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Quality Manual | IQAS-ULisboa 2021

Technical Data Sheet

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Acronyms and abbreviations

A3ES | Assessment and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education
AQAA [AAGQ] | Assessment and Quality Assurance Area of the Central Services of University of Lisbon
CSULisboa [SCULisboa] | Central Services of the University of Lisbon
ENQA | European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ERP | Enterprise Resource Management System
ESG | Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
ESU | European Students' Union
EUA | European University Association
EURASHE | European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
FCT [FCT] | Foundation for Science and Technology
IQAS [SIGQ] | Integrated Quality Assurance System
IQAS-ULisboa [SIGQ-ULisboa] | Integrated Quality Assurance System of the University of Lisbon
LRDDHE [RJGDES] | Legal Regime of Degrees and Diplomas of Higher Education
OU | Organic Unit
QAC-ULisboa [CGQ-ULisboa] | Quality Assurance Council of the University of Lisbon
QM [MQ] | Quality Manual
QM-ULisboa [MQ-ULisboa] | Quality Manual of the University of Lisbon
QP [PQ] | Quality Plan
QP-ULisboa [PQ-ULisboa] | Quality Plan of the University of Lisbon
R&D | Research and Development
RIQAS-ULisboa [RSIGQ-ULisboa] | Regulation of the Integrated Quality Assurance System of the University of Lisbon
SASULisboa [SASULisboa] | Social Services of the University of Lisbon
ULisboa [ULisboa] | University of Lisbon

1. Introduction

The University of Lisbon's Quality Manual (QM-ULisboa) defines the organisation, responsibilities and processes that establish the guiding principles for the development of University of Lisbon's Integrated Quality Assurance System (IQAS-ULisboa), having as reference the good European practises (*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – ESG, 2015*) and national recommendations, namely the procedures and studies disseminated by the Assessment and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (A3ES).

This manual aims to fulfil the quality assurance mission and objectives established for the University of Lisbon (ULisboa). Its primary goal is to create and operate a system that is common to all ULisboa's Schools and is based on the same general principles, without jeopardising the consolidation and certification of the quality systems that have already been developed or will be developed by some of its Schools.

According to the 2015 ESG, quality assurance is defined as a set of activities within a cycle of continuous improvement that can provide information capable of assuring the institution and the public of the quality of its operation (accountability) while also leading to the production of recommendations for improvement (enhancement)¹. These activities contribute to the institution's quality culture, which leads to increased trust in its performance.

Furthermore, the quality assurance policy requires the active participation of all members of the academic community – teachers, researchers, students, technical and administrative staff – as well as strategic social partners such as public, private, non-governmental, and associative entities, alumni, among others. They must cooperate to analyse, reflect on, and debate ULisboa's current situation and future prospects, based on the identification of the challenges that the University and its constituent entities face.

1.1 Historical background

The implementation of the quality assurance system at ULisboa began even before its foundation. Quality assurance processes were part of the main management instruments at both the former University of Lisbon (also known as Classical University [Universidade Clássica]) and the Technical University of Lisbon [Universidade Técnica de Lisboa] – the two entities that gave rise to ULisboa.

¹ According to the ESG, “at the heart of all quality assurance activities are the twin purposes of accountability and enhancement. Taken together, these create trust in the higher education institution's performance. A successfully implemented quality assurance system will provide information to assure the higher education institution and the public of the quality of the higher education institution's activities (accountability) as well as provide advice and recommendations on how it might improve what it is doing (enhancement)” (ESG, 2015: 7).

They were already quite formalised in some cases, either at the level of the Rectorates or of some of its Schools.

Evaluation and quality assurance were central elements of the ULisboa Statutes, which were approved in 2013. According to Article 5, *the University of Lisbon ensures that permanent evaluation processes of its activities, units, and services are conducted in accordance with the law, in cooperation with the competent evaluation and accreditation entities, and also through its own institutional mechanisms, in compliance with internationally recognised principles and quality criteria.*²

In 2015, the Regulation of the IQAS-ULisboa (RIQAS-ULisboa) was published.³ It stated as its primary goal the *continuous improvement of the quality of the University of Lisbon, assessing the degree of its mission fulfilment, by implementing criteria and performance indicators*. That assessment was both an internal evaluation – ensured by periodic self-evaluation – and external – carried out by third-party entities, such as A3ES. This regulation also established the system's principles, instruments, and structure.

Some system constitutive elements were developed during the first mandate of the first Rector of ULisboa. In 2014, the first draft versions of the QM-ULisboa and the Quality Plan (QP-ULisboa) were prepared, but they were not formally approved. In 2016, the members of the Quality Assurance Council (QAC-ULisboa) were appointed, which is an advisory body to the Rector and consists of teachers and researchers from all Schools, students, technical and administrative staff and the Coordinator of the Assessment and Quality Assurance Area.⁴ In 2018, a new draft version of the QM-ULisboa was prepared, which was also not formally approved – and was the foundation for the current version.

The lack of an integrated information system common to all Schools at the start of ULisboa's existence explains the delay in formalising the IQAS-ULisboa. This situation led to the system not being submitted to the A3ES for certification at the time. Despite this, it was submitted to A3ES in 2018, through the ULisboa Institutional Self-Assessment Report.

Meanwhile, some ULisboa Schools have decided to proceed independently with the development of their own IQAS. This occurred most notably at Técnico (IST), which received A3ES certification for its system in 2013. More recently, the Institute of Social and Political Sciences (ISCSP) and the Lisbon

² Statutes of the University of Lisbon - approved by Normative Order no. 5 -A/2013, dated 19 April, and republished in Normative Order no. 14/2019, dated 10 May 2019, amended by Normative Order no. 8/2020, dated 17 July, and published in Official Gazette, 2nd series, no. 150, dated 4 August.

³ Order No. 15622/2015, published in the Official Gazette, 2nd series, No. 253, on December 29.

⁴ Order no. 10290/2016, published in the Official Gazette, 2nd series, no. 156, on August 16, 2016. Subsequently, through Order no. 10371/2018, published in the Official Gazette, 2nd series, no. 215, of November 8, a new appointment of the members of this body occurred, and the most recent appointment occurred with the publication of Order no. 12811-A/2021, published in the Official Gazette, 2nd series, no. 251, of December 29, adjusted by the Declaration of Rectification approved by the Rectorial Dispatch no. 18/2022, of 18 February, and published under Dispatch no. 2663/2022, Official Gazette, 2nd series, no. 42, dated 1 March.

School of Economics and Management (ISEG) consolidated their systems and received the A3ES certification, respectively, in 2020 and 2021.

In 2021, the implementation of an academic management system common to the 18 Schools of the University – FENIX – was completed. Thus, the conditions for ULisboa to complete the formalisation of its IQAS were met.

Given the ULisboa Schools' diversity and autonomy, as well as the progress made with the certification of the IQAS of IST, ISCSP, and ISEG by A3ES, it is now intended to develop a common system based on the same general principles, but without jeopardising the autonomous systems that are already in place or will be implemented. The learning that has occurred in recent years, whether as a result of University-wide initiatives or the most advanced Schools in this field, now allows us to create the conditions for implementing a solid and reliable system.

1.2 Approval, revision and dissemination

According to RIQAS-ULisboa, it is the responsibility of QAC-ULisboa to develop the QM-ULisboa and the Rector to approve it (Table 1). The QM-ULisboa is a dynamic document that must be revised on a regular basis to ensure continuous improvement. Each change to its content must result in the issuing of an updated version, which must be recorded in Table 2, being an integral part of this document. The Assessment and Quality Assurance Area (AQAA) is in charge of preparing and disseminating the digital version of the QM-ULisboa via ULisboa's website.

Table 1 – Creation and approval of QM-ULisboa | IQAS-ULisboa

Intervention	Function	Name	Period
Author	QAC-ULisboa	QAC-ULisboa	2013-2022
Validation	Vice-Rector	Professor Eduardo Pereira	2013-2021
Validation	Vice-Rector	Professor João Peixoto	2021-2025
Approval	Rector	Professor António Cruz Serra	2013-2021
Approval	Rector	Professor Luís Ferreira	2021-2025

Table 2 – Preparation and revision of the QM-ULisboa | IQAS-ULisboa – History

Version	Preparation date	Validation Date	Approval Date	Stage/Motive Review
VP_01/2014	2014	-	-	1 st Preliminary Version
VP_02/2018	2018	-	-	2 nd Preliminary Version
01/2021	26.11.2021	21.12.2021	07.03.2022	1 st Final Version

QM-ULisboa will be promoted on the ULisboa website in aims to spread awareness of the IQAS-ULisboa organisation both internally and externally.

1.3 Scope and structure

QM-ULisboa, according to the RIQAS-ULisboa, organises quality promotion and management processes. Thus, it focuses on organisational practices that ensure and improve the quality of the institution's operation, defining the IQAS-ULisboa and explaining the competencies of the different agents involved, as well as the main processes and indicators that serve as a basis for strategic decisions. It also identifies the goals and actions that should be promoted to meet the quality guidelines.

Furthermore, RIQAS-ULisboa specifies that QM-ULisboa is one of the instruments that support IQAS-ULisboa operation and cannot be separated from the others. It works well in tandem with the QP-ULisboa, which outlines the main procedures and indicators. The instruments defined by ULisboa coexist with those defined by the schools within the context of their respective IQAS.

QM-ULisboa is structured as follows:

- Introduction, including reference to the legal framework for the implementation of the system;
- Guidelines adopted in the quality assurance process;
- ULisboa's mission, vision and goals;
- The ULisboa's organic structure, including descriptions of the management bodies, services, and respective spheres of competence;
- ULisboa's quality policy;
- IQAS-ULisboa, describing the information and management systems, as well as the points of contact with the institutional management bodies.

1.4 Legislation and framework

The QM-ULisboa was created using the recommendations in the legislation and documents listed in Table 3.

Table 3 – Legislation and other supporting documents for the QM-ULisboa| IQAS-ULisboa

Legislation and other documents	Subject
Legal Regime of Higher Education Institutions, Law No. 62/2007, of 10 September.	Regulates the organisation of Higher Education Institutions.
Legal Regime of Degrees and Diplomas of Higher Education (LRDDHE), Decree-Law No. 74/2006 and successive amendments, republished by Decree-Law No. 65/2018, of 16th August.	Regulates the attribution of Higher Education degrees and diplomas and establishes the rules for their accreditation.
Legal Regime of Evaluation of Higher Education, Law no. 38/2007, of 16 of August.	Establishes a system for assessing the quality of Higher Education.
Decree-Law no. 369/2007, of 5 November, creates the Assessment and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education and approves its Statutes.	Creates the Assessment and Accreditation Agency for Higher Education – A3ES.
Council for the Prevention of Corruption, Recommendation No. 1/2009, published in the 2nd series of the Official Gazette, No. 140, of 22 July 2009 and Recommendation No. 1/2010, published in the 2nd series of the Official Gazette, No. 71, of 13 April.	Guidelines for the preparation and publication of Risk Prevention and Management Plans issued by the Council for the Prevention of Corruption.
Normative Order No. 5-A/2013, published in the Official Gazette, 2nd series, No. 77, of 19 April, revised and republished by Normative Order No. 14/2019, published in the Official Gazette, 2nd series, No. 90, of 10 May, amended by Normative Order No. 8/2020, of 17 July, published in the Official Gazette, 2nd series, No. 150, of 4 August.	ULisboa Statutes.
Order No. 15622/2015, dated December 29, establishes the foundations of the University of Lisbon's Integrated Quality Assurance System (IQAS-ULisboa), defining its goals, organisation, and instruments of action.	Approves the RIQAS-Lisbon.
<i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)</i> , Brussels, 2015.	International Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
A3ES, <i>Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education Institutions (adapted to ESG 2015)</i> , 2016.	Establishes the guidelines for IQAS in Higher Education Institutions.
A3ES, <i>Manual for the Audit Process</i> , V 1.4, Jan 2020.	Audit of the IQAS in Higher Education Institutions, issued by the A3ES.

2. Quality Guidelines

The Quality Guidelines provide a reference framework for the development of the IQAS-ULisboa. These guidelines serve as the foundation upon which the audit criteria are applied by the evaluation institutions in order to certify the IQAS of academic institutions. As a result, when developing the IQAS-ULisboa, the ESG 2015⁵ and the A3ES' *Guidelines for IQAS in Higher Education Institutions*⁶ must be taken into account.

The ESG 2015 were adopted in 2015 by the ministers responsible for higher education in the European Higher Education Area, based on a proposal from the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), in cooperation with the European Students' Union (ESU), European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and European University Association (EUA). The following principles were established:

- Policy for quality assurance
- Design and approval of programmes
- Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
- Student admission, progression, recognition and certification (awarding of degrees) by the institutions
- Teaching staff
- Learning resources and student support
- Information management
- Public information
- On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
- Cyclical external quality assessment.

In turn, in the *Guidelines for IQAS in Higher Education Institutions*, the A3ES adopted a broader set of principles that, being in line with the ESG 2015, are developed according to five vectors:

- Policy for quality assurance;
- Core processes of the institutional mission – teaching and learning, research and development, inter-institutional and community cooperation, internationalisation;
- Management of human resources, material resources and support services;

⁵ Available at https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

⁶ Available at https://www.a3es.pt/sites/default/files/Referenciais%20ASIGQ_PT_V1.2_Out2016.pdf

- Information management and publicity;
- Periodic external evaluation.

The A3ES derives 13 guidelines from differentiating these vectors, which are detailed in Table 4.

Table 4 – A3ES Guidelines

Vectors	Guidelines
I – Policy for quality assurance	1. Adoption of a policy for quality assurance and pursuit of quality objectives
II – Core processes of the institutional mission	2. Design and approval of programmes 3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment 4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification 5. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes 6. Research and development 7. Inter-institutional and community cooperation 8. Internationalisation
III – Management of human resources, material resources and support services	9. Human resources 10. Material resources and services
IV – Information management and publication	11. Information management 12. Public information
V – Periodic external evaluation	13. Cyclical nature of external quality assurance

Source: A3ES

A3ES's 13 guidelines thus include and reinterpret the ten ESG 2015 guidelines, as well as those related to Research and Development (R&D), Inter-institutional and Community Cooperation and Internationalisation. A3ES broadens the guidelines for Human Resources, Material Resources, and Support Services, no longer considering them only in the limited scope of education.

The A3ES elaborates on these guidelines. The main goals for each are identified, as are the actions that institutions should take to achieve them.

ULisboa has chosen to consider the 13 guidelines adopted by A3ES. A brief summary of each of their goals is provided below.

1. Adoption of policy for quality assurance and pursuit of quality objectives

Through this guideline, we seek to assess whether ULisboa has consolidated a culture of quality,

supported by a formally defined and publicly available quality policy and objectives. In this sense, it is evaluated whether the University has prepared, formally approved, and published documentation expressing institutional policy and quality objectives.

2. Design and approval of programmes

This guideline assesses whether ULisboa has processes in place for the design and approval of its study programmes, ensuring that the programmes taught are based on objectives that are aligned with the institutional strategy in this domain. This evaluation applies to any cycle of studies, whether or not it confers an academic degree.

3. Student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment

ULisboa must ensure that teaching encourages active student participation and that the teaching methodologies and assessment objectives are consistent with the teaching objectives and student-centred.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

This guideline focuses on aspects associated with the admission, progression, recognition and certification of students. The assessment of the procedures associated with the certification of training obtained in other areas or institutions by ULisboa should also be considered.

5. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

ULisboa must monitor and periodically review the programmes, as well as its adequacy and continuous improvement.

6. Research and Development

ULisboa must equip itself with mechanisms to promote, evaluate and develop scientific, technological, cultural and artistic activity as part of its institutional mission.

7. Inter-institutional and community cooperation

ULisboa must have mechanisms in place to promote, evaluate, and develop inter-institutional and community cooperation.

8. Internationalisation

ULisboa must promote, evaluate and develop its international cooperation activities, valuing Europe and the Portuguese-speaking countries and communities.

9. Human resources

In Higher Education, the quality and motivation of human resources is critical for the success of

institutions. It is necessary to ensure that the processes of recruitment, evaluation, training and promotion encourage the improvement of the quality of teachers', researchers' and technical and administrative personnel's work. It is also necessary to ensure a sustainable human capital management policy that avoids excessive ageing while also allowing for openness to younger people and avoiding disruptions in certain areas or scientific domains.

10. Material resources and services

ULisboa must ensure that the material resources and services available to support the various activities are adequate, and that there are mechanisms in place to monitor their adequacy and continuous improvement. Their use must ensure the University's current and future sustainability.

11. Information management

ULisboa must have an integrated information system as well as mechanisms for data collection, analysis, and use of relevant information in order to effectively manage its various fields of activity.

12. Public information

ULisboa must publish up-to-date, impartial, and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, on the various aspects of its mission on a regular basis. This practise, which stems from the University's public nature, is an important tool for disseminating ULisboa's activities.

13. Cyclical nature of external quality assurance

ULisboa is periodically evaluated by external entities. The external evaluation promotes the quality of the activities developed, verifies the effectiveness of the IQAS, acts as a catalyst for improvement and may offer new perspectives to the institution. This evaluation, with a cyclical nature, covers the various areas of activity.

The IQAS-ULisboa is an important mechanism for supporting internal and external evaluation processes, as well as incorporating quality improvements resulting from these evaluation procedures.

3. ULisboa's mission, vision, and goals

ULisboa's Statutes define its mission as being an institution of education and science committed to the progress of society, based on the creation, transfer and social and economic reinforcement of knowledge and culture.

ULisboa's vision is promoting its cohesion and spirit of identity; attracting the best students; fostering interaction with productive structures and public authorities; encouraging the renewal, qualification and mobility of human resources; reinforcing its intervention and influence skills within strategic international scenarios; consolidating a Quality Management System; providing culture for the University and for the City of Lisbon; encouraging social responsibility and sports, health and well-being, as well as improving the infrastructures available for the academic community.

According to its Statutes, ULisboa has the following attributions:

- a) *To provide higher education in bachelor, master and PhD programmes, as well as specialization and lifelong learning courses and activities;*
- b) *To conduct a high-level scientific research and promote its dissemination, social and economic valorisation of knowledge, namely technology transfer, as well as support for the formulation of public policies and innovation;*
- c) *To promote the Portuguese language and culture throughout the country and around the world;*
- d) *To ensure the provision of services to society, and to contribute to the social and economic development of the country, namely through cooperation with public, corporate, non-governmental and associative entities;*
- e) *To endorse public understanding of the arts, culture, and knowledge through scientific dissemination, heritage preservation, and museums valorisation;*
- f) *To promote the students' quality of life and work, particularly through social action and employment programmes, artistic, cultural and sports activities, as well as the appropriate conditions for the free exercise of student associations;*
- g) *To develop processes of sustainability, respect for cultural and social diversity and intergenerational responsibility;*
- h) *To provide its workers with personal and professional fulfilment and to guarantee the best conditions for their training and qualification;*
- i) *To promote internationalisation and cultural, scientific, and technological cooperation through the formation of partnerships and the mobility of its academic community members;*

- j) To provide scientific and technical support for the implementation of cooperation policies in the field of tropical scientific research;*
- k) To sponsor the connection of former students of the University of Lisbon and the Technical University of Lisbon to their new alma mater, as well as the participation of other personalities and entities in the University's strategic development;*
- l) To strengthen the relationship with the city by contributing to the enrichment of its cultural, artistic, scientific, and social life, and to promote Lisbon's reputation throughout the world.*

4. ULisboa's organic structure

According to its Statutes, ULisboa includes Schools, research units and other units, structures and services. The Social Services (SASULisboa) are also included in this scope. ULisboa also includes the Rector, the Colleges and the Specialised Units.

There are governing and advisory bodies at ULisboa that support and represent the academic community.

4.1 Schools, Research Units and Colleges

Schools, also known as Faculties or Institutes, are teaching and research Organic Units (OU) with their own governing bodies. They are legal persons governed by public law who have statutory, scientific, pedagogical, cultural, administrative, financial, and patrimonial autonomy under the law and the Statutes of ULisboa. ULisboa has 18 Schools:

Lisbon School of Architecture (FA)

Faculty of Fine Arts (FBA)

Faculty of Sciences (FC)

Faculty of Law (FD)

Faculty of Pharmacy (FF)

School of Arts and Humanities (FL)

Faculty of Medicine (FM)

Faculty of Dental Medicine (FMD)

Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (FMV)

Faculty of Human Kinetics (FMH)

Faculty of Psychology (FP)

Institute of Social Sciences (ICS)

Institute of Education (IE)

Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning (IGOT)

School of Agriculture (ISA)

Institute of Social and Political Sciences (ISCSP)

ISEG – Lisbon School of Economics and Management (ISEG)

IST Técnico Lisboa (IST).

The *Schools* have the following governing bodies: School Council; President or Director; Scientific Council and Pedagogical Council. Given their administrative and financial autonomy, the *Schools* also have a Board of Management, with powers similar to those of the University's Board of Management.

The competences of the Schools' self-governing bodies are those defined by the respective statutes and by law.

Under the terms of the ULisboa Statutes and the Statutes of its Schools, *Research Units* may adopt different organizational models and have their own governing bodies. They are generally integrated into the National Scientific and Technological System and are evaluated on a regular basis by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT).

Colleges are cross-cutting units that aim to strengthen internal cohesion, interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary collaboration, and greater efficiency in the use of human, material, and technological resources. The Colleges, established by the Rector, are non-organic spaces that incorporate scientific research, technological innovation, and teaching programmes, which necessarily involve teachers and researchers from several Schools.

To strengthen R&D ties there are also *Networks*, known as Interdisciplinary Thematic Networks, ULisboa's strategic axes of development, allowing its inclusion in international networks and European programmes.

4.2 Rectory, Specialised Units and Central Services

The Rectory is ULisboa's central governing support, responsible for ensuring its regular operation and assisting the Schools in carrying out their mission.

ULisboa also has a number of Specialised Units that provide services to the academic community and society, contributing to the preservation of heritage and the public understanding of knowledge, culture, and the arts. The following Specialised Units are currently operational:

University Stadium of Lisbon (EULisboa)

Museums (MUHNAC)

Institute of Tropical Scientific Research (ICT)

The latter include the National Museum of Natural History and Science, the Lisbon Botanical Garden, the Tropical Botanical Garden and the Lisbon Astronomical Observatory.

To ensure greater coordination and efficiency in the management of the services under the Rector's authority, these services, the Rectory and the Specialised Units, have been grouped into a common management, known as Central Services of the University of Lisbon (CSULisboa), which coordinate, organise and support the entities that comprise ULisboa, in the various areas of activity and support for the Rector, without prejudice to the competences of the Schools' own governing bodies.

4.3 Social Services

The SASULisboa are services that ensure school social action functions and provide direct and indirect social support to the academic community of ULisboa as well as external entities; they are administratively and financially autonomous and governed by their own statutes.

4.4. Bodies

The governing bodies of the University are:

- General Council;
- Rector;
- Management Board.

The University also has the following bodies:

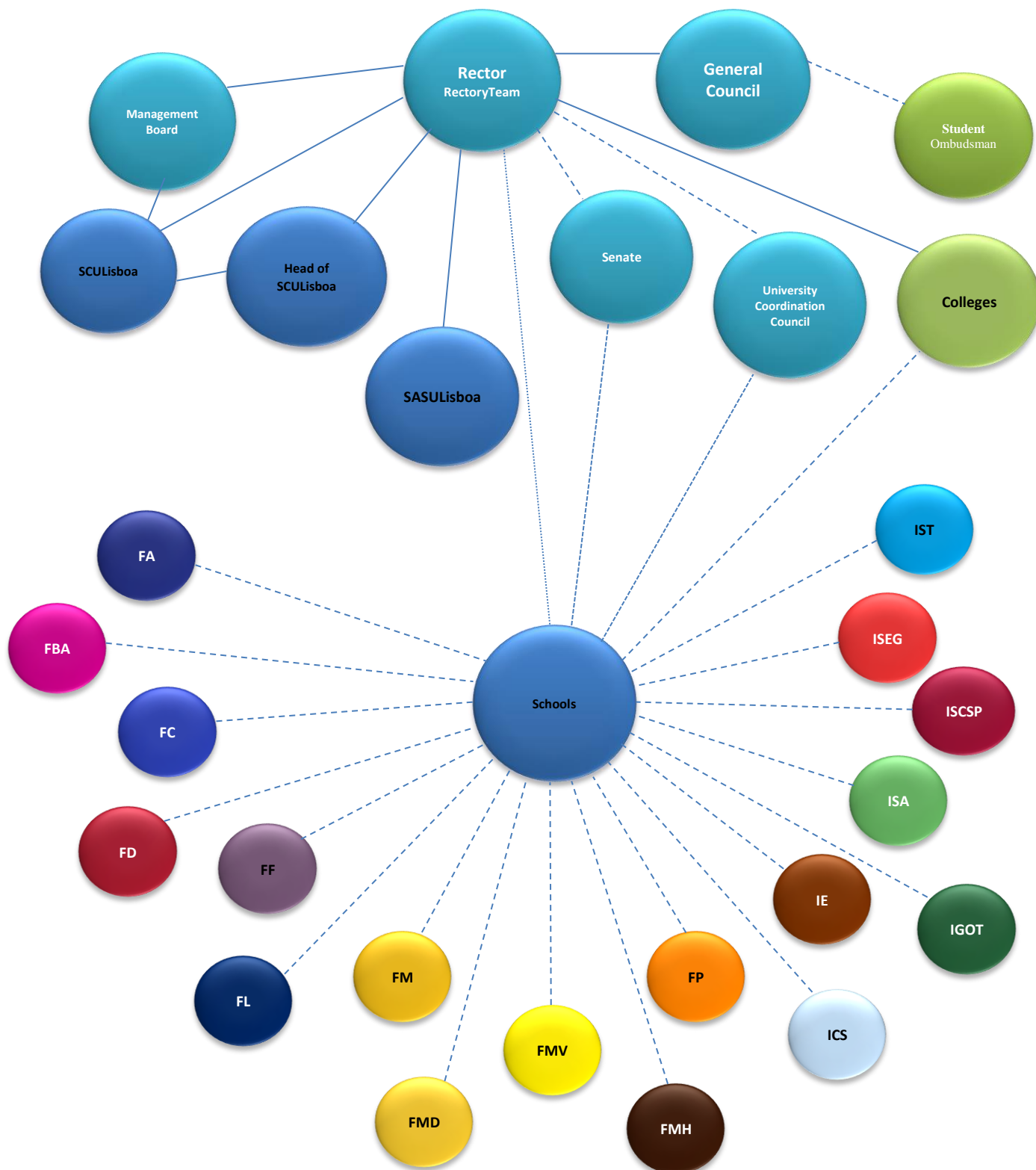
- Senate;
- University Coordination Council;
- Student Ombudsman.

The Statutes of ULisboa define the composition and competencies of ULisboa's bodies.

As previously stated, the Schools have their own governing bodies, which are defined by their respective statutes and by law.

4.5. ULisboa's organisational chart

Figure 1 – ULisboa's organisational chart



5. ULisboa's Quality Policy

ULisboa puts a focus on assessment and quality assurance. According to its Statutes, ULisboa must ensure that *permanent evaluation processes of its activities, units, and services are carried out in accordance with the law, in collaboration with competent evaluation and accreditation entities, as well as through its own institutional mechanisms, in compliance with internationally established quality principles and criteria. Furthermore, the results of the evaluation processes will be taken into account in the organisation and operation of the University and the Schools, in the allocation of human and material resources, and in strategic decisions.*

Quality assurance, specifically the existence of processes for systematic information collection with the goal of continuous improvement, has been a central tenet of the strategic plans for institutional development presented by the Rector at the start of each mandate.

Since 2015, an IQAS-ULisboa has been regulated. It focuses on the following principles:

- a) *To attend to the University's diverse, complex, and multidimensional reality;*
- b) *To ensure the integration of the Schools' various Quality Assurance Systems into the IQAS-ULisboa, allowing for high specificity of procedures while respecting Schools' diversity and autonomy;*
- c) *To encourage the participation of all the stakeholders – teachers, researchers, students, technical and administrative personnel;*
- d) *To be distinguished by simplicity, consistency, stability and predictability, while remaining open to innovation and administrative modernisation of system management;*
- e) *To ensure transparency and accountability;*
- f) *To ensure participation, collegiality, accuracy and commitment in academic life;*
- g) *To promote the development of a quality culture in the University's various fields of activity.*

The goal of contributing to the continuous improvement of the activities developed at ULisboa can be added to these principles.

The IQAS-ULisboa brings together all of the University's activities that contribute to the quality assurance of its developed activities and the achievement of its mission. Its implementation and management are the responsibility of the Rector.

In accordance with the RIQAS-ULisboa, the QAC-ULisboa was created to assist the Rector in this task, with advisory functions and the following competencies:

- a) To promote the development of a quality culture at ULisboa;*
- b) To present management and monitoring proposals for IQAS-ULisboa;*
- c) To monitor the activities of ULisboa's Assessment and Quality Assurance Area;⁷*
- d) To assist with the internal and external evaluation processes;*
- e) To prepare and update the ULisboa's Quality Manual and Plan and to submit it for approval to the competent bodies;*
- f) To create good practice manuals and submit them to the competent bodies for approval;*
- g) To propose the revision of these Regulations.*

The steps taken since the foundation have been followed by a series of operational improvements that allow us to ensure the system's maturity today. The fact that ULisboa has used the same common system for academic management (FENIX) and Human Resource and Financial Management (SAP) since 2021, was a significant milestone that will enable the future development of systems that allow for the integrated collection and processing of information while respecting the specificities and autonomy of the Schools.

⁷ Currently AQAA, under subparagraph b), i), no. 3 of Article 5 of Normative Order No. 14/2019, 24 April, published in the Official Gazette, Series 2, No. 90, 10 May.

6. ULisboa's Integrated Quality Assurance System

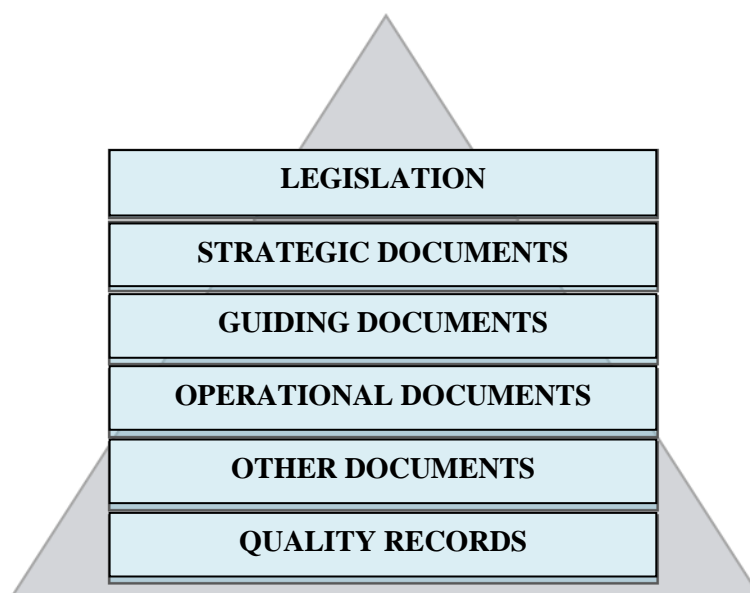
6.1 Organisation and documentation

The IQAS is organised into two levels at ULisboa. Firstly, a process approach is used to identify and manage the procedures associated with them, as well as to recognise the various activities that integrate them, as well as their intervening parties, and to define the indicators that allow monitoring their development. Based on the performance of these indicators and their measurement against the goals outlined in the Strategic, Activity and Quality Plans, mechanisms of analysis and reflection should be implemented to allow for continuous process improvement and plan redefinition.

Secondly, a quality-guideline-based perspective is adopted. In this case, the objectives, the actions to be promoted, the responsible bodies or services and the related documents and/or activities are identified for each of the guidelines.

Figure 2 depicts the documentary architecture adopted by IQAS-ULisboa.

Figure 2 – Documentary architecture adopted by IQAS-ULisboa



The most relevant legislation has been referred to above (Table 3).

The strategic documents are the ULisboa Statutes, the medium-term Strategic Plan, and the Action Plan for the Rector's four-year term.

The guiding documents are as follows:

- Quality Manual – defines the quality policy, describes the IQAS-ULisboa and establishes the architecture and general organisation of the quality management system;
- Quality Plan – outlines, in a detailed way, the intervening parties, processes, procedures necessary to evaluate and manage the quality of the activities;
- Annual Activity Plan - establishes ULisboa's and its Schools' main lines of action for each year, as well as the respective budgetary impacts;
- Management Risk Prevention Plan, including the Risks of Corruption and Related Infractions – identifies the major risks in the pedagogical, scientific, research and administrative areas and determines the design of procedures to eliminate or mitigate them.

Operational documents include:

- Regulations – regulate the activity of ULisboa, either by adapting its operation to legal requirements or by defining the rules that certain internal programmes or activities must follow;
- Procedures Manuals – When necessary, they aggregate the procedures used by the various services, with a systematic description of the tasks that are part of each process, including, if necessary, procedure description sheets; information notes, instructions, forms, reports resulting from process execution and respective analysis, and quality records that demonstrate compliance with the various procedures.

Other documents and records are created as a result of the regular collection of information at multiple levels. They include, among others, course unit files, summaries, course unit reports, study cycle reports, teaching reports, results of pedagogical surveys, research unit reports, performance evaluation reports and, when available, system meta-evaluation reports.

6.2 Integrated information system

In order to provide reliable indicators, the IQAS-ULisboa requires continuous collection and analysis of information on the University's activities. The process is based on an information system that allows the consolidation of data related to the quality guidelines described at the start of this QM, assessing the degree of compliance with its objectives, the performance of the various indicators, and the opportunities for improvement.

ULisboa has two integrated information management systems that are fully operational, and a third that is being developed. The first is the FENIX academic management system. The rollout of this system to all schools, which took several years and was completed in 2021, enabled the collection and processing of data to be done in an integrated and articulated manner. FENIX is an information management system that integrates various academic documents and indicators, such as study cycles, curricular units, classes

and summaries, grades and agendas, pedagogical inquiries, and others.

The *Quality Assurance Module for the Fenix Integrated Academic Management System* will be operational starting in 2022. This will contain, among others, the following elements:

- a) Curricular Unit Reports – data on the characteristics and functioning of the curricular unit, academic success, pedagogical surveys and comments from those in charge of the curricular unit;
- b) Study Cycle Reports – data on the characteristics of the study cycles, number and characteristics of the enrolled students, evolution of demand, academic performance, dropouts, training efficiency, characteristics of the graduates, employability of graduates, internationalisation, class attendance, pedagogical surveys, comments and opinions of the heads of the study cycles and of the Pedagogical Council;
- c) School Year Operation Report.

The creation of an automatic "alerts" system is also envisaged, which will flag up situations with potential problems, which should then be examined by those involved in order to improve them. Although there should be general procedures, the type and level of alerts should be decided at the school level.

Although the elements collected by FENIX only relate to teaching and learning – A3ES guidelines 2 to 5 – they are critical to the development of a robust quality system in a higher education institution such as ULisboa.

The second operational information system is the Enterprise Resource Management System (ERP), which is based on SAP technology and is used by all ULisboa entities, including Schools, Central Services, and Social Services. This system makes it easier to collect and process information about human, financial, accounting, patrimonial, logistical, and sales resources in one place. These data are mostly related to A3ES' guidelines 9 and 10.

A third information system on R&D activities is still being developed. Until now, the collection and processing of information on scientific production has followed the procedures and used the indicators typically reported by research units to entities that promote and fund research, most notably the FCT. The A3ES guideline 6 is based on these data.

However, in order to continuously improve, ULisboa will soon have an integrated scientific information management system operational. The goal of this system is to facilitate real-time management, production, and access to scientific information in order to provide a broad view at various levels; to identify research networks; to facilitate the measurement and analysis of scientific activity, specifically the production of bibliometric indicators; to increase efficiency in the preparation of activity reports and

other documents; to improve mechanisms for strategic decision-making and the formulation of R&D policies; and to contribute to better science communication.

This system anticipates articulation with international databases (such as ORCID, Web of Science, and SCOPUS) as well as FCT (specifically, CIÊNCIAVITAE), allowing elements of scientific production pertaining to teachers and researchers to be imported. There may also be a connection to FENIX, allowing for integrated management of advanced training activities, to the ULisboa Repository (a collection of digital documents containing the university's intellectual, academic, and scientific output), and to the ULisboa Libraries system.

These integrated information systems do not preclude the use of other sources, nor do they preclude the supplementation of common ULisboa reports and indicators with the collection and processing of information specific to the Schools and other entities.

The IQAS-ULisboa data collection process is based on a set of processes that can be linked to the main quality guidelines. This information allows for the creation of several indicators. Some of these aspects are discussed in depth in the QP-ULisboa. The QM-ULisboa and QP-ULisboa indicate the procedures and indicators that are common to all Schools and services, while the others are the result of each entity's autonomy and specificity.

6.3 Integrated Management System

An integrated management system based on a *Guideline Control Map* inspired by the quality guidelines is another component of IQAS-ULisboa operationalization. Table 5 depicts the model for this map.

Table 5 – The Guideline Control Chart model

Name of the Guideline		
Guideline's description and objectives		
Actions to be promoted	Authorities or services in charge	Related documents and/or activities
Action description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ULisboa's Central Bodies (...) • Schools (...) • CSULisboa and SASULisboa (...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ULisboa's Central Bodies (...) • Schools (...) • CSULisboa and SASULisboa (...)

This map identifies the various guidelines, their objectives, the actions to be promoted, the bodies or services in charge of information production and processing, and the documents and/or activities associated with them. The list of guidelines, objectives, and actions to be promoted is derived directly

from the standards presented to A3ES for quality system organisation and auditing.⁸ The institution is responsible for defining the bodies or services to be mobilised, as well as the documents and/or activities to be developed.

The QP-ULisboa will include a detailed version of the *Guideline Control Chart* that will be updated as needed.

6.4 Relationship with Schools

ULisboa Statutes define an institutional model based on the principles of autonomy and responsibility of the Schools. Thus, the IQAS-ULisboa must consider the global and local levels, constituting a model which, in an integrated way for the whole University, is developed and replicated in the Schools' IQAS, but which also feeds into them through fluid, easy and permanent communication.

Quality evaluation involves, at each level, the following components:

- ULisboa: global evaluation of the University's activities, ensuring the fulfilment of the mission and the activities plan and defining the guidelines, the main processes and general indicators;
- Schools, CSULisboa and SASULisboa: evaluation of the activities developed based on the guidelines and indicators, focusing on the specific processes taking place at their level of action.

Given the University's statutory principles, as well as the different state of consolidation of the various Schools' quality systems, the global IQAS does not jeopardise local autonomy: there is a common system, based on general rules and principles, but with specifications for each School, which may or may not take the form of their own IQAS certified by A3ES.

Formally, the QM-ULisboa must be adopted by the various Schools, CSULisboa and SASULisboa. When an autonomous IQAS exists or is planned, the QM-ULisboa must serve as the general framework for the appropriate IQAS. The same principle applies to QPs. When there is no autonomous IQAS

⁸ For example, in Guideline 1 (*Adoption of policy for quality assurance and pursuit of quality objectives*), A3ES specifies the following proposition as an objective: *The institution has established a quality culture, which is supported by a formally defined and publicly accessible quality policy and objectives*. Then it includes the actions that should be encouraged: *In this regard, the institution has prepared, formally approved, and published documentation expressing the institution's quality policy and objectives, which include:*

- *The institutional strategy for continuous quality improvement, as expressed in the pursuit of specific quality objectives, as an integral part of the institution's overall strategic management and contribution to accountability;*
- *The organisation of the quality assurance system, highlighting the responsibilities of the various bodies and services in this area;*
- *The types of involvement and responsibilities of students and other stakeholders (internal and external) in quality assurance processes;*
- *The methods of ensuring academic integrity and vigilance against academic fraud, as well as any form of intolerance or discrimination against students or teaching and non-teaching staff;*
- *The methods of implementing, monitoring, and reviewing the quality policy, as well as its translation into an effective internal quality assurance system.*

system, the Schools may use the ULisboa QMs and QPs, introducing only their unique characteristics. Given the autonomy of the Schools, the necessary adjustments to the various institutional frameworks should be made in all cases.

Thus, the Schools' QM and QP are adaptations of the corresponding ULisboa documents, tailored to the functions and specificities of each.

In all cases, the statutorily competent bodies approve these documents, as well as the medium-term Strategic Plan and Action Plan for the Director's or President's mandate and the Services' Manuals of Procedures.

6.5 Structures, competences and responsibilities

In terms of quality assurance, the top management of ULisboa, represented by the Rector, has the following main responsibilities:

- To define and disseminate a quality policy;
- To ensure IQAS implementation;
- To promote management efficiency and effectiveness;
- To ensure resource availability;
- To ensure the commitment of all bodies and services to IQAS implementation, maintenance, and improvement.

According to the Regulations of IQAS-ULisboa, the QAC-ULisboa, appointed by the Rector, is the consultative body responsible for proposing the management, monitoring and improvement of IQAS-ULisboa. This body is composed of 18 teachers/researchers, recommended by each of the Schools; six students, proposed by the student members of the Senate Committee for Pedagogical and Student Affairs; two technical and administrative staff members; and the person in charge of AQAA.

At the Schools' level, there are structures responsible for the implementation and development of the respective IQAS. The Schools approve the regulations that define the structure and the required instruments for the development of the respective systems.

The schools may submit the certification autonomously through A3ES or fit into the certification process promoted by ULisboa and adapt to the specific reality.

CSULisboa and SASULisboa must apply the general IQAS-ULisboa principles to their specific operation.

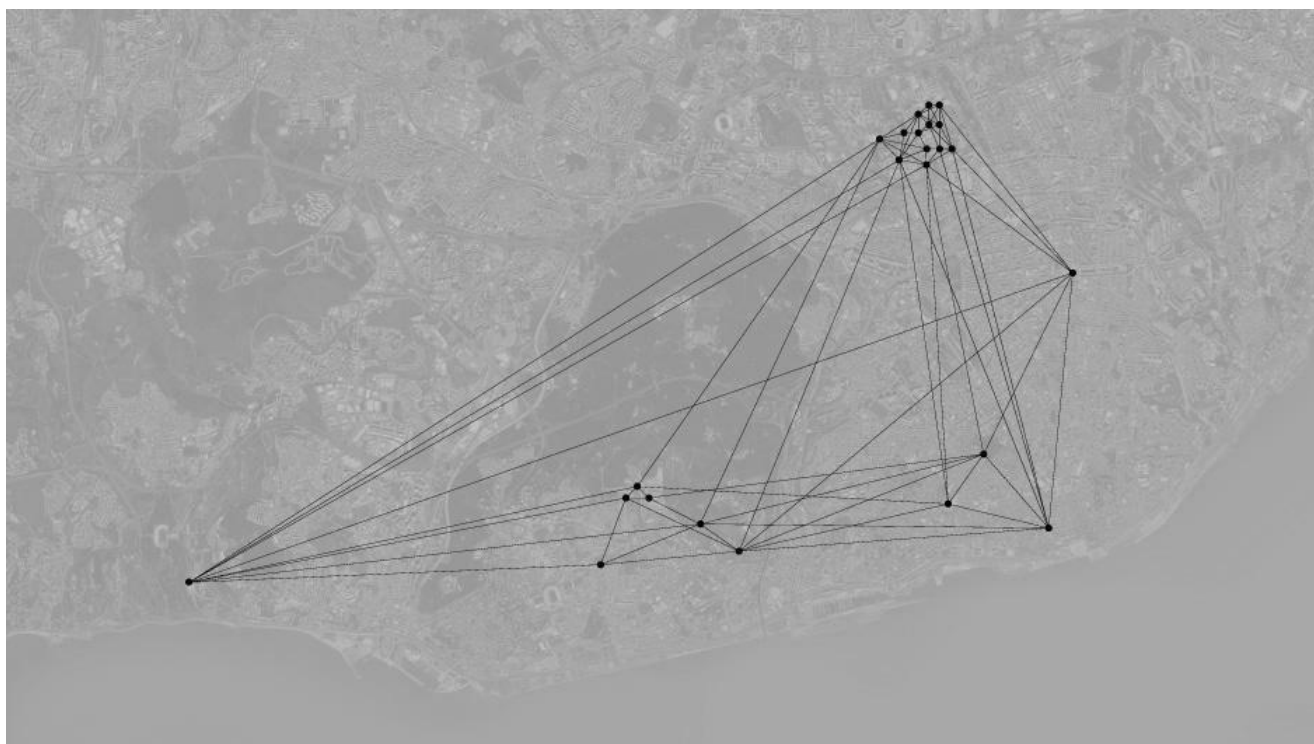
To facilitate integration between common processes and procedures of the IQAS-ULisboa and the specific processes and procedures of the Schools, CSULisboa and SASULisboa, there must be a regular channel for connection between AQAA and the remaining entities.

In short, the Schools, CSULisboa and SASULisboa, promote, in collaboration with AQAA and through their own mechanisms, self-assessment strategies and data collection and processing, with the goal of continuously improving the institution and its services to the community. At the level of general principles, these procedures should be consistent with those generally defined for the University. The information gathered by the Schools, CSULisboa, and SASULisboa as part of management and quality assurance activities is an essential component of the IQAS-ULisboa.

ULisboa acknowledges that the facts gathered and the conclusions drawn from data analysis on various aspects related to quality guidelines and their monitoring must necessarily result in decision proposals aimed at identifying the less positive aspects and defining effective solutions faced by the Schools and the University.

At all times, special attention must be paid to the interaction between IQAS-ULisboa and the management bodies, as well as to the participation of all agents involved in the quality assurance processes. In the latter case, the mobilisation of teachers, researchers, students, and technical and administrative personnel is critical to the system's credibility.

The Rector, the Presidents/Directors of the Schools, the heads of CSULisboa and SASULisboa, and the QAC-ULisboa should regularly assess the form of inter and intra-institutional articulation in the conduct of quality processes in order to monitor and improve their functioning.



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