assurance system in 2014/15 by A3ES, which certified the system for a period of six years.

22. I believe that this third stage has enabled to increase awareness towards the importance of quality assurance among a larger number of elements within ISCTE-IUL, especially those responsible for programme coordination, representing more than one third of the career faculty staff, as well as the members of the scientific commissions. The support provided by the technostructure, which had been created in the meantime, especially the Curricular Management Office and GEAPQ, has been paramount for the success of the processes, both of programme accreditation and of assessment of the system and of the institution. These processes have also implied the extended involvement of the internal community (faculty staff, researchers, students and non-faculty staff), as well as of various types of external stakeholders. They have also represented a new milestone in the development of the internalisation of quality's values and respective utility for the institution's organisational efficiency and reputation, as decisive features for its sustainability and as critical factors for the fullfilment of its mission.

23. At this stage, which is still in progress, further to mandatory evaluations, ISCTE-IUL has been making a serious, and voluntary, investment on its programmes' international certification, both regarding the engineering programmes, already fully certified by EUR-ACE, and the programmes in the area of management, whose evaluation by AACSB is taking place in 2016.

24. The permanent improvement effort has also led to the request of an additional, follow-up, institutional evaluation from EUA, to be carried out in 2016, in order to analyse the progress accomplished and to set new thresholds of international excellence.

25. In the meantime, the quality procedures have evolved to include the non-faculty staff at large, with the performance of two audits per year, since over six years ago, and a new decisive step towards the implementation of the role of "quality liaison person" has recently taken place in each one of the technical and administrative services.

26. In the framework of the culture of engagement of the various stakeholders, all the regulations issued by the central management bodies, especially by the rectory, is subject to discussion with the heads of the decentralised bodies, and made available to the internal community through the intranet, for at least thirty days, and, frequently, for more extended periods.

The same happens with all the initiatives connected to quality assurance, in addition to the involvement of the specific quality system bodies mentioned in the Manual.

27. In their majority, those initiatives are triggered to respond to external requirements, by legislation or by the national or international regulatory and certifying or accreditation authorities, or initiated internally to accomplish the institution's strategic and operational goals. In both cases, the participation of all interested parties is encouraged, and, in some matters, they contribute with various suggestions. The process has almost always been led and promoted according to a "top-down" model, and there are very few cases in which the initiatives towards change or innovation have started off in the intermediary or primary bodies, notwithstanding the frequent requests.

28. As is well known, no one takes pleasure in being forced to change. Therefore, the first reaction to any initiative towards innovation in this context is generally felt as "another demand" from the rectory. Dissatisfaction in the face of any effort towards innovation in the quality assurance framework has been most people's immediate reaction, as it implies breaking a routine or changing some standardised inconsistency. However – just as the "peer review syndrome"! –, the second reaction of the great majority of faculty members is to attempt to implement it effectively and according to the required standards. This

second moment of involvement, in which most faculty and non-faculty staff members make an effort towards continuous improvement, has inscribed quality assurance as a valuable part of ISCTE-IUL's organisational culture.

In fact, despite the expectable and natural obstacles, the way in which most members of our workforce has endeavoured to accomplish quality assurance has been extremely positive and reassuring.

29. What has been taking place in recent years is a change in the institution's culture, which already ascribes significant value to continuous improvement, self-regulation and accountability, as well as individual merit.

From my personal perspective, ISCTE-IUL's former culture was excessively set on egalitarianism. Now, in an egalitarian, iniquitous, culture, we are all equal, but there are no peers, as each ego is better than any of the others because there are no objective criteria of evaluation. On its turn, meritocracy assumes that peers have a fundamental role in the validation of scientific knowledge. The academic consensus of the peers is the ingredient that determines scientific knowledge. The quality of the knowledge produced is "accredited" by peer consensus and by peer citations. That is, the acknowledgment of difference is objectivised. Furthermore, in a meritocratic culture, status, which is probably the most deified (or toxic) of all aspirations for any scholar, may emerge with the soundness of empirical evidence.

Meritocracy is not democratic, but fosters equity. I believe that, in the current context of university education, a meritocratic culture provides a vital mechanism to ensure the institution's democratic management and sustainability.

30. An organisational culture cannot be easily changed, and the institution of changes usually requires a long period of adaptation. However, the intentional effort made along the last years to embed meritocracy in the culture of the institution, has been producing positive effects, as can be verified, for instance, by analysing some indicators regarding the scientific production of ISCTE-IUL's faculty and research staff. Based on the scientific production level registered in 2012, the quantity of articles published in journals indexed by WoS/SCOPUS increased from 197 to 303 in 2014, and, in terms of quality, the number of articles published in journals indexed in quartile 1 increased from 77 to 131.

At least two of the mechanisms created in the meantime are certainly not unrelated to these results, and more so in the period in which the economic crisis peaked, which significantly decreased salaries: the faculty performance appraisal system, with the weight it attributes to research, and the creation of scientific awards that repeatedly contribute towards research funding. That is to say, in addition to other causes, two of the implemented meritocratic mechanisms seem to be connected to this massive boost of scientific productivity.

Yet, the most relevant "change agent", which has been mitigating the unaccountability and "free-riding" effects of the egalitarian culture, as well as increasing meritocracy, can be identified as "social comparison", deployed by means of the production and provision of the maximum amount of information concerning the service and performance of faculty members and the institution's general functioning, aiming to reach the highest possible levels of organisational transparency.

Where are we headed?

31. It is important to keep on generalising the practices of ongoing organisational learning, continuous improvement and accountability in all areas of activity so as to anchor ISCTE-IUL's quality culture as

an essential condition to overcome the challenges placed by the new contexts of higher education, and to deal effectively with the new international trends of the industry.

32. There are two main guiding principles which will mark the next stage of quality assurance in higher education, which comprise (a) placing the student at the centre of the university, and (b) endogenising the quality assurance evaluation within the institution.

33. As pointed out above, academic freedom has been frequently invoked, especially to try to avoid the accomplishment of initiatives intended to promote evolutionary leaps in quality culture, namely regarding the increase of management transparency and faculty accountability.

So far, that invocation has been generally unreasonable, as none of the changes implemented aims at, or affects, in the least, the academic freedom of faculty or research staff.

Due to the trivialisation of this argument, and because it is an essential value in the culture of institutional quality, its meaning should be clarified.

34. In the modern age, the postulation of academic freedom as central value by (Humboldt's) University of Berlin goes back more than two centuries (1812), meaning autonomy in research, teaching and learning.

From Humboldt's perspective, it was essential to ensure that professors could investigate and convey the ideas they considered adequate, without any type of constraint or fear of punishment, as well as that students should be free to learn whatever they intended.

Understanding its possibilities, various Western universities assimilated that value into their culture, as is the case of ISCTE-IUL, even if the actual international security concerns have been opening the discussion regarding its scope.

35. Considering that definition, and because it seems to be liable to confusion with various aspects of university management, it is therefore important to clarify what academic freedom, in point of fact, is not. Thus, without being exhaustive, let us look at some examples.

Academic freedom does not include: recruitment, selection, promotion and evaluation of faculty members, resource allocation, structural organisation of the university and its units.

Academic freedom is not related to educational products, opening or cancelling programmes, programme curricular plans and respective accreditation, number of ECTS, schedules, timetables, academic year model of distribution, in semesters, quarters, or other.

Academic freedom is not related to the decisions on performance awards, amounts allocated for research funding, research scholarships or jury constitution.

What academic freedom actually comprises is the content passed on to students and society, the ideas taught, the ideas and hypotheses that constitute research topics, the theories that are created and used in teaching and research.

ISCTE-IUL's current quality culture spurs and fosters exactly the accomplishment of that academic freedom among teachers and researchers, inseparable from their academic responsibility, and without it quality assurance would not be possible.

36. Nonetheless, in the framework of the new quality assurance trends defined in 2015 and corroborated in the new standards and guidelines for the higher education sector in Europe (ESG 2015), it is essential to create or develop conditions *to ensure the academic freedom and responsibility of students*.

Therefore, taking into account the degree of quality assurance attained by ISCTE-IUL's internal community, with a notable effort, in a relatively short period and in such an unfavourable economic context, it is now necessary to begin a new stage that may allow to place the student at the centre of the university. That is to say, in line with the concept of academic freedom defined by Humboldt, *it is necessary to ensure that the student has freedom and responsibility, to learn what he/she needs to learn and is relevant for his/her professional activity after leaving university*. Nowadays, this is probably the utmost challenge that may distinguish an excellent university.

It is not about infantilizing the student, but, on the contrary, it is about assuming that students are self-responsible for their effective learning, that they assume the self-leadership of their academic path, and that they are accountable and can actually demonstrate the acquired skills, including the values of citizenship and integrity, which must be evaluated using thorough and validated devices.

From my point of view, this new challenge requires a great effort of innovation by the university community, particularly regarding:

- (a) maximum flexibility of curricular plans;
- (b) new teaching and learning models with optimal use of technologies;
- (c) articulation between research and teaching, fostering creativity and innovation of the faculty and research staff and the connection with the social and economic fields;
- (d) development of critical thinking and openness to the globalised world;
- (e) implementation of accurate devices for the evaluation and validation of acquired skills.

37. Regarding the self-assessment of quality assurance, it is important to fully exploit the mechanisms already in place, particularly regarding the reevaluation of existing programmes, and complement them with regular external evaluations.

38. Naturally, it is ISCTE-IUL's academic community's duty, and that of whomever shall assume the leadership of this area, to decide whether it is important to pursue the investment in the quality culture as a decisive factor for sustainability and, especially, for the accomplishment of its mission in the society as a public higher education institution.

I have full confidence that the faculty and non-faculty staff, as well as the students, will maintain the same level of commitment that has generally been expressed throughout this period, and for which I would like to express my gratitude to everyone, since having collectively met the challenge issued by our Rector has been a genuinely rewarding experience.

Quality Manual

(Abridged version)

Glossary

Accreditation	Procedure through which a body, competent to award the respective accreditation, formally verifies and recognises that a given product, service, programme or entity, complies with the organisation or quality requirements, legal or conventionally foreseen for the effect. In the case of higher education it can assume the form of institutional accreditation or study cycle accreditation. (Source: A3ES Glossary)
Certification	Procedure through which a competent body formally certifies that a product, service, programme or entity meets certain standards. (Source: A3ES Glossary)
Quality assurance	Comprehensive term referring to a continuous process of quality assessment of a higher education system, higher education institutions, or study cycles. As a regulatory mechanism, quality assurance is focused on responsibility and accountability, as much as in improvement, providing information and value judgment through a structured and consistent process, based on well-established criteria. (Source: A3ES Glossary)
Quality improvement	Constant search for performance improvement, focused on the higher education institution's responsibility for making the best possible use of its institutional autonomy. (Source: A3ES Glossary)
Stakeholders	People or groups with interest in the activities of an institution or organisation. Such people or groups may be internal (i.e., regarding the internal community), or external. (Source: A3ES Glossary)
Procedure	Specified way to carry out an activity or a process. (Source: EN ISO 9000, 2005)
Process	Set of interrelated or interacting activities, which transforms inputs into outputs. (Source: EN ISO 9000, 2005)
Product	Result of a set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs into outputs. (Source: EN ISO 9000, 2005)
Quality (in Higher Education)	Multi-dimensional, multi-level and dynamic concept, associated with the context of an educational model, the institutional mission and goals, as well as with the specific standards and terms of reference of a given system, institution, course, programme or subject unit. Thus, quality may assume different, and sometimes conflicting, meanings, depending on: (i) the perspective of the various higher education stakeholders (e.g. students, professors, subject areas, labour market, society, government); (ii) its references (inputs, processes, outputs, missions, goals, etc.); (iii) the qualities or features of the academic milieu under assessment; and (iv) the historical period regarding higher education development. (Source: A3ES Glossary)
Curricular unit	Education unit with its own training goals, which is object of registration and evaluation translated into a final classification. (Source: A3ES Glossary)

List of acronyms and abbreviations used in the Quality Manual

A3ES	Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior (Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education)
AA3C	Área de Apoio ao 3º ciclo (3 rd Cycle Support Area)
AAA	Área de Apoio ao Aluno (Student Support Area)
AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
AAL	Área de Apoio Logístico (Logistic Support Area)
AB	Área de Biblioteconomia (Library Science Area)
AEA	Área de Expediente e Arquivo (Archive and Resources Area)
AGCAD	Área de Gestão Curricular e de Apoio aos Docentes (Curricular Management and Faculty Support Area)
AMBA	Association of MBAs
AUDAX	AUDAX - Centro de Empreendedorismo (AUDAX - Entrepreneurship Centre)
BRU-IUL	Business Research Unit
CAC	Comissão de Análise Curricular (Curricular Analysis Commission)
CEI	Centro de Estudos Internacionais (CEI-IUL) (Centre for International Studies)
CGQ	Comissão de Garantia da Qualidade (Quality Assurance Commission)
CIES	Centro de Investigação e Estudos de Sociologia (Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology)
CIS – IUL	Centro de Investigação e de Intervenção Social do Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (Centre for Research and Social Intervention)
ConCQ	Conselho Consultivo da Qualidade (Quality Assurance Council)
CRIA – IUL	Centro em Rede de Investigação em Antropologia (Network Centre for Research in Anthropology)
DINÂMIA/ CET-IUL	Centro de Estudos sobre a Mudança Socioeconómica e o Território do Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (Centre for Socioeconomic and Territorial Studies)
ECSH	Escola de Ciências Sociais e Humanas (School of Social Sciences)
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
EQUIS	European Quality Improvement System
ESPP	Escola de Sociologia e Políticas Públicas (School of Sociology and Public Policy)
EUA	European University Association
EUR-ACE	European Quality Label for Engineering
FCT	Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (Foundation for Science and Technology)
FUC/CUF	Ficha de Unidade Curricular (Curricular Unit File)
GAI	Gabinete de Apoio à Investigação (Office for Research Support)
GAOU	Gabinete de Apoio aos Órgãos Universitários (Office for University Body Support)
GCM	Gabinete de Comunicação e Multimédia (Communication and Multimedia Office)
GCSA	Gabinete de Career Services e Alumni (Career Services and Alumni Office)
GDSI	Gabinete de Desenvolvimento de Sistemas de Informação (Office for Information Systems' Development)
GEAPQ	Gabinete de Estudos, Avaliação, Planeamento e Qualidade (Office for Studies, Evaluation, Planning and Quality)
GRI	Gabinete de Relações Internacionais (International Relations Office)
I&D	Investigação e Desenvolvimento (R&D - Research and Development)

IASIA	International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration
IBS	Escola de Gestão (ISCTE Business School)
INDEG-IUL	Instituto para o Desenvolvimento da Gestão Empresarial (ISCTE-IUL Executive Education)
IPPS-IUL	Instituto para as Políticas Públicas e Sociais (Institute for Public and Social Policy)
ISCTE-IUL	ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon)
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ISTA	Escola de Tecnologias e Arquitetura (School of Technology and Architecture)
ISTAR	ISTAR-IUL, the Information Sciences, Technologies and Architecture Research Center
IT – IUL	Delegação do ISCTE-IUL do Instituto de Telecomunicações (ISCTE-IUL's Telecommunications Institute Delegation)
LLCT	Laboratório de Línguas e Competências Transversais (Languages and Transversal Skills Laboratory)
MQ / QM	Manual da Qualidade (Quality Manual)
PAA / APA	Plano Anual de Atividades (Annual Plan of Activities)
PQ	Procedimento da Qualidade (Quality Procedure)
PSE	Painel de <i>Stakeholders</i> Externos (Panel of External Stakeholders)
RAA/ARA	Relatório Anual de Atividades (Annual Report of Activities)
RUC/CUR	Relatório de Unidade Curricular (CUR - Curricular Unit Report)
SAS	Serviço de Ação Social (Students' Social Services)
S-ECSH-ESPP	Secretariado de Apoio Técnico Administrativo da Unidade da ECSH e ESPP (Secretariat for Technical and Administrative Support of the Units ECSH and ESPP)
SFPRH	Serviços Financeiros, Patrimoniais e de Recursos Humanos (Financial, Human Resources, Provision and Infrastructure Services)
SGE	Serviços de Gestão do Ensino (Teaching Management Services)
S-IBS	Secretariado de Apoio Técnico Administrativo da Unidade da IBS (Secretariat for Technical and Administrative Support of the IBS Unit)
SID	Serviços de Informação e Documentação (Information and Documentation Services)
SIGQ-IUL	Sistema Interno Garantia da Qualidade do ISCTE-IUL (ISCTE-IUL's Internal Quality Assurance System)
SIIC	Serviços de Infraestruturas Informáticas e de Comunicações (Computer and Communication Infrastructure Services)
SIIG	Sistema Integrado de Informação e Gestão (Information and Management Integrated System)
S-ISTA	Secretariado de Apoio Técnico Administrativo da Unidade da ISTA (Secretariat for Technical and Administrative Support of the ISTA Unit)
UC/CU	Unidade Curricular (Curricular Unit)
UER	Unidade de Edifícios e Recursos (Buildings and Resources Unit)
UF	Unidade Financeira (Financial Unit)
UI/RU	Unidade de Investigação (Research Unit)
UIF	Unidade de Informação e Formação (Information and Training Unit)
UPC	Unidade Patrimonial e de Compras (Provision and Purchases Unit)
URCS	Unidade de Redes de Comunicações e Sistemas (Networks, Communications and Systems Unit)
URH	Unidade de Recursos Humanos (Human Resources Unit)

1. INTRODUCTION

The current European and International standards require higher education institutions to have a policy for quality assurance in their various programmes and study cycles and to support an internal culture which recognizes the importance of such quality (e.g., Santos, 2009;2011). Consequently, It becomes necessary for those institutions to develop and deploy a strategy for the continuous improvement of quality, clearly disclosing the rules and procedures, as well as the roles of all its internal and external stakeholders (e.g., ENQA, 2009;2010).

Further than the definition of a quality assurance policy and the formalisation of its procedures, higher education institutions shall also include mechanisms for the formal approval, periodic revision and monitoring of their study cycles and other activities, through the collection and analysis of the most relevant data (e.g., SGQA, 2010;Amaral, 2011).

In the quality assurance framework, higher education institutions must incorporate highly qualified and competent personnel, who use the public rules and procedures, which are consistently applied to the various aspects of their activity, with special emphasis to student evaluation. In their turn, the latter shall have access to the adequate and necessary resources to support their learning and their integration in the labour market.

ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon’s (ISCTE-IUL) institutional quality policy is a fundamental vector of its development strategy and is materialised into the Internal Quality Assurance System (SIGQ-IUL), which is based on the **Quality Manual** (QM), the system’s structuring document.

1.1. QM approval, revision and distribution

The current revision of the QM is based on a set of recommendations resulting from accreditations, both national (SIGQ-IUL certification by A3ES) and international (EUA, AACSB; EUR-ACE), as well as the results of audits concerning the ISO9001 standard, to which SIGQ-IUL also corresponds.

ISCTE-IUL’s application to this type of assessment has also contributed towards an internal discussion and analysis, involving all SIGQ-IUL’s actors (internal stakeholders – students, faculty members, researchers and other staff, as well as external stakeholders).

The changes made in ISCTE-IUL’s organisational structure (Resolution No. 59/2014) have also had impact on the changes made to SIGQ-IUL and consequent revision of the manual.

The regular revision of the QM is two-yearly, but may take place whenever it may be necessary to include a modification. It is coordinated by the Quality Assurance Commission (CGQ) and approved by the Rector or, in his replacement, by the Vice-Rector responsible for the respective area. The manual’s revision may be partial or total, and implies, whenever issued, a new version, duly identified and dated. The changes resulting from a revision of the QM are registered in an appropriate form, ensuring the traceability of the changes implemented from ONE version to another.

The current version of the QM was approved on 16th November 2015, and is available for consultation at ISCTE-IUL’s internal information Portal (MyISCTE), at ISCTE-IUL’s web pages dedicated to Quality (http://iscte-iul.pt/quem_somos/qualidade/documentos_garantia_qualidade) and at the Office for Studies, Evaluation, Planning and Quality (GEAPQ)’s webpage (<http://iscte-iul.pt/servicos/>

[gab_estudos_avaliacao_planeamento_e_qualidade/Qualidade.aspx](#)), and is made available for reference to the community at large.

GEAPQ is responsible for the controlled original version of the QM and for its ongoing update (whenever there are changes/revisions in the processes, procedures, regulatory orders, standards and guidelines related to quality assurance), archive (physical/paper and electronic copy), publication and divulgation.

1.2. Structure of the QM

ISCTE-IUL's Quality Manual outlines the organisational arrangements, responsibilities, processes, objectives and indicators that comprise SIGQ-IUL, as well as the principles guiding its implementation and monitoring.

This Manual also describes SIGQ-IUL's functioning, namely: the articulation of ISCTE-IUL's strategy for the quality policy; the responsibilities and relationships between the government bodies which participate in the conception, validation, attainment and improvement of prescriptive guidelines and quality assurance actions; the processes, plans and reports which evidence quality assurance at ISCTE-IUL.

The QM's supporting documents are **ISCTE-IUL Strategic Plan** and the **Annual Plan of Activities** (APA).

This version of the QM is structured into three chapters.

- Chapter 1 is a brief introduction presenting the historical framework regarding the MQ's approval, revision and distribution, its structure and respective legal and institutional framework - national and international legislation, standards, norms and recommendations.
- Chapter 2 contains the institutional commitment and policy for Quality, with the respective explanation of policy, strategy, mission and goals, along with its principles of ethics, responsibility, and sustainability. This chapter also presents ISCTE-IUL's organisational structure.
- Chapter 3 addresses SIGQ-IUL's general features, with emphasis on its structuring elements, organisational structure, levels of responsibility and System functioning, in a process-oriented approach. It also describes the methodologies for monitoring and assessing quality assurance regarding the institutional macroprocesses – strategic management; learning and teaching; research and external interaction. Internationalisation is also defined as a critical process in the institution and transversal to all others, supported by the management processes of human and material resources, as well as by the services in general.

Finally, the description of the ways of involving the internal and external stakeholders; the production and transmission of relevant information to the stakeholders, as well as SIGQ-IUL's continuous monitoring, assessment and improvement (revision by the System management).

1.3. QM legal framework and reference documents

The current version of the QM is based on a set of national and international legislation, standards, norms and recommendations, mainly the following:

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- AACSB International (2013) – The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business Eligibility Procedures and Accreditation Standards for Business Accreditation, Adopted: April 8, 2013; Updated: January 31, 2015.
 - AACSB International (2013 b) - Business Accreditation Standards Comparison –2013 & 2003 (www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/2013standards).
 - A3ES (2013). Audit of Internal Systems of Quality Assurance – Manual for the audit process, Assessment and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (A3ES), January 2013.
 - Decree-law No. 369/2007 (establishes the Assessment and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education – A3ES)
 - Legislative order No. 18/2009, Statutes of ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, Diário da República, 2nd series – No. 89 – May 8, 2009.
 - ENQA (2015). Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Revised ESG approved by the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan, on 14-15 May 2015: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
 - EQUIS (2015). EFMD Quality Improvement System. Brussels: European Foundation for Management Development.
 - EUA (2015). Institutional Evaluation Programme: Guidelines for institutions. European University Association.
 - EUR-ACE -Quality assessment to award the EUR-ACE label (second cycle of the Bologna process).
 - EUR-ACE® (2009). Framework Standards and Guidelines. Introduction to the EUR-ACE® Framework Standards and Guidelines.
 - A3ES, Glossary of the Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (n/d), available at:< <http://www.a3es.pt/sites/default/files/Gloss%C3%A1rio%20A3ES.pdf>>
 - A3ES (2010). Performance Indicators to Support the Processes for the Assessment and Accreditation of Study Programmes - Cláudia S. Sarrico, April 2010.
 - International Organization for standardization (2005) Quality Management - ISO 9000:2005 – fundamentals and vocabulary.
 - International Organization for standardization (2008) Quality Management - ISO 9001:2008 – sets out the requirements of a quality management system.
 - International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (2008), Standards of Excellence for Public Education. (<http://www.ias-iisa.org/iasia/about-iasia/iasia-and-the-undes-iasia-standards-of-excellence/>)
 - Regime Jurídico da Avaliação do Ensino Superior (Legal Framework for the Evaluation of Higher Education) (RJAES) – Law No. 38/2007, August 16
 - Regime Jurídico das Instituições de Ensino Superior (Legal Framework for Higher Education Institutions) (RJIES) – Law No. 62/2007, September 10
 - ISCTE-IUL (2015). ISCTE –IUL Services Regulation, nº 83/2015, Diário da República, 2nd series – N.º 38 – February 24, 2015.
 - A3ES (2013). Regulation No. 392/2013 - A3ES (Approves the system for the evaluation and accreditation procedures for higher education institutions and respective study cycles)
 - ENQA (2015). Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Revised ESG approved by the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan, on 14-15 May 2015: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – ENQA, 2015.
 - ISCTE-IUL (2011). Legislative Order No. 11/2011, Statutes of ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, Diário da República, 2nd series – No. 124 – June 30, 2011.

2. INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT AND POLICY FOR QUALITY

Quality assurance has taken a leading role for the sustainability of higher education institutions, both in the European and global arenas. Although the notion of quality has been widespread since the beginning of the twentieth century, especially in the industrial area, there is not a generally assumed universal definition of quality. Quality has different meanings according to different contexts.

Some authors (e.g., Harvey and Green, 1993) identified five main dimensions of quality: (a) quality as excellence (exceeding established high standards), (b) quality as perfection or consistency (flawless outcome or first attempt success), (c) quality as adequacy to the purpose (corresponding to the declared objective, the specifications or needs of the clients), (d) quality as value of the money invested (efficiency and efficacy), and (e) quality as transformation (organisational and institutional change).

According to the operational definition adopted by ISCTE-IUL, quality concerns the totality of the aspects and features of a product or service which support its capacity to satisfy declared or implied needs of its clients. **Quality assurance** refers to the processes used to ensure the compliance with and improvement of the quality standards and criteria in the various activity domains, so as to meet the needs of that activity's stakeholders, namely students, faculty members, researchers, employees, clients and the community at large.

Quality assurance is based upon a self-regulatory system carried out by all members of the organisation focused on the adjustment and improvement at all the levels of their activity. The quality assurance system must consider the desired results (for instance, the students' acquisition of specific knowledge and skills), the processes that must support those results (eg., the study plans, the activities of the services), and the resources involved in those processes (eg., the excellence of the faculty members and students, material and technological, institutional culture). Quality assurance shall be assessed and evaluated considering each one of these factors, not being, therefore, only restricted to the procedures.

Quality assurance has an external component and an internal component. External quality assurance includes various types of evaluation carried out by external entities that, according to their objectives, seek to verify, for example, whether their mission and quality standards are met in their activity, namely in what regards the attained results, the processes, procedures, products, services, etc, as well as the responsibility for the use of the resources. For example, a study cycle's accreditation is carried out by an external commission under the responsibility of A3ES (by governmental delegation) and determines whether the respective programme corresponds to or excels the defined quality criteria and standards. Accreditation systems usually involve three steps: self-assessment, external assessment, and the accreditation itself. The quality assurance system is not limited to accreditation procedures.

Internal quality assurance seeks the institutional development and monitoring of internal liability for the accomplishment of the organisational values, standards and goals, and the levels of quality in the performance in the areas of teaching and learning, research, university extension, ethics and social responsibility by the various actors within the organisation, considering the institution's mission, context and strategy. This process is under the responsibility of all the organisation's members, with the support provided by the institution's technical services and management bodies. The greater or lower degree of focus on the results, processes or resources, depends on the system's maturity, on the levels already achieved in each aspect and on the institutional goals.

Therefore, the quality assurance system requires an ongoing and open process of each organisation member's responsibility, and shall be manifest in that member's daily performance.

2.1. Policy and strategy for quality

ISCTE-IUL quality policy is based on sharing the mission, vision and strategic goals of the institution. The deployment of the strategy is carried out through the APA, which specifies the actions to be developed, the goals to be met, the people that are responsible for these, and the deadlines.

SIGQ-IUL is based on a set of procedures and mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of the activities carried out, so as to generate effective measures of self-regulation that enable the attainment of all the internal and external requirements and the continuous improvement of the quality in its various components.

The strategy for quality is highly based on the involvement of the ISCTE-IUL community in the discussion of goals and activities in the Annual Plan of Activities, on the definition and design of processes, and on the quality assurance system, according to the rules governing the operation of the system's organisational apparatus, the institution's regular management and its accountability.

The strategy for quality also aims at consolidating an institutional culture of quality and self-accountability, based on the regular evaluation, involving the various stakeholders and supporting the clear and active students' participation throughout that process.

In the framework of the strategic development plan, from 2011 onwards, SIGQ-IUL was duly formalised, meeting the standards defined at national and international levels, as well as encapsulated in the QM and in the APA.

2.2. Mission and goals

The mission of ISCTE-IUL is to create and convey scientific knowledge according to the best international standards, training highly skilled professionals, mainly at the postgraduate level, in the areas of management, information technology and architecture, social sciences and public policy, for the advancement of society.

This mission is achieved by improving the research-teaching nexus with a strong applied focus, by fostering multidisciplinary learning, and by maximizing the interplay between entrepreneurship, technology and innovation to prepare competent professionals able to deal effectively with the forthcoming challenges of society, within profit and non-profit organizations.

ISCTE-IUL believes that the achievement of this mission must take place at all levels: individual, organisation and society. At individual level, it aims to provide students demanding conditions for learning various skills and for personal and ethical development, which may increase their employability and contribute towards the attainment of their professional, personal and social expectations. At the organisation level, ISCTE-IUL seeks to promote empirical study and application of validated and relevant knowledge for all types of organisations - private, public and non-profit -, so as to contribute towards their innovation, development, efficacy and sustainability. At society level, ISCTE-IUL aims to contribute towards the scientific progression within its knowledge areas, and to propose innovative solutions that may boost the community's cultural, social and economical development, both from the regional and

national perspectives, and towards its sustainability. The recognition of ISCTE-IUL's high quality action at these three levels is crucial for its institutional reputation in its scientific areas of activity.

This mission's achievement is carried out in the framework of a quality-focused culture, which articulates the strategic goals of the institution, the legal framework that governs it, academic freedom, ethics, responsibility and sustainability.

The mission is reflected into a vision of ISCTE-IUL as a research oriented university focused on deploying a dynamics of continuous improvement of the institution in its various areas of management and functioning, from which stand out:

- a. A highly skilled faculty and body of researchers representing the best international standards;
- b. The internationalization of teaching, research and knowledge transfer activities, as well as of faculty members and students, which fully integrates ISCTE-IUL in the international research and education networks;
- c. The transfer and exchange of the produced scientific and technological knowledge, particularly through development of products, provision of services the community, lifelong education and promotion of entrepreneurship and employability;
- d. The realization and promotion of activities that grant access and fruition of cultural and scientific property to individual users and groups within and without ISCTE-IUL;
- e. The permanent interaction with society, contributing to the analysis and resolution of problems at national and regional levels, as well as the establishment of partnerships with organizations committed to the cultural, social and economic development of the country;
- f. The professionalization of management and the qualification of infrastructures by means of creating a culture of excellence that provides effective support to research, teaching and knowledge transfer activities in order to ensure institutional sustainability.

This dynamics of improvement is based on the ISCTE-IUL community's commitment with the following general goals for quality:

- Ensuring the respect for the institution's values and goals;
- Adopting adequate and innovative pedagogic practices, as well as thorough pioneering and original scientific practices;
- Guaranteeing the conditions for the development and diffusion of knowledge, learning, know-how and innovation;
- Ensuring academic freedom;
- Guaranteeing an adequate reception that enables to each one of its members the full integration in the institution;
- Promoting the well-being of all its members, offering a suitable environment to study, work, research and achieve personal development;
- Providing for the active involvement and participation of internal and external stakeholders in the institution's regular functioning, including the alumni;
- Contributing towards the continuous improvement of the institution's functioning, namely by carrying out simple, uniform and standardised administrative tasks;
- Ensuring fair and transparent evaluations, based on precise objectives and clear procedures, that may sustain the liability and accountability of its members;
- Guaranteeing the timely information and adequate interaction within the services and between the services and the entities that compose ISCTE-IUL;

- Making scientific and cultural products and goods available to society, that may promote its development;
- Valuing the interactions between its members and the national and international academic world, the corporate world and society;
- Regularly monitoring the processes and activities that accomplish ISCTE-IUL's mission.

These objectives are consistent with ISCTE-IUL's general strategy and are translated into goals defined yearly in the plans of activities that involve ISCTE-IUL schools and other decentralised organic units, services and affiliates.

2.3. Ethics, responsibility and sustainability

ISCTE-IUL is governed by values and principles with high levels of ethics, responsibility and sustainability, which are pursued in all internal and external activities.

Ethics is a fundamental pillar for the quality of teaching and research at ISCTE-IUL. Among the main values which characterise its institutional culture, the most prominent are liberty, diversity, democracy, equality, reliability, thoroughness, impartiality, honesty, integrity and respect for the others. ISCTE-IUL seeks to promote high standards of ethical behaviour among its employees, faculty members, researchers and students, accordingly with the standards established in its regulations. ISCTE-IUL's Ethics Committee regulation was published In 2011, formalising the Ethics Committee as a rectorial advisory body on ethical issues regarding ISCTE-IUL's areas of teaching and learning, scientific research, provision of services to the community, and functioning of the Institution.

ISCTE-IUL's Academic Code of Conduct highlights the set of general principles which guide the actions and behaviour of the members of the academic community regarding intra-institutional relationships. This Code is applied to all elements of the academic community, namely: students; faculty and non-faculty staff; regardless of the nature of their contractual relationship with ISCTE-IUL, researchers and other project collaborators; as well as those who are jointly bound to other entities or institutions.

In terms of responsibility, ISCTE-IUL seeks to take into account the impact of its decisions and activities on the internal community and the society, including the preoccupation with social equality and justice, as well as on the various dimensions of the environment.

Institutional, social, environmental and economical sustainability is a central concern in ISCTE-IUL strategy, and it is sought in ISCTE-IUL's management practices and in teaching, research, knowledge transfer to the organisations and to society.

Beyond the formal regulation that contemplates ethics, responsibility and sustainability, ISCTE-IUL seeks to contribute towards a responsible and sustainable development of society, through teaching and learning, research, training for citizenship and the active intervention in the community, disseminating knowledge and proposing innovative solutions for organisational, social and environmental problems.

2.4. ISCTE-IUL organisational structure

ISCTE-IUL belongs to Fundação ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (May 2009) which is managed by the Board of Trustees.

ISCTE-IUL's organisational structure includes teaching and research organic units; university extension units focused on external interaction (via subsidiaries); and social services.

ISCTE-IUL bodies are:

- Government Bodies: General Council, Rector and Management Board;
- Advisory Bodies: Senate, University Council, Quality Advisory Board and Ethics Committee;
- ISCTE-IUL scientific and educational activities', respectively: Scientific Council and Pedagogic Council;
- Other Bodies: Student Ombudsperson, Quality Assurance Commission.

Teaching and research organic units currently include the schools, departments, research units and the Soft Skills Office.

Regarding services, internal organisation obeys to a graded structure model, which includes: Rectory Services; Central Technostructure (made up of nuclear organic structures referred to as Offices) and Central Services (made up of nuclear organic structures referred to as Services, which are organised into Units or Areas). ISCTE-IUL Services Regulation (Regulation 83/2015, Diário da República, No. 38, 24 February, 2015) is available at ISCTE-IUL's internal information portal – MyIscte and in the internet (<http://www.iscte-iul.pt/home.aspx>).

The composition and responsibilities of ISCTE-IUL's university bodies and respective decentralised organic units are laid down in ISCTE-IUL's Statutes (Legislative Order No. 11/2011, Diário da República, 2nd series – No. 124 – 30 June, 2011). ISCTE-IUL's organisational charts are available at the institutional website.

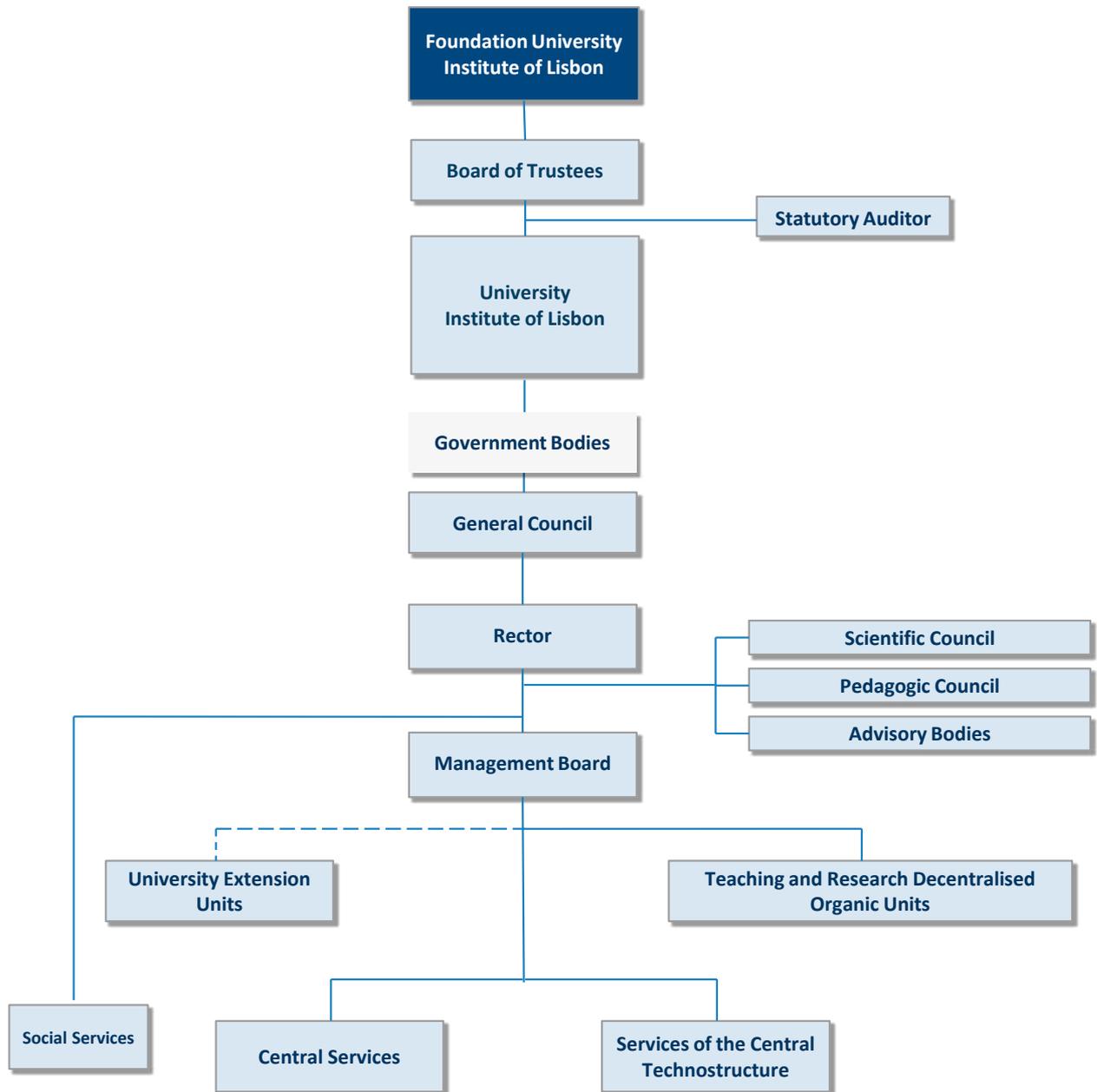


Illustration 2.3.1 – ISCTE-IUL General Macro-Organisational Chart

3. ISCTE-IUL INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM (SIGQ-IUL)

3.1. SIGQ-IUL organisation

SIGQ-IUL's scope systematically includes all activities developed at ISCTE-IUL in the areas of social sciences and public policy, management and economics, and technology and architecture, as well as the resources used, and is focused on the various macro-processes of the institutional mission – public higher education: teaching and learning (undergraduate and post-graduate); research; interaction with society and internationalisation.

3.1.1. SIGQ-IUL organisational structure and responsibilities

SIGQ-IUL is based on A3ES' recommendations (A3ES, 2011), has as reference the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ENQA, 2009), as well as other guidelines from ENQA (2010) and EUA (EUA, 2012) and integrates the quality culture values developed along ISCTE-IUL's history. SIGQ-IUL also observes the requirements of the various professional associations related to the degrees taught at ISCTE-IUL, namely in the areas of management (AACSB, 2015) and technology (EUR-ACE, 2015).

The system comprehends the intervention of various actors at several organisational levels and with different degrees of responsibility. In order to guarantee quality assurance, the complexity of the related interactions between all participants, and at the different levels, needs to be duly regulated and strategically oriented and monitored.

The achievement of quality in each one of the abovementioned areas is based on the individual and collective action of four sets of internal stakeholders: students, faculty members, researchers and non-faculty personnel. At the structure and middle management levels, quality assurance requires a consistent and permanent intervention by the decentralised organic units, the technostructure and administrative services, and by the affiliates. Articulation at strategic level is achieved through the action of the government bodies, the coordination bodies and the advisory bodies, which include external stakeholders.

SIGQ-IUL's organisational model is based on the existing structures and is specifically composed by:

- a. Quality Assurance Commission (CGQ);
- b. Quality Assurance Advisory Board (ConCQ);
- c. Curricular Analysis Commission (CAC);
- d. Studies, Evaluation, Planning and Quality Office (GEAPQ).

A) Quality Assurance Commission (CGQ)

Responsibilities:

- Recommending institutional policy and strategic objectives for quality to the Rector;
- Ensuring the SIGQ's adjustment to the legal standards and to the criteria established by the regulatory authorities;
- Establishing procedures, structures and activity plans for the achievement of SIGQ-IUL;
- Monitoring the achievement of SIGQ-IUL;
- Analysing and making decisions based on the conclusions of the SIGQ-IUL's Revision report;
- Assessing the proposals of self-evaluation reports for cycles in operation and of institutional report;

- Suggesting improvements to the quality assurance system;
- Revising the Quality Manual and putting it forward to the Rector for approval.

Composition:

The commission is presided by a Vice-Rector for the respective area and includes the quality director and the quality manager appointed by the Rector to manage the System's implementation and monitoring.

The members of the Commission are:

- CGQ President;
- Quality Director;
- Quality Manager;
- President of the Scientific Council;
- President of the Pedagogic Council;
- Director-Coordinator.

Functioning:

- Holds regular bi-annual meetings and extraordinary meetings held by the respective President's decision;
- The meeting's notice, along with the agenda, must be sent at least eight days prior to the date of the meeting;
- The decisions taken by CGQ are recorded in minutes elaborated by the GEAPQ and made available on ISCTE-IUL's intranet;
- The CGQ President may invite other heads of organic units whenever their participation is considered pertinent for the subject matter under discussion.

B) Quality Assurance Advisory Board (ConCQ)**Responsibilities:**

- Ensuring that the Quality Policy integrates the internal and external stakeholders' contribution, aiming at ISCTE-IUL's sustainable development;
- Guaranteeing that the Quality Policy and Objectives reflect ISCTE-IUL's culture and values and adequately articulate the strategy and activities carried out at the institution, considering the regulatory entities' standards and criteria.

Composition:

- Rector (Chairman);
- Vice-Rectors and Pro-Rectors;
- Representatives of ISCTE-IUL alumni's employers (four);
- Representatives from public and social entities (three);
- Alumni (two from each ISCTE-IUL's school);
- President of the Scientific Council;
- President of the Pedagogic Council;
- President of the Ethics Committee;
- Research unit directors;
- School directors;
- Student Ombudsperson;
- Presidents/directors of the affiliates;
- Student representatives;
- President of ISCTE-IUL's Students' Association;

- Non-faculty staff representatives (three);
- CGQ members.

Functioning:

- The Council is chaired by the Rector;
- Ordinary meetings are held once a year and extraordinary meetings are held by Rector's decision.
- The meeting's notice, along with the agenda, must be sent at least fifteen days before the date of the meeting;
- ConCQ's recommendations are recorded in minutes elaborated by GEAPQ and made available on the Internet;
- Representatives of external stakeholders are substituted every two years.

C) Curricular Analysis Commission (CAC)

Responsibilities:

- Ensuring compliance with ISCTE-IUL's study plans following the quality assurance standards, the regulatory entities' rules and ISCTE-IUL's policy and strategy for institutional quality and sustainability.

Composition:

- Vice-Rectors;
- Pro-Rectors;
- President of the Scientific Council;
- President of the Pedagogic Council.

Functioning:

- The commission is coordinated by a Vice-Rector or a Pro-Rector;
- Ordinary meetings are held once a year and extraordinary meetings are held whenever there are proposals for study plan creation or change;
- CAC's recommendations are recorded in minutes made available on ISCTE-IUL's intranet;
- CAC relies on technical and administrative support provided by the Curricular Management Office.

D) Studies, Evaluation, Planning and Quality Office (GEAPQ)

GEAPQ is the structure that provides logistic support to SIGQ-IUL, coordinated by the Quality Director.

Responsibilities:

- Ensuring technical and administrative support to SIGQ-IUL's bodies;
- Managing the process towards the achievement of quality assurance and self-assessment;
- Managing the collection, systematising and analysis of information about quality;
- Managing the relation between SIGQ-IUL and ISCTE-IUL structure units;
- Managing the articulation between SIGQ-IUL and external entities related with quality management and assurance;
- Providing self-assessment support to the organic units;
- Preparing institutional self-assessment reports;
- Ensuring the permanent update of indicators and information on SIGQ-IUL;
- Other responsibilities in the scope of SIGQ-IUL.

Regarding SIGQ-IUL's coordination activities, the functions of the quality director are to be considered, as described below.

Responsibilities of the quality director:

- Working directly under the coordination of the Management Representative for SIGQ-IUL on the implementation of the policies and goals he/she defines;
- Promoting a general awareness for quality and its requirements within ISCTE-IUL;
- Ensuring the SIGQ-IUL planning is conducted considering the system's requirements and the quality goals;
- Ensuring the analysis of results emanating from the Quality Objectives' monitoring;
- Ensuring that SIGQ-IUL's integrity is maintained whenever any changes to it are planned or implemented;
- Ensuring the maintenance of SIGQ-IUL.

Responsibilities of the quality manager:

- Working directly under the coordination of the Quality Director in the operational implementation of the policies and goals defined by the Management Representative;
- Ensuring the attainment of the specific quality management operational tasks related to the requirements of general control of documents and records, internal audits, non-compliance, corrective and preventive actions and complaints;
- Keeping the Quality Director informed on any operational issue that may negatively impact SIGQ-IUL;
- Providing assistance to the Quality Services and to the Quality Liaisons persons in the attainment of their operational duties, in what concerns their area of influence and impact at the level of SIGQ-IUL.

SIGQ-IUL also provides for the appointment of a "quality liaison" per service/unit and office. This appointment is carried out by the Rector, after suggestion by the heads of the central services and the central technostructure. These elements shall assume the role of "quality liaisons person" in their respective service, unit or office, functioning as permanent liaisons to GEAPQ-IUL.

Responsibilities of the quality liaison person:

- Encouraging the use of quality practices within the service/unit or office , promoting the implementation of the quality policy and the attainment of the goals established for quality, always based upon ISCTE-IUL's mission and vision;
- Maintaining the permanent monitoring on quality issues within their respective service/unit or office, guaranteeing that eventual situations of non-compliance are recorded and communicated to GEAPQ, for its due information and to obtain support in the respective resolution;
- Ensuring that the documentation to support quality assurance by the service/unit or office, is identified and kept up to date, reporting that information to GEAPQ from time to time;
- Guaranteeing the availability to play a part in the periodical quality coordination meetings, as well as in team work for quality improvement, promoted by GEAPQ, along with promoting the implementation of the improvement actions identified in the aforementioned meetings;
- Keeping up with quality audits carried out in his/her service/unit or office, cooperating with GEAPQ in implementing eventual improvement actions arising from those audits.

3.1.2. SIGQ-IUL process-oriented approach

SIGQ-IUL is focused on the stakeholders' needs (students, faculty members, researchers, non-faculty employees and external stakeholders), guided by a process-oriented approach (Image 3.1.2.1).

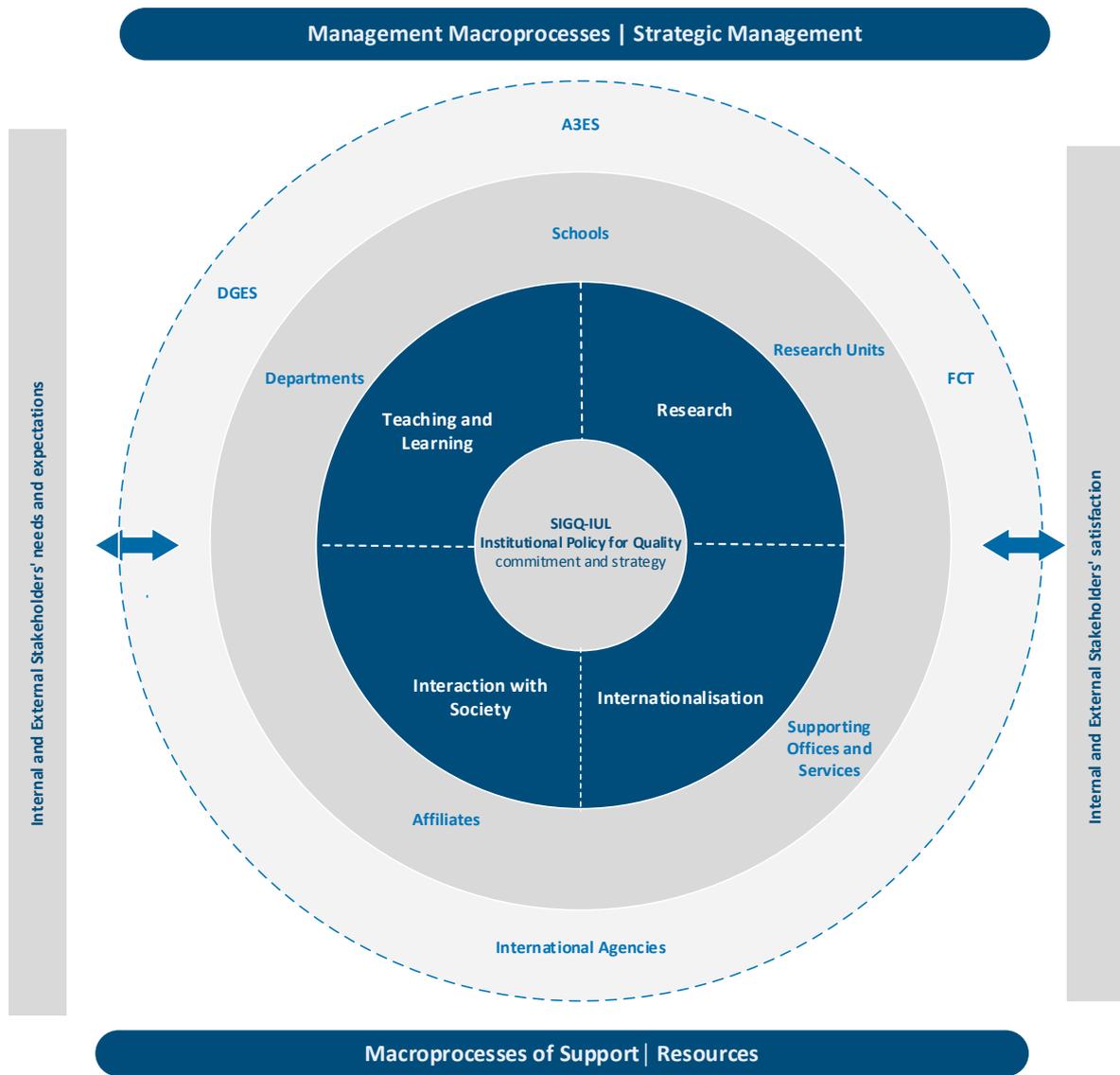


Illustration 3.1.2.1 - Systemic Model of ISCTE-IUL's SIGQ-IUL

ISCTE-IUL uses a process-oriented approach at three levels: macroprocesses; processes and subprocesses (Image 3.1.2.2)

- **Management macroprocesses | Strategic management**

These processes define ISCTE-IUL's commitment and responsibility towards the Government, the Board of Trustees, and the stakeholders, and lay down the strategic guidelines, both for ISCTE-IUL's operational processes and for the supporting processes, namely through the elaboration, approval and monitoring of the Strategic Plan and the Annual Plan of activities (axes of intervention; strategic goals; and operational goals). This macroprocess includes the global planning of the Institution's activities, communication with the Government, executive activities (new services, products, processes), and the elaboration of the annual reports of activities, as well as the adjustments made to SIGQ-IUL.

- **Operational macroprocesses**

These processes represent the fundamental elements of the execution of ISCTE-IUL's mission and strategy, adding value for students, researchers, employees and stakeholders, as well as for society. They arise from the process of strategic management, operate using the resources made available by the supporting processes so as to guarantee quality assurance in teaching and learning, in research and in the interaction with society, as well as in internationalisation.

- **Macroprocesses of support | Resources**

These processes are paramount to ensure that ISCTE-IUL's operational processes are carried out assuring the required level of quality, accordingly with the current European and International standards and the applicable legal requirements. They include all the processes which are deemed necessary to the provision of resources, namely: human resources; budgetary and financial management; procurement/purchases; physical infrastructures and equipment; information systems; communication and multimedia; academic events and space management; computer and communication resources; information and documentation; and social action. These processes emanate from the guidelines of the strategic management process, and interact with the key processes, making the adequate and necessary resources available to ensure their quality.

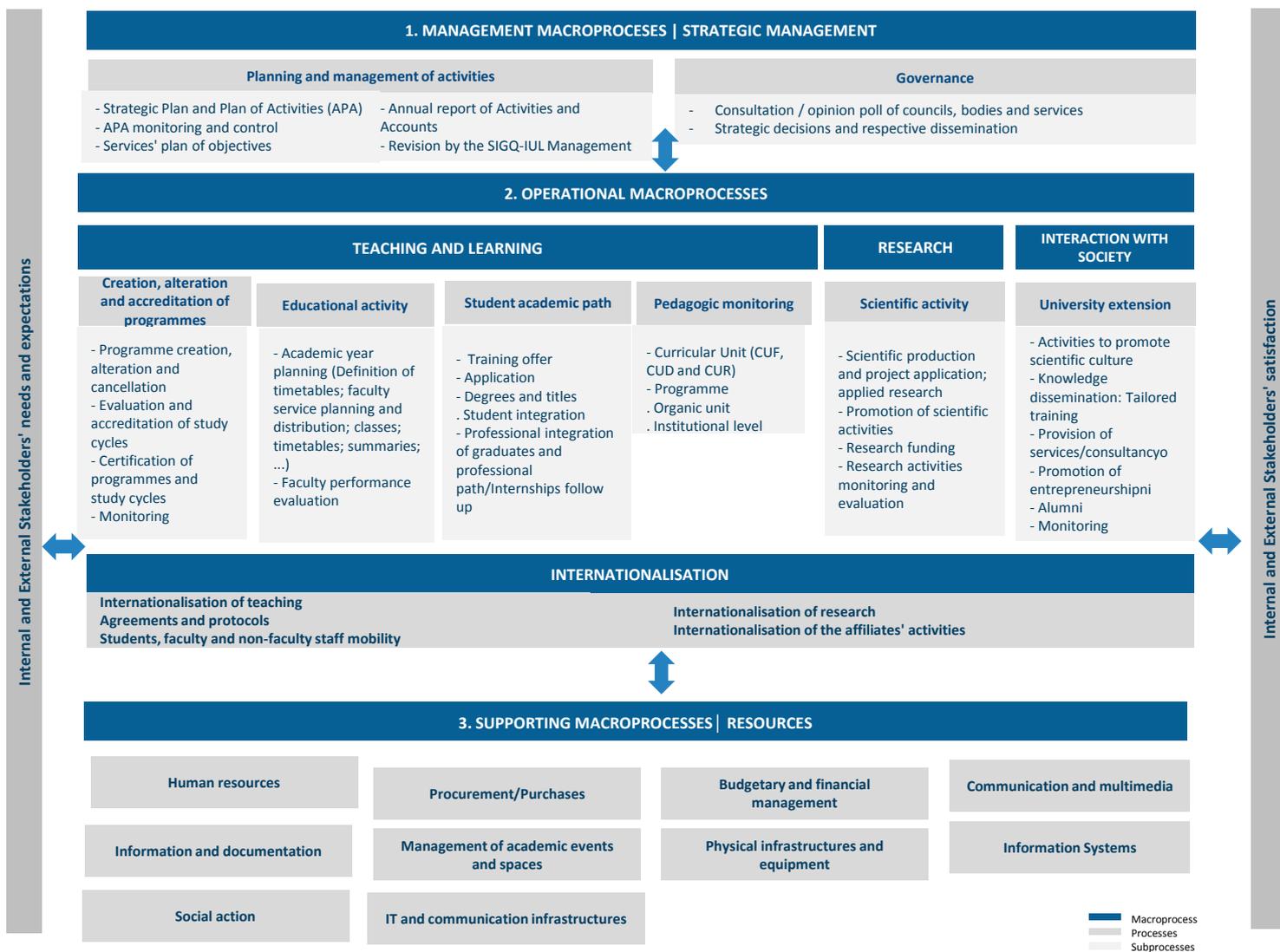


Illustration 3.1.2.2 - Map of iscte-iul macroprocesses

These macroprocesses are supported by activities and procedures that operationally attain the quality policy. Accordingly with the standard ISO 9001, the documented procedures are the following:

- Document management (requirement 4.2.3);
- Record management (requirement 4.2.4);
- Internal audit (requirement 8.2.2);
- Non-compliant product control (requirement 8.3);
- Corrective action (requirement 8.5.2);
- Preventive action (requirement 8.5.3)

All the Requirements of the Standard ISO 9001 are applicable to SIGQ-IUL, except for the requirement: 7.6 “control measuring and monitoring equipment”. ISCTE-IUL does not use measuring and monitoring equipment in its activities.

Quality procedures are made known through the intranet and/or Internet, according to the decision of the service coordinator.

ISCTE-IUL obtained the certification ISO 9001 of its services in 2008 and, since then, it has been gradually renewed simultaneously with the annual revision of the number of certified procedures. Initially, the field of application of the ISO 9001:2008 quality management system was mainly focused on the management and support processes (services), involving also the Scientific and Pedagogic Councils. In 2014, the scope of certification of SIGQ-IUL was extended to the processes of teaching and learning and research and, in 2015, to the process of external interaction.

3.1.3. Participation of the (internal and external) stakeholders in SIGQ-IUL

ISCTE-IUL's quality policy ascribes great importance to the participation of all relevant, internal and external, stakeholders so as to ensure that all the Institution's processes correspond to their, and to guarantee their satisfaction.

The type and frequency of the partners' involvement are varied, and take into account the level of analysis that is at stake in each case, from the curricular units, in which the participation of students, faculty members and coordinators is of the essence, up to the global evaluation, which is more connected to the involvement of external stakeholders, students' representatives, faculty and non-faculty staff and the heads of bodies and decentralised units. Beyond the direct involvement, the system includes the regular consultation of various stakeholders through surveys, which are already part of the established ISCTE-IUL practices.

In the processes of strategic planning and quality assurance, like in the management practices already in place, the participation of the external stakeholders is very noticeable, with their participation in CongQ.

in the particular case of the **students**, their involvement in the advisory and government bodies of the Institution is noteworthy, namely in the General Council, in the Pedagogic Council, in the Pedagogic Commissions, in the Year Council and in CongQ. The Student Association participates in all matters of the students' interest, fosters the physical, cultural and scientific development, contributing towards the increase of its social, political, civic and democratic conscience. The president of the Student Association is inclusively a member of the Management Council, upon proposal of the Rector and appointment by the Board of Trustees.

Further to the direct intervention in the pedagogic bodies and in the year councils, the participation in the pedagogic monitoring surveys, the satisfaction surveys promoted by the services, as well as in the mobility surveys, is one of the most recurring ways of involving the student population in the quality of teaching and learning.

Regarding former students, the existence of a specific unit to manage the relationship between the institution and this group has been paramount to increase their involvement in the quality of teaching. The alumni have been involved in processes of discussion about the skills that may boost the employability of current students, about partnerships between lecturers/researchers and companies, as well as about the labour market needs. Partnerships have been established with the companies in which ISCTE-IUL's Alumni currently work.

3.2. Quality monitoring and assessment

Regarding each macroprocess, various monitoring and assessment apparatuses have been implemented, so as to ensure the attainment of the intended quality standards, along with their continuous improvement.

3.2.1. Strategic management

Quality assurance in ISCTE-IUL's strategic management is a fundamental element of SIGQ-IUL. This macroprocess determines the institutional commitment and responsibilities towards the Government and the stakeholders, establishes the Institution's strategic guidelines and the way in which the activities and processes are designed, organised, managed and supervised, considering their efficiency and effectiveness.

Based on the annual report of activities, ISCTE-IUL's government bodies, in connection with their respective advisory bodies, make an annual analysis of the degree of achievement of the predefined objectives and goals and promote a broad debate thereon, with the participation of faculty members, students and non-faculty staff, as well as of the external stakeholders.

Based on the discussion and the analyses carried out within SIGQ-IUL's organisational apparatus, the General Council approves the Activity Report. It is for the Rector to submit the Plan of Activities for the following year to the General Council's approval.

Throughout the year, the rectory team organises regular meetings with:

- School directors, to analyse and supervise the central aspects regarding academic activity planning and respective implementation and monitoring, according to the goals set in the APA;
- Research unit directors, to analyse matters regarding projects, funding, competitions and functioning and to supervise the evolution of the activities;
- Executives of the affiliates, to analyse the achievement of the planned activities, the quality assurance procedures and the articulation with the goals of ISCTE-IUL;
- Department directors, to analyse the implementation of activities and the attainment of the academic plan in its various aspects;

- Service/office managers, and representatives of the students to discuss and analyse matters of general interest and to present the degree of implementation of the APA.

These meetings are generally monthly, except for the last one, which is semi-annual. Further to these meetings, which ensure the vertical integration and the horizontal articulation, the remaining bodies, including the advisory boards, hold meetings periodically, or whenever necessary.

3.2.2. Teaching and learning

Regarding quality assurance in teaching and learning, there are presently various benchmarks and standards produced by external entities and accreditation agencies, with particular emphasis on the standards established by ENQA and A3ES, as well as by international associations within the scientific areas taught at ISCTE-IUL (e.g., AACSB, 2013; EUR-ACE; EQUIS, 2013). In conformity with the practices that have been implemented in the best universities, and by pursuing the recommendations from the main agencies, ISCTE-IUL's Quality Manual contemplates the procedures and standards that are essential for quality assurance in all teaching and learning dimensions. Their thorough explanation in the current Manual is based on the level of detail that has been suggested by the external entities, and does not overlap with the research areas in which the quality assurance specifications are already generally objective-oriented and consolidated.

3.2.2.1. Programme Creation, Change and Accreditation

The definition of procedures for the processes of programme creation, alteration and accreditation is paramount to the maintenance of teaching quality standards. ISCTE-IUL's permanent search for high levels of efficiency and efficacy in programme management, as well as update and market analysis effort, along with the conformity with (national and international) accreditation agencies' benchmarks, require a frequent adjustment of study plans, including the substitution of some programmes, the alteration of current programmes and the creation of new programmes.

Therefore, SIGQ-IUL has mechanisms to support curricular revision. In the processes of programme creation, change and extinction, the following mechanisms stand out:

- The guidelines defined in orders issued by the Rector are followed, in which the benchmarks are explained, namely those inherent to the Bologna model and the ECTS credit system, as well as the competences of the various ISCTE-IUL bodies on this subject;
- Programme directions and scientific and pedagogic bodies are always included in the process, at school and department levels and at central level, as well as the Curricular Analysis Commission;
- The contributions from former students, employers and other relevant external partners are collected and considered, as result of surveys and meetings;
- The monitoring processes for educational quality, study cycle assessment/accreditation, study plan alteration and programme creation are totally defined and implemented, regarding teaching and learning, and duly framed in the scope of ISO 9001.

These monitoring tools aim at the continuous improvement of teaching quality through cyclic revision of their results and assessment of goal attainment, both in teaching and learning and in the real-time adjustment of internal processes.

3.2.2.2. Educational activity

Quality assurance in teaching and learning at ISCTE-IUL is also based on the quality of its faculty. ISCTE-IUL has its own, established, faculty staff (97% professors holding doctorate degrees¹), with high academic qualifications, with a high level of skills accordingly with the best international criteria, and specialised in the training areas of the programmes provided by the Institution.

In this scope, the planning of faculty service distribution enables a proper faculty management. According to ISCTE-IUL's Faculty Service Regulation, faculty service is composed by various components:

- Pedagogic activity, which includes the activities of teaching, supervision, guidance, training and mentoring needed to accomplish the Institution's academic mission;
- Research, which comprises those activities related to the production of knowledge, original discovery and research, technological development, cultural creation, methodological development, and similar activities, as well as the integration in scientific and professional networks and the dissemination of scientific knowledge;
- Provision of services to the Institution, which is defined as the performance of activities resulting from the participation in university management bodies, boards of examiners, ad hoc commissions, promotion of the institution, new student recruitment, and other activities deemed necessary for the functioning of ISCTE -IUL;
- Knowledge transfer and university extension activities, which comprehend those activities focused on studying and solving problems of the community.

For faculty members in full-time or exclusivity were defined objective and equitable criteria for the faculty profiles, regarding the aforementioned components. Regarding the class component, further to the time spent with the supervision of master dissertations/project works, the faculty members' time allocation is based on the hours dedicated to teaching and student tutoring.

With view to guaranteeing a proper management of ISCTE-IUL's faculty and boosting their scientific and pedagogic components in the various programmes offered by the Institution, a faculty service plan is prepared every year, according to a procedure already formalised.

The faculty staff performance evaluation Regulation is articulated with ISCTE-IUL's faculty service provision Regulation and sets the standards and procedures for the assessment of their activity's various components: teaching, research, university management and university extension.

The faculty members' performance evaluation takes place in three-year periods, with annual monitoring, based on the goal set by the Rector. ISCTE-IUL has developed its own platform (i-meritus), which is connected to the academic, research and management information systems (Fénix, Ciência-iul and SAP), which enables the automatic integration of the majority of the information needed for the assessment. The first three-yearly evaluation has already been concluded, and its general results are very positive.

3.2.2.3. Student academic path

The students' academic path is one of ISCTE-IUL's concerns, from the moment of application up to professional inclusion and professional guidance. It is part of the institutional mission to provide students

¹ Source: ISCTE-IUL, Activity Report, 2014.

the proper conditions for their academic adaptation; demanding conditions for learning various skills, and of personal and ethical development which may increase their employability and enable the attainment of their professional, personal and social aspirations.

To ensure support to 1st cycle candidates, ISCTE-IUL includes the Admissions Office. In all study cycles, the process of application and registration takes place through the Fénix portal. The analysis of 2nd and 3rd cycle applications is based on previously defined selection and ordering criteria for each programme and communicated through ISCTE-IUL's portal. The results are made available to all candidates through Fénix.

Every year, ISCTE-IUL organises IULCOME, an innovative event which promotes the inclusion of the 1st cycle students from all Schools – Business School, School of Social Sciences, School of Sociology and Public Policy and School of Technology and Architecture – aiming to facilitate the transition to higher education and to welcome 1st year students. This initiative takes place in the week before classes begin and involves 2nd and 3rd year students (mentors), faculty members (tutors), and former students (Alumni), as well as representatives from various companies/institutions.

IULCOME is organised in partnership with the Student Association and with ISCTE-IUL's subsidiaries, namely Audax-Centre for Entrepreneurship. Further to the workshops, debates and team building activities included in the programme, a set of volunteering activities are organised in the city of Lisbon, involving other partners and entities.

In the beginning of the year, the schools carry out information sessions for the new students to facilitate their inclusion in the academic community (socialising, available services and internal regulations). The regulations for academic, scientific and educational management are available at the internal information portal.

GEAPQ applies an online annual survey to the new students, with the following goals: understand their motivations to pursue education; the sources of information used to choose ISCTE-IUL; the factors that attracted them to ISCTE-IUL and their specific programme; and their performance expectations.

ISCTE-IUL includes the Social Action Service in its structure so as to promote student social support and psychological counselling. There is also student hosting in the Research Units, to engage them in scientific activities, for instance the participation in research projects and attribution of research scholarships.

The Career Services and Alumni office has the main mission of supporting the students' inclusion in the labour market, as well as guiding students throughout their professional path. This office's role is: to plan, propose and establish training actions that may promote employability among students and alumni; to manage the contact and cooperation protocols with national and international entities, so as to foster employability among graduates, as well as scientific employment; to guide students and alumni, and to create opportunities for their integration in the labour market through systematic contact with employers and alumni; to promote, formalise and accompany the placement of students in curricular internships and provide support in their search for professional internships; to create professional networking events with the participation of recently qualified graduates and alumni; to manage the information system of support to their main activities, management of job demand and offer, contacts and networking update and promotion of alumni engagement through events organised especially for that effect.

Every year, GEAPQ carries out surveys to monitor ISCTE-IUL graduates' integration into working life, aiming to know their level of employability and their paths towards labour market inclusion up to one year after graduation. From time to time, GEAPQ-IUL also carries out surveys among the employers of ISCTE-IUL former students, which have the main goal of getting to know the opinion of those employers about the professionals trained at ISCTE-IUL. In both cases, the results are made known in ISCTE-IUL's portal, enabling the submission of proposals to apply changes to current study plans by the scientific commissions of departments/schools.

3.2.2.4. Educational monitoring

The monitoring of teaching and learning quality is carried out according to a **multilevel approach**, which, considering the specificity of each one of the levels considered, seeks to successively aggregate and articulate the evaluations carried out, so as to produce six-monthly and/or annual reports that contribute towards the continuous improvement of teaching quality.

Therefore, the monitoring process includes the following successive levels of evaluation: the **Curricular Unit, the Programme, the Organic Unit and institutional level**.

At each level, the reports are guided by the terms of reference presented in the current Manual.

At each Organic Unit's level, the coordination of the teaching quality assurance processes is under the responsibility of The Organic Unit's Direction, after consulting the respective Scientific and Pedagogic Commissions (in the case of the Schools), accordingly with the standards defined in the current Manual and with the common guidelines provided by the Quality Assurance Commission.

GEAPQ provides the technical and logistical support defined in its competences, namely in what regards the centralised application of the various surveys related to teaching.

The Computer and Communication Infrastructure Services (SIIC) provide the necessary support for the production and online publication of most of the information and the reports elaborated at the various assessment levels. Through the Fénix Academic Management System, the SIIC provide the necessary support for the application of the pedagogical monitoring surveys to students and faculty members, in a predefined format, but contemplating the existence of open questions that may enable the input of comments by the respondents.

1 | CURRICULAR UNIT

All programmes' study plans are based on the curricular units (CU). Therefore, the teaching and learning organisation and planning is based on the curricular unit as the fundamental pillar of the programme's architecture. Its monitoring represents the essential basic element of the quality evaluation process in what regards the achievement of the programmes' objectives, the teaching processes and the contribution of students towards learning and continuous improvement.

The elaboration of the **Curricular Unit File (CUF)**, whose content is made available in Portuguese and in English is under the responsibility of the CU Coordinator. The CUF is publicly made available after approval by the respective department's ECTS Coordinator, whose job description is defined in an Order issued by ISCTE-IUL's Rector. The CUF provides for the following elements:

- Curricular Unit Identification (name; code; teaching languages; prerequisites; among others);
- Curricular unit general goals;
- Learning outcomes;
- Syllabus;
- Demonstration of the syllabus coherence with the curricular unit's objectives (internal information);
- Evaluation process;
- Teaching and learning process;
- Demonstration of the coherence between the teaching methodologies and the learning outcomes (internal information);
- Bibliography;
- Comments.

In the scope of the curricular unit's evaluation, self-assessment reports are produced - **Curricular Unit Report** (CUR) with the goal of briefly presenting a global assessment of the CU's functioning and defining improvement plans where the results are considered unsatisfactory.

The CUR includes:

- Curricular Unit Folder, which contains:
 - CUF (except for internal information);
 - Faculty;
 - Timetables;
 - CU planning;
 - Enrolled students.
- Students' Academic Results
 - Distribution of the classifications of approved students;
 - Student assiduity per class typology.
- Curricular Unit Assessment:
 - Student satisfaction (results of the final survey);
 - CU evaluation by the Coordinator: satisfaction survey; strengths; areas for improvement;
 - Follow Up: areas for improvement identified in the previous edition and respective degree of improvement since the previous edition.

In order to measure the students' satisfaction, a pedagogical monitoring survey on the teaching and learning process is applied. The survey comprises various questions, structured into two different groups: 1) general, about ISCTE-IUL, and 2) specific, about the CU and respective lecturer(s). The latter includes questions related to the CU's functioning, the student's self-evaluation in the CU, and the performance of the lecturers of the CU. The general group includes questions related to the students' satisfaction regarding ISCTE-IUL and the programme, as well as the comparison with other Higher Education Institutions in Portugal, and the probability of recommending ISCTE-IUL to a friend/relative. In the survey carried out in the 2nd semester, this group also includes the opinion of the students about the quality ISCTE-IUL's facilities, resources and services, their opinion about SIGQ-IUL and about the programme.

The participation in this survey is mandatory and the students answer to the specific group about the CUs and respective lecturer(s) as the CUs conclude. It is only possible to submit the survey after having responded to the questions in the survey's general block, the questions about all the CUs in which the student is enrolled and to the questions about at least one lecturer per CU.

In the CUR are loaded the results regarding the CU's functioning and the student's self-evaluation in the CU. This loading procedure is carried out by GEAPQ up to 30 days after the survey's closing.

The conclusion of the survey, achieved through the assessment of the CU by the coordinator and respective follow up, is a duty of the CU coordinator and must take place within one month after the final deadline for the publication of results in the normal season.

In short, the CUR:

- a) Is under the responsibility of the CU Coordinator and is materialised in a specific form made available online by the SIIC, which contains all the information on the CU available in the system;
- b) Focuses particularly on the CU's functioning conditions and on any detected problems, the educational practices deployed and the results of evaluation;
- c) Concludes with an analysis of strengths and areas for improvement in the Curricular Unit's teaching and learning process, and the explanation of the extent to which the identified aspects to improve in the respective previous edition have been achieved;
- d) Is available in the academic management system for reference of the whole ISCTE-IUL community.

Further to educational monitoring, at the end of each semester, ISCTE-IUL also carries out the **mid-term monitoring** (1st and 2nd cycles). Mid-term monitoring is carried out by the totality of students in each class, with coordination assured by the respective class representative, between the 4th and the 5th weeks after classes begin, in order to minimise or eliminate the negative consequences of any problems detected. The element responsible for triggering this process is the Year/Programme Coordinator, to whom the mid-term evaluation must be sent by the class representatives. The results of mid-term monitoring are communicated to the students and lecturers of the CUs up to 3 weeks after being carried out.

The Year Council meeting takes place between the 5th and the 6th weeks after classes begin, with the purpose of analysing and discussing the CUs' functioning, based upon the mid-term evaluation, as well as establishing efficient improvement measures during the semester and preparing the schedule of the final evaluation (1st and 2nd examination and special examination). The Year Council is convened by the Year Coordinator, after informing the Programme Director, and includes all faculty members and class representatives of the respective year, according to the procedures defined by the Pedagogic Council for mid-term monitoring.

Identification of results: excellent and unsatisfactory

GEAPQ is responsible for monitoring the results of the teaching and learning process. These results may, according to ISCTE-IUL, **be unsatisfactory** - , when they deviate significantly from the objectives and goals set in the Plan of Activities and other criteria defined by ISCTE-IUL management bodies regarding teaching and learning - **or excellent**, when significantly above those objectives and goals and other institutionally defined criteria.

As mentioned above, the Curricular Unit is the basic element in the organization of teaching and learning, so that, in the scope of SIGQ-IUL, it is essential to identify the Curricular Units and CU/lecturer pairs in which there are excellent or unsatisfactory results, in particular having regard to academic success, the opinions of students, innovative practices and the connection with research.

Among other criteria which may be defined by the School's Pedagogic Commission, an unsatisfactory result², which is consequently referred for improvement, is attributed whenever the following situations take place:

- **Pair Lecturer/CU:** average lower than the average point (3 in 1 to 5 scales; 5 in 0 to 10 scales) in at least 2 out of the 4 key indicators: "Globally, what is your degree of satisfaction with this lecturer"; "Does he/she clearly present the CU's subject"; "Adequately clarifies the questions from students;" and "Stimulates the students' interest for the CU".
- **Curricular Units:** average below the average point (5 in a 0 to 10 scale) in the indicator "What is your global level of satisfaction with the CU".

According to the practice already established at ISCTE-IUL, these assessments are considered negative if at least 50% of the average of students who have attended classes participate in the survey.

GEAPQ produces a list of the curricular units and pairs lecturer/CU referenced for improvement, which are disclosed to the Rectorate and to the Pedagogic Council, as well as to the respective CU coordinators and department/school directors. It is for the respective school's Pedagogic Council, in connection with the responsible elements, to define the improvement plan (if applicable), whose implementation, along with the respective divulgation, is monitored by the Pedagogic Council.

Through the Educational Awards' regulation, ISCTE-IUL defines the criteria which **determine excellent results for a pair lecturer/CU**.

The regulation of the award defines the specific criteria and procedures in each edition, as well as those responsible for the logistical support to its implementation. The definition of the list of the pair(s) eligible for the awards is under the responsibility of GEAPQ, as well as the submission of that list to the Rectorate Support Office.

Pedagogic audits

The pedagogic audit is a tool for the promotion of quality and excellence in teaching, and is part of a strategy of analysis and diagnosis of eventual causes for unsatisfactory results and of recommendations for the resolution of the identified problems.

The Pedagogic Council may decide to implement pedagogic audits in case two consecutive unsatisfactory results in the CU or in the pair lecturer/CU have been referenced for improvement, or if a plan of action has not been defined for two consecutive unsatisfactory results. The Pedagogic Council Standing Committee may also determine the implementation of other pedagogic audits, duly well-founded and justified.

The pedagogic audit is carried out by an Audit Team selected by the Pedagogic Commission of the School in which the lecturer is included, being composed of two faculty members with recognised pedagogic competence and experience (one of them shall be a member of the department of the audited lecturer), and one student. The Pedagogic Commission of the respective School submits the composition of the audit team to the Pedagogic Council Standing Committee. In the first meeting, the Audit Team defines the pedagogic audit plan, namely the procedures to adopt, the procedural steps to be taken, the indicators to analyse, the data sources to be collected and the deadlines. The decisions take in this meeting

² If there are more than 5 responses.

are recorded in minutes and made known to the President of the School's Pedagogic Commission and to the lecturer in cause.

The pedagogic audit identifies weaknesses and strengths, and presents measures for short and long term improvement. It also suggests measures to be taken and good practices, within the maximum deadline of 30 working days after the conclusion of the Audit. The Audit Team produces a Pedagogic Audit Report, in which are identified the causes for unsatisfactory results and are defined the recommendations for the solution of the identified issues.

This Report is sent to the Pedagogic Council, after informing the Pedagogic Commission of the School who nominated the Audit Team, and to GEAPQ. The Pedagogic Council submits the proposal of necessary actions to the Rector for approval.

2 | PROGRAMME

Regarding the evaluation of programmes, there is an annually produced **Programme Self-Evaluation Report**, analysed for opinion by the Schools' pedagogic commissions. This report, based on the curricular unit reports and other indicators from ISCTE-IUL information systems, includes a critical and forecasting analysis on the main aspects responsible for the programme's success. It includes the following aspects:

- Programme identification;
- Characterisation of the faculty staff and respective assessment of the CU's functioning;
- Characterisation of the students and respective assessment of the CU's functioning;
- Results (academic results, degree of internationalisation; other results);
- Follow up (Degree of implementation of the improvement proposals set forth in the SWOT analysis carried out in the previous academic year);
- SWOT on the programme's functioning (related to the academic year under analysis);
- Improvement actions to implement;
- General comments.

Except for the first topics in the programme report, which are automatically filled in, or under the responsibility of the services/offices, it is the Programme Director's duty to fill in the following points: other results; Follow up; SWOT analysis; improvement actions to be implemented and general comments.

This report is concluded by the Programme Director, and takes place until January 31 of the calendar year after the academic year under analysis. This report is discussed and approved by the scientific commission of the respective school. It is made known to ISCTE-IUL's statutorily competent bodies, becoming available in the academic management system for reference of the whole ISCTE-IUL Community.

3 | ORGANIC UNIT

It is the Programme Director's duty to produce an annual report on the activities carried out, based on the programme reports from the respective school and other indicators available at ISCTE-IUL's information systems, until January 15. This report includes the following aspects:

- Level of implementation of the annual plan;
- Attainment of the defined goals;
- Evolution of admissions and attendance of the study cycles taught;

- Academic degrees and diplomas awarded;
- Employability among graduates;
- Indicators of internationalisation of the teaching activities he/she manages, namely the number of foreign students;
- Human and financial resources;
- Partnerships established;
- Self-assessment and external evaluation and respective results;
- SWOT analysis of the activity carried out by the school throughout the reporting academic year.

The school reports - SR are analysed in the school's Scientific and Pedagogic Commissions, who communicate any aspects they may consider relevant in the scope of their responsibilities. These reports are approved and published by the relevant competent bodies.

The SR are also analysed by the Quality Assurance Commission (CGQ), which issues its opinion, and may provide opinion on additional aspects in the scope of its responsibilities, namely make suggestions for improvements related to teaching and human and material resources management, then putting it forward to the Rector for approval. The divulgation of these reports in MyISCTE is carried out by GEAPQ.

4 | INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

At institutional level, ISCTE-IUL approves and publishes a consolidated annual report about its activities in the different aspects of the institutional mission, as well as an annual statement of accounts elaborated accordingly with the official standards in force. It is for GEAPQ to produce the ARA, based upon the contributions from the Services/offices' reports and other institutional indicators, until March 31.

The report includes the execution of the Annual Plan of Activities with the level of attainment of the various axes related to the areas of ISCTE-IUL's mission and its strategic goals.

Specifically at the teaching and learning level, the report of activities shows various indicators focused on:

- Training offer;
- Vacancies, candidates, placed and enrolled;
- Graduates;
- Internationalisation: programmes; faculty members and students;
- Transversal skills: CUs offered and enrolled students;
- Graduate employability and internships;
- Programmes' accreditation and certification;
- General results of the teaching and learning quality monitoring.

It is the General Council's duty to approve ISCTE-IUL's report of activities and statement of accounts.

3.2.3. Research

Scientific research at ISCTE-IUL is based on the Research Units (RU). ISCTE-IUL has a Research Support Office (GAI) whose responsibility is to organise, stimulate and make public all research activities: scientific production; application to applied research projects; promotion of scientific activities and the respective monitoring.

SIGQ-IUL incorporates the standards from the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) in what regards the choice of indicators and the elaboration of periodic reports necessary in the framework of research units' supervision and external evaluation.

in the framework of ISCTE-IUL's Strategic Plan, the APA specifies the set of actions that implement the **institutional strategy for research** and its articulation with teaching. According to the APA's architecture, the goals are implemented with actions which have specific objectives, express the intended quality patterns, and function as indicators to monitor the activity of the research units.

ISCTE-IUL's eight RUs have their own regulations and produce an APA in the framework of the strategic plan of action proposed by the Rector and approved by the General Council. The research teams are composed of researchers (doctorate degree holders included in agreement with FCT), associate researchers, research assistants and research fellows.

The RUs publish an annual report of activities (ARA) informing on: a) the level of implementation of the APA; b) attainment of the defined goals; c) efficiency of the administrative and financial management; d) movements of the researchers and composition of the research team; e) projects concluded and in progress; f) scientific production indicators; g) indicators of internationalization of the activities and the body of researchers; h) partnerships; and i) internal and external evaluation procedures and respective results. The RUs have advisory boards with external members (External Scientific Consultancy Commission), who assess their reports of activities and make improvement suggestions.

The RUs' ARA includes surveying the performance indicators included in ISCTE-IUL's Plan of Activities, which are systematised by the GAI, being consequently sent to GEAPQ to be included in ISCTE-IUL's Annual Plan of Activities. The improvement actions for the development of research at ISCTE-IUL, to include in the APA, shall be based on these reports.

In the 3rd cycle there is a systematic articulation between teaching and research with the management of various doctoral programmes by the RUs. ISCTE-IUL provides internal scholarships to students from the various doctoral programmes. The scholarship fellows are admitted into the RUs and take part in the scientific activities carried out by those units.

Research is also included in ISCTE-IUL's faculty and researchers performance evaluation system, which includes a comprehensive set of indicators on their scientific activity, hosted in the portals i-meritus and ciencia-IUL.

3.2.4. Interaction with society

Knowledge transfer and interaction with society are a fundamental part of ISCTE-IUL's mission. This aspect of the mission determines the strategic goals of the Institution in the area of continuous training, knowledge transfer and involvement with society at the various levels of interaction, both at local and national and at international levels.

ISCTE-IUL has four affiliates which are dedicated to the transfer of knowledge to society through the promotion of entrepreneurship, consultancy and executive training, not only in private companies, but also in public entities and non-profit organizations: INDEG-IUL; IPPS-IUL; AUDAX-IUL and IUL-GLOBAL.

ISCTE-IUL ensures the formal implementation of quality assurance practices in its affiliates by holding regular meetings between the Rectory and those entities, respecting their autonomy. All the curricular

units with credits provided by the affiliates follow the circuit of approval of ISCTE-IUL's CUs/programmes, that is, are credited and subject to the same quality assurance mechanisms as the ones used for ISCTE-IUL's study cycles. The participation of the faculty staff in training actions provided by the affiliates is subject to the Rector's approval..

ISCTE-IUL's research units also contribute towards the progress of knowledge and for the development of society through the organization of activities to disseminate scientific culture, the organization of scientific meetings and debates open to the society.

In their annual reports, ISCTE-IUL's research units, teaching units and affiliates or associated entities include the analysis of attainment of established objectives and goals in what regards inter-institutional cooperation, the provision of services to society, knowledge transfer and promotion of the community's culture and quality of life, and include, namely, the assessment and analysis of the indicators defined in the Plan of Activities regarding this aspect of ISCTE-IUL's mission.

ISCTE-IUL's annual report of activities comprehends the various aspects of its mission and integrates the essential results of external relations, attained by the organic units and affiliates.

Concerning interaction with Society, it is also important to mention the activities carried out with ISCTE-IUL's former students (Alumni), which aim to promote and reinforce the institutional identity and the network of support, both regarding the community at large, employees and faculty staff, and students and former students, through the Career Service and Alumni Office.

3.2.5. Internationalisation

The internationalization of teaching, research and service provision, as well as the mobility of students and faculty members, are a transversal vector of ISCTE-IUL's development and sustainability strategy. Therefore, the Plan of Activities includes a set of goals aimed at increasing the degree of internationalization. On their turn, the reports from organic units and affiliates are included in the analysis of goal achievement and of the indicators included in the APA.

ISCTE-IUL's annual report of activities presents an analysis of the results attained in the scope of inter-institutional relationship and the respective degree of conformity with the objectives and goals defined for the internationalization of teaching, research, interaction with society and mobility of students and faculty members.

3.2.6. Resources

Quality assurance in supporting services has been, since 2008 (with the 1st ISO 9001 certification), a priority for institutional strategic management. From then on, ISCTE-IUL has sought to promote the autonomy of services in the creation and revision of appropriate procedures for its activities. On the other hand, there is an ongoing preoccupation by the Institution to disseminate a quality culture, also at the level of its services. In this domain, the appointment of a "quality liaison person" for each service/office contributes towards the enhancement of quality practices at service level, promoting the implementation of the quality policy and the attainment of the quality goals. At the same time, the Quality training courses aim at enhance the staff members' awareness for the need to constantly monitor service quality.

ISCTE-IUL's strategic plans (four-yearly), as well as the annual plans of activities, have underpinned the monitoring of the performance of the various services and respective management and support processes. These processes are designed and certified according to ISO 9001, being GEAPQ the internal entity responsible for the promotion and dissemination of this work methodology and by the design and revision of the majority of procedures that comprise the support to the quality management system.

Every year, the services/offices produce their plan and report of activities. The latter summarizes the main activities developed, being also assessed the degree of attainment of the goals for which they contribute and with which are aligned with ISCTE-IUL's annual plan of activities. This report, elaborated by the services/offices, also presents the strengths, areas for improvement, and the plan of action for the following year, further to carrying out the follow-up of the areas for improvement identified in the previous year. The reports are sent to GEAPQ until January 15 of the year that follows the calendar year under analysis.

ISCTE-IUL's annual report of activities provides for a systematic approach and makes an assessment of the degree of attainment of the strategy for human and material resources management, including the investments made in equipment and buildings.

In parallel, ISCTE-IUL seeks to get feedback from its students regarding the facilities, physical spaces, resources and services. These results are available in the pedagogic monitoring reports produced by GEAPQ and guide ISCTE-IUL's government and management bodies' reflection. In the scope of mid-term monitoring carried out in each academic semester, students also indicate the situations that need to be rectified in the scope of material resources adequacy, and these situations are registered and forwarded to the respective support service for correction.

There is also an email account for complaints (reclamacoes@iscte.pt), which allows to keep a register of complaints identified by the whole community. These complaints are received by GEAPQ, being always analyzed and the respective response sent to each claimant, with the involvement of the services/offices or services in question. The complaints and compliments books are also available and advertised in all front-office services, and all necessary procedures for resolution in force are carried out (Procedure of complaints/suggestions/compliments management).

There are also three boxes placed at the main entrance of each of the three buildings, which enable the members of the community to leave any eventual complaints/suggestions/compliments.

3.3. ISCTE-IUL information and management integrated system

ISCTE-IUL has a specially advanced information and management integrated system (SIIG) in what concerns the main strategic axes and general functioning of the Institution and all its services. This systems provides for a thorough control of the management and application of resources as a means to ensure maximum quality in teaching, research, as well as in knowledge transfer and organisational sustainability.

3.3.1. Information systems

There are four main information platforms/systems at ISCTE-IUL: Fénix, for all the academic information; I-meritus, for the information related to the faculty performance evaluation; - Ciência-Iul, for the information regarding the performance of faculty members and researchers (scientific production); SAP,

for the accounting and financial information (income and expenditure) and operational (students, faculty, non-faculty), including the project management module.

The processing of the information from those subsystems, namely that associated with SAP, allows, for instance, to carry out cost analysis and decision making based on all activities, including the cost of each programme, curricular unit and class (considering the classroom, the number of students, the lecturer's category, etc.), as well as of each project. This analytic information is made available to directors of schools, programmes, and research unit for purposes of management, control and decision-making, so as to ensure the levels of efficiency and efficacy intended for their activities and for the use of the respective resources.

This financial management integrated system, supported by an analytical accounting system, is already in use at ISCTE-IUL and, in the framework of management transparency, the budgetary and accounting information of all programmes is available through the intranet (MyIscte).

ISCTE-IUL's e-learning platform (Blackboard Learn) is a distance learning and educational management tool, which complements classroom teaching, to which faculty and students have access, and which is transversal to all programmes provided by the institution.

ISCTE-IUL's portal (<http://iscte-iul.pt/home.aspx>) is one of the main means of dissemination of the Institution's training offer (external communication). At the level of internal communication, ISCTE-IUL has its own intranet (MyIscte) which, among various features, disseminates and communicates the decisions taken by the government and management bodies.

ISCTE-IUL's Institutional Repository has the purpose of storing, preserving, disseminating and providing access to ISCTE-IUL's intellectual production (publications of scientific nature) in digital format, being, accordingly, specifically connected with Ciencia-Iul.

The Document Management System, recently implemented at ISCTE-IUL, responds to the need, felt within the Institution, of optimizing the management and circulation of information, in electronic format, inside the Institution.

ISCTE-IUL has recently developed a Business Intelligence (BI) system based on an analytical model which integrates information from the various transactional systems existent at ISCTE-IUL: Fénix, I-meritus, and E-learning (Black Board), SAP and KOHA (library directory). This device has the main goal of measuring and aggregating various indicators using the Balanced Scorecard and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) techniques.

All the information from the various information and management systems is used at the government and coordination bodies' level for decision-making and opinion issuing, as well as in improvement initiatives in the scope of quality assurance regarding teaching and learning, research, human and material resources management, and of ISCTE-IUL's service quality, and this management is facilitated by the existence of a platform that allows the bi-annual and annual monitoring of the APA and, consequently, of the Institution's Strategic Plan.

Illustration 3.3.1.1 presents ISCTE-IUL's Information and Management Integrated System.

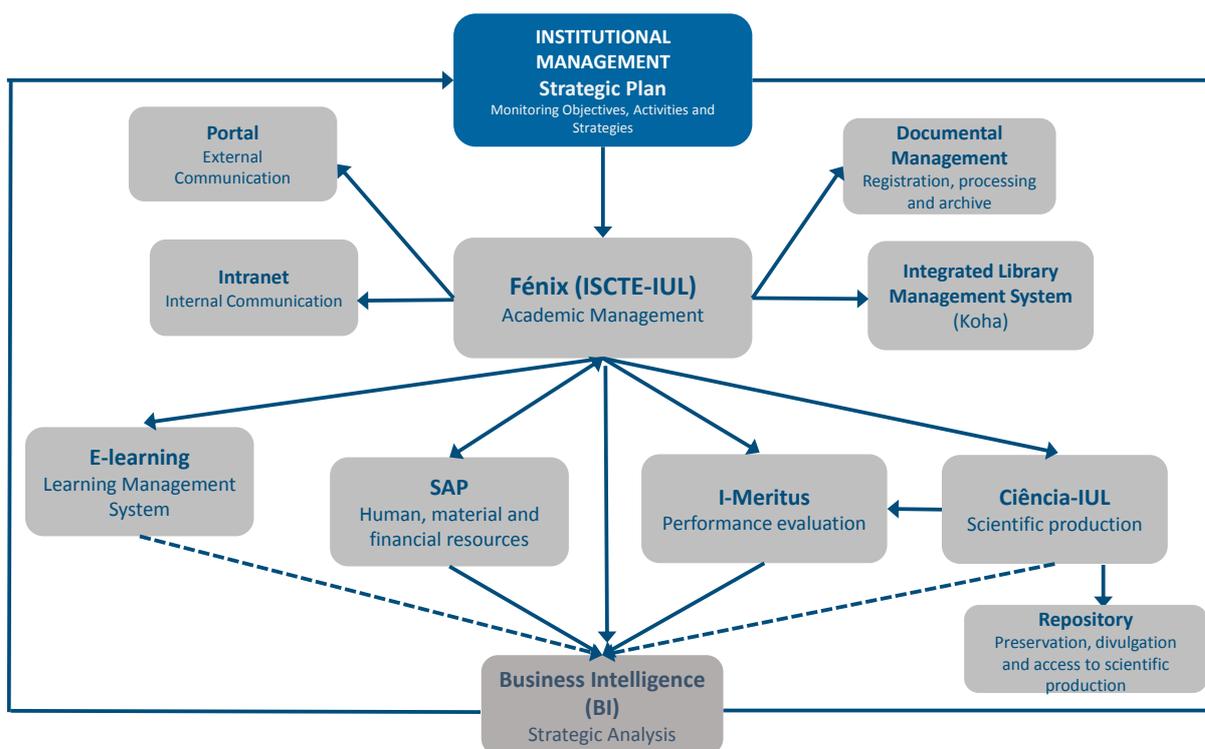


Illustration 3.3.1.1 - Information and Management Integrated System (SIIG)

3.3.2. Information management and dissemination

Transparency and provision of information to the ISCTE-IUL community, collected in the diverse existing information systems, are an essential element of SIGQ-IUL, as they enable the improvement of efficacy in decision-making processes in a perspective of continuous improvement.

Therefore, it is necessary that the updated, wide-ranging and relevant information is, systematically and in a structured manner, made available to the community, fostering the liability of the various actors and an atmosphere of academic transparency, which favours the consolidation of the internal and external partners' involvement.

Consequently, ISCTE-IUL's organizational mechanism provides IT system support regarding the following aspects: data collection, which must be as "friendly" as possible for the various parties involved so as to allow an efficient management of their time and ensure the reliability of the information; data processing; provision and easy access to reports; and other outputs, which are relevant for quality assessment and analysis in the various aspects substantiated in the Annual Plan of Activities.

The evaluation of teaching and learning is, for various reasons, the most complex of all aspects of the internal quality assurance system, and, therefore, the system provides an adequate IT support for the information registration and collection as regards:

- Data related to the organization and planning of each curricular unit, as well as the results obtained in the CU, which are included in the CUR, mandatorily made available in the information system;
- Opinions from students and faculty members on the functioning of teaching (collected through the various existing surveys);
- Data which are necessary for conducting external evaluations, namely reports and recommendations from course monitoring commissions, or from national or international certifying entities.

The processing, analysis and systematization of information is globally coordinated by GEAPQ, with technical support provided by the SIIC and GDSI, as well as support from those services directly related to the data in question. GEAPQ manages and provides a panel of institutional evolution indicators with figures concerning at least the three previous years, so as to keep updated the indicators to support strategic planning, which evidences ISCTE-IUL's development trends.

According to the practices already in place, all the relevant information is disseminated within the academic community, based on principles of transparency and aiming at their educational effect on the effort of self-regulation and continuous improvement, as well as the promotion of a culture of self-empowerment and greater commitment participation of all towards the achievement of the APA.

In what regards public information about projects and activities, ISCTE-IUL already has a tradition of annual publication of its activity report, which includes the degree of fulfillment of the objectives and goals defined in the plan.

In this sense, ISCTE-IUL has various means of divulgation that provide information of interest for the specific target audience at whom they are aimed.

ISCTE-IUL's Internet portal is aimed at the general public and presents information about the institution and its activity, constituting one of the most important ways to advertise the Institution's training offer (external communication). According to the European standards for quality assurance in education, it is of paramount importance to publish updated, independent and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and degrees offered by the Institution, namely:

- Applications and ordering criteria;
- Programme Goals;
- Study Plans;
- Faculty;
- Scheduling, timetable system and tuition fees;
- Dissertation/project work; Internships and Theses;
- Career Prospects;
- Programme evaluation and registration.

In conformity with those standards, ISCTE-IUL keeps all this information duly up-to-date in its Internet page.

Regarding internal communication, ISCTE-IUL has its intranet (MyIscte), which, among various other features, disseminates and communicates the decisions taken at the government and management bodies' level. MyISCTE also provides the necessary tools for the functional performance of the various types of employees at ISCTE-IUL: faculty staff, researchers and other staff.

ISCTE-IUL's Institutional Repository enables also the dissemination and access to ISCTE-IUL's intellectual production in digital format, being, accordingly, specifically connected with Ciencia-Iul.

Fénix, further to its academic management role, is also a means of dissemination of all the information of academic nature to the current students.

In what concerns scientific production, ISCTE-IUL also makes available, through Ciência-IUL (with public access) a module of statistics with the results of the various outputs made public by the research units, along with the profile of each faculty member/researcher, automatically updated.

3.4. Continuous monitoring, evaluation and improvement of SIGQ-IUL (SIGQ revision)

SIGQ-IUL has various evaluation and continuous improvement mechanisms based on the systematic analysis made to the various previously referred reports, and on the suggestions from the elements responsible for the programmes, the pedagogic commissions, school directors and other parties and stakeholders.

The analysis of the fulfillment of the procedures regarding teaching has enabled a substantial improvement of the registration time and the thoroughness of information on class activity (summaries, planning, classifications, reports). The implemented mechanism has also enabled the systematic revision and the improvement of the various regulations focused on teaching and research, as well as financial management and general functioning.

The fact that all ISCTE-IUL programmes have been subject to processes of accreditation by A3ES, which demanded mobilization from almost all faculty members, students and staff, also enabled to identify various aspects that required improvement measures, that, in the meanwhile, have been implemented, beyond having contributed for a greater internalization by the ISCTE-IUL community of the importance and practical value of quality assurance in higher education.

ISCTE-IUL applied SIGQ-IUL for certification with A3ES. The obtainment of this certification provides a higher degree of autonomy to the IES in the processes of evaluation/accreditation of the various study cycles. A3ES accepted the application and the process took place throughout 2014.

In February 2015, A3ES Board of Directors communicated to ISCTE-IUL their decision to accredit SIGQ-IUL over the maximum period allowed – six years –, without any restrictions. This has increased the effort of systematic revision and improvement of procedures, including the first revision of the QM carried out in 2013, and the ongoing revision of various regulations.

Furthermore, as quality assurance is assumed as a strategic aspect in its own statutes, ISCTE-IUL has promoted, on its own initiative, external institutional evaluation by the European University Association (EUA), in 2012/2013, which demanded a reflection, wide-ranging and extended to the whole ISCTE-IUL community, on the various areas covered by the Institutional Evaluation Programme, including the identification of improvement measures to implement, some of which were already implemented, and others have been incorporated in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. The EUA report is available at ISCTE-IUL's website. In 2016 the follow up evaluation will be carried out by EUA.

Still in the scope of this strategy, ISCTE-IUL has been promoting the accreditation of most of its programmes with international agencies, such as AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA for the management programmes, and EUR-ACE for the engineering programmes. The quality standards required by those agencies have been implemented and evidenced by ISCTE-IUL, which has greatly contributed for the development and improvement of SIGQ-IUL. In the case of EUR-ACE, two engineering programmes were certified in 2015, for the maximum period allowed of six years. On their turn, the management programmes have already attained the demanding international standards and will soon be assessed by AACSB's experts. This process is particularly important, among other reasons, for the relevance it ascribes to learning goals and for the institutional learning its implementation provides, which will be extended, even to the programmes that do not require such accreditation. In the field of Public Policy, ISCTE-IUL is already a member of the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA) which has been implementing a system of international accreditation. In due time, ISCTE-IUL will start application procedures for its Public Policy programmes to that accreditation.

Since 2009, ISCTE-IUL has obtained APCER Certification every year, in the scope of the Standard ISO 9001. In the scope of this process, ISCTE-IUL carries out two audits per year, one internal and the other external. These audits enable the identification of eventual non-conformities and represent opportunities to implement improvements and define new procedures.

In the past 3 years, ISCTE-IUL has had other specialized external audits by official entities, such as the Court of Auditors, the General Inspectorate for Higher Education and the Ministry of Finance, whose reports have generally confirmed the efficiency and compliance with the procedures, and drawn attention to a number of very specific aspects which require improvement, which have systematically been implemented.

In conclusion, the internal process of monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the quality assurance system is dynamised by CGQ. Every year, GEAPQ produces the Report of Revision of SIGQ-IUL, which has the purpose of assessing and reviewing its performance, based on the results of all the audits carried out at ISCTE-IUL and the feedback from the various members of the community. This report also presents the improvement actions considered necessary to ensure the system is maintained adequate and effective. It is the CGQ's duty to analyze and act on the conclusions of this report. The improvement proposals achievable in the short term are submitted to the Rector or to the Management Board. Those improvement measures proposed by the CGQ which are more general in scope, are eventually included in the following year's APA to be submitted to the General Council.

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