



National Quality Report: SPAIN
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Introduction

Spanish universities have undergone a profound transformation in the last thirty five years both in their size and in their organization. In particular, after the passing of the University Reform Act (*Ley de Reforma Universitaria*, LRU) in 1983, a university model was created which gave universities autonomy and at the same time placed them within their social context.

University Continuing Education (UCE) began to be developed at the beginning of the nineties in direct competition with the most important part of university activity, research, and has established a strong foothold in the system in the last ten years.

Currently, all Spanish universities carry out activities related to UCE although its development and forms of organization are very different from one university to another.

The Spanish University System

Spain has used a three-cycle structure since 1983, but since 2005 it is being amended to follow the new Bologna Process structure. The transition is expected to last until 2013.

The old three-cycle system was based on the official degrees of Diplomado or Technical Engineer, Licenciado or Engineer and Doctor (PhD). Under the new official degree system, the Masters will become the second cycle (new Master programmes started to be implemented in 2006-07), while the first is called Graduado and the third retains the title PhD.

As before and in addition to official degree programmes, universities can establish other programmes leading to "Títulos Propios" (university diplomas or certificates). They can be Máster, Especialistas y Expertos.

The Definition of University Continuing Education in the Spanish Context

In Spain the terms "university continuing education" (CE) and "university permanent education" (UCE) are used to refer to the non-regular studies organized (or jointly organized) by a university, aimed at companies or individuals who want to update or obtain either specialist

knowledge or knowledge of an informative or cultural nature. This knowledge can be accredited through qualifications such as diplomas or certificates issued by the university or by participating companies and foundations. These qualifications are not officially recognised by the State.

The Types of Courses in University Permanent Education (UCE)

Broadly, we can consider the following types of courses in UCE in Spain:

- The University's own Titles (*Títulos Propios*)
- Company courses
- Short courses, workshops, talks and seminars.

The University's own Titles (*Títulos Propios*)

The courses that are classified as “**the university's own titles**” (*Títulos Propios*) are usually those of a longer duration, cyclic, repeated almost every year, which focus on some form of specialization (normally postgraduate) related to a professional field (not doctoral). These courses can respond more flexibly to market demands than formal degree courses. Although approved by the universities' governing bodies, these qualifications are not officially recognised.

Among these university qualifications, the most common degree title is the **Masters** degree. Generally, a Masters degree is a course aimed at university graduates and they have a minimum duration of 500 classroom contact hours (although, in some universities, mainly from Catalonia, a Masters degree can be awarded after 300 contact hours)

A second type of university own title, which demands at least 200 classroom contact hours, has variously been called a **Specialization Course, University Specialist or Expert**. Mostly, a Specialization Course or University Specialist is aimed at first cycle university graduates and professionals who have the appropriate qualifications to gain entry to a university course while the Expert course is aimed at all post-secondary stage students.

Company courses

Once the University Reform Act had become law, universities began to establish contacts with companies. Although these initially established research contacts or concerned the development of technology, universities later began to respond to the particular training needs of companies. As a consequence, courses are now designed specifically to meet the needs of companies, and in some cases, the needs of individual workers.

Other courses, workshops, talks or seminars

Spanish universities complete their provision of Permanent Education, UCE (*Formación Permanente*) with a series of courses that are heterogeneous in nature and conform to the specific regulations of very different universities. The duration of these courses is variable, usually short, and they are often aimed at their own university students or are courses that have special entrance requirements. They include extracurricular training, summer courses, adult education, workshops, talks or seminars, etc., (Mora & Vidal 2000).

Resources

Financing University Continuing Education

UCE courses are generally required to be self-financing. There is little subsidy for these courses either from public or private sources. Fees are paid mostly by the learners and only in few cases by their employers.

In reality, however, most universities indirectly subsidize these courses by permitting the use of the university infrastructure (classrooms, laboratories, computers, etc). In some cases, the University finance with personnel specific administrative units that give centralized support to UCE. In compensation, universities often retain a fixed percentage of the income derived from this kind of training. The director of the course generally keeps the rest for paying the teaching costs, materials, etc. This deduction is variable and varies from 30% of the total income generated by these courses (Universidad de Cádiz) to only 10% of the teaching costs (Universidad Politécnica de Valencia).

Management Models for University Continuing Education

The implementation of the Bologna Process has produced lots of changes in the organizational structure of the university. In the case of continuing education, there is no unified management model in Spanish universities. In a generic manner one can distinguish between four general models for managing UCE:

- With a unique centralized unit for managing postgraduate studies (regular), University own Titles (non regular) and continuing education. In this case all the courses (regular and non regular) are managed together.
- With two units: one to manage postgraduate studies and usually the other regular studies (graduate); the other to manage university own titles and continuing education. In this case regular degrees are managed independently from non regular studies.
- With no specialized unit. Each faculty manages their own courses independently.

The distribution of these models in the Spanish universities is shown in the table below:

MANAGEMENT MODEL	% Univ.
1. One unit for Postgraduate and Continuing education	25%
2. Postgraduate / Continuing Education	20%
3. Regular / Non regular	45%
4. Managed by individual faculties	10%

Quality Assurance of University Lifelong Learning

There is no unified or compulsory model for quality in continuing education in Spanish universities. Looking at survey done in 2004 to continuing education units, although 65% of the units have interest in quality models only 30% have one implemented (Mora et al, 2004). The best-known models are: ISO 9000, EFQM, EQUIS, National university models.

In the same survey, asking about indicators, the indicators most used are activity indicators where 72% of the units calculate them periodically. After them come the processes indicators calculated by 64% of the units. This percentage decreases to 35% in the case of personnel indicators and is mostly calculated in a non periodical manner.

With the University Organic Law 6/2001, the Government established the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) in 2002 with the ultimate goal to contribute to the quality improvement of the higher education system through the assessment, certification and accreditation of university degrees, programmes, teaching staff and institutions.

ANECA, nowadays, focuses its work on two principal areas: the academic merits and the verification of the undergraduate and master degrees (under the new Bologna model) prior to its official recognition. It is a fact that now with the implementation of the new degrees, Quality Assurance programmes promoted by the state are developed and focused only for regular degrees. Quality initiatives in continuing education are due only to individual initiatives in some universities.

Nevertheless, the Spanish Network for Continuing Education (RUEPEC), is looking into the possibility of working with ANECA to develop quality protocols for verifying the “University own titles”, while trying to balance the flexibility and professional orientation of these titles with the rigorous evaluation of the quality analogous to the regular degrees.

Very new this year is the program for accreditation/recognition of the university services based on the EFQM model. There, ANECA, jointly with the EFQM partner in Spain, promote the external evaluation of the services using the standards set by EFQM.

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Glossary

ANECA Spanish Quality Assurance Agency (www.aneca.es)

RUEPEC Spanish University Continuing Education Network (www.ruepec.org)
CRUE Spanish Rectors' Conference (www.crue.org)
EFQM European Foundation for Quality Management (www.efqm.org)

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