

ACSUG CODE OF ETHICS

PRESENTATION

The Consortium Axencia para a Calidade do Sistema Universitario de Galicia (ACSUG) was created in 2001 through a collaboration agreement between the Xunta de Galicia, through the Department of Education and University Planning, the General Secretariat for Research and Development and the Universities of Santiago de Compostela, A Coruña and Vigo, as a public institution committed to guaranteeing the quality of Higher Education in Galicia.

ACSUG's identification as an entity of recognised prestige in the field of quality assurance in higher education, both at regional, national and international level, is closely linked to the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of its action procedures, to the promotion of a culture of quality in the universities of the Galician University System (SUG) through debates and initiatives on university quality, and to the continuous improvement system in all its activities, as well as to a stable and professionalised internal organisation.

At an international level, ACSUG is a member of various bodies characterised by a high demand for quality requirements and standards: ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education), ECA (European Consortium for Accreditation), INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education), with the priority objective of contributing, with its presence and participation, to the excellence of quality in SUG.

At a national level, ACSUG belongs to the REACU (Spanish Network of University Quality Agencies), which is essential for the generation and exchange of relevant information on the university system, whose transfer to the university community and society results in proven quality.

In addition, since 2011, ACSUG has been carrying out the evaluation of university centres outside the Spanish University System, with special adaptation to the countries in which it operates.

Latin America. For the development of this project, a methodological proposal has been drawn up based on ACSUG's evaluation experience in different evaluation processes in Galicia.

As a university quality control and assessment body, ACSUG considers it essential to guarantee the proper internal functioning of its activities in order to carry them out effectively and efficiently. For this reason, ACSUG has implemented an internal management system externally certified by an entity of the international IQNET network, being the first university quality agency in Europe to obtain these certifications.

ACSUG's primary objective, in accordance with the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), is to achieve lifelong quality education that enables excellent intellectual mobility, as well as the obligation, provided for in the ESG (Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area), to carry out external quality assurance, as a key to consolidating a welfare society.

The Code of Ethics that we are presenting reiterates our clear commitment to excellence, to the necessary transparency and to the effective and irreproachable conduct that prestige and guarantees the evaluation of quality.

J. Eduardo López Pereira

Director of ACSUG

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MISSION

ACSUG's fundamental mission is to promote and ensure the quality assurance of the SUG, focusing on its continuous improvement and transmitting relevant information to society on the activities carried out and their results, so that the SUG is always adapted to the social and economic situation at all times.

VISION

ACSUG seeks to be an agency of proven quality and efficiency and to be recognised as such, both nationally and internationally, in the field of university quality assurance, always working under the principles of independence, objectivity and transparency and based on national and international standards of quality assurance in higher education.

GENERAL PROVISIONS.

Article 1. OBJECT.

The main objective of ACSUG's code of ethics is to establish a set of principles and rules for internal action according to criteria of transparency, trust and social responsibility. These principles should be useful in the application and promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), creating a climate of values integrated into the working methods that guarantee objectivity in the agency's actions in the processes of evaluation, accreditation and certification of SUG quality.

Article 2. SCOPE OF APPLICATION.

ACSUG carries out its quality assessment, accreditation and certification activities within the Galician university system, taking into account the Spanish, European and international framework. The Code of Ethics is essential for the achievement of this purpose and for the credibility of the agency itself, and will therefore be applied in ACSUG's relations with higher education institutions.

and with other institutions or interest groups with which it maintains relations.

Article 3. ETHICAL COMMITMENT.

ACSUG assumes a firm ethical and socially responsible commitment to this Code, translated into the necessary prior adherence to the Confidentiality and Collaboration Commitment with ACSUG by any person providing accreditation, assessment, certification or consultancy services.

Article 4. PUBLICITY OF THE CODE OF ETHICS.

ACSUG is committed to the continuous training of its staff and those who collaborate with the Agency in the use and understanding of the principles and commitments of this Code. To promote these values, they will be publicised on the Agency's website, for consultation by all interested parties and by the general public.

Article 5. EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION.

ACSUG is committed to excellence and innovation in the performance of its activities as a differentiating aspect of quality. To this end, it is committed to external national and international evaluation and certification with the aim of achieving continuous improvement in its results, resulting in greater efficiency and agility that is recognised by its users, the university community and society in general.

Article 6. REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF ETHICS.

Any revisions deemed necessary with respect to the content of the Code of Ethics shall be approved by the ACSUG Governing Board, while the resolution of any controversy that may arise regarding compliance with the Code shall be the responsibility of the ACSUG Advisory Board.

Article 7. TRANSPARENCY.

ACSUG shall carry out its functions in accordance with the principle of transparency, clearly providing the necessary information in advance on the evaluation criteria and processes, forms, forms, procedures and tools used in evaluations and other activities, without hiding any information to which users are entitled. This shall not be to the detriment of the correct use that staff must make of documentation considered to be confidential. It shall also apply transparency and clarity in the presentation and dissemination of the results of its evaluations, where appropriate.

Article 8. INDEPENDENCE.

ACSUG is endowed with full legal personality and has the necessary independence to be able to develop its objectives with the utmost rigour and with full respect for university autonomy. Therefore, ACSUG does not allow external pressures, influences or interventions to influence the rigour of its criteria and principles of action.

Article 9. IMPARTIALITY.

All persons involved in the provision of ACSUG's services must be neutral and impartial, complying with the ethical standards included in this code, refraining from participating in any activity in the event of a conflict of interest that could call into question their impartiality.

Article 10. CONFIDENTIALITY.

ACSUG shall act in accordance with current legislation on data protection and shall establish the necessary measures for the appropriate processing of the personal information in its possession, without under any circumstances providing information relating to personal data provided by the subjects evaluated, unless expressly authorised by the interested parties or by court order.

Article 11. RIGOUR AND OBJECTIVITY.

ACSUG staff, as well as collaborators and evaluators, shall carry out their activities based exclusively on accuracy and technical rigour, taking into consideration the suitability and objective merits in each specific case, without any prior value judgements.

Article 12. AUSTERITY AND EFFICIENCY.

In carrying out its activities, ACSUG shall manage its human and material resources with criteria of efficiency and austerity. The origin of these resources shall be subject to the principle of transparency, using them in a responsible and impartial manner, in accordance with the due independence of ACSUG's actions.

Article 13. TEAMWORK AND INTERNAL FUNCTIONING.

ACSUG will encourage teamwork, cooperation and the exchange of information and ideas among staff and with the evaluators themselves, which is necessary for the achievement of its objectives. Furthermore, ACSUG will encourage active participation with external organisations and interest groups in order to achieve the goals established in the performance of its activities.

Article 14. PROFESSIONALISM.

ACSUG guarantees the quality and professionalism of its staff and the people who provide its services, undertaking to carry out its work in the public interest, clearly placed before private gain, in a thorough, reliable and impartial manner, acting with the appropriate professional diligence.

ARTICLE 15. INTERNATIONALISATION.

ACSUG, with the clear intention of continuous improvement in terms of quality and service to society, is open to new initiatives, standards and processes in the field of quality assurance.

European and international higher education. International cooperation increases the value of the knowledge and experience of the services offered by ACSUG in the field of quality assessment. For this reason, the institutional policy will be permanently oriented towards collaborating and cooperating with other national and international agencies with similar characteristics and objectives to ACSUG.

Article 16. EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION.

ACSUG defends equal opportunities between men and women in all areas, as well as the effective development of the necessary measures to guarantee compliance with the right to non-discrimination in all its activities, whether for reasons of sex, sexual orientation and diversity, racial origin, religious beliefs, social class or any other type.

Article 17. ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITY.

ACSUG, aware of the importance of carrying out its activities with respect for the environment, will at all times take into account the impact on society of the services it provides and respect for the environment and the objectives of sustainable development, promoting practices such as the reuse of materials, recycling and the adoption of energy saving measures.

Article 18. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

ACSUG, as part of its ethic of good governance and collaboration with society, assumes the commitment to identify with its stakeholders, establishing the necessary communication mechanisms to gather information regarding the activities carried out, with the aim of continuously improving the entire process. Furthermore, as a socially responsible organisation, it will increase, in accordance with the possibilities derived from the social situation at any given time, investment in human capital, material resources and relations with interlocutors.