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UAb's QUALITY MANUAL

FOR AN OPEN UNIVERSITY

TO THE WORLD, INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A3ES	Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education
ALV	Lifelong Learning
CAE	External Evaluation Commission
CAM	Commission for Monitoring and Improvement of Study Cycles
CAMID	Research and Development Monitoring and Improvement Committee
CAQ	Quality Assessment Council
CLA	Local Learning Centre(s)
EaD	Distance Learning
EADTU	<i>European Association of Distance Teaching Universities</i>
EFQM	<i>European Foundation for Quality Management</i>
ENQA	<i>European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education</i>
FCT	Foundation for Science and Technology
R&D	Research and Development
IEC	<i>International Electrotechnical Commission</i>
IES	Higher Education Institutions
ISO	<i>International Organization for Standardization</i>
QM	Quality Manual
PA	Activity Plan
PE	Strategic Plan
RA	Activities Report
RASIGQ_UAb	SIGQ_UAb Evaluation Report
SIGQ_UAb	Universidade Aberta's Internal Quality Assurance System
SUO	Services and Organic Units
UAb	Open University
UI	Research Units

1. INTRODUCTION

Organisations are responsible for developing and implementing strategies for continuous quality improvement of their activities, based on a policy for quality assurance.

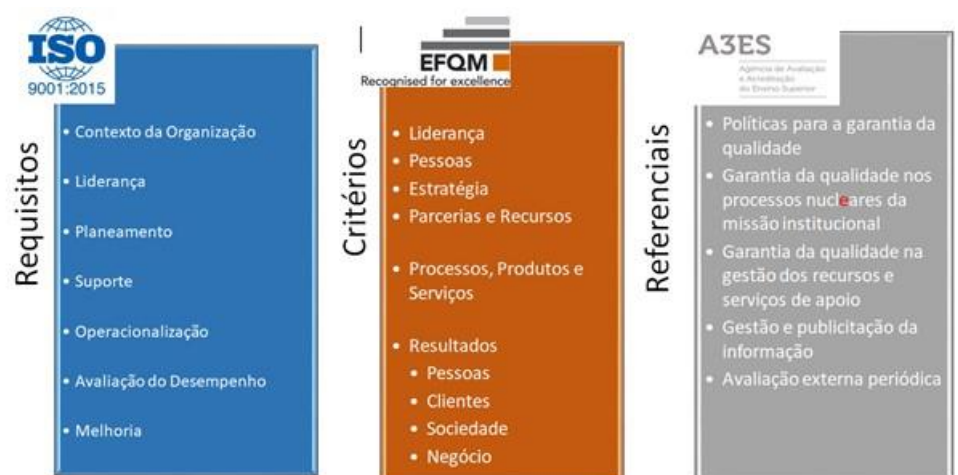
In Higher Education, one of the consequences of the Bologna process has been the adoption of the European Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance. As a consequence, Higher Education Institutions are responsible for their quality assurance policy and its implementation, monitoring and review procedures.

More recently, and according to the A3ES benchmarks (A3ES, 2018), revised to integrate the changes in the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in European higher education, the Internal Quality Assurance Systems (IQAS) should ensure the existence of comprehensive and effective quality assurance structures and procedures in the core strands of the institutional mission and in the transversal areas that support them.

Universidade Aberta's strategy for Quality is framed and aligned with the Action Plan for the four-year period 2019-2023, in a perspective of promotion and development of A UNIVERSITY OPEN TO THE WORLD, INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE, committing the entire Academic Community and involving all stakeholders (internal and external) in a culture of quality, transparent and perceptible by all.

The paradigm of distance learning in Portugal has changed with the publication of the Legal Regime of Distance Higher Education¹ which, in terms of quality assessment, introduces some parameters to be considered in the evaluation of study cycles taught at a distance.

Since 2007 Universidade Aberta has assumed quality as a fundamental element of the organizational culture in the pursuit of its mission, which has been translated into several distinctions ([UAb portal](#)) that contribute to the credibility and trust in the institution. The evolution of the Internal Quality Assurance System is shown in the figure.



The implementation and fulfilment of the determinations defined in the Internal System of Quality Assurance of the UAb is the responsibility of all the collaborators - teaching staff, non-teaching staff and students - and the management structure is the first responsible for its coordination and management.

The Quality Manual is intended to be a dynamic document, adjustable to the needs, and for this reason it is regularly revised and updated.

¹ [Decree-Law no. 133/2019, of 13 September](#)

2. STRUCTURE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE QUALITY MANUAL

2.1 Structure of the Quality Manual

The Quality Manual (QM) is the document that describes the organization and structure of Universidade Aberta's Internal Quality Assurance System (SIGQ_UAb) in its various aspects, specifying the Quality Policy, responsibilities, attributions and mechanisms, which cover the requirements defined in the regulatory framework of the Assessment and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (A3ES) and the requirements of ISO 9001:2015.

The present version of this manual results from the development of the system and subsequent integration of the contributions and recommendations arising from different exercises, namely:

- i) Institutional Evaluation by A3ES;
- ii) Result of the SIGQ_UAb Audit;
- iii) Result of audits relating to ISO 9001 and ISO/IEC 27001 standards;

In this sense, the QM embodies, from a formal point of view, the set of practices that for several years have been carried out by the institution in order to comply with the institutional policy for quality assurance and continuous improvement of its activity in the various core areas of the mission, in alignment with the national and European terms of reference for quality in Higher Education Institutions (HEI).

The QM, a document that is intended to be current and adequate to the needs of the institution, corresponds to the four-year period defined in the Strategic Plan and will be revised whenever necessary.

The drafting of the QM proposal is the responsibility of the Planning, Evaluation and Quality Office (PAQ), validated by the Quality Evaluation Council (QAC) and approved by the Rector.

The various editions of the QM are identified in Annex 5.1. where, in addition to the date of approval/approval, the revision summary is recorded.

The QM is available on the institutional portal, accessible to the whole academic community and public in general, and in bilingual format (Portuguese and English).

2.2 Legal framework and reference documents

The review and preparation of this QM had as reference a set of national and international legislation, standards and recommendations, namely:

Guiding documents and legislation	Description
<i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality in the European Higher Education</i> , ENQA, 2015	European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education
<i>Quality Assessment for E-learning: a benchmarking approach</i> , EADTU, 2012	Handbook with a set of <i>Excellence</i> projects that present methodologies and support resources for Quality Assurance in European distance education
Benchmarks for Internal Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education Institutions, A3ES, October 2016	Set of general guidelines to assist HEIs in designing and implementing their quality systems
Request for Internal Quality Assurance Systems Audit, A3ES, December 2019	Self-assessment guide for audits of internal quality assurance systems.
Manual for the Audit Process, A3ES, December 2016	Internal quality assurance systems audit process manual.
Institutional Assessment Handbook, A3ES, January 2017	Manual for the process of institutional assessment in higher education
Standard NP EN ISO 9001:2015	International reference standard for quality management system certification
ISO/IEC Standard 27001:2013	International reference standard for information security management systems
Decree-Law no. 133/2019, of 3 September	Legal Regime of Distance Learning Higher Education
Law 62/2007 of 10 September	Legal Regime of Higher Education Institutions
Law 38/2007 of 16 August	Legal Regime of Evaluation of Higher Education

In addition to these, a set of regulations applied at the UAb are taken into consideration and can be found in annex 5.4. of this manual.

3. INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

Founded in 1988, Universidade Aberta, the only public distance higher education (EaD) institution in Portugal, by its vocation and nature, uses in its teaching activities the most advanced distance education methodologies and technologies oriented towards education without geographical borders and without physical barriers, giving special emphasis to the expansion of the Portuguese language and culture in the Lusophone space (migrant communities and Portuguese-speaking countries).

UAb has defined in its Statutes, published by Normative Dispatch no. 65-B/2008 in DR 2nd series no. 246 of 22 December, the structures, operation and global competences of the governing bodies, consultation, management of departments, scientific-pedagogical coordination and services. In 2015, UAb adopted a new organic structure (Regulamento da Estrutura Orgânica da Universidade Aberta - regulamento n.º 570/2015, de 20 de agosto), which promotes sustainability in the distribution and concentration of means, human and material resources in areas of expansion and strategic interest.

With this new organisational framework, a culture oriented towards efficiency, debureaucratisation, modernisation and quality is ensured, aiming at an open, flexible and more participative administration, allowing the fulfilment of its mission, and the response to strategic and development challenges, serving the students and society better, at the height of what is expected from a distance learning university in the 21st century.

The UAb is organised into:

- i) Organic Units (4) - structures responsible for the formal offer of 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle courses, distributed among 12 licentiate degrees; 20 master's degrees and 12 doctorates;
- ii) Organizational Unit (1) - responsible for Lifelong Learning (LLL), one of the strategic priorities of the UAb, and aims, through non-formal and informal courses, the acquisition and improvement of competencies, skills and knowledge of adults, in order to build an active citizenship and increase employability. Its mission is to organize and manage the development and offer of programmes and training, in articulation with the Departments;
- iii) Central Services - exercise their activities in support of the Rector and the other governing bodies of the University;
- iv) Decentralized Services - are structures of organization and management of human and material resources that meet the needs of students and trainees of the University. The Regional Delegations (of Coimbra and Porto) and the Local Learning Centres (CLA) are decentralized services.

UAb, in an attitude of continuous improvement guided by excellence in management, obtained, in 2011, the certification of services (NP EN ISO 9001) and was recognized with the 1st Level of Excellence, by adopting the management excellence model of the *European Foundation for Quality Management* (EFQM). In the pursuit of this path to excellence, UAb has ensured the renewal of the certification of services and has become the first Portuguese public university to be distinguished under the European Levels of Excellence scheme, being also the only European distance learning university with this 4-star "recognition" for the 2nd level - *Recognised for Excellence* (R4E) of EFQM. In 2017, UAb obtained the certification of Information Security, under the *eLearning* platform (ISO/IEC 27001), which it has maintained through external audits by the certifying entity - APCER. In 2018 it obtained again the certification of services, by the 2015 version of NP EN ISO 9001.

The organisation chart of the UAb is available in Annex 5.2 of this manual.

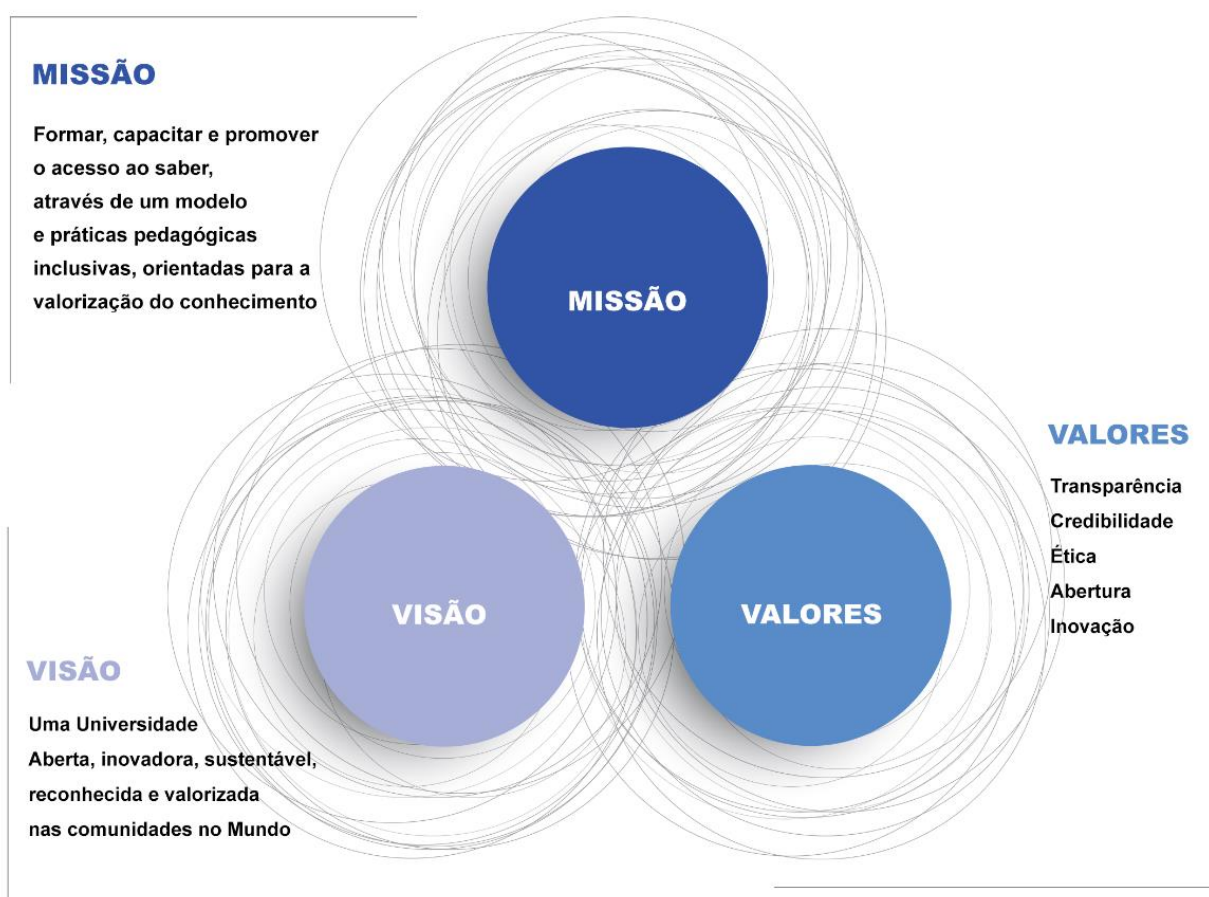
Universidade Aberta's Strategic Plan for the four-year period 2019-2023 is developed around four axes:

- A competent and competitive university for a digital world.
- The flexibilisation of supply.
- Knowledge creation and transfer.
- A sustainable and people-centred (and socially committed) university.

Around these axes, 14 strategic objectives were outlined for which targets and indicators were defined, as per the Strategic Map (annex 5.3.).

Mission, Vision and Institutional Values

Figure 1 - Mission, Vision and Values



3.1 Quality policy and objectives

The main objective of the quality policy is continuous improvement through stimulating participation and responsibility. The achievement of this objective implies: i) the development of an organisational culture, involving and motivating the whole academic community in the processes related to quality; ii) the promotion of a culture of quality transversal to all activities and projects, in which assessment is seen as a natural element of the institution's activity.

Thus, in line with the guidelines defined in the UAb Strategic Plan, a commitment is made to:

1. To promote a culture of institutional quality and self-accountability, based on regular self-assessment and the consequent control of improvement implementation.
2. To encourage an active participation of internal and external stakeholders, relevant for the functioning of the institution, listening to their needs and expectations, seeking to increase their satisfaction.
3. To promote the UAb values in all activities developed within the scope of the SIGQ_UAb.
4. To ensure that constraints and opportunities are identified, considered and controlled, increasing the effectiveness of the QMS and obtaining better results.
5. To guarantee the necessary conditions for updating the QMSI and its certification by the benchmarks and standards established as reference for its construction.
6. Ensure, through the Information Security Policy, the commitment of the organisation to comply with the requirements of the ISO/IEC 27001 standard.

The degree of achievement of the quality objectives is supervised through processes and procedures which allow the monitoring and evaluation of the developed activities, in order to guarantee the fulfilment of the internal and external requirements in a perspective of continuous improvement of the University's performance.

4. The UAb's Internal System of Quality Assurance (SIGQ_UAb)

4.1.

The SIGQ_UAb aims to ensure quality and continuous improvement in the institutional mission areas, through the implementation and monitoring of the quality assurance system and participative management of all relevant stakeholders.

The system is governed by the principles underlying the Quality Policy and covers all the processes and activities carried out with a view to achieving its objectives of improving and guaranteeing the quality of its products and services.

The SIGQ_UAb is the result of the integration of the ENQA/A3ES standards with other quality management systems by which the UAb is certified, namely by the ISO 9001 and ISO/IEC 27001 standards with regard to the Information Security Management System.

The requirements of the **ISO 9001** standard are applied to the support processes and its scope is the management of applications, customer service, management of enrolments and registrations, management of student accounts, certification of academic and professional skills, requests for certificates, management of exams, management of grade appeals, forwarding of theses and dissertations, document management of theses and dissertations defended at the UAb, management of mobility programmes, educational resources, sale of publications, recognition of academic degrees, organisation of events, digital production and management of the eLearning platform.

ISO/IEC 27001 applies specifically to the management, use and support of the eLearning platform and its assets in accordance with the current Statement of Applicability.

Currently, the SIGQ_UAb reinforces the relationship between the A3ES benchmarks and the requirements of ISO standards, and of these with the procedures adopted by the UAb in the various aspects of the SIGQ, UAb's unique quality assurance system.

Constitution and powers

The SIGQ_UAb integrates a set of structures, as shown in Figure 2, which contribute to the balanced, effective and transversal development of the system, through monitoring and evaluation activities of quality assurance at the various levels of UAb management.

Figure 2 - Organisational structures of the SIGQ_UAb



The structures that constitute SIGQ_UAb work under the Rector's direct dependence, or in whom he/she may delegate competences, being its constitution and competences defined by Rector's Order. Besides these structures, all services and organic units contribute to quality assurance.

The competences of each of the SIGQ_UAb structures are presented below.

The competences of the Quality Assessment Council (QAC) include, among others

- To contribute to the Strategic Plan and to the Activity Plans in articulation with the strategic priorities of SIGQ_UAb;
- Propose the Quality Policy;
- To validate the Assessment Report of the SIGQ_UAb, taking into account the opinions of the Commission for the Assessment and Improvement of Study Cycles (CAM) and the Commission for the Assessment and Improvement of Research and Development (CAMID);
- Validate the institutional self-evaluation report;
- To periodically monitor the state of implementation of the approved SIGQ_UAb Improvement Plan and propose appropriate changes;

The competences of the Commission for Monitoring and Improvement of Study Cycles (CAM) are, among others:

- To contribute to the Activity Plans, so that they address the priorities of the SIGQ_UAb for teaching-learning;

- To issue an opinion on the annual teaching-learning SIGQ_UAb report of each department and Lifelong Learning Unit (LLLU) and on the analytical reports of the courses, namely on the improvement actions proposed and the results achieved by the implementation of the actions proposed in the previous academic years;
- Periodically monitor the state of implementation of the actions identified in the annual reports;
- To propose the implementation of actions for the improvement of the SIGQ_UAb, in the teaching-learning dimension, namely those resulting from the analysis of the annual reports;
- To identify, propose and trigger the implementation of improvement actions in the teaching-learning context;

The competences of the Commission for Monitoring and Improvement of Research and Development (CAMID) are, among others:

- To contribute to the Activity Plans, in articulation with the SIGQ_UAb priorities for R&D;
- To issue an opinion on the SIG&D SIGQ_UAb annual report, namely on the improvement actions proposed and the results achieved by the implementation of the actions proposed in previous years;
- To periodically monitor the state of implementation of the actions identified in the annual report I&D SIGQ_UAb;
- To propose the implementation of improvement actions of SIGQ_UAb, in the R&D dimension, namely those arising from the analysis of the SIGQ_UAb annual R&D report;
- To identify, propose and trigger the implementation of improvement actions of the SIGQ_UAb, in the scope of R&D.

The Quality Council carries out its activity within the framework of ISO 9001:2015 and ISO/IEC 27001:2013 certifications, with the following competences:

- Pronounce on the Review of the System;
- Ensure that the system conforms to the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 and ISO/IEC 27001:2013;
- Reporting to senior management on the performance of the QMS, from the perspective of the support processes.

Also in the scope of the ISO 9001 and ISO/IEC 27001 standards, it should be noted that there are Quality and Information Security managers, with the following competences:

Quality Manager:

- To participate in the preparation of the Quality Manual and Quality Procedures;
- To validate and codify the Work Procedures, the work instructions and the forms, under the proposal and in articulation with the managers;

- To verify the Quality System Procedure in the scope of Information Security and respective working procedures, work instructions, plans and forms, under the proposal and in articulation with the Information Security Manager;
- Propose the Audit Programme;
- To process the data concerning the functioning of the Quality Management System that supports the analysis to be carried out by the Quality Council;
- Stimulate the implementation and improvement of the Quality Management System;
- Analyse the reports of the QMS audits and respective improvement bulletins;
- To streamline the handling of non-conformities and the taking of corrective actions to avoid the repetition of problems.

Information Security Manager:

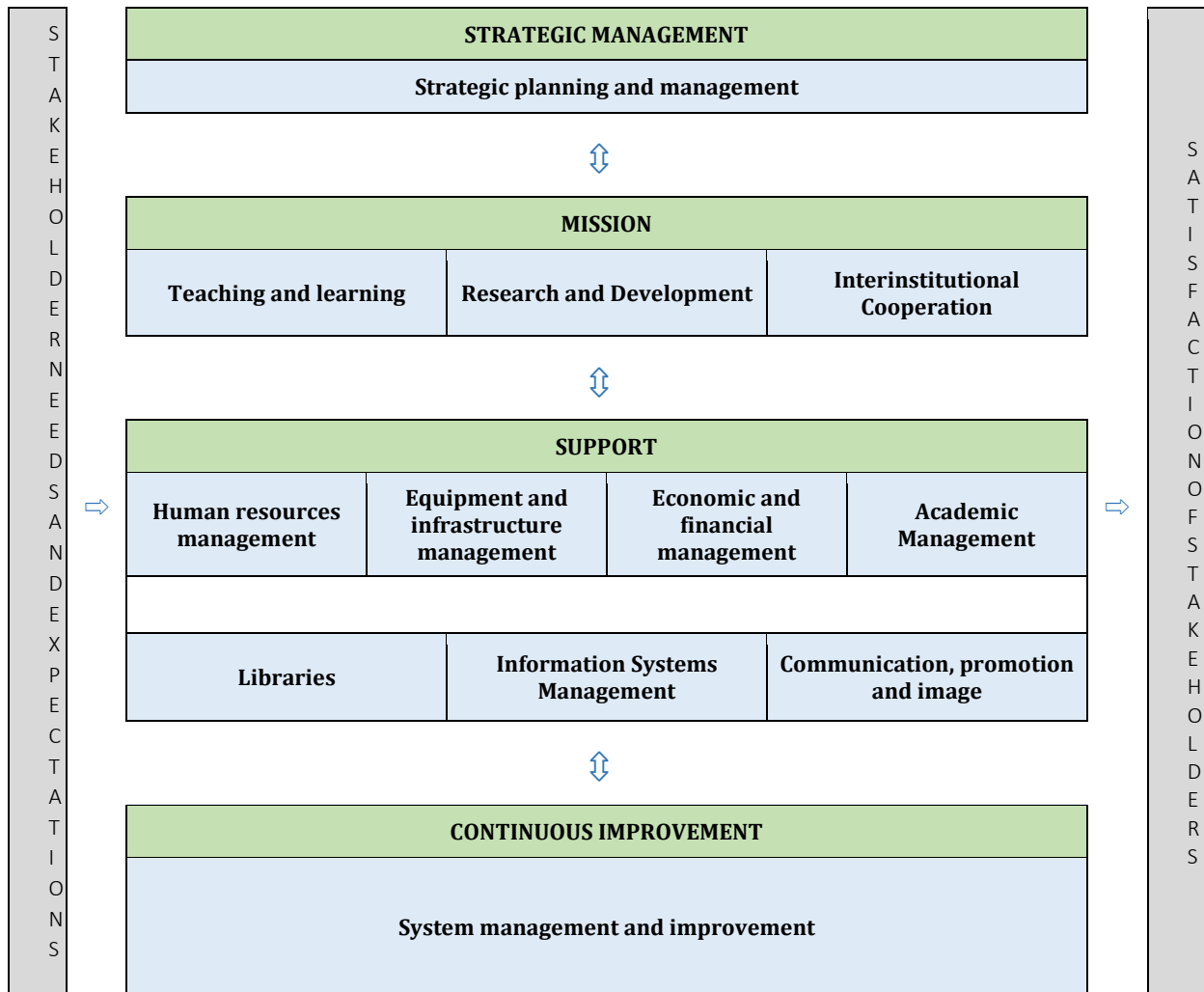
- To participate in the preparation of the Quality Manual and the Procedures of the Quality Management System;
- Propose and codify the Procedures of the Quality System in the scope of Information Security and respective Working Procedures, work instructions, plans and forms;
- Propose the audits in the scope of Information Security, to be incorporated in the QMS audit programme;
- Articulate with the Quality Manager the treatment of the data concerning the functioning of the Quality Management System that supports the analysis to be carried out by the Quality Council;
- Articulate with the Quality Manager the dynamisation, implementation and improvement of the Quality Management System;
- Dynamise the treatment of non-conformities, incidents and the taking of corrective actions to avoid the repetition of problems in the area of information security;
- Streamline the updating of the applicability statement and risk assessment.

4.3. UAb QMS Model

The SIGQ_UAb is based on a process approach, divided into four areas: Strategic Management, Mission, Support and Continuous Improvement, and its structural model is presented in Figure 3.

Annexes 5.6 and 5.7 present the correlation matrices between processes and reference standards underlying the SIGQ_UAb (A3ES and ISO).

Figure 3 - SIGQ_UAb model



The processes identified according to this methodology were grouped into four types:

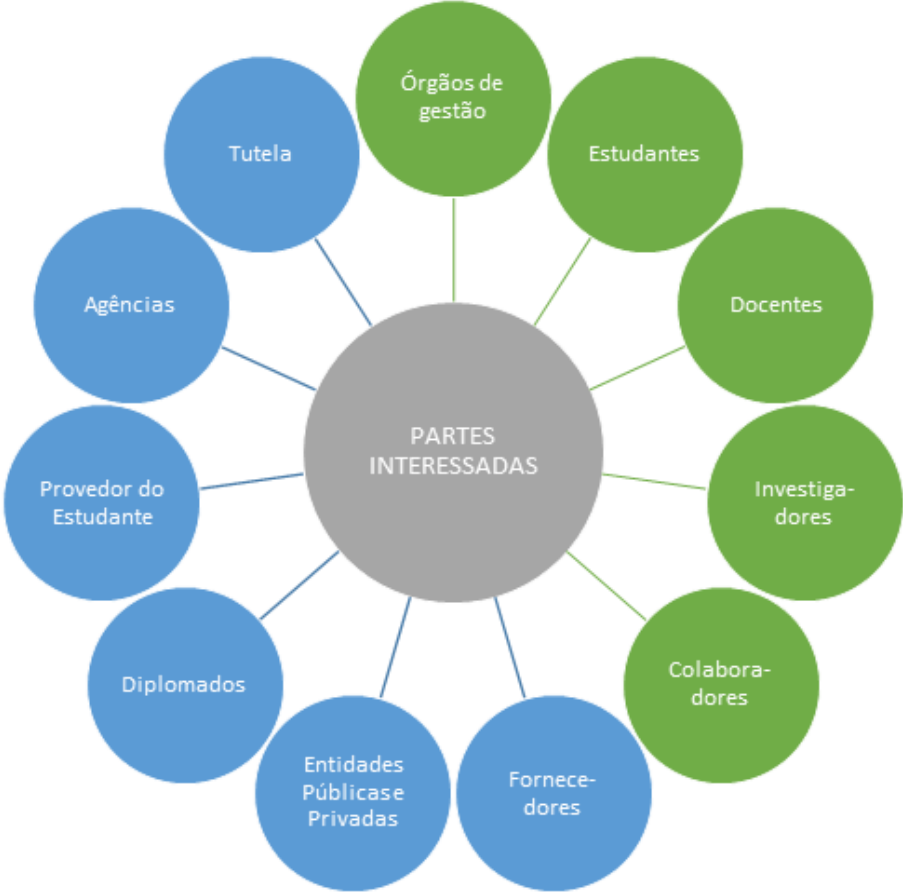
- Strategic Management - includes the whole process of Strategic and Operational Management and establishes the guidelines for the achievement of the institutional mission.
- Mission - nuclear axis that includes the Teaching and Learning processes, Research and Development, and Interinstitutional Cooperation;
- Support - processes that support the Mission and Strategic Management areas and guarantee the functioning of the institution, in particular people, but also support services, infrastructure and work environment, management of information and communication systems.
- Continuous Improvement - processes that allow verifying the conformity of the system with the normative references and with the legal and regulatory requirements. They assess performance, including stakeholder consultation, effectiveness and efficiency, contributing to continuous improvement.

The UAb has a Procedures Manual, which describes how to carry out the various activities, identifying the respective *inputs* and *outputs* and the people responsible for their execution.

The UAb's quality policy gives particular relevance to the internal and external stakeholders, promoting their participation and ensuring the monitoring of their degree of satisfaction, namely in relation to their needs and expectations. In this framework, for each of the relevant stakeholders (identified in Figure 4) the needs and expectations, monitoring methodologies and forms of participation in the bodies were identified. This information is included in Annex 5.5 of this manual.

The UAb undertakes regular consultation with stakeholders by means of surveys and questionnaires, which represent an established practice in the institution. Annex 5.8 presents the consultation methodologies used at the UAb.

Figure 4 - Relevant stakeholders (internal and external)



4.5. Operationalisation of the SIGQ_UAb

4.5.1 Strategic Management

The institutional strategy for quality assumes, as a core principle, the shared vision of the mission and values of the University, translated into a strategic plan of institutional development, approved by the General Council. Its operationalisation involves all levels of the institution, is aligned with the Strategic Plan adopted by the General Council at the beginning of the Rector's mandate, and is materialised through annual activity plans.

In terms of management instruments, the Rector presents the Strategic Plan for the four-year term of office to the General Council for approval. Supported by the PE, the Annual Plan of Activities and the Budget is annually submitted to the General Council, after consultation with the Senate, in which the objectives, actions to be developed and goals to be achieved are defined, as well as the respective associated cost estimates. The UAb's PA integrates the contributions of the Activity Plans of the different organic units, services and offices, which, in turn, base their operational objectives and their actions on the strategic objectives proposed in the EP. Every year, the UAb publishes the Annual Activities Report in which the execution of the PA is evaluated.

The UAb ensures that, at least once a year, an analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of the SIGQ_UAb is carried out, which allows for a critical analysis of the performance of the system and of the UAb.

The institution has implemented ways to ensure academic integrity and vigilance against academic fraud and against any form of intolerance or discrimination towards students or teaching and non-teaching staff. There is the Student Disciplinary Regulation and the Code of Conduct. Also with regard to plagiarism, the institution has a software (URKUND ®) license for detecting plagiarism in written work, and there is a practice of formal declaration of authorship by the master's/doctoral student. The existence of the Student Ombudsman and the Joint Commission also contributes to minimising acts of intolerance and/or discrimination.

4.5.2 Mission processes

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality assurance system of the teaching-learning process aims to ensure the planning, monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement of the activities related to teaching, learning, student assessment, monitoring of the student's academic pathway and course evaluation, involving in this process all the relevant bodies and interlocutors. This process is supported in documented procedures of Academic Cycle Management (Annex 5.4.) and has a set of regulations for the various phases of the academic cycle.

The design of the formative offer, formal or non-formal courses, is based on the institutional strategy, the General Regulation of the UAb's Educational Offer and the results of the evaluation, analysis and improvement process. The procedure of creation and alteration of courses counts on the involvement of students through the structures in which they are represented (Scientific Council and Pedagogical Council), which are part of the process.

All the information regarding the courses (study plan, access conditions, teaching regime, objectives and professional outlets) is available, of public access, in the institution's portal.

The monitoring of the quality in Teaching and Learning takes place at various levels, in an articulation between the evaluations made and the production of semester and/or annual reports. The monitoring process contemplates the following levels:

- Curricular Units (CU) - The teacher responsible for the CU is responsible for the elaboration of a CU self-evaluation report - Curricular Unit Report (RUC) - in which a global analysis of the CU operation is made and improvement plans are defined whenever unsatisfactory results are verified.
- Course - In terms of course self-evaluation, the course coordinator is responsible for the elaboration of the Course Self-evaluation Report (RAC), based on the UC reports and other elements (e.g. survey results), and includes a critical analysis on the fundamental aspects for the course success. The structure of the RAC is defined by the Rector's order. This report is subject to an opinion by the CAM and the CAQ is responsible for giving its opinion on the aspects it considers relevant. These reports are approved by the Rector and their results integrate the Institutional Activity Report and the RASIGQ.
- Department - The Departmental Director is responsible for preparing the Activity Plan, which should present the objectives, activities and indicators in line with the institution's strategic objectives, as well as the Activity Report, which should include an analysis of the main activities based on the indicators and goals defined.

In order to support the development process of the evaluation reports, the University provides the different responsible agents with simple and immediate access to absolute and comparative data and management indicators at the level of the course unit, the course, the department and the University, through the Integrated Academic Data Application (AIDA). This application is part of a digital information system that promotes interoperability between the various subsystems of the academic activities of the UAb Information System, enabling the integration of relevant information, in an agile and reliable way, oriented to guarantee the quality of education.

The process of submission, in each assessment cycle, of the courses for assessment and accreditation involves the different Organic Units (Departments) and organisational units, the teaching staff, the students and non-teaching staff and consists of a fundamental exercise that allows the identification of the aspects

to be improved and the ways of implementation. The QISMS structures contribute to this process, namely the CAM and the CAQ, through the analysis of the Annual Course Reports (Analytic Reports).

The results of these processes of assessment and accreditation of study cycles are integrated in the management instruments, namely the RA and RASIGQ.

The academic path of the student is a concern of UAb, which immediately seeks to provide conditions for academic adaptation to a distinctive teaching-learning model that also requires learning multiple skills and personal and ethical development. In this context UAb promotes:

- The organization of welcome sessions for new students, in partnership with the Academic Association, Regional Delegations and Local Learning Centres;
- Attendance, at the beginning of each academic year, free of charge, of the Online Familiarisation Module, with the aim of promoting a better integration of the students to UAb's pedagogical model. This is a two-week course which is compulsory for all students enrolled for the first time in the UAb and who start an eLearning course. All the information that the student needs to carry out and manage his learning is integrated in the eLearning platform, through which the student accesses the learning materials and activities, the pedagogical tasks to develop, the communication, sharing and knowledge construction and evaluation spaces;
- The application of pedagogical and satisfaction surveys with the services provided by the UAb, in order to measure the quality of the processes and improve them, meeting the students' expectations;
- The monitoring of graduates, through the Observatory for the professional paths of UAb graduates.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Research and Development is under the dependence of the Vice-Rector for Research, Knowledge Transfer and Scientific Dissemination. The monitoring of research takes place within the scope of the monitoring of the activities proposed in the Activity Plan, identifying actions and respective goals, which allow for the assessment of the quality standards that the UAb proposes to achieve.

In the scope of SIGQ_UAb, the UAb also has the CAMID, whose constitution is defined by Rectorial dispatch and includes, besides the President of the Scientific Council, the scientific coordinators of the research units based at the UAb and the representative of the poles with research centre extension and the director(s) of the chair(s).

At UAb scientific research is developed by its IUs, funded and evaluated by FCT. The internal procedures to ensure the quality assurance of the research produced are aligned with the provisions of FCT. The evaluation processes are based on periodic assessments carried out by panels of international experts, based on reports, activity plans, projects developed and contact with the IUs, resulting in the attribution of a quality classification by the panel to each IU.

The UAb also has an Office of Support to Research and Development Projects (GAPID) in its organizational structure, which is responsible for: i) support in the formalization of applications; ii) support to teachers, researchers and other collaborators in the preparation of project budgets; iii) support in the technical-financial execution of projects throughout their life cycle; iv) analysis of the existence of possible new sources of funding and their relevance and feasibility in relation to the Mission of the University.

In the case of Research and Development Units, the administrative and technical-financial obligations imposed by funding granted by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) are the internal competence of the respective Unit to which they are housed.

The research units in articulation with the course coordinations and departments, regularly promote events directed to students of the different study cycles, not only as a way to capture the interest for the research developed in the Institution/Research Centre, but also to raise the interest for Science, Technology and Innovation, giving them a closer approach to practice. These practices also promote a greater articulation between teaching and research.

The monitoring of research is also carried out within the scope of the follow-up of the activities proposed in the Activity Plan, identifying actions and respective goals, which allow the assessment of quality standards that the UAb proposes to achieve. Regarding the results of the valorization of knowledge, the monitoring procedures are carried out through periodic reports, where several indicators appear, such as the projects submitted/approved in the context of different types of programs and funding. In terms of teaching performance evaluation, there is a mechanism that recognises scientific production.

INTERINSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

Interinstitutional Cooperation is a priority for the UAb and is materialised in different types of relationship that can be typified as:

- Interinstitutional Collaboration;
- Provision of services abroad;
- Integration in international and national projects and partnerships, including mobility programmes;
- Contribution to regional and national development;

The UAb's strategy, outlined in its Strategic Plan, pays special attention to the inter-institutional cooperation with society and to the regional development, starting with the existence of a Vice-Rector for Institutional Development and Cooperation and of the Mission Unit for the Local Learning Centres, which aggregates a network of 18 Local Learning Centres, present in mainland Portugal and in the islands, and which represent the link between the University and society.

Interinstitutional cooperation is developed in two aspects: the valorisation and transfer of knowledge generated by the R&D activity of the UAb's IUs and the identification and response to the needs of the regions and their populations, whether in terms of graduate and continuing training or the provision of services.

In this context, part of the knowledge transfer activity is developed by the IUs, which include in their agenda topics that arise from current problems. On the other hand, they also include in their action plans numerous activities for the dissemination and diffusion of knowledge through events.

In terms of graduate and continuing education, besides the graduate training offer and the teaching model practiced by the UAb allowing it to reach everyone, regardless of their physical location, the UAb also has the Lifelong Learning Unit to develop continuing training that meets the needs of society, in collaboration with public and private entities that seek us out.

UAb assumes a strategic commitment to internationalisation, essential to the teaching-learning and Research and Development (and innovation) process.

The goal of strengthening internationalisation is thus transversal to all areas of the UAb mission, present in the Strategic Plan, in the Annual Activity Plans and in the Internationalisation Policy, and assumes as concrete objectives:

- To promote participation in internationalisation activities, in the areas of education and training;
- To promote participation in research networks and in the development of international research projects;
- To promote international mobility (students, teaching and non-teaching staff).

Through the UAb's internal communication mechanisms, information about the established agreements is disseminated, allowing the dissemination of the potential opportunities, beyond those defined in the initial cooperation proposal. The Rector is responsible for the establishment of partnerships, although they may be based on individual proposals from teachers, Organic Units and Research Units.

In terms of international mobility, besides the usual programmes (e.g. ERASMUS), the UAb is also committed to virtual mobility. The UAb has documented procedures for managing mobility programmes, which establish the rules applied to the mobility of students, teaching and non-teaching staff.

The monitoring and evaluation of cooperation activities is carried out by measuring the results achieved, in relation to the objectives set, based on a set of performance indicators defined for this process.

4.5.3 Support to Mission and Strategic Management areas

HUMAN RESOURCES

In the human resources management process, the operationalization of the institutional policy for quality is materialized, among other responsibilities, in activities, processes and procedures for recruitment and hiring of human resources for all areas of activity of the University, based on documented procedures. The UAb makes available on its portal, in the Human Resources area, the publication of all the acts.

In terms of performance evaluation, at the level of the teaching staff, the existence of the **Regulation for Evaluating the Performance of Teaching Staff (RADD) should be** noted, which is based on the collection of data regarding the teaching activity, according to a set of indicators defined for research; teaching; transfer and social valorization of knowledge; university management and other tasks.

The following actors are involved in the teacher performance evaluation process:

- the evaluated;
- the evaluators;
- the Scientific Council and the Pedagogical Council;
- the Coordinating Council for Teacher Performance Evaluation;
- the Rector.

In the case of non-teaching staff, the Integrated System for Management and Performance Evaluation in the Public Administration (SIADAP) is applied, supported by the GeADAP tool. In relation to the performance evaluation of non-teaching staff, it should be noted the existence of structures - the Assessment Coordinating Council (CCA) and the Parity Commission - and respective associated regulations.

As an important component of performance evaluation, the UAb considers relevant the qualification and enhancement of its human resources, through the identification of training needs and expectations, conditions and requirements for personal and professional development. In this respect, every year the Vocational Training Plan is established, promoting the realization of training actions aimed at all employees, in order to provide them with the appropriate skills for the performance in their fields.

As a responsibility of the Division of Human Resources (DRH), the application of satisfaction surveys among the UAb's employees should be mentioned, as a way of guaranteeing quality and assessing opportunities for improvement (Annex 5.8.). The UAb has publicly available norms and regulations applied to human resources (Annex 5.4.).

EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The equipment and infrastructure management process aims to ensure the availability, maintenance and conservation of infrastructures, equipment and the work environment, necessary to ensure the provision of the service in conformity and appropriate working conditions, based on preventive maintenance procedures and plans. It is supported on procedures that ensure effective and sustainable management and use of equipment and infrastructures, and its follow-up is done through periodic monitoring and evaluation of a set of indicators.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The process of economic and financial management includes the areas of financial resources, public procurement, purchasing and assets and is supported by procedures, ensuring a sustainable management of these resources. In the area of financial resources, in addition to the monitoring of indicators and internal audits, the management is supported by opinions of external entities (Technical and Statutory Auditors and Statutory Auditor) to ensure the financial compliance of the UAb. In the area of public procurement and supply, every year the UAb promotes the evaluation of its suppliers, ensuring the necessary qualification in the provision of goods and services needed to carry out the activities.

ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT

It is a process in close connection with the teaching and learning process as an administrative support to all the stages of the student cycle at the UAb, from admission and enrolment, to the issuing of graduation diplomas. This process includes a set of defined procedures (applications, enrolment and registration, crediting of competences and recognition of academic degrees, management of accounts, ...). The area of academic management assumes, in the UAb, a central role not only because the student's contact with the University is almost exclusively online, but also because it covers all the activity of support to the students of all the UAb courses, namely: Applications with entrance exams; Management of enrolments and registrations; Management of student current accounts; Accreditation of academic and professional skills; Requests for certificates; Management and conduct of exams; Management of grade appeals; Forwarding of theses and dissertations; Applications direct access, course changes, transfers, re-entry and UCI; Recognition of foreign qualifications.

Follow-up and monitoring is done through indicators and periodic satisfaction surveys.

LIBRARIES

The UAb has three libraries located in its premises in Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra. It also makes available a set of services and tools, appropriate to the needs not only of UAb students, but also of the general public, namely:

- Home loans;
- Interlibrary loan;
- Online catalogue;
- Audiovisual archive;
- Implementation of training actions;
- Open Repository.

UAb has specific regulations and policies, both for libraries and also for its Open Repository.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Information systems are the technological support of the UAb's activity and this nucleus, which integrates information technologies, is structured according to the following activities:

- Teaching
 - Academic Portal;
 - Application portal;
 - eLearning platform;
 - Academic Data Integral Application (AIDA).
- Research
 - Institutional Repository - Open Repository;
 - Record of activities of the teacher.
 - Comprehensive Application of Research Data (IDAI).
- Cross-cutting services:
 - Institutional Portal;
 - Intranet;
 - Teaching Service Management;
 - ERP Services (Financial Management, Human Resources, Purchasing and Assets);
 - Servicedesk;
 - Online Communication Management System (SITCON);
 - UAbTV;
 - Online shop.

All members of the academic community interact with the information system and the interconnection between the different systems and levels is ensured. Users are associated to user profiles, ensuring that each user only accesses functionalities and data that are his/her responsibility and/or level of access.

As a support to the UAb teaching model, this process includes the procedures related to Information Security Management within the eLearning platform, which aim to ensure the preservation of integrity, confidentiality and availability, meeting the requirements of the ISO/IEC 27001:2013 standard.

This process also includes all the system's documentation, guaranteeing its conformity, control and updating.

COMMUNICATION, PROMOTION AND IMAGE

This process includes procedures associated with the following areas:

- Communication (internal and external);

- Organisation of events;
- Digital production.

Communication, whether internal or external, plays a key role in institutions. In the case of the UAb, it is an area foreseen in the EP and the PAs through the inclusion of strategic objectives.

Communication is the responsibility of the GCRI, under the Rector's guidance and in articulation with various SUO of the UAb. The UAb has several means of dissemination that provide information of interest to the specific target **audience** for which they are intended:

- a) Portal UAb;
- b) Intranet (private area);
- c) Newsletter;
- d) Institutional e-mail;
- e) UAbTV
- f) Institutional social networks.

The UAb portal is the main vehicle for disseminating information about the institution and its activity, and is the privileged means of disseminating the training offer at the UAb.

In response to the European standards for quality assurance in education, the UAb makes available regular and up-to-date information on the education programmes and degrees offered, namely;

- Applications;
- Study Plans;
- School calendar;
- Tuition fees;
- Faculty;
- Employability;
- Evaluation/Accreditation of courses (period and registration with DGES)

The UAb also makes available in its portal, several management instruments that respond to the UAb's strategy, contributing to the promotion of an institutional culture of self-accountability and participation in its implementation.

In terms of event management, the various structures (organic units, research units and Local Learning Centres) are given support in the organisation of events.

The UAb also has the Digital Production Services (SPD) responsible for the digital production carried out (audio, video and editions in ebook format).

4.5.4 Continuous Improvement Process

The system management and improvement process establishes the mechanisms and procedures for the identification, collection, analysis and use of results and other relevant information - internal and external - for an effective management of the SIGQ_UAb, both in the institutional mission areas and in the support processes.

SIGQ_UAb monitoring consists in following up a set of indicators of institutional evolution, is carried out annually and included in the SIGQ_UAb Evaluation Report (RASIGQ_UAb), allowing for an analysis of SIGQ_UAb effectiveness and efficiency. This analysis and the evidences that support it are periodically presented to the Rector, who decides on the areas for improvement and their timing, so that SIGQ_UAb remains effective and adequate to the needs of the organization and to the provisions of the applicable legal and regulatory references.

The UAb performs throughout the year a set of audits, internal and external, through the establishment of an audit programme, which allows the identification of possible non-conformities and opportunities for improvement. The audits to the QMS are the responsibility of the QMSG, which in articulation with the different OUs and services, in articulation with the Quality and Information Security Managers. It is also the responsibility of the QMSG to promote the coordination with the various services in the treatment of non-conformities arising from audits performed.

The results of the audits (non-conformities and opportunities for improvement) are analysed and integrated in RASIGQ_UAb, as well as the action plans, whenever they are considered relevant for improving the quality of the service provided by the UAb

The UAb has a **complaint** management instrument, which defines the means available for the interested parties to present complaints. The management of complaints is within the competence of the GGAC.

The complaints are received by the CAG, and are always analysed and a response is presented to each complainant, involving the services/offices in question. The complaint books are also available and advertised in the services with public attendance (academic secretariat, libraries, Regional Delegations and Local Learning Centres), and all the resolution procedures established by law are followed.

The annual report resulting from the QMS evaluation identifies the main activities developed in the context of Quality, assesses the overall performance of the QMS_UAb and presents areas for improvement and the subsequent action plan to be developed in the next management cycle.

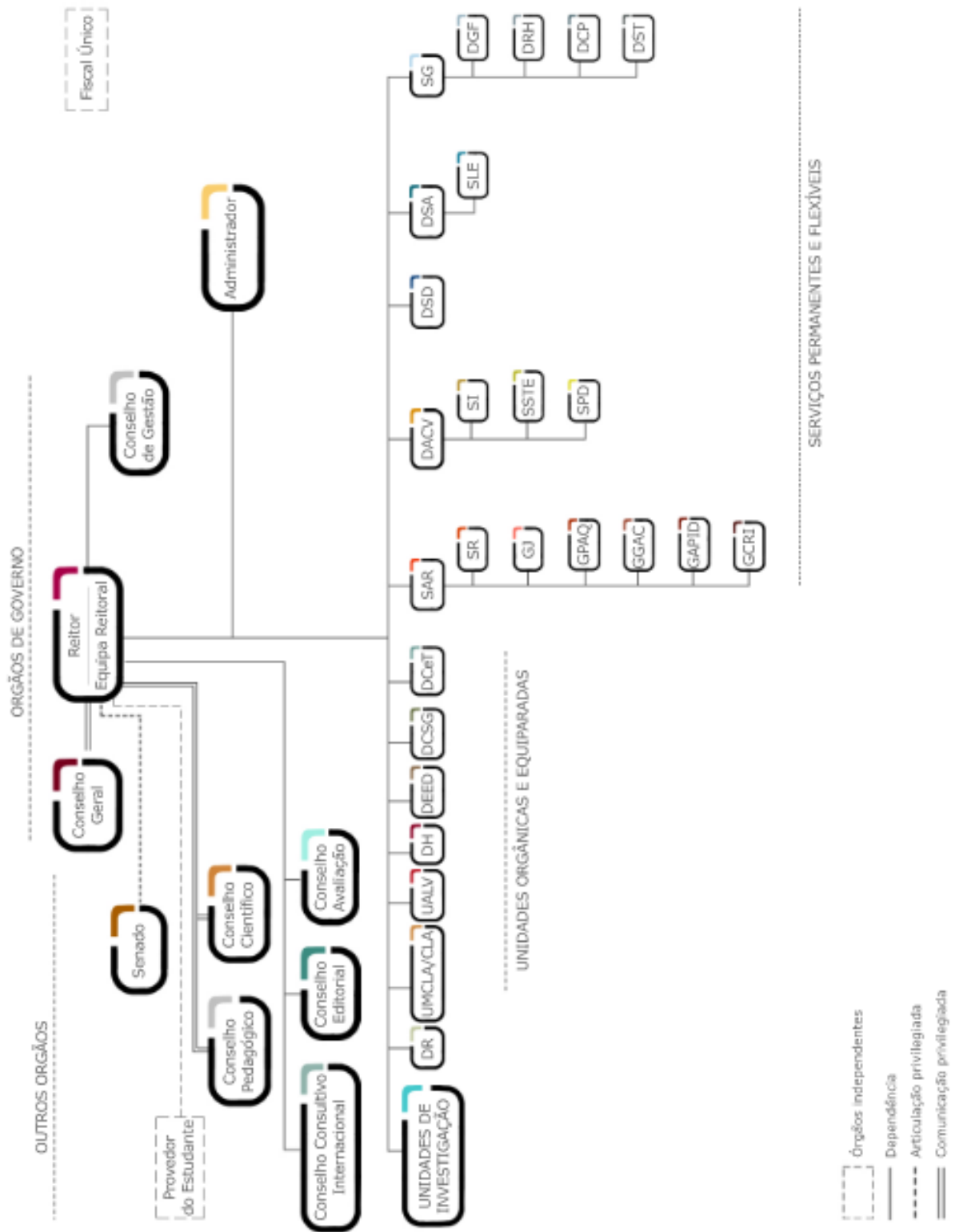
The elaboration of RASIGQ_UAb is the responsibility of the RPAQ and approved by the Rector.

5. ANNEXES

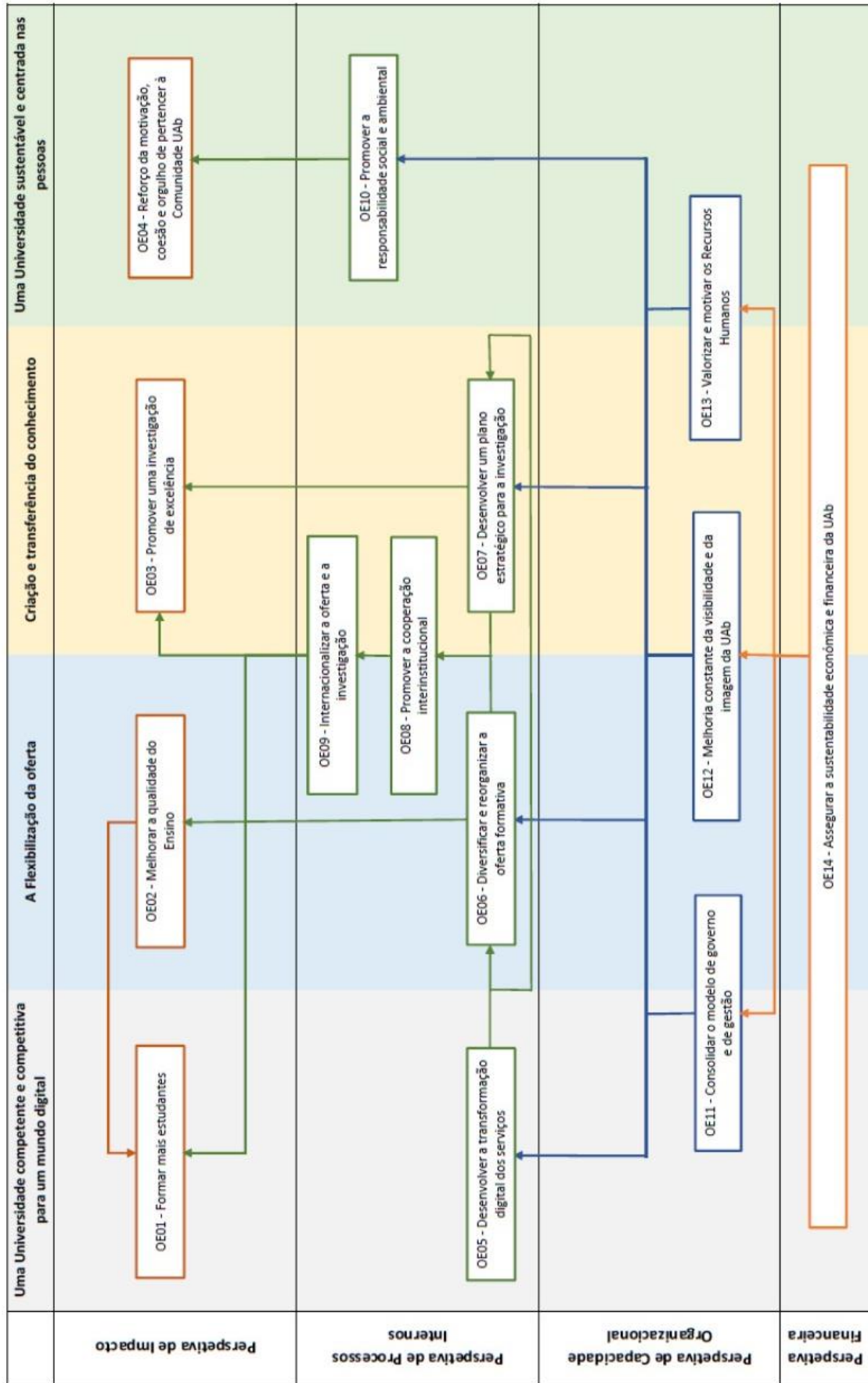
5.1 Recording of revisions of the QM

VERSION	DATE	SUMMARY
QM.1.0/2018	26-11-2018	First version of the QM.
QM.2.0/2019	23-04-2019	Global revision of the Quality Manual in view of the new references for internal quality assurance systems in HEIs.
QM.3.0/2021	April 2021	Comprehensive revision of the Quality Manual with the integration of the various quality systems, namely the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 and ISO/IEC 27001:2013, obtaining a single quality assurance system. Review of the SIGQ_UAb process map and the structures responsible for quality assurance.

5.2 UAb Organisation Chart



5.3 Strategic Map 2019-2023



5.4 UAb Regulations

NAME	ADVERTISING	NATIONAL OFFICIAL JOURNAL
UAb Statutes	Normative Dispatch No. 9/2002	Official Gazette no. 38/2002 (1st series B) of 14-02-2020
UAb Organic Structure Regulation	Regulation No 489/2014	D.R. no. 210/2014 (2nd series) of 30-10-2014
UAb Ethics Committee Regulation	-	-
Scientific Council Regulation	Order No. 05/R/2018	-
Pedagogical Council Regulation	Order No. 8579/2016	D.R. no. 125 (2nd series) of 01-07-2016
Editorial Board Regulations	Order No. 27/R/2017	-
General Data Protection Regulation	-	-
Student Ombudsman Regulation	Order No. 4880/2010	D.R. no. 54 (2nd series) of 18-03-2010
PLANS AND POLICIES		
Plan for the Prevention of Risks of Corruption and Related Infractions	-	-
Specific Information Security Policy	-	-
Editorial Policy	Order No. 175/R/2017	-
Internationalisation Policy	-	-
Communication Policy	-	-
Open Repository Preservation Policy	Regulation (extract) No 663/2018	D.R. no. 199 (2nd series) of 16-10-2018
INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM		
Regulation of the Internal System of Quality Assurance of the UAb	-	-
TEACHING		
General regulation of the UAb's educational offer	<i>In public consultation</i>	
Regulation for the application of the curricular credit system (ECTS) to all pedagogical offer of the UAb	Order No. 10438/2011	D.R., 2nd series, no. 158 of 18-08-2011
Regulation on the crediting of academic and professional skills, training and professional experience of the UAb	Regulation No 39/2017	D.R., 2nd series, no. 8 of 11-01-2017
Regulation of post-doctoral programmes and internships in sandwich doctoral programmes	Regulation 62/2016	D.R., 2nd series, no. 13 of 20-01-2016

NAME	ADVERTISING	NATIONAL OFFICIAL JOURNAL
Regulation of evaluation, classification, qualification and certification of the UAb	Order No. 4861/2016	D.R., 2nd series, no. 70 of 11-04-2016
UAb's student disciplinary regulation	Order No. 14355/2013	D.R., 2nd series, no. 215 of 06-11-2013
Regulation of doctorates in cotutela regime of the UAb	Regulation (extract) No 356/2018	D.R., 2nd series, no. 112 of 12-06-2018
Regulations for obtaining the academic title of aggregate	Notice No. 6831/2017	D.R., 2nd series, no. 117 of 20-06-2017
Regulations on remote participation in master's, doctoral and aggregation public examinations and in selection and recruitment panels for teaching and research staff	-	-
Isolated curricular units and certified modular training courses or study cycles	Order No. 171/VR/DC/2014	-
Advanced study courses and diplomas	Order No. 57/VR/DC/2015	-
Constitution of Masters' Juries	Order No. 252/VR/DC2017	-
Regulation of the especially adequate tests intended to evaluate the capacity to attend higher education of those over 23 years of age	Regulation 67/2007	D.R., 2nd series, n.º 84 of 02-05-2007
Regulation of local competitions for the application for enrolment and registration in the study cycles leading to a degree by UAb	Order No. 517/2011	D.R., 2nd series, no. 82 of 28-04-2011
Regulation of foreign language level examination	Regulation 218/2009	Official Gazette, 2nd Series, no. 100, 25-05-2009
Regulation on the regimes of course change, transfer and re-entry into higher education	Ordinance No. 181-D/2015	D.R., 1st series, no. 118 of 19-06-2015
UAb Tuition Fees Regulation	Dispatch no. 13352/2012	D.R., 2nd series, no. 197 of 11-10-2012
Regulation for the attribution of UAb subsidies	Order No. 94/R/2017	-
HUMAN RESOURCES		
Code of good conduct for the prevention and combat of harassment at work at the UAb	Order No. 9/R/2021	-
UAb Teachers' Performance Evaluation Regulation	Regulation (extract) No 760/2020	DR no. 178/2020 (2nd series) of 11-09-2020
UAb Teaching Service Regulations	Regulation (extract) No 217/2019	DR no. 52 (2nd series) of 14-03-2019

NAME	ADVERTISING	NATIONAL OFFICIAL JOURNAL
Regulation of the Working Hours of UAb Workers	Regulation (extract) No 101/2018	DR no. 29 (2nd series) of 09-02-2018
Tutoring Regulation	Order No. 70/R/2017	-
SERVICES		
UAb Libraries Regulation	Regulation (extract) No 100/2018	DR no. 29 (2nd series) of 09-02-2018
Open Repository Regulation	Regulation (extract) No 663/2018	DR no. 199 (2nd series) of 16-10-2018

5.5 Relevant Stakeholder Matrix

RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS	REQUIREMENTS (NEED AND EXPECTATIONS)	MONITORING	PARTICIPATION IN BODIES (GOVERNING, MANAGEMENT AND ADVISORY)
Internal			
Management and governing bodies	Compliance with statutory powers	Activities Report	General Council; Rectorial Team; Management Board; Senate Scientific Council; Pedagogic Council
Students and their representatives	Pedagogical and scientific quality; Compliance with internal requirements	Pedagogical surveys	General Council; Senate Scientific Council; Pedagogical Council; Students' Association;
Teachers / Researchers	Professional valorisation	Satisfaction survey	General Council; Senate Scientific Council; Pedagogical Council; Management Board;
Non-teaching staff	Professional valorisation	Satisfaction survey	General Council; Senate
External			
Directorate-General for Higher Education	Compliance with the requirements imposed by the entity; Regulating higher education activity	RAIDES; REBIDES; Statistics; Periodic inspections	Not applicable
Higher Education Assessment and Accreditation Agencies	Compliance with the requirements imposed	Audit reports; Follow-up reports on courses and QIS	Not applicable
Student Ombudsman	Ensuring respect for the rights, freedoms and guarantees of UAb students	Complaints Activity Report SIGQ_UAb Report	CAM
<i>Alumni</i>	Integration into the alumni network; Involvement in activities of the Institution; Sense of belonging to the Institution	Activities Report	Not applicable

Graduates	Not applicable	Graduate survey Report on the professional career of graduates	Not applicable
Candidates	Availability of information;	Not applicable	Not applicable
Public and Private Entities	Partnerships in training and research; projects	Activity report; Protocols;	Not applicable
Suppliers	Compliance with applicable legal requirements Continuity of supply	Supplier evaluation	Not applicable

5.6 Correlation matrix between processes and A3ES benchmarks

Process	Strategic Management Process	Mission processes			Support Processes							Continuous Improvement Process
A3ES/ENQA Benchmarks	Strategic planning and management	Teaching and learning	Research	Cooperation	Human resources management	Equipment and infrastructure management	Economic and financial management	Academic management	Library	Information systems management	Communication, promotion and image	System management and improvement
1												
2												
3												
4												
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11												
12												
13												

5.7 Correlation matrix between process and ISO 9001:2015 requirements

Process	Strategic Management Process	Mission processes			Support Processes							Continuous Improvement Process
		Teaching and learning	Research	Cooperation	Human resources management	Equipment and infrastructure management	Economic and financial management	Academic management	Library	Information Systems Management	Communication, promotion and image	
ISO 9001:2015 requirements	Strategic planning and management	Teaching and learning	Research	Cooperation	Human resources management	Equipment and infrastructure management	Economic and financial management	Academic management	Library	Information Systems Management	Communication, promotion and image	System management and improvement
Organisational context												
Leadership												
Planning												
Support												
Operationalisation												
Performance evaluation												
Improvement												

5.8 Mechanisms for Listening to Stakeholders

NAME	MAIN OBJECTIVE	TARGET PUBLIC	METHODOLOGY	RESPONSIBLE	PERIODICITY
INTERNAL					
Pedagogical survey - 1st cycle	Evaluation of satisfaction with 1st cycle courses (licenciatura)	1st cycle students, with active registration	Online survey	PWYP	Half-yearly
Pedagogical survey - 2nd and 3rd cycle	Evaluation of satisfaction with 2nd and 3rd cycle courses (Masters and PhDs, respectively)	2nd and 3rd cycle students, with active registration	Online survey	QFAG	Annual
Satisfaction with ALV courses	Obtaining information from students on various parameters associated with the ALV course attended	ALV course students	Online survey	UALV	Annual
Satisfaction with the services provided	Evaluation of satisfaction with services provided	Students with active enrolment	Online survey	QFAG	Annual
Brainstorming	Survey of specifications and requirements / Proposal for adjustment (if/when necessary) and subsequent solution	Top Management / SUO Leaders / UAb Teachers	Meeting	SSTE	Where necessary
Enquiries	Surveys complementary to the institutional pedagogical surveys to support the monitoring and improvement of the teaching and follow-up processes	DEED Students, Teachers and Advisors	Online survey	DEED's Course Coordinators	Half-yearly
Meeting with students	To identify the main obstacles and problems presented by students, both in the forums created for this purpose and in the pedagogical council meetings; to identify the main employability needs of students within the course.	Student representatives	Meeting	Departmental Management	Quarterly
Coordination of courses	Analysis of processes and procedures common to all courses with a view to optimising and standardising solutions and resources	Course Co-ordination	Meetings; <i>Focus Groups</i>	Departments Departments	Half-yearly

NAME	MAIN OBJECTIVE	TARGET PUBLIC	METHODOLOGY	RESPONSIBLE	PERIODICITY
Satisfaction with support and technical support	Assessing user satisfaction of the ISD's Technical Support Service	UAb Collaborators	Online survey	DSI	In each response to a support request
Satisfaction with libraries	To assess the level of satisfaction of users with the profile of Teacher, Non-teaching Staff or External Reader, with the information resources and services provided by DSD	Library users	Online survey	DSD	Annual
Satisfaction with user training	To assess the degree of satisfaction of Users with the training sessions they attend	Graduates	Online survey	DSD	At the end of the training sessions
Satisfaction with digital production	Evaluate the quality of the products designed and made available by the Digital Production Services	UAb Collaborators	Enquiry (email)	SPD	Where necessary
Satisfaction to internal collaborators	Employee satisfaction survey with the UAb	UAb Collaborators	Online survey	HRD	Annual
EXTERNAL					
Public and private entities registered with the CLA network	Assess the degree of satisfaction with the cooperation activities and possibilities for improvement	All employees and associates of the entities consulted	Surveys (email); Meetings in person and by videoconference	CLA Coordinators	Annual
Questionnaire on the Professional and Life Paths of UAb Graduates	Evaluate the institution's courses to obtain useful information, as well as to know, in a rigorous way, the impact that our degrees have on the employment and lives of our students	Graduates	Online survey	GGAC	Triannual
Creation of ALV courses	Assess the possibility of creating vocational training courses of interest to the community of these entities or the community in general	Public and Private Entities	Meeting	UALV	Where necessary