

Assessment report

URCA - Université de Reims
Champagne-Ardenne
FRANCE



Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation



european consortium for accreditation

Assessment report

URCA - Université de
Reims Champagne-
Ardenne
FRANCE

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ECA OCCASIONAL PAPER

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Glossary

EHEA	European Higher Education Area
HE	Higher education
QA	Quality assurance
URCA	Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne
UAS	University of Applied Sciences
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
PAP	Annual Performance Plan
ROF	Répertoire d'Offre de Formation (Programs register)
IMPI	Indicators for Mapping and Profiling Internationalisation

1. Executive summary

The University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne was assessed by the French Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education (AERES) and this assessment procedure took place within the framework of the Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation project (CeQuInt). AERES convened an assessment panel which studied the self-evaluation report and undertook a site visit of the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne on the 11th of April 2014.

University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne, URCA, has defined and documented in its strategic project a realistic and challenging **Internationalisation Strategy**. Internationalisation is one of the five main pillars of the university strategic vision, and is built regarding both local and national contexts. Internationalisation is implemented as a transverse dimension of the everyday life in the institution. International goals of the university are shared and supported by its highly committed internal and external stakeholders. Its objectives are declined in both quantitative and qualitative ways and embrace all parts of the university. They allow monitoring of the achievement of its internationalisation goals. The university leadership follows and assesses the internationalisation through the management dialogue with each faculty and through its set of indicators. Measures of improvement are identified and under implementation, and the university has to continue and deepen its improvement dynamic.

The aforementioned strategic project also presents institution-wide **action plans** with internationalisation aspects. These plans are relevant and fully in line with the internationalisation goals. The university undertakes the building of a new campus to improve the study environment, where internationalisation aspects and support to students really matter. University's action plans also include support to staff to develop international projects.

Action plans are also completed by specific institution-wide instruments and resources offering to internationalisation initiative support to be developed. External stakeholders, as the City of Reims, or the region also take part in this development on a win-win basis.

The **implementation** of the internationalisation goals and activities is supported by an information system based on the annual Project of Performance (PAP) which describes the evolution in the university. The data collection is centralised within the Apogee database, but a new system is under development. There is also a newly developed set of indicators concerning international research, and online surveys to collect the students' mobility experiences. Annual activity reports are produced by faculties and units, they will be included in the annual report of the university. Annual seminars with the strategic policy makers of the Presidency and various management teams across the university are used to review internationalisation activities. The internal procedure for international project includes a systematically assessment phase.

The institutional **Quality Management System** covers some internationalisation dimensions and activities and uses them in its enhancement activities. Stakeholders are regularly consulted, but their commitment does not go beyond recommendations in the building of the quality assurance and enhancement.

The responsibilities regarding the institution's internationalisation are clearly defined and allocated. The internal organisation underlines the importance given to internationalisation with the creation of the position of Vice president for International relations, a strengthened international office, a unit for international projects in research and education, and the existence of several correspondents for international relations at faculty level and in laboratories, with roles clearly defined in their mission letters. Internal procedures put in place by the new organisation to manage and to support international activities are adopted and shared. They are designed as tools to achieve internationalisation goals, but need time to demonstrate their efficiency. The university should also pay special attention to the definition and assessment of international and intercultural learning outcomes. The university has developed an interesting system of



internal call for projects to provide a dynamic internationalisation and the centralised organisation allows to react readily to external demands through the International Office.

Conclusion

To conclude, the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne, URCA, has defined an ambitious internationalisation strategy which is implemented in the everyday work of the institution. The goals are shared by both internal and external stakeholders, who are highly involved in the implementation process. The action plans are completed by specific instruments and resources, and supported by different annual follow-up systems. The responsibilities regarding the institution's internationalisation are clearly defined. As a development target, the university should pay more attention to the quality management of internationalisation, and to the reflection of the internationalisation goals in the definition and assessment of international and intercultural learning outcomes.

The panel therefore recommends that the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA) is awarded the Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation.

2. The assessment procedure

This report is the result of the assessment of the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA). The procedure was coordinated by French Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education (AERES). This assessment procedure took place within the framework of the Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation project (CeQuInt).

The assessment procedure was organised as laid down in the Frameworks for the Assessment of Quality in Internationalisation published by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

The framework for the assessment of quality in internationalisation at institution level consists of five standards:

1 - Intended internationalization

- 1a: Supported goals
- 1b: Verifiable objectives
- 1c: Measures for improvement

2 - International and intercultural learning

- 2a: Intended learning outcomes
- 2b: Student assessment
- 2c: Graduate achievement

3 - Implementation

- 3a: Information system
- 3b: Information driven management
- 3c: Realisations

4 - Enhancement

- 4a: Internal quality assurance
- 4b: Approaches for enhancement
- 4c: Stakeholders' involvement

5 - Governance

5a: Responsibilities

5b: Effectiveness

5c: Staff Composition

The judgment is provided for each standard and each underlying criterion included in the framework. All standards have the same weight.

The framework consists of a four-point scale: Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory, Good and Excellent.

An Institution gets the Certificate when at least 3 standards are assessed as good or excellent and there is no standard assessed as unsatisfactory.

A panel of experts was convened by AERES. The assessment panel consisted of the following members:

- **Riitta Pyykkö**, panel chair, Professor, vice-rector (University of Turku), Chair of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (2008-2014)
- **Agneta Bladh**, panel member, Former rector University of Kalmar (now: Linnaeus University), Former Secretary of State Higher Education and Research, Former Head of HSV, the Swedish QA agency
- **Nicolas Vaicbourdt**, panel member, Professor, vice-president of the international commission (University Paris 1 – Panthéon Sorbonne), former vice-president of international relationship (university of Cergy-Pontoise)
- **Emilia Todorova**, panel member, Student in Information Systems Development, Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) Expert, team member of ELIR (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Scotland (QAA Scotland))

The composition of the panel reflects the expertise deemed necessary by the Assessment Framework. The individual panel members' expertise and experience can be found in Annex 1: Composition of the assessment panel. The preparatory meeting with the university has been conducted by François Pernot, Head of International department at

AERES, on the 16 October 2013. The procedure was coordinated by Julien Lecocq, Head of Internal Quality Assurance at AERES.

The assessment panel studied the self-evaluation report and annexed documentation provided by the institution before the site visit. (Annex 2: Documents reviewed) The panel organised a preparatory meeting the day before the site visit. The site visit took place on 11 April 2014. (Annex 3: Site visit programme)

The panel formulated its preliminary assessments per standard immediately after the site visit. These were based on the findings of the site visit, and building on the assessment of the self-evaluation report and annexed documentation.

The draft version of this report was finalised taking into account the available information and relevant findings of the assessment. Where necessary the panel corrected and amended the report. The panel finalised the draft report on 30 June 2014. It was then sent to the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA) to review the report for factual mistakes. One minor issue was reported and the panel amended the report.

The panel approved the final version of the report on 21 July 2014.

3. Basic information

Institution: University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne - URCA

Type of institution: Comprehensive public university

Status: Evaluated on 7 of June 2011

QA / accreditation agency: AERES

Status period: Next evaluation in 2016-2017

Additional information:

The University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne is a multi-disciplinary university including medicine with about 23000 students and 2400 members of personnel (1396 professors and teaching staff). Its student population ranks it in the upper quarter of the French Universities by size, and it is one of the few French comprehensive Universities. With the major part of the University located in Reims (82% of students, 8 locations, 13 faculties), the URCA is located in the 4 major cities of the Region Champagne-Ardenne (RCA), the cities of Reims, Charleville-Mézières, Troyes and Chalôns-en-Champagne. Within the institution, all types of University education are delivered, such as short programmes (IUT) in different fields, bachelor and master degrees, engineering education and training of schoolteachers. It is the unique multidisciplinary university of the Region Champagne-Ardenne, but there is one other public university UTT, with a technological profile located in the city of Troyes. Moreover, there are other higher education institutions : NEOMA (Private business school); Sciences Po, with its French American campus located in Reims and Group ESC Troyes (Private management, tourism and design school) located in Troyes. The population of the Region Champagne-Ardenne is approximately 1,34 million

inhabitants. The Region is characterised on one hand, by a rather weak entrepreneurial context in comparison with the neighboring regions (Ile-de France, Alsace-Lorraine) and on the other hand, by relatively weak mobility of the local population.

4. Assessment criteria

Standard 1: Intended internationalisation

Criterion 1a: Supported goals

The internationalisation goals for the institution are documented and these are shared and supported by stakeholders within and outside the institution.

University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne is a comprehensive, middle-sized university, located in a region with rather weak entrepreneurial context and weak mobility of the local population. University of Reims intends to contribute to the development of the region in partnership with the city, with regional authorities and companies and international partners.

Internationalisation is one of five main pillars of the university. The international strategy of URCA is built gradually with the ambition of reaching a more global policy where the international dimension is included in all central university issues, such as research, education, innovation, culture and student guidance to the labour market. This means that internationalisation is a transverse dimension in the everyday life of the institution.

The international strategy of URCA through 2020 aims at offering:

- A comprehensive approach covering all academic and administrative aspects of the university organisation
- International cooperation of high quality and intensity (joint programmes, research cooperation)
- University partnerships of high visibility and high sustainability (premium partnerships with few institutions)
- Fruitful management dialogue with all the faculties of the university and deans for a shared integrated approach
- Enhanced indicators for better governance and deployment of the international policy

- Improvement of international student's and researcher's hosting.

The self-evaluation report states that the vision of URCA is to be "a highly internationalised institution, meaning an important ratio of international students and staff, a high visibility on an international scale in educational training and research, with a strong internationalisation of all study programmes and research activities." (p. 4). These are the intended internationalisation goals of the institution.

The "Projet Stratégique" (strategic plan), which is the institutional strategy, decided by the University's President, elected in 2012, includes several aspects of internationalisation. One of them is the construction of a large multidisciplinary campus, intending to increase the visibility of the university both nationally and internationally and displaying the international dimensions of the university. The strategic plan includes an extensive collaboration with the surrounding community and international partners, taking into account the specificity of the university as well as its environment. It also includes a substantial human and financial support to internationalisation, notably through an elected Vice-President of International Affairs in order to foster incoming and outgoing mobility, an adapted linguistic policy and linking internationalisation strongly to education and research. Thus, internationalisation is said to play a major role in the strategic project of the university.

The strategic plan also embraces a broadened mobility scheme, aimed not only at students, but also at staff (teaching, research and administration) and at collaboration with partners outside the university in order to improve employability. The university aims at becoming a motor of internationalisation in the region.

The stakeholders within the university (teachers, researchers, students, deans and management staff) are identified and are supporting the internationalisation goals. This was demonstrated during the interviews. The yearly dialogues between the university leadership and different parts of the organisation is also said to discuss the internationalisation goals.

The stakeholders outside the university are identified as the city and the region and the organisations, working in the region. The city is important for the hosting of the foreign students and faculty, as one of the goals concerns the improvement of this hosting. The region has a specific programme to initiate international projects. The region also supports research financially. At the interview, the external stakeholders were expressing their support to the internationalisation goals of the university. They are actively contributing to the achievement of the goals by improving the hosting of foreign students and staff, the international projects and joint international identification journeys with the university.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the internationalisation goals for the institution are realistic and challenging. They are satisfactorily documented. The goals are shared and supported by stakeholders both within and outside the university.

Criterion 1b: Verifiable objectives

The institution has formulated verifiable objectives that enable it to monitor the achievement of its internationalisation goals.

Internationalisation is one pillar in the five-year contract (2012-2017) with the State Ministry, in which concrete objectives to be achieved during the period are set. These objectives concern:

- Outgoing students
- Incoming students from different parts of the world
- Study mobility
- Internship mobility
- Outgoing faculty staff
- Incoming faculty staff
- Outbound staff mobility
- Number of joint diplomas
- Foreign diploma holders on each level (L, M, D)

- Exchange agreements – or partnership agreements
- Submitted European projects
- Number of accepted European projects
- Budget linked to European research projects
- Number of co-publications in research

The university also has internal objectives for a stronger speed and growth of internationalisation:

- Increase the visibility of URCA
- Finalize the English version of the common IT-programme (named ROF) in order to get the ECTS label before the end of the five-year contract
- Attain a high level of attractiveness to students and researchers on a regional, national and international level
- Develop balanced mobility flows of incoming and outgoing students
- Slightly exceed the mark of 15% of the number of international students to be above the national average
- Significantly improve the university's participation in international research projects in order to generate overheads into 2014 for creating at least a half position for administrative staff
- Put adequate resources to encourage educational training in international partnerships (double degrees, joint degrees)
- Promote the mobility of teachers and researchers, incoming and outgoing

The university has set objectives for the head of the International Office:

- Creation of the international research project team
- Benchmark with neighbouring universities such as Amiens, UTT and Dijon in order to increase the efficiency of the International Office
- Definition and description of the procedures within the international sector
- Increase the third party funding of international research projects and creation of one half administrative post on the overheads of research projects

- Strengthen the position of URCA in University networks and adhesion in at least one of them
- Guarantee a better integration of international degree seeking students in the institution
- Advice for International Dimension in the new Central Reims Campus

The internationalisation objectives are diversified and challenging and cover a broad spectrum of the internationalisation goals. The objectives are both quantitative and qualitative and verifiable. The objectives are found both in the contract with the ministry and in the university documents. The objectives correspond to the internationalisation goals and the achievement of the internationalisation goals can be monitored through these objectives.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that objectives have been formulated: quantitative objectives have been formulated by the ministry for the university and qualitative objectives have been formulated by the university itself, embracing all parts of the institution, including objectives for the head of the International Office. All these objectives are formulated in such a way that they can be verified. They allow for monitoring of the achievement of the institution's internationalisation goals.

Criterion 1c: Measures for improvement

As a result of periodic evaluations of the institution's internationalisation, the successful implementation of measures for improvement can be demonstrated.

The AERES undertakes an evaluation of the whole institution, including internationalisation. URCA, according to the contract with the Ministry, yearly as well as for a five-year period assesses the performance via several indicators, including indicators for internationalisation. There is, as a consequence, a follow up of the contract between the ministry and URCA.

The strategic plan is continuously followed by the university leadership in a Management Dialogue set up by the president in 2012 in order to ensure the concordance and alignment of the institutional policy with that of the faculties. There are guidelines for this dialogue. There are opportunities for each faculty to set up an international strategy at faculty level, which responds more precisely to the needs and specificity of each faculty. The panel is given two examples of the result of these dialogues concerning internationalisation. The dialogues are seen as a necessary watchdog to benchmark results, readjust objectives and means in alignment with the overall aims of the university, but also as a ground for brainstorming of ideas and opinions on international issues. There is consequently a follow up and evaluation inside the university.

URCA has participated in the “Indicators for Mapping and Profiling Internationalisation” project (IMPI) to create a toolbox of indicators and uses indicators in its strategy in internationalisation and to feed the PAP (annual performance plan).

URCA has two measures for improvement.

A. Quality charters and labels, which are different approaches to meet and display international standards in their international activities.

1. Requirements for exchange programmes are laid down: study exchange only based on institutional agreement, recognition of student’s study periods prepared by a study contract, mutual information the credits delivered in the study period, using the European grading scale.
2. A charter defines main requirements for the establishment of double degree and joint programmes according to EUA publication of master degrees. Validation is made by the ordinary bodies of URCA, quality assurance is made by a jury from both institutions, annual report to the international commission, standards for student selection and guidance and student fees.
3. Standards for the delivering of diplomas of URCA outside of France – a minimum 50% of the education in a foreign programme has to be delivered by URCA.
4. A charter for general inter-institutional agreements is to come.

5. A compulsory language test for outgoing students. This has influenced the number of outgoing students negatively. Influential has also been the economic situation and the privileged choice of internship mobility.
6. Incentives: The Involvement into international project entitles the staff to be freed from a quota of teaching hours. Combined with an annual report to the International commission.
7. International correspondents are responsible for all pedagogical questions in a given field. Their role is defined in a mission letter and readjusted.
8. URCA was the first French institution to get the diploma supplement label and grant all students this, free of charge.
9. Partnership with four French universities to elaborate a common IT programme aiming at displaying the university's course offer in a more user-friendly way – this will result in a more fluid approach to planning and organising the student's study period. The site will be translated into English.
10. Research. A network of research coordinators was created in 2012 and rewarded by free preparation hours.
11. URCA has adopted the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for Recruitment. As a consequence the internal procedures of URCA are screened to comply with the Charter.
12. One person is dedicated to guiding and counselling researchers mobility and is the local contact point for Euraxess network.

B. Newly introduced internal calls to foster the dynamics of international activities.

There is a budget of 100 000 Euros for staff mobility with a duration of up to one month. The purposes are several: preparation of joint publications, elaboration of research projects, working sessions on joint programmes. There are also calls for 4 doctorates in a joint guardianship-scheme. Totally, URCA has dedicated more than 500 000 Euros for calls for international programmes.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that there are evaluations of the institution's internationalisation and that these are organised periodically. Measures for improvement have been implemented but their success cannot yet be demonstrated.

The panel recommends the university to continue strengthening the assessment, the improvements in different parts of the university in order to give feedback to the faculties and make it possible for them to benchmark and further develop the internationalisation.

Overall conclusion regarding Standard 1. Intended internationalisation

The panel found the internationalisation strategy, with vision, mission and goals, as interesting and challenging. The panel deems the underlying criteria of this standard to be met. The embracement of the whole university in the internationalisation goals can be regarded as an international example.

The panel recommends the university to expand its efforts to include non-francophone universities as partners in order to widen the internationalisation aspect to include intercultural aspects. In the same time the panel emphasises that the number of international partners should be restricted in order to enable deepened collaboration. The panel also recommends the university to systematically describe the results of the internationalisation efforts after the yearly Management Dialogues.

The panel assesses *Standard 1. Intended internationalisation* as good.

Standard 2: Action plans

Criterion 2a: Fitness for purpose

The institution's internationalisation plans warrant the achievement of its internationalisation goals.

The relevant internationalisation action plans of the university are found in the strategic plan, which is covering the whole institution. The different faculties may also form their

own internationalisation strategy. The action plans correspond with the institution's internationalisation goals, as internationalisation is one of five pillars of the university. There is therefore demonstrated correspondence between goal and action plan and the correspondence is made explicit.

The instruments used are:

- Annual dialogue
- Internal calls
- Financial incentives for staff
- Support staff (two administrative positions within the international office have been created to support the further development)
- Financial support from the Region

The instruments cover most parts of the university.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the university's internationalisation plans warrant the achievement of its internationalisation goals.

Criterion 2b: Dimensions

The institution's internationalisation plans appropriately include at least the following dimensions: "international and intercultural learning outcomes", "teaching, learning and research", "staff" and "students".

According to the institution's self-evaluation report (SER), the action plan of the institution covers all basic activities. The basis of URCA internationalisation is mobility, but the international dimension is also built up in the programmes and the institution itself. During the site-visit the panel could find that internationalisation is in the very core of all the actions of the URCA, not a separate issue. The staff members agreed that the policy for internationalisation is ambitious, and the process of internationalisation is demanding, but they had already been able to recognise several improvements in different dimensions. The panel noted that the current academic leadership is really promoting internationalisation.

Language courses for outgoing and incoming students as well as support for teaching staff in teaching in English is the core of URCA's internationalisation strategy. The objective of the university is to broaden its offer of courses in the English language, and the goal is that by 2017 each department will offer at least one degree programme in English. The panel heard partly contradictory views on the promotion of teaching in English, which can be a common position in France with a strong Francophone tradition in internationalisation. It is also important to mention that offering degree programmes in English has become possible at French universities only with the University Act 2013.

The panel appreciates plans directed towards student support and the actions taken for better integration of foreign students. The new campus is built to improve the study environment. The panel was also satisfied to find that the staff, both teaching staff, research staff and administrative, gets good support from the institution. E.g. support for European research projects has been improved, and there is a contract with the regional innovation agency "Carinna".

The SER doesn't, unfortunately, offer any examples, how the learning outcomes are expressed or assessed in order to give the programmes an international and intercultural dimension. The additional information asked by the panel specified in more detail the international elements in the programmes, but they are mostly connected to language issues, especially to the French language. The panel questioned this issue also with staff and student representatives, and found only some examples of plans to create other internationalisation modules than language courses in study programmes. From the interviews was, nevertheless, clear that URCA together with the city of Reims and the region has done a lot for the support and integration of foreign students. There was also a system for the students to assess their mobility experience.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the institution's internationalisation plans include most dimensions in a suitable manner. The panel recommends to pay special attention to the definition and assessment of international and intercultural learning outcomes.

Criterion 2c: Instruments and resources

The institution's internationalisation plans are complemented by specific institution-wide instruments and adequate resources.

The instruments are described also in 2a and they cover most parts of the university. There are clear links between the internationalisation plans of URCA and the instruments and resources. The creation of a position of Vice-President in internationalisation issues itself is an innovation in the French higher education system. In the self-evaluation URCA expresses a strong support for the mobility of students, but also for the development of the international dimension within each study programme. From the interviews it was, nevertheless, not quite clear, how this international dimension is implemented in the programmes. The panel found the international dimension to be interpreted mostly as support for language learning which the panel was satisfied to find to be broad

In order to increase significantly international research activities, the URCA has created in 2013 the international projects cluster ("Cellule projets internationaux") and signed a contract with a regional innovation agency "Carinna". During the site visit the panel was able to discuss this matter both with the researchers and a representative of the agency and was pleased to find the results of the contribution of "Carinna" very encouraging.

The city of Reims and the region are deeply involved in the cooperation with the university. The region has a specific programme and funding to international research projects and there is also other support from the regional companies. The region also offers scholarships for students from partner regions in other European countries and countries outside Europe.

The panel was also delighted to find that the budget for internationalisation matters and the connected services has increased over the last two years and an increase was decided also for the year 2014. The panel congratulates the URCA for the decision to invest a total of 500 000 € in incentive measures for internationalisation until 2016, in which 350 000 € have been invested for now.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the institution's internationalisation plans are complemented by specific institution-wide instruments and adequate resources.

Overall conclusion regarding Standard 2. Action plans

The panel found that the URCA's internationalisation plans are relevant, cover the basic dimensions of internationalisation of higher education and correspond with the institution's internationalisation goals. They are also completed by specific institution-wide instruments and resources. The panel deems all the underlying criteria of this standard to be met. The close cooperation between the university and the region on a win-win basis can be regarded as an international example.

The panel recommends the URCA to pay special attention to the definition and assessment of international and intercultural learning outcomes.

The panel therefore assesses *Standard 2. Action plans* as good.

Standard 3: Implementation

Criterion 3a: Information system

The institution has a functional management information system which enables it to collect and process relevant information regarding internationalisation.

According to the self-evaluation, the basis of the institutional information system is the annual Project of Performance. The figures in PAP give a concise picture of the evolution in the university. A set of figures and measures, concluded with the State ministry, will also

be the basis for the next AERES evaluation. The ‘projet institutionnel’ (institutional project), delivered by the presidency at the beginning of 2013, is a source for the institutional strategy and adds some indicators especially on the percentage of incoming degree students.

The work in the IMPI-project during 2010-2012 seems to be ongoing in order to choose a revised set of indicators for the next annual dialogue with the faculties. The indicators are comparable on European level, but the institution has defined as a development target to guarantee the reliability of the figures and to simplify the data collection at institutional level. The set of indicators might be too broad and thus not easy to integrate in the dialogue with the faculties’ managers (‘dialogue de gestion’).

The data collection is centralised by the International Office with the Apogee database, but the panel found out that there will be a new system, and that the definition of indicators was just in progress. There is also a newly developed set of indicators concerning international research, and online surveys to collect the students’ mobility experiences. The collection of external data is less developed.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the institution has a functional management information system in place to collect and process relevant information regarding internationalisation at institutional level. The panel recommends the URCA to continue the development and implementation of indicators and to intensify the collection of external data.

Criterion 3b: Information driven management

The institution makes use of processed information for the effective management of its internationalisation activities.

The international strategy is a part of the mission letters on the management level. The Vice-President has got a political mission for the development of internationalisation at the

beginning of his mandate. A one-stop centre for International relations with a closer linkage between education and research has been created. The Mission letter of the Head of International office concentrates on quantified objectives, but the panel was pleased to find also qualitative aspects in the letter. Annual activity reports are produced from faculties and units, and they will be a part of the annual report of the university. These measures are a part of a new management system introduced lately. The system is based on a definition of specific goals and the annual evaluation of the achievements of those goals. As a whole, the panel was able to review a strengthened reporting and follow-up system which will cover all activities and give a strong support for an effective management of international activities of the university.

The panel appreciates the new instrument, annual seminars bringing together the strategic policy makers of the Presidency and various management teams across the university. The seminars will surely contribute to a growing consciousness about international affairs at the university. There are plans to evaluate the current cooperation strategy with the region.

The representatives of the URCA expressed that all internal procedures for international processes have been reviewed but the system is so new that the impact of these reviews can't yet be evaluated. According to the staff members the dialogue about administration in general is new for the University, and there are big differences between faculties in the management of internationalisation activities. Part of the faculties has a real strategic hold on internationalisation, part is mostly steered by resources. The contact with the Rectorate¹ is today regular, and the responsibilities more clear than earlier, as well as the purposes of information processing.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the institution makes use of processed information for the management of its internationalisation activities. The panel recommends the university to

¹ In France, the Rectorate is the authority for Education policy at the level of the administrative district (called 'Académie')

continue efforts in an effective use of the information for reaching the intended internationalisation outcomes.

Criterion 3c: Realisations

The institution can demonstrate the extent to which its internationalisation plans are realised through documented outcomes and results.

In the self-evaluation report, several measures for improvement of services for foreign students are mentioned and their outcomes documented. The panel could find evidence on changes after the 2010 evaluation among international exchange students. A central International office was created where all administrative procedures from the faculties were concentrated, URCA was the first French university to get the Diploma supplement label in 2010, and the ECTS label is planned for this five-year period. The panel was able to review a clear development in administrative procedures for international exchange students concentrated in the central international office.

The city with other stakeholder organisations has created a one-stop shop ('guichet unique'), where incoming degree students can find persons in charge with all administrative steps. The panel found this a good practice that could be spread both nationally and internationally. There is also a large number of activities bringing foreign and domestic students together (e.g. students' welcome week, cultural events, esp. the 'Cultures en fête', International Speed Meetings, wine testing competition). The housing situation in Reims was analysed to be better than in other French university cities. The international office of URCA has a continuous contact with outgoing students and the students' reports from their study places are made public to both actual and prospective students. The feedback from both French and international students interviewed during the site visit was very positive.

A characteristic feature for the internationalisation of the URCA has been that most incoming students come from francophone countries. There have been also political reasons for degree mobility to France from other francophone countries. Over the last

years there have been efforts to increase mobility from outside the French speaking countries. The panel recommends the URCA to continue these efforts. The figures analysed show increase in the number of incoming degree students, but the incoming credit mobility is stagnant.

The panel was satisfied to find that there is a high percentage of international candidates in the doctoral schools, and the URCA strongly fosters joint supervision of doctoral thesis. This offers in the future an important source for international research projects and other research cooperation. The panel found that the university has already succeeded to increase substantially the number of international research projects, and was pleased to hear from the staff members that all kinds of development projects have become easier and more efficient than before. The department of international relations is well informed and has a close contact and cooperation with the faculties. There are several good practices, e.g. thematic workshops on partnership building or project building, which has made the researchers more confident and more willing to build international projects.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the institution has documented outcomes and results which can demonstrate the realisation of the institution's internationalisation plans. The panel recommends the URCA to continue the efforts to increase mobility from other than francophone countries in order to widen the scope of internationalisation.

Overall conclusion regarding Standard 3: Implementation

The panel found that the URCA has a functional management information system which enables to collect and process relevant information regarding internationalisation and that the institution makes use of this information. The URCA could also demonstrate the realisation of its internationalisation plans. The panel deems all the underlying criteria of this standard to be met. The panel found the one-stop shop ('guichet unique') created by the city with other stakeholders, can be regarded as an international example. The panel

recommends the URCA to continue the efforts to increase mobility from other than francophone countries in order to widen the scope of internationalisation.

The panel assesses *Standard 3: Implementation* as good.

Standard 4: Enhancement

Criterion 4a: Internal quality assurance

The institution's internal quality assurance system covers all internationalisation dimensions and activities.

The Institution has demonstrated a robust internal quality assurance system with opportunities for enhancement. Through internal committees, student feedback arrangements and opportunities for programme development projects, URCA is developing a quality culture. Since one year, the URCA has a central Quality Assurance Unit, dealing with the improvement of procedures and performance in all fields, including internationalisation. It organises the annual inquiry among diploma holders and central evaluation procedures for education. A chapter on the international dimension will be added to the questionnaire in 2014. The work of the International Office is evaluated regularly by students.

Each study programme has a committee for the improvement of the programmes. The committees of professionally oriented programmes include also external stakeholders. An annual report is centralised and discussed in the Educational Council. Student feedback is collected, and the SER defines the feed-back circuit as well developed, but the students interviewed during the site visit did not have a clear picture on how their feedback is taken into account.

The panel appreciates the opportunities given to programmes and departments for development and improvement through a project-bid system, which is well supported by the management of URCA.

During the site visit, the panel identified that URCA has dedicated specific funds into enhancing its internationalisation and is currently developing strategies to include more internationalisation aspects within its internal quality assurance processes.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the institution does have an internal quality assurance system which covers some internationalisation dimensions and activities. The panel recommends that URCA implements a clear and targeted strategy for monitoring and enhancing international and intercultural learning outcomes within its programmes, the internationalisation of teaching, learning and research, and the level of international/intercultural skills of the staff and the students.

Criterion 4b: Approaches for enhancement

The institution utilises internationalisation approaches as part of its regular quality assurance and enhancement activities.

Through the self-evaluation report and during meetings, URCA has demonstrated a commitment to learning from international activities. The panel was satisfied to find that URCA's staff is committed to international peer learning by attending international seminars on quality assurance (e.g. the annual European Quality Assurance Fora) and keeping informed in developments in internationalisation trends across the EHEA. The experiences are shared, e.g., during days of comparative practice. The panel was satisfied to hear about the benchmarking activities with the University of Amiens, which surely offers a good partner for exchange of good practice. The Quality Unit of the university has also participated in an Erasmus Staff Training programme.

URCA management and other staff members are also active at national level in different elected bodies and networks. This offers good opportunities for discussions and exchange of practices with leading French universities. The panel was delighted to find that the

presence of the University of Reims in the national debate on internationalisation issues is strong.

The panel has been able to observe URCA's dedication to learning from international practice continuously. This has also made a contribution to URCA's approach to internationalisation and the inclusion of new activities and developments within the University.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that internationalisation approaches are used by the institution in its regular quality assurance and enhancement activities. The panel recommends that URCA continues its efforts to learn from international practice on internationalisation and be more proactive in including what they deem as a good practice within its processes.

Criterion 4c: Stakeholders involvement

The institution actively involves its internal and external stakeholders in its quality assurance and enhancement activities regarding internationalisation.

In the self-evaluation report, URCA has demonstrated a strong involvement of stakeholders within and outside of the institution. The institution makes a commitment to consult with its stakeholders on a regular basis and provide more opportunities for their students through building up partnerships.

During the site visit, the panel was able to review the strength of the involvement and was satisfied to find that URCA actively builds up partnerships with external stakeholders and the community of the region. The institution is strongly supported by its external stakeholders from the City of Reims and the region, to build up its internationalisation strategy and to actively develop it.

Although the SER outlines that the external stakeholders take part in the study improvement committees at programme level, the panel was unable to identify a specific external stakeholder engagement within quality assurance or curriculum development

activities of the institution beyond consultation. Currently external stakeholders are mainly used for partnership projects. The panel was, nevertheless, able to find some examples of good practice in the development of activities in cooperation with external stakeholders, e.g. the improvements made in the international students' welcome week organised by the City.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the institution actively involves its internal but not external stakeholders in its quality assurance and enhancement activities regarding internationalisation. The panel recommends that URCA takes advantage of its wide number of external partners and develops a way for them to take an active part in quality assurance and enhancement.

Overall conclusion regarding Standard 4: Enhancement

The panel found that URCA has ambitious goals for internationalisation and has put in a lot of effort and resources in developing those. The panel deems some of the underlying criteria of this standard to be met. The panel commends the efforts made by the Institution to enhance internationalisation. The panel recommends that URCA's ambitions of building up its internationalisation are supported by clear measurable criteria and regular quality assurance and enhancement activities, which include a stronger active external stakeholder engagement.

The panel therefore assesses *Standard 4: Enhancement* as satisfactory.

Standard 5: Governance

Criterion 5a: Responsibilities

The responsibilities regarding the institution's internationalisation (goals, plans, implementation and enhancement) are clearly defined and allocated.

Internationalisation has been claimed as a priority of Reims University. The new team has clearly meant its will, even though their official strategy and purpose – as indicated by the ‘*Contrat Pluriannuel 2012-2017*’ (Multiannual contract 2012-2017) - five years strategic contract with the French Higher Education Department) is still vague (one half page over 51). The Presidency of URCA has recreated and strengthened the role of the Vice-president for International Relations, with an extended field of competences. In his letter of mission, the Vice-President of International Affairs has the objectives to foster incoming and outgoing mobility by an adapted educational and language policy, and to get a vision of internationalisation linking strongly education and research.

This overall policy is supported and administrated by the International Office, which covers all matters of International Affairs, the mobility of staff and students, the projects in education and research and the development of the institution-wide international objectives. Consecutively, the International Office has been reinforced by the recent (December 2013) creation of a Directorate of International Relation. The director has to coordinate and oversee the whole internationalization process in education training and research, with strong links to the other administrative sectors and to the different faculties of the University.

Whereas the Vice-President for Internationalisation has to define the global strategy in accordance with the President of the University, the Director of International Office ensures the operational and implementation aspects of internationalisation at the institution.

This global strategy is implemented through the organisation of decentralised bodies in each part of the University:

- the creation of a support unit for International projects in Research and Education: the international projects cluster (‘*Cellule projets internationaux*’), which provides advices for both the academics and students in all aspects of internationalisation.
- the designation of a student as advisor for the welcome and support policy for incoming students, linked to the vice-president for International Affairs.

- the existence of the correspondents for international relations on both the department level for the educational aspect and Research laboratories (created in 2013).

The correspondents in each faculty have the role to assist students (incoming and outgoing) on all questions of student mobility. In the Research laboratories, their role is to organise the information on research programmes in each laboratory. The correspondents are supported administratively by a staff member of the International Office. The staff members ensure the link between the pedagogical responsibility of the correspondents and the role of guidance and counselling of the International Office.

All the correspondents are gathered with the International office and other offices of the university several times a year, in an International Commission, in order to discuss the activities and coordinate the efforts. Nevertheless, the role of the commission for International Relations is only advisory.

The role of every staff member is clearly defined in mission letters. The process of agreements and cooperation is clearly explained in charters which are known by the members of the International Commission.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the responsibilities regarding the institution's internationalisation activities are clearly defined and allocated and the individuals and bodies are aware of their duties.

Criterion 5b: Effectiveness

The organisational structure, decision-making processes and leadership (regarding internationalisation) support the realisation of the institution's internationalisation goals and action plans.

Since 2013, the university has clarified the responsibilities for its international policy and thoroughly developed an organization chart, as described above. The system seems promising in order to implement internationalisation; especially with the creation of both a



Vice-Presidency for International Relations and a Directorate of International Relation. A close cooperation of the International Office with all other central services of the university has been developed and reinforced by the legitimacy given by the creation of a Vice-Presidency. The International Office has now the official role to implement the international strategy of URCA in all fields and all faculties and schools. Regular meetings of the Directions and the Vice-Presidents assure a close coordination in the field.

The operational organisation provides guarantees of implementation, as long as all staff members are genuinely involved. There might be challenges in the involvement of the volunteer correspondents, academics and student representatives in the future. The university has developed the idea of internal support to stimulate initiative and involvement in internationalisation. It has introduced incentive system for main fields of internationalisation, by reducing the teaching hours of the staff as compensation for administrative tasks in Internationalisation. Correspondents on faculty and department level for the international aspects of education and research are rewarded by a defined number of free preparation hours to complete the administrative tasks.

The cooperation with the Educational service has been reinforced, as the two services have worked out a Diploma Supplement Label for student's mobility. The procedures for concluding international agreements are centralised by the International Office, each contract leading to information in the International Committee and the other university Committees. Once adopted by the International Commission, all contracts involving the university must be presented to the university's administrative bodies, as stated in the respective charters. This procedure guarantees both information and acceptance of the agreements.

Each project of cooperation has to be discussed and approved at faculty level through the 'Conseil de gestion' (administration committee) process before transmission to the other central university bodies for final review and validation (pedagogical committee of each faculty, committee for student life, board of directors which are central commissions of the

university) followed by the signing of the documents by the official representatives of the partners concerned.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the institution's organisational structure, decision-making processes and leadership support the realisation of the internationalisation goals and action plans.

As the procedure is still recent, an additional period of time is needed to judge about the real efficiency of the process.

Criterion 5c: Responsiveness

The institution can demonstrate that it readily reacts to input from within and outside the institution regarding internationalisation activities.

The university is involved in a network of institutions mostly linked to national agencies such as 'Campus France', the French Conference of University Presidents (Conférence des Présidents d'Université - CPU), the Erasmus Agency or international ones such as the agency of Francophonie (Agence pour la Francophonie), the European Education and Training Agency in France. All these institutions, as well as the Region Champagne-Ardenne, might solicit the university through the International Office or the Presidency for any project.

Academic cooperation with foreign faculties, as well as student mobility, are most of time solicited through the correspondent who then organises the process with the International Office which centralises everything and provides support. The university considers that the initiative coming from a professor for a new cooperation can result in the signing of a bilateral contract within a time frame of about three months; followed by the process identified above.

In rare occasions the initiative comes from the International Office that suggests cooperation with other universities. Nevertheless, it always needs support from the concerned Faculty or laboratories to proceed.

In terms of input, the university has developed a policy of internal calls in order to provide a new dynamic to the international relations. This policy is too recent to provide tangible results, but the panel found it definitely an interesting and innovative approach.

Once again, the efficiency of the all process relies on the motivation at each level of decision, councils and implementation.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the institution can demonstrate that it readily reacts to input from within and outside the institution regarding internationalisation activities. The panel reminds the institution to take good care of the motivation for participation in internationalisation activities at all levels of the Academia.

Overall conclusion regarding Standard 5: Governance

The panel found the reforms convincing and promising. The panel deems all the underlying criteria of this standard to be met. The organisational structures balancing centralised decision making process and personal involvement at every level seems interesting, as well as the idea of introducing incentive and proposing internal calls. The panel is convinced that these aspects can be regarded as an exemplary practice.

The panel therefore assesses Standard 5: Governance as good.

Conclusion

Based on its internationalisation goals, the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA) has successfully implemented effective internationalisation activities, which demonstrably contribute to the quality of teaching and learning.

The panel therefore recommends that the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA) is awarded the Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation.

5. Overview of assessments

Standard	Criterion	Level of fulfilment
1. Intended internationalisation	1a. Supported goals	Good
	1b. Verifiable objectives	
	1c. Measures for improvement	
2. Action plans	2a. Fitness for purpose	Good
	2b. Dimensions	
	2c. Instruments and resources	
3. Implementation	3a. Information system	Good
	3b. Information-driven management	
	3c. Realisations	
4. Enhancement	4a. Internal quality assurance	Satisfactory
	4b. Approaches for enhancement	
	4c. Stakeholders involvement	
5. Governance	5a. Responsibilities	Good
	5b. Effectiveness	
	5c. Responsiveness	

Annex 1. Composition of the panel

Chair: Riitta Pyykkö, panel chair, Professor, Vice-Rector (University of Turku), former Chair of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council. Riitta Pyykkö has a long experience in university teaching and research as a Professor of Russian Studies at the University of Turku since 1997. From 2012 she is the first Vice-Rector of the university, responsible for the development of education and quality management. Except being a member (2004-2014) and the chair (2008-2014) of the Finnish Higher Education Council (FINHEEC, now FINEEC), she has been active in the development of higher education and the EHEA on national and international level, e.g. as a member of the Finnish Bologna Experts' Team from 2006. She takes regularly part into international assessments: External agency reviews for ENQA membership, Russian National Accreditation Agency (NAA), AEQES (Belgium), Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency (EKKA), NCPA (Russia); Evaluation of Centers of excellence in Higher Education in Norway.

Agneta Bladh, panel member. Agneta Bladh holds a PhD in political science from Stockholm University and is an independent consultant involved in evaluations and other engagements in the field of higher education. Bladh was 2004 - 2010 Rector of University of Kalmar, Sweden (since 2010 part of Linnaeus University), 1998 – 2004 State Secretary at the Swedish Ministry of Education and Science, responsible for higher education and research and 1995 – 1998 Director General at the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (the Swedish QA agency). Bladh has also been member of the Danish Accreditation Council and is currently member of the supervisory board of The Swedish Higher Education Authority. Bladh is member of the EU High Level Group on Modernisation of Higher Education and the Magna Charta Observatory Council and several university boards in Sweden and Norway. Bladh was 2008 - 2012 member of the Administrative Board of the International Association of Universities.

Nicolas Vaicbourdt, panel member, Professor, vice-president of the international commission (University Paris 1 – Panthéon Sorbonne), former vice-president of international relationship (University of Cergy-Pontoise).

Emilia Todorova, panel member, currently studying Education Studies (MSc) at the University of Glasgow, having previously completed a BSc in Information Systems Development. Emilia is a Development Officer at the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership as well as a European expert in quality assurance and internationalisation in higher education in various quality assurance programmes across Europe.

Coordinator: Julien Lecocq, Head of Internal Quality Assurance, AERES, FRANCE.

Overview panel requirements

<i>Panel member</i>	<i>Man.</i>	<i>Internat.</i>	<i>Educat.</i>	<i>QA</i>	<i>Student</i>
• Riitta Pyykö	X	X	X	X	
• Agneta Bladh	X	X	X	X	
• Nicolas Vaicbourdt		X	X	X	
• Emilia Todorova				X	X

Man.: Management experience;

Internat.: International expertise, preferably expertise in internationalisation;

Educat.: Relevant experience in teaching or educational development;

QA: Relevant experience in quality assurance or auditing; or experience as student auditor;

Student: Student with international or internationalisation experience;

Annex 2. Documents reviewed

- Self-evaluation report
- Contrat between URCA and the Ministry of Higher Education 2012 – 2017
- Projet Stratégique 2013 – 2017
- Strategic dialogue – guidelines
- Strategic dialogue – strategy of Faculty of Sport Science
- International Relations Strategy for the Faculty of Economics
- Appel à projets – ville de Reims
- Internal call: short mobility
- International call: cotutelle
- International call: Mobility of Master internship students and doctorates
- Calendrier of the International Office
- Guidelines for study programmes
- Charter on international exchange programmes
- Charter on international degree programmes and overseas programmes
- Mission letters for International coordinators III.5. Mission letter for the International correspondent
- Budget of the International Office
- Map of institutional collaboration agreements
- IV.2. Agreement on the consortium of French Universities engaged in USTH (University of Science and Technology Hanoi)
- Joint programme arrangement
- Example of a Cotutelle agreement
- Bilateral Agreement with the University of Sao Joao del Rei in Brazil
- Indicators of Internationalisation
- Table of incoming degree seeking students per country for the last three years
- Document PAP 2013 (plan annuel de performance)
- Bilan Cellule Projets Internationaux – Review 2013 international projets’ team
- Example of a diploma supplement
- Organisational chart of the international office and the international sector
- Development plan of the International Office up to 2020
- Statutes of the International Commission
- Expression of Interest ‘Institutional Human Resources Strategy Group’
- Mission letter of the Vice-president for International Affairs
- Mission letter of the Head of International Office
- Referentiel HRS – free preparation hours
- Charte d’évaluation – evaluation guidelines for study programmes

- Institutional Evaluation report AERES 2011
- Evaluation reports of AERES for two Master Programmes
- Magazine Article Erasmus mobility staff – Oseo – Zoom
- Article Regional Newspaper 22/06/2012 on the occasion of the new governance team

Annex 3. Site visit programme

Overview

Date:	11 of April 2014
Institution:	URCA, University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne
Location:	Villa douce, 9, Bd de la Paix – 51100 Reims, France

Programme

Thursday 10 April 2014

16h00 – 18h00	Preparatory meeting of the international experts' panel Salle de Réunion, Villa Douce
18h00 – 19h00	Meeting with, Gilles Baillat , President And Nouredine Manamanni , vice-president International Relations Translation: Cecilia Anicette
19h30	Dinner of the panel

Friday 11 April 2014 - All meetings will take place in the Auditorium of Villa Douce

8h45 - 9h30	Staff in governance structure, Deans Christine Jourdain , Dean ESPE (teacher training school), Michèle Madiot , ESPE Pascal Legrain , Dean Faculty of sport science (by video-conference) Michel Couderchet , Vice-Dean Faculty of natural science Philippe Estier , Faculty of economics, in charge of International policy Translation: Cecilia Anicette
9h30 – 10h30	Meeting with responsables for international projects Renaud de la Brosse , Faculty of law: double degree Banska Bistrica (by video-conference);

	<p>Fabienne Maron, teaching staff of the double degree</p> <p>Daniel Niclot, School for teacher training: Erasmus Mundus and international Master programmes</p> <p>Claire Barritault, IUT Troyes, responsible International Relations (by video-conference)</p> <p>Mirén Lacassagne, coordinator International Relations, faculty of Humanities</p>
10h30 – 10h45	Coffee break
10h45 – 11h45	<p>International Research policy</p> <p>Fazilay Abbes, Correspondent International Relation, Research lab</p> <p>Jon Marco Church, coordinator of different research projects</p> <p>Nathalie Lebarc’h, head of administration, Doctoral school</p> <p>Nathalie Rau, head of the international projects cluster ('cellule projets internationaux')</p>
11h45 – 12h30	<p>Meeting with students (outgoing and incoming)</p> <p>Charles Deschamps, student policy advisor international, incoming degree seeking student</p> <p>Apolonija Rihtaric, incoming Erasmus Student 2013/2014</p> <p>Damien CANIVEZ, mobility to Salzburg 2012/2013</p> <p>Valentine NGUHI, incoming student from Leicester 2013/2014</p>
12h30 – 13h30	Lunch
13h30 – 14h30	<p>Meeting with external stakeholders</p> <p>Dominique Bunel, Representative of the City of Reims in the Administration council of URCA</p> <p>Claude Poulet, representative of the Regional government of Champagne-Ardenne</p> <p>Didier Treutenaere, Direction CROUS; Anthony Guitton, CROUS</p> <p>Raphaël Coupat, Member of Conseil de Perfectionnement Master EEAll, former student</p> <p>Vincent Steinmetz, Carinna agency for innovation</p>
14h30 – 15h30	Meeting with representatives of international services



Loubna Ait-**Belgnaoui**

Priscilla **Ebaka**

Cecilia **Anicette**

Sylvie **Sohier**, Direction School French foreign language

Patrick **Ravaux**, Direction Maison des langues

15h30 – 16h00

Exchange with Harald **Schraeder**

Head of International Office

16h00 – 16h30

Panel discussion

16h30 – 17h00

Final meeting with the management

Gilles **Baillat**, **Président**

Noureddine **Manamanni**, **Vice-President International relations**

Harald **Schraeder**, Head of International Office

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