

THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF SPANISH UNIVERSITIES: IMPACT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND ACCREDITATION



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ASSOCIATION OF LANGUAGE CENTRES IN
HIGHER EDUCATION (ACLES)

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In particular, I would like to thank Plácido Bazo Martínez, coordinator of CRUE-IC's linguistic policy working group, whose knowledge of the *Language policy framework document for the internationalisation of Spanish universities* has undoubtedly been of invaluable help for the preparation of our study on the current backdrop of internationalisation in universities, which uses the recommendations of said CRUE document as guiding principle.

We would also like to highlight the collaboration of ACLES members and partners, who have contributed their ideas and conclusions to this study. We would especially like to mention the working group on English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), who has actively participated in providing undoubtedly enriching ideas for the development of this document.

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Cristina Pérez Guillot

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Language Centres in Higher Education*

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[1.] INTRODUCTION

This report originates from *Language policy framework document for the internationalisation of the Spanish university system*, published in 2017 by the Language Policy Sub-Working Group of the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE) (Bazo and González, 2017). The purpose of this document was to “offer specific guidelines and recommendations around three basic lines of action - accreditation, training and incentives - to design a quality language policy in a changing and increasingly international context”. Three years after its publication, from the Association of Language Centres in Higher Education (ACLES) we plan to approach the situation of the universities with respect to the recommendations made in the document.

From ACLES we believe it is important to prepare this report, as the first ever analysis of the situation of the linguistic policy of Spanish universities for internationalisation purposes is over a decade old: in 2010, the British Council published the *Accreditation of the English language level in Spanish universities* (Halbach and Lazaro, 2010), a paper which tackled a diagnosis of the situation of the universities in terms of linguistic requirements and accreditation. The report revealed a great diversity in terms of English training in the different degrees, as well as the heterogeneity in the universities when it came to certifying the levels of language proficiency.

As acknowledged by the update of this British Council report carried out in 2015, the situation changed for the better, both in training and in accreditation: the effort in the creation of language centres, the provision of language training courses, the offer of subjects taught in English and the administration of foreign language level exams. It also mentions the changes in the accreditation mechanisms, the contribution of CRUE Linguistic Tables and the accreditation work carried out by ACLES, as well as the creation of the tables by which the universities are governed when accepting or rejecting language certificates.

It is worth noting that it was the Bologna Declaration signed in June 1999, which laid the foundations for the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the trigger for the internationalisation of the Spanish university system. The integration of the Spanish university in the EHEA led to a significant increase in the mobility of students and staff, which, together with the improvement in employability thanks to linguistic knowledge, has meant that the accreditation of linguistic competence has become a key element in the careers not only of lecturers, but also of university graduates; in short, of all members of the university community.

Likewise, we must bear in mind that, within the frame of the globalisation of employment and the internationalisation of new jobs, the acquisition of internationalisation knowledge, skills and competences will be highly valued in order to prepare our future graduates for an increasingly globalised world at the employment level (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, 2015). It is hence clear that international competences such as linguistic and intercultural competences should also be promoted (Haug and Vilalta, 2011), as well as mastering the language in which content is learned to access knowledge (Schleppegrell, 2008).

Thus, we have seen how the so-called Bologna process has contributed to universities having to set a number of priorities, with internationalisation being one of them and one of the most important ones. Adding the improvement of employability, we find the need to improve in languages, and especially in the use of English as a communication tool (Alcón, Eva 2011).

Thus, it becomes clear how the accreditation of linguistic competence has now become an essential element in the university environment. On the one hand, it has now a requirement to graduate from many Spanish universities and one of the requirements to access most master's degrees. On the other, we must not lose sight of the positive impact this will have in the classrooms, due to the clear need to improve language training from the initial stages of people's training so that, when starting university, the path becomes easier and the chances of success much greater.

The objective of our work is to present the result of an online survey to Spanish universities. The survey was sent to all the rectors of public and private universities in Spain, whether or not they were members of ACLES, since what we aimed for was to have the largest number of participants in the survey, in order to present a study that showcased the impact that the 2017 CRUE document has had in terms of internationalisation in the Spanish university system.

We received a response from 58 universities, the list of which we include at the end of this document. We believe that it is not necessary to include the questionnaire sent to the universities, since it matches exactly to the structure of the original CRUE document.

The universities answered the questions which were arranged according to the three main lines of action that are raised in CRUE document: accreditation, training and incentives. Within each of the lines, recommendations are taken into account for each of the three university groups: teaching and research staff (TRS), administrative and services personnel (ASP) and students. We shall present the results in the same order in this report.

Our report summarises the quantitative data, contrasting in some cases the responses to the different sections. This is due to the fact that our objective is mainly to show the current landscape for universities, but in no case to assess the different situations of the data obtained.

[2.] PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

2.1. ACCREDITATION

First, we present an overall view of the universities regarding the accreditation of linguistic competence, in accordance with the measures suggested by CRUE document and with reference to each of the three groups: students, administrative and services personnel (ASP) and teaching and research staff (TRS). We present the data by percentages according to the total number of universities that have responded to the survey and, in cases where it is relevant to the objective of our study, we do differentiate between the situation in public or private universities, as well as the differences that exist between autonomous communities.

2.0.1. CERTIFICATION OF STUDENTS

Regarding language accreditation, CRUE makes five recommendations:

1. "That B1 is the minimum level required in a foreign language to obtain the degree certificate in the different skills, notwithstanding the fact that universities may demand a higher level in the degrees that may require so."

We have been able to observe that 60% of universities establish a minimum level (B1 or B2) for the obtention of the degree. Out of these universities, for 38% the requirement is a B1 while it is a B2 for the remaining 22%. However, it is worth noting that, despite the recommendation, 26% of universities have not established a specific level requirement for the accreditation of language proficiency. Likewise, 12% have marked the "other" option. Given the observations noted, the reason behind seems to be that these universities only have the requirement in place for some of the degrees they offer or that they actually require a C1 level, so the question on the B1 or B2 level was not relevant in their case.

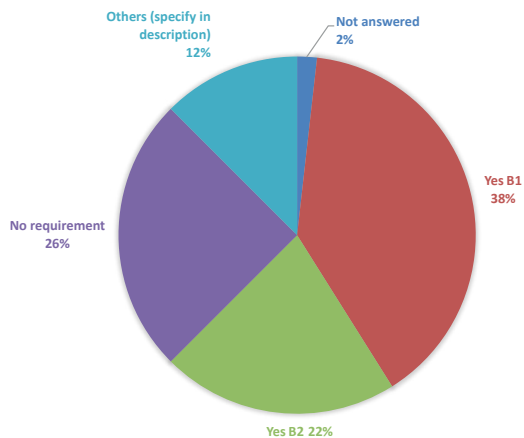


Figure 1. Minimum level of accreditation recommendation.

If we analyse this same point taking into account whether the universities are public or private, it can be observed that there are no significant differences between them. Nevertheless, there are differences regarding the required B1 or B2 level.

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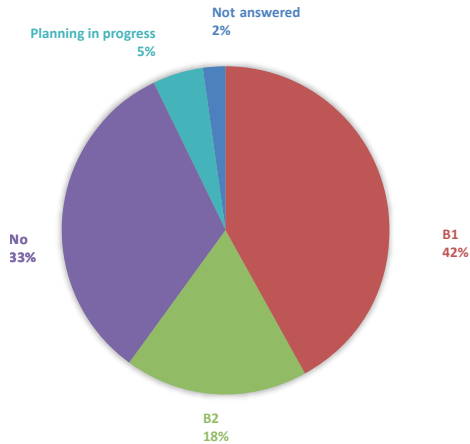


Figure 2. Accreditation requirement in public universities.

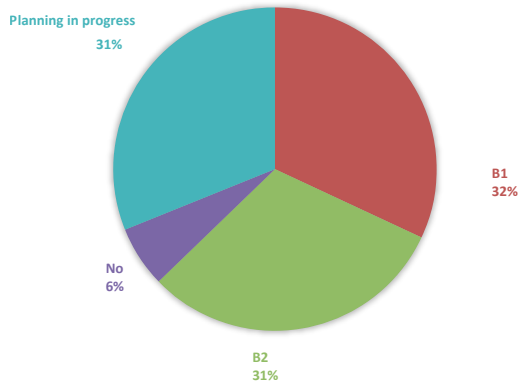


Figure 3. Accreditation requirement in private universities.

Thus, in the case of public universities, 42.5% require a B1 and 17.5% a B2, while 32.5% of universities do not require any level or are not considering it.

In the case of private universities, B1 and B2 level requirement is balanced (31.25% and 31.25%, respectively), another 31.25% of universities are considering requiring a level and only 6.25% have answered “no” to this question.

We consider remarkable the fact that the B2 level requirement is broader in private universities than in public ones.

2. “To establish in linguistic/multilingual degrees a defined linguistic path with differentiated access profiles and linguistic exit level higher than B1. To establish bilingual/multilingual degrees.”

Regarding this recommendation, we note that the majority of universities have bilingual/multilingual degrees and those that do not have so are mostly planning to introduce them.

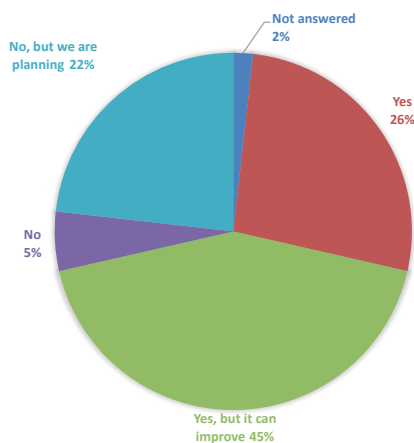


Figure 4. Percentage of bilingual/multilingual degrees.

It is significant that 45% of those who do offer bilingual/multilingual degrees check the option “yes, but it can improve”. It would be necessary to explore what aspects of improvement the universities that have marked this option refer to, but in principle it seems that there

is an opportunity for initiatives in this area, such as offering specific training for the lecturers in charge of teaching the lines in English, as well as for those who wish to join this teaching modality.

Regarding the type of university, significant differences are noted between public and private universities, where the latter group includes a higher percentage of universities that offer bilingual/multilingual degrees. Likewise, in the case of private universities in which bilingual/multilingual degrees are not offered, they all actually are considering offering such degrees, even if there is a 7% of public universities that neither have them nor are considering it.

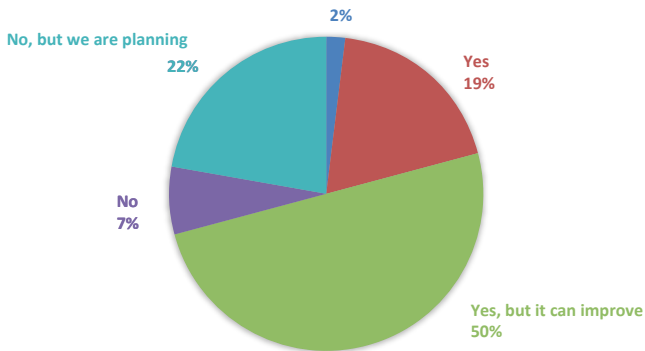


Figure 5. Offer of bilingual degrees in public universities.

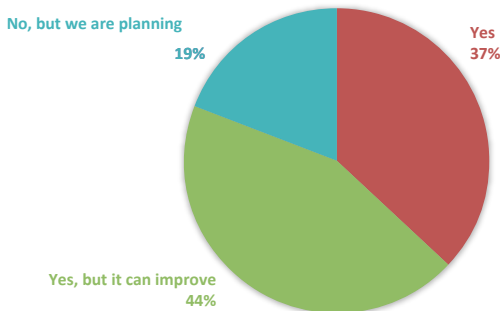


Figure 6. Offer of bilingual degrees in private universities.

The high percentage of responses to the option “yes, but it can improve” could indicate that the trend to offer teaching in other languages is increasing.

3. “To ensure the rigour of the accreditation and verification processes, in consultation with the commissions with which Spanish universities have been provided for this purpose, CRUE and ACLES Language Tables, and respecting the decisions of these committees.”

In this regard, it should be noted that the majority of universities, 80%, answer that they do ensure the rigour of the accreditation processes and that they do so according to the recommendations of ACLES and CRUE. 10% state that there is no requirement. This result seems inconsistent with the almost 26% of universities that answer that there is no requirement in question 1, so we believe that there may have been a problem in interpreting the question.

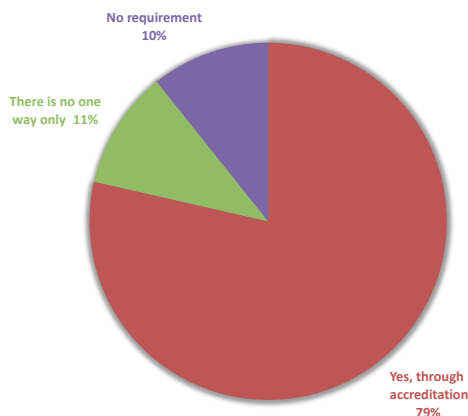


Figure 7. Accreditation processes.

4. "To facilitate the recognition between universities of the accreditation mechanisms for access to studies, mobility programmes and obtaining degrees"

Regarding this recommendation, the resulting scenario is that only 57% of universities facilitate the recognition of accreditation mechanisms through ACLES and CRUE. Therefore, there is still a way to go regarding the recognition of certificates between universities in general and, in particular, through ACLES and CRUE. On the other hand, it is surprising there is a high percentage of universities (17%) that have not established any recognition system, which, among other things, can impair student mobility.

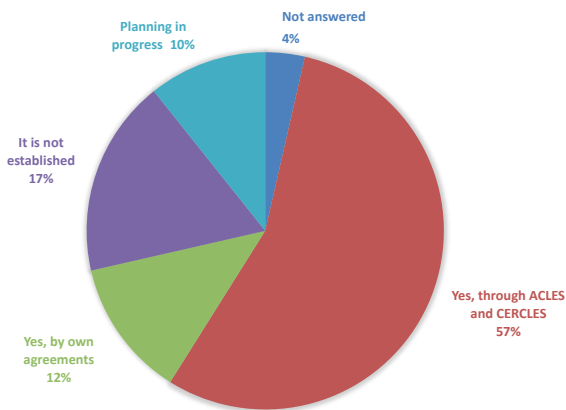


Figure 8. Recognition of accreditations between universities.

In this regard, we believe it is important to highlight that there is an answer, "Yes, through ACLES and CercleS", in which significant differences are found between autonomous communities, probably due to the policies promoted by their governments. The following data shows the communities with the highest percentage of affirmative answers to this question and those communities with the lowest

percentages. We take into account the communities in which the survey has been answered at least in four universities.

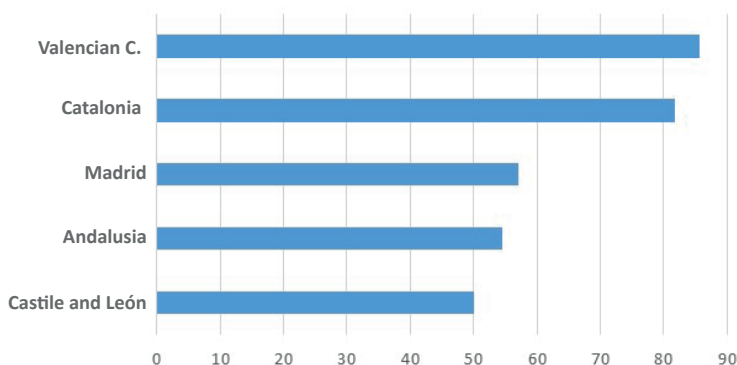


Figure 9. Recognition of certificates by autonomous communities.

5. "To include in the SET (Student Accreditation) the duly certified exit level of the graduates and, in the case of bilingual/multilingual degrees, explicitly state the participation of students in such itineraries, in order to provide visibility to the added value of foreign languages knowledge."

53.5% of universities include the exit level of graduates in the SET, duly accredited. Within the 24% of universities that answer «Other» to this question, very different scenarios exist: universities that have not yet implemented the SET, universities that include subjects taught in English and/or language level courses completed in the SET, universities that record in the SET the degrees taught in another language and universities which claimed that it is included in the students who present the certificate.

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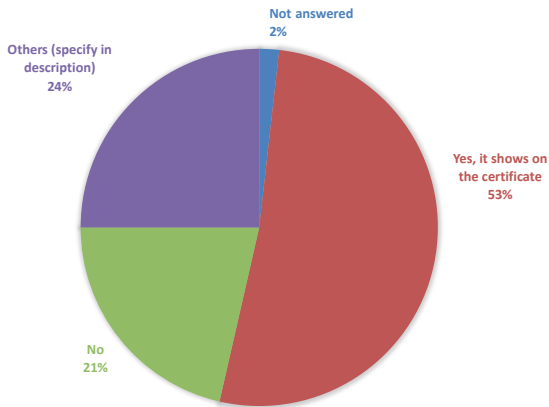


Figure 10. Universities that include the language certificate in the SET.

We would like to highlight the data by autonomous communities that indicate that they do include the certificate in the SET (please bear in mind that those communities in which the survey has been answered by at least four universities are taken into account).

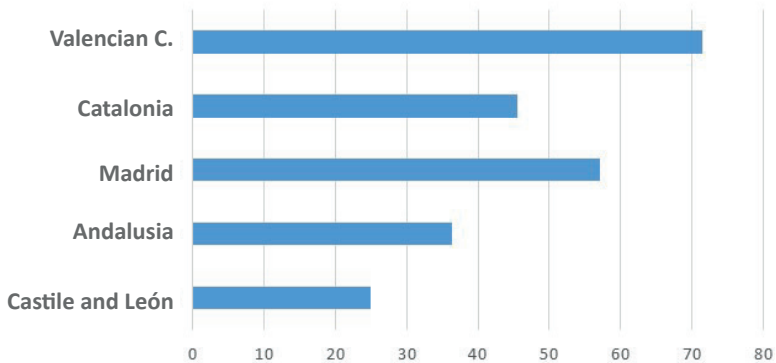


Figure 11. Communities in which the certificate appears in the SET.

2.1.2. CERTIFICATION OF TEACHING STAFF

The recommendations on accreditation referred to the teaching staff in the CRUE document and the situation of the universities shown by the result of the survey are analysed below.

1. “To recommend the CEFR’s C1 level (using as reference the certifications validated by the Language Tables and/or ACLES) as the minimum advisable requirement for lecturers involved in bilingual/multilingual degree programmes.”

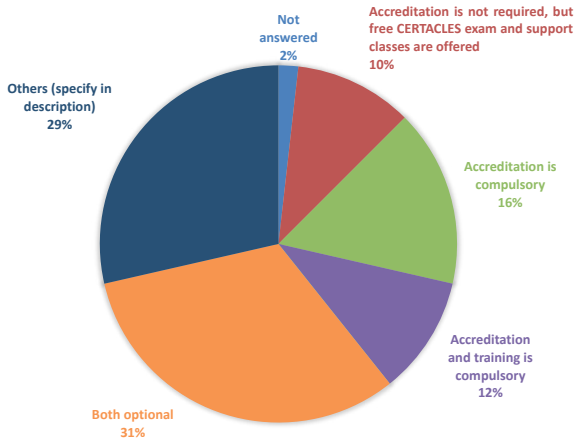


Figure 12. TRS level accreditation.

16% of universities require a C1 accreditation on a compulsory basis, for 31% training and accreditation are voluntary and 12% establish both accreditation and training as an essential requirement, indicating that more than one quarter of the surveyed universities use the accreditation procedure as a requirement for bilingual programmes.

This accreditation is not necessarily completed through a CertAcles exam. Some universities have designed specific exams to certify lecturers for teaching in English, or they consider the possibility of recognising some of the certificates included in the ACLES and CRUE tables. Lastly, a number of ways to verify the level are considered exclusively for this purpose, such as having taught in that language at a foreign university for a year or recognising native status.

On the other hand, six universities require accreditation although just for the B2 level, and five admit being in a planning process to demand C1 accreditation in the future.

A small group of universities (10%), despite not having accreditation as a requirement, do subsidise the accreditation exam and only 2% include training as a compulsory part.

2. "To promote duly subsidised procedures so the teaching staff can prove their specific training for teaching in a foreign language."

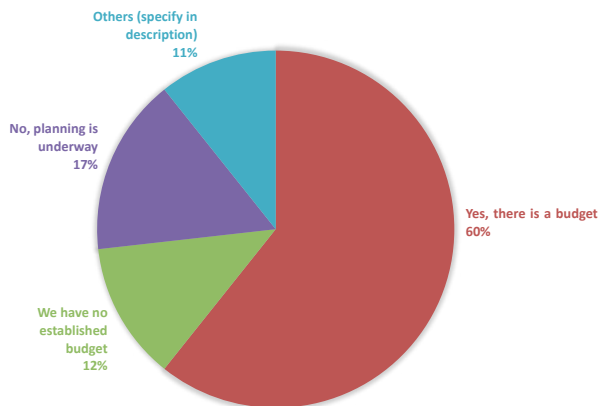


Figure 13. Budget availability.

While 60% of the universities that have answered the survey state that they have an assigned budget so that their academic staff can accredit their training to teach in a foreign language, 17% said that they are planning it; 77% of universities, therefore, understand that it is important to provide academic staff with grants to be able to prove their ability to teach in a foreign language.

Among the 35 universities that claim to have a budget, one states that “the training and accreditation of levels of different foreign languages is offered to lecturers under preferential conditions (reduced enrolment and the possibility of face-to-face courses)” and another mentioned that “the budget is for a programme to help intensify teaching in English, which includes two training modules, class observations and the accreditation exam.” Another university notes that the budget and the conditions of participation are defined in its own programme of the Internationalization Plan, dedicated to linguistic policy actions.

On the other hand, 12%, that is to say, seven universities out of the 58 that completed the survey, claim that they do not have any budget for this item. It should be noted that some universities claim that they do not have a budget, but nevertheless do offer a reduction in enrolment prices for their staff in language courses.

3. **“To encourage the participation of teaching staff in training programmes for foreign language teaching, so that universities will ideally include them in their subsidised training plans.”**

Most universities (64%) offer subsidised training plans, but at the same time a high percentage (31%) admit that these plans are subject to improvement. The percentage of institutions that do not have a chapter devoted to language training within a lecturer training plan is very small, since, as the chart shows, it only represents 3% of the surveyed institutions.

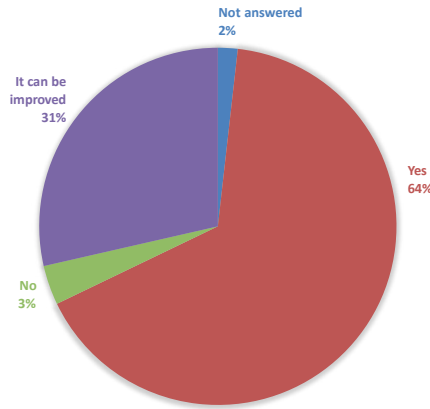


Figure 14. Participation of lecturers in training programmes for teaching in a foreign language.

4. "To offer linguistic support during the teaching period."

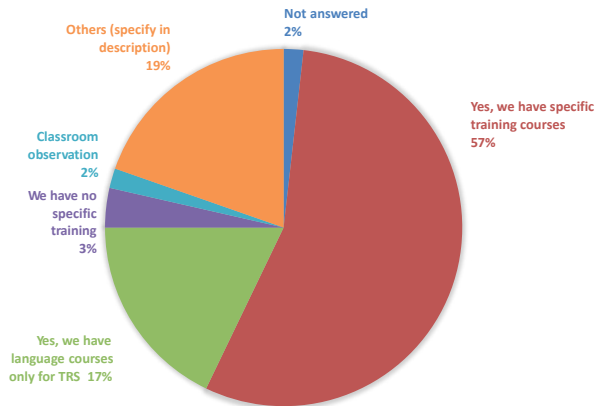


Figure 15. Linguistic support for teaching staff.

We can see how, in line with the situation raised in the previous point regarding the existence of training plans, most universities make language courses available to lecturers to improve their language skills. In this regard we will highlight that 22% offer exclusive courses for TRS.

2.1.3. CERTIFICATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND SERVICE STAFF

Finally, within the accreditation section, the situation of the administrative and services personnel (ASP) is displayed.

1. "To identify and reflect in the list of jobs (staff contracts) those administrative positions where the use of English and/or other foreign languages is necessary."

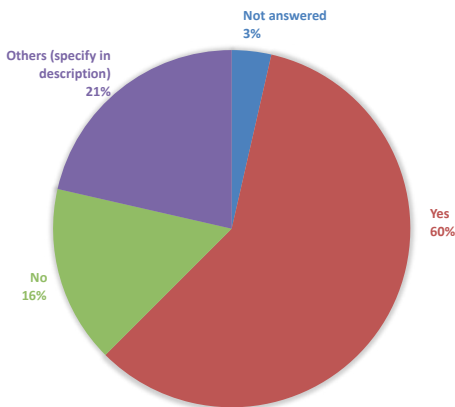


Figure 16. Identification in the staff contracts of the jobs in which the use of foreign languages is necessary.

Most universities, 60%, identify and reflect the jobs in which a foreign language is needed. It seems to us an excessively high percentage; it

would be useful to see what kind of positions require this knowledge and analyse if they are equivalent in the different universities. 21%, also a high percentage, marked the “other” box, without providing too much information in this regard. A more in depth study would be necessary to obtain information.

2. “To pay special attention to improving the language skills of this group with the aim of certifying an appropriate linguistic level, especially for staff who are in contact with the overseas community of the university or with internationalisation actions.”

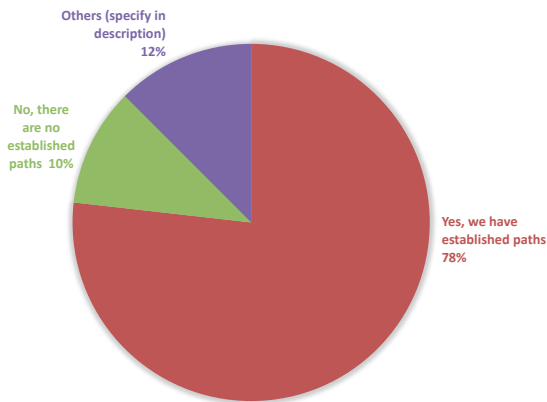


Figure 17. Improvement options.

Almost 78% of universities respond positively to the recommendation, which would indicate that there are specific training plans for accreditation. The question is slightly unclear, since it talks about “improving skills”. Perhaps this is why the data obtained on the exact situation regarding the attention paid to improving proficiency aimed at accrediting the language proficiency level of the ASP is somewhat unclear.

3. "To consider the inclusion of a linguistic requirement (between B1 and C1 according to the service) in the promotion of certain managerial positions as well as for newly created positions."

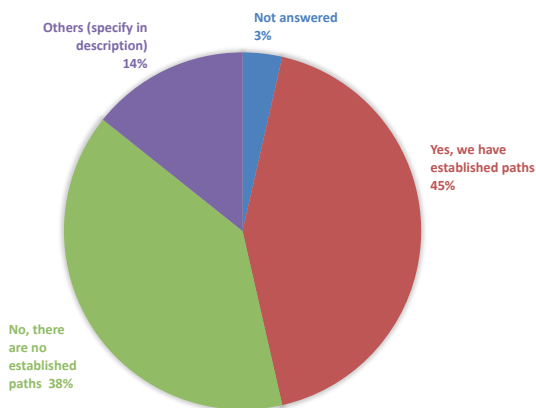


Figure 18. Linguistic requirement.

We note that the inclusion of this requirement is contemplated in 45% of universities, which contrasts with the training section. It is surprising that so much effort is put into training the staff but that this training is not requested from new employees. We believe that it may be related to aspects of the calls and the specificity or not of the levels of working and official ASP. It should be noted that 35% state that they do not have any established options. Together with the 14% of universities that answer "others" without providing more information and the 10% that do not respond, the outlook is that, for the moment, most of the universities do not contemplate the inclusion of a linguistic requirement in ASP job positions.

4. "To promote their participation in mobility programmes and in internationalisation actions at home, in order to engage this group in the internationalisation process of the university."

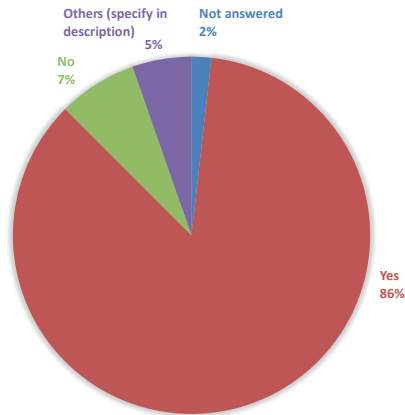


Figure 19. ASP participation in mobility programmes.

It is observed that the majority of universities (86%) promote the participation of ASP in mobility programmes and internationalisation actions at home, whereas the remaining percentages are not very significant. 10% of the surveyed universities do not answer the question.

In our view it is important to stress the support given to the ASP community at this point, since few answers to the survey have had such a majority result. Given the high percentage of ASP that seems to participate in mobility programmes, we consider that a study on the benefits obtained by the aforementioned activity and whether this mobility should be linked to the existence or not of a language requirement and the training received would be interesting.

2.2. TRAINING

The situation of universities in terms of language training, also, as in the previous section is presented below referred to each of the three university groups: students, TRS and ASP.

2.2.1. STUDENT TRAINING

CRUE suggests four measures to achieve practical and quality training that helps improve the language skills of students.

1. «To encourage the teaching of courses that develop students' ability to understand and express academic content (both orally and in writing) in a foreign language.»

The vast majority of universities (80%) offer language training courses in different modalities: partially subsidised, as complementary training for payment or, to a lesser extent, at no cost. Only 5% of universities stated that they do not offer courses. In the 15.5% of cases of universities that answer "others", they are mostly resources platforms and online courses.

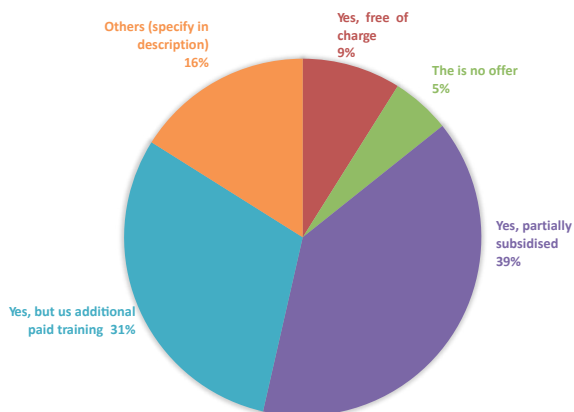


Figure 20. Courses aimed at improving the linguistic competence of students.

With regard to promoting student training, it is observed that a high percentage of universities (47%) state that they offer partially

subsidised training. Only 10% claim they have a free training offer for students. It should be noted that 31% of universities offer complementary training, but for a fee. The data shows that universities are aware of the need to offer complementary training in foreign languages, but they do not have sufficient means to provide such free complementary training.

The data by Autonomous Communities regarding this measure are as follows:

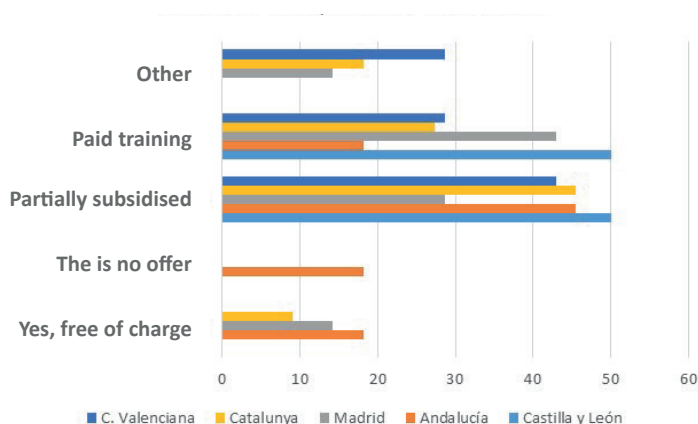


Figure 21. Promotion of teaching courses by autonomous communities.

We can see how the percentage of subsidised training is practically the same in Andalusia, Castile and León, Valencia and Catalonia (between 45% - 50%), while in the Community of Madrid only 28% of training is subsidised. On the other hand, it shows that in Castile and León and the Valencian Community there is no free offer, with quite a high variation in those that do have the offer; 14% in the Community of Madrid, 18% in Andalusia and only 9% in Catalonia. Please remember that the communities in which the survey has been answered at least by four universities are taken into account.

The same conclusion can be reached from this data by autonomous communities: universities clearly see the need for complementary training and most offer it, but for a fee due to the unavailability of the budget to cover this need.

2. "To provide training to develop multilingual and multicultural competence oriented to mobility programmes."

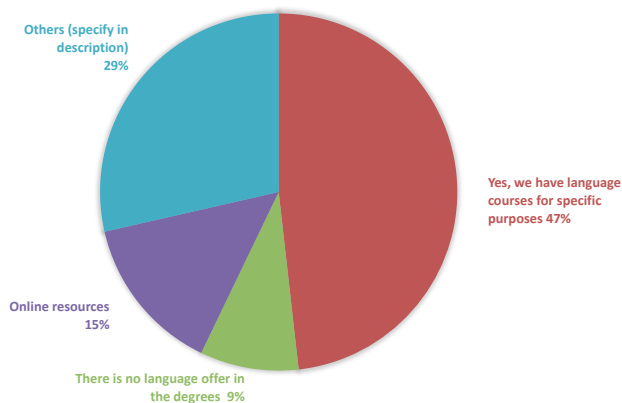


Figure 22. Training oriented to mobility.

As it is displayed, the universities are mostly committed to providing mobility-oriented training by facilitating the development of multilingual and multicultural training (40%). The next point to note is that 29% of universities offer language training for specific purposes.

3. "To educate in the promotion of strategies that help to solve possible communication issues and cultural differences and facilitate learning."

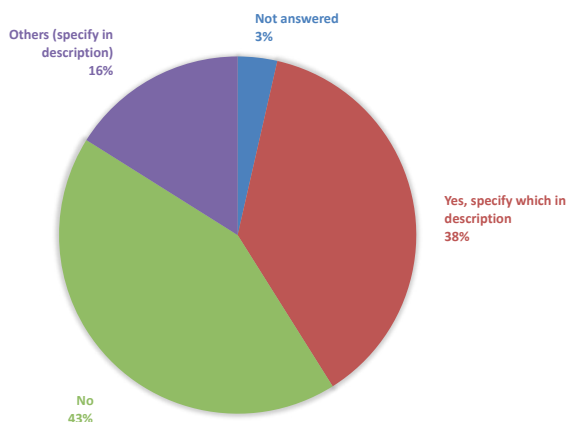


Figure 23. Promotion of communication and cultural strategies.

While there is a high percentage of universities that promote strategies to tackle cultural differences, we note that the percentage of universities that do not yet offer anything in this regard is higher (43%).

4. "To prepare students to face professional situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts."

55% of universities have answered yes to the question and have specified how they carry out this preparation. One of the most widespread modalities is the inclusion of specific intercultural subjects in certain degrees, especially those related to languages or international activity (Tourism, Communication, English Studies...). In some universities specific workshops are organised for this purpose and others have chosen to include them as transversal training. Another option chosen in some universities is the creation of materials for online consultation. In either case, there is great awareness of the importance of this recommendation.

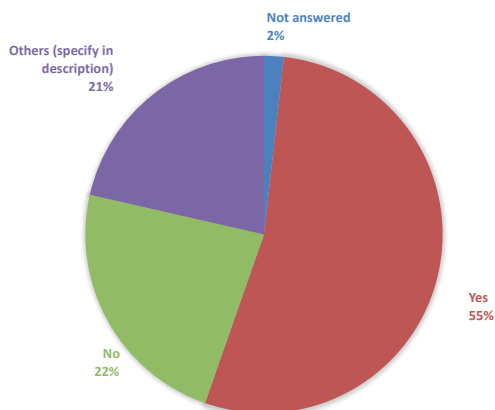


Figure 24. Preparation of students for multicultural contexts.

2.2.2. TEACHER TRAINING

CRUE suggests measures aimed at equipping lecturers with the skills and competencies necessary to offer quality teaching through a foreign language.

It also establishes the need to “establish a framework in which to register lecturer training in order to attend training areas related not only with linguistic and methodological competence, but with the competences that stem from the professional roles of the lecturer: pedagogical competence.”

The measures that we deem most relevant in relation to the training of TRS are analysed below.

1. “To create a quality framework in universities for teaching in English.”

The vast majority of universities have a framework detailing quality strategies for teaching in English or are in the process of creating it. In

the answers to this question, we observe that more than 40% of the universities have established procedures so that teaching in English is carried out successfully. A similar percentage is implementing it. There is a clear commitment on this point.

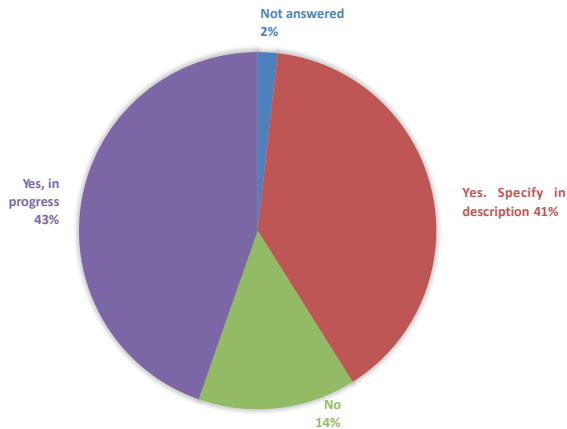


Figure 25. Creation of a quality teaching framework in English.

2. **"To offer initial and continuous training, both of a linguistic and methodological nature, for teaching in a foreign language."**

Most of the universities, 65%, have a training plan on teaching subjects in a foreign language that covers both the linguistic and methodological aspects, while 9% indicate that it is only at an initial stage. The high total percentage provides a clear picture on the awareness of this need, not only by the institution but also by TRS, which is increasingly participating in this training.

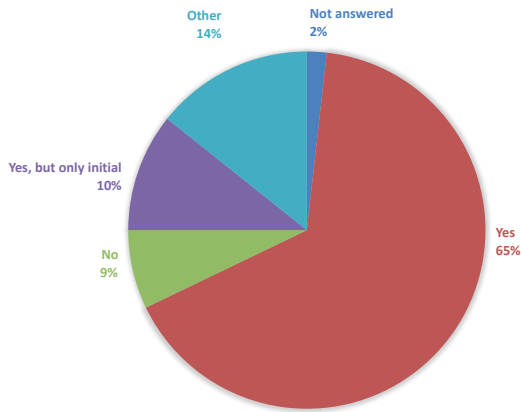


Figure 26. Initial continuous training for teaching in a foreign language.

3. “To establish a quality assessment system for training programmes at European level to enable accreditation and mobility.”

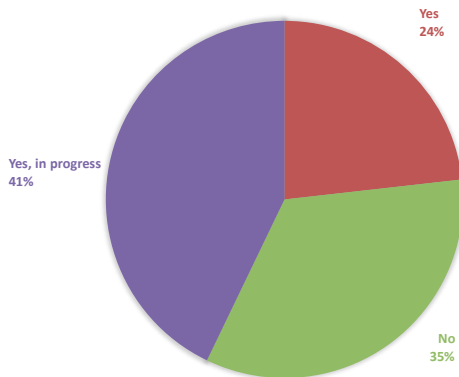


Figure 27. Quality assessment system.

24% of universities claim to have an established quality assessment system, 35% state that they do not have an established system and

41% state that it is being developed. In can hence be seen how there is an interest in quality control, but there is still a long way to go in terms of the existence of a clear plan or system that evaluates the quality of training that facilitates accreditation and, consequently, mobility.

4. "Ongoing training offer for trainers."

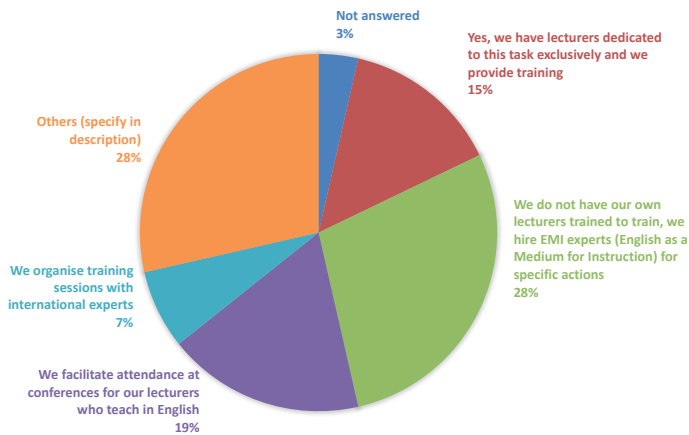


Figure 28. Ongoing training offer for trainers.

We see a clear trend for all universities to organise training for lecturers involved in teaching in English. Although 28% state that they do not have expert staff, they do hire them for this purpose. 15% have lecturers dedicated exclusively to this work and encourage their attendance at training sessions.

2.2.3. TRAINING OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND SERVICE STAFF

The recommendations of CRUE regarding the training of the ASP group are as follows:

1. "Specific oral communication courses for telephone assistance, reception of international student, service to visiting lecturers, etc."

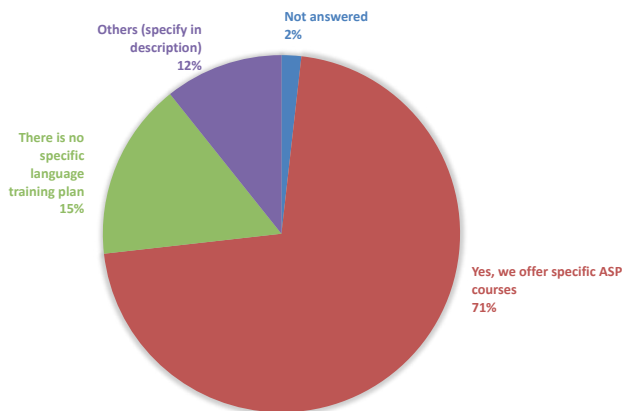


Figure 29. Specific courses for ASP.

As it can be noted, more than 70% of the universities offer specific courses for ASP. Only 15% do not have a specific language training plan for this group. 12% of the universities mentioned that they are implementing it or that they have some support for the training of ASP. It is worth noting how this type of courses has been mainly introduced in the training plans for ASP, possibly because some basic needs have been detected (those described in the CRUE recommendation) that seem more easily achievable than others (the certification of a certain level in all skills, for example).

2. "To promote stays in foreign universities to observe and collaborate in the administrative tasks related to internationalisation processes."

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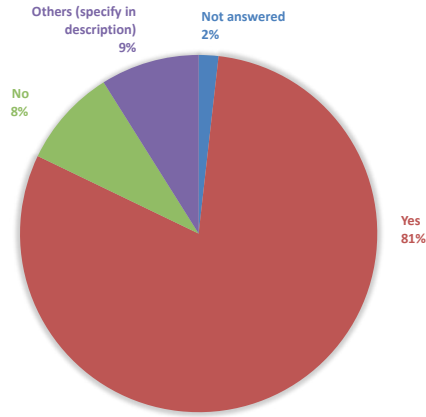


Figure 30. To promote stays in foreign universities.

This type of stay in foreign universities is mostly promoted, which shows that universities believe in the internationalisation of these groups. We believe that this majority support is also due to the fact that it is carried out through the funds and organisation of the Erasmus programme (*staff weeks* and similar activities).

2.3. INCENTIVES

The *Language policy framework document for the internationalisation of the Spanish university system* suggests that promoting languages for internationalisation requires an incentive programme aimed at the entire university community.

The incentives for language promotion that universities have according to the survey are analysed below.

2.3.1. INCENTIVES FOR STUDENTS

Some of the incentives suggested for this group in the CRUE document are the following:

1. "To offer subsidised foreign language courses or, failing that, discounts for students who enrol in language courses offered by the university itself during the degree."

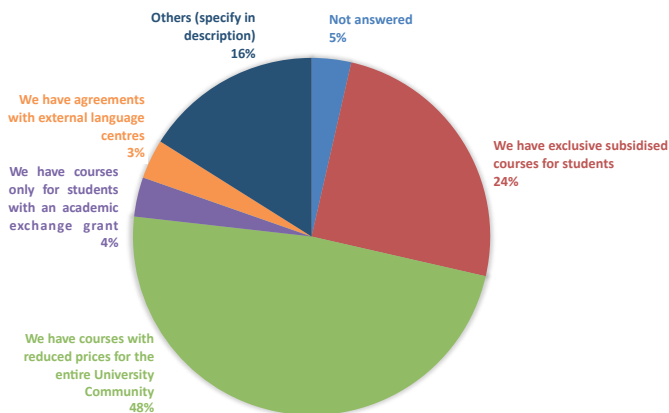


Figure 31. Offer of subsidised courses.

Most universities offer subsidised courses for students, either through subsidised courses for the entire university community (48%) or subsidised exclusively for students (24%). Other options are the offer of courses for students with an exchange grant (3.5%) and agreements with external language centres (3.5%).

2. "To reduce the fees for conducting tests leading to the accreditation of linguistic competence in a foreign language, preferably B1 level or higher."

54% of universities offer CertAcles exams at a public or subsidised price and 34.5% of universities do the same with external exams. The universities that offer both options are included in the above percentages.

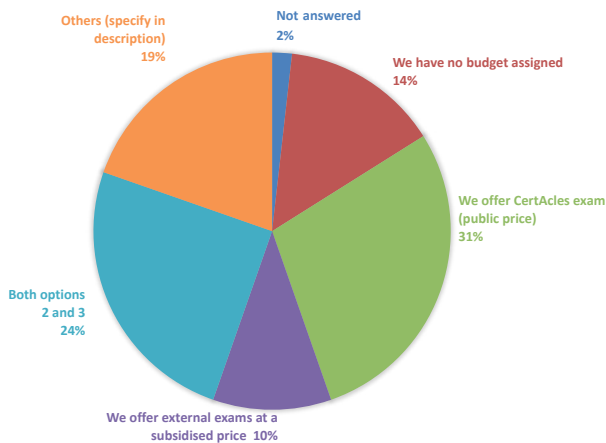


Figure 32. Reduction of certification test rates.

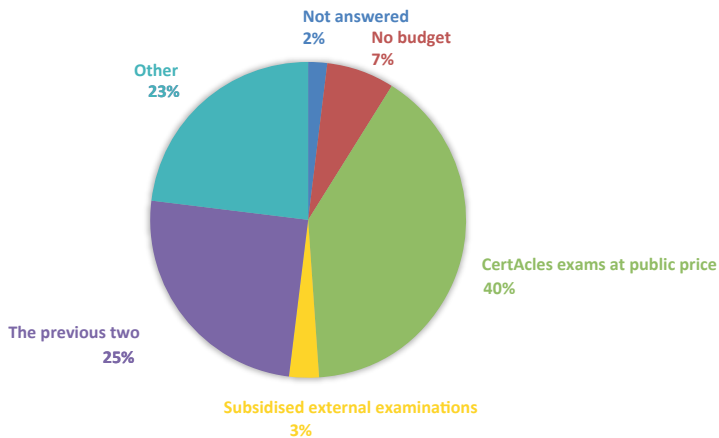


Figure 33. Reduction of certification test rates in public universities.

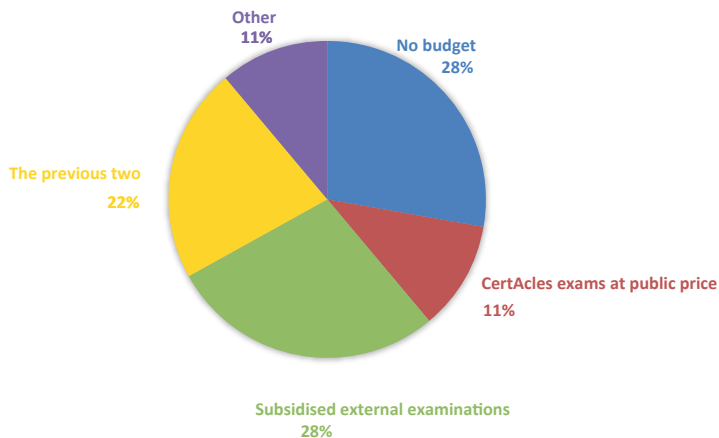


Figure 34. Reduction of certification test rates in private universities.

Significant differences exist between public and private universities. Broadly speaking, it can be said that, in terms of percentages, there are more public universities that invest in subsidising external exams than private universities that invest in subsidising CertAcles exams at public prices. While “external examinations” do not necessarily imply that they are not public, it seems that more resources go out of the public system towards the private one than the other way around in the accreditation of the language level.

It is also worth noting the differences between both types of universities with regard to not having a budget to subsidise exams, a situation that takes place in 7.7% of public universities and 28% of private ones.

3. “To prioritise students of bilingual/multilingual degrees who attend the Erasmus+ calls for studies and internships or other mobility programmes.”

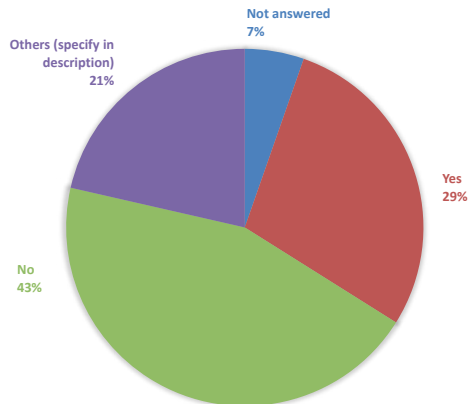


Figure 35. Prioritisation of bilingual degree students in mobility calls.

Only a third of the universities (29%) prioritise the students of bilingual/multilingual degrees in mobility calls.

4. "To promote the granting of ECTS for passing foreign language courses in university language centres."

Most universities (55%) grant credits for passing courses at language centres, 11% are planning it and 29% replied that they do not.

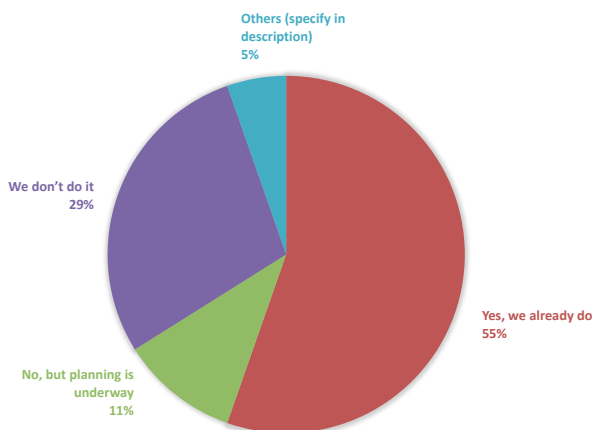


Figure 36. Granting of ECTS credits for language courses received.

5. To organise linguistic tandems between foreign and local students and language exchange activities.

There is a majority trend in this activity, since it entails a good incentive for students and does not generate expenses to the universities beyond the logistical management of the different programmes.

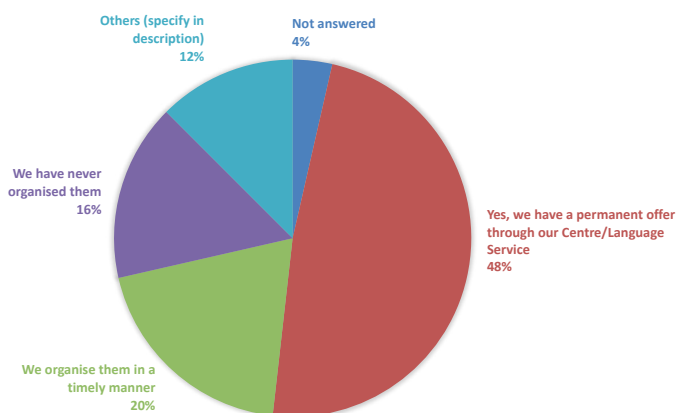


Figure 37. To organise linguistic tandems between foreign and local students and language exchange activities.

2.3.2. INCENTIVES FOR TEACHING STAFF

Some of the incentives suggested for teaching staff in the CRUE document are the following:

1. "To enable the accreditation of the language competence of teaching staff in the universities themselves."

It is clear that there is a commitment by many universities to enable the accreditation of linguistic competence within the institutions themselves, and that those who do are not already committed are considering doing so. A minority answered "no" to this question and they did not provide any alternative. Most of this 78% are accredited with their own degrees, both general language and English teaching (CertAcles or other certifications that can be provided in language centres). It is surprising to see, however, that in 19% of universities accreditation is not possible. If we extrapolate the data to the rest of

the population, this means that in 2 out of 10 Spanish universities the accreditation of languages is not yet possible within the institutions themselves. Probably, that 20% corresponds to smaller universities with fewer resources to promote accreditation and that entrust certification to external entities.

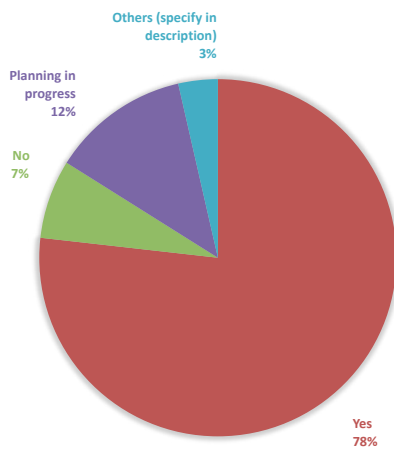


Figure 38. TRS accreditation.

2. “To offer specific subsidised courses as well as a linguistic support service for lecturers who teach in a foreign language.”

In general, the comments are similar to those in the chart above. It is interesting to note that certification and training go hand in hand in terms of percentages. Different figures would have been expected (for example, lower percentage of universities that subsidise training), since, in general, training has a higher cost than certification.

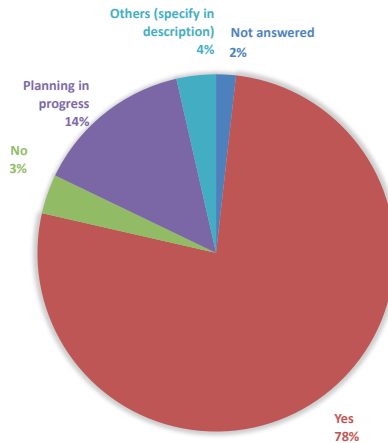


Figure 39. Offer of specific subsidised courses.

3. "To Include the acquisition of a certified level (B2 - C1 - C2) as specific merit for the hiring of new lecturers and promotion in the teaching career."

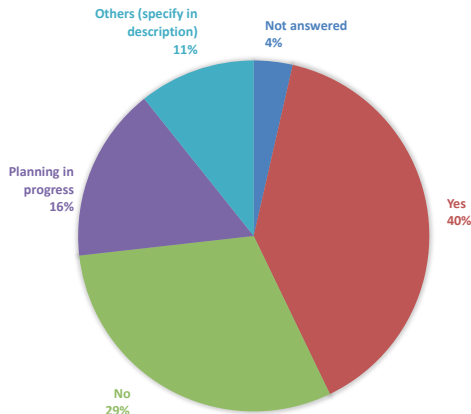


Figure 40. Linguistic level as specific merit for the recruitment and promotion of TRS.

Here we clearly see the 78% segmentation of the two previous charts. Of that 78% (three quarters of the total sample), 29% do not consider an accredited language level as specific merit. These 29% of universities may not yet have plans to implement degrees/subjects in English (this seems to be reflected in similar percentages of the “No” answer in the next 2 charts).

In our view, what is truly remarkable is not that there are 29% of universities that say “no”, but the fact that there are 40% that say “yes”, as it could indicate a structural commitment to multilingualism within this group of universities. It remains to be seen if within this 40% the level of languages is merely a specific merit or a requirement *sine qua non*. It would also be interesting to find out if 40% applies to all new staff recruited or only to some specific degrees (for example, those expected to be taught in English).

4. “To apply a reduction of teaching hours in the teaching load of lectures who teach non-linguistic subjects in a foreign language.”

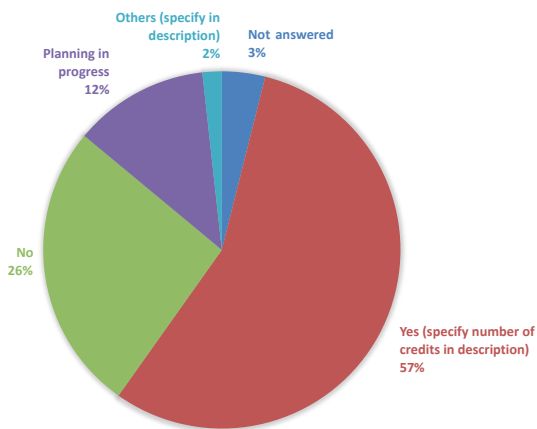


Figure 41. Reduction of teaching load.

26% of universities consider the reduction of the teaching load as an incentive, and 12% are planning to do so. Such low percentage is surprising in this regard. The causes can be manifold (lack of credit, impossibility of hiring new teaching lecturers who take care of subjects in a foreign language, etc.) and ultimately, they must be sought within each university and its ability to meet the needs of sharing teaching loads.

5. "To ensure the commitment of the departments (and stakeholders) to maintain the teaching assigned in the foreign language for a minimum period of 3 consecutive years."

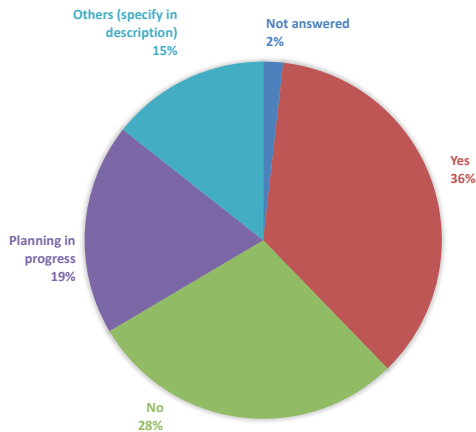


Figure 42. To ensure the commitment to maintain teaching in a foreign language.

36% of universities commit to maintain foreign teaching for a minimum period of three years and 20% are planning to do so. It is difficult to reach an agree for faculties and departments if there is no structural policy in this regard. The data confirms some of the aforementioned: if commitment is not assured from above (since it is not expected to establish a deep level of multilingualism in the short/medium term),

there is little point in requiring that new hires have language certificates or that reward lecturers who teach subjects in an L2.

6. «To promote linguistic revision programmes [...] as well as actions to improve competences regarding oral and written expression to increase the production and international dissemination of research.»

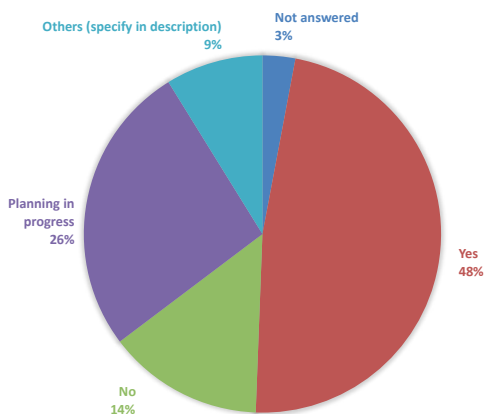


Figure 43. Promote language proficiency improvement programmes.

Three quarters of universities have quality promotion programmes (or are planning to have them) in the oral and written expression of researchers in the field of research. This confirms the feeling that this form of multilingualism is closely linked to scientific research and production.

2.3.3. INCENTIVES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND SERVICE STAFF

As in other sections dedicated to ASP, special focus is placed on the training of this group. The way to encourage language learning and

training according to CRUE recommendations can be clearly seen in the following charts.

1. "To offer language courses for administration and service staff that address content aimed at communicative improvement for the performance of their duties."
2. "To reduce fees for language training and in B1 level or above accreditation tests."

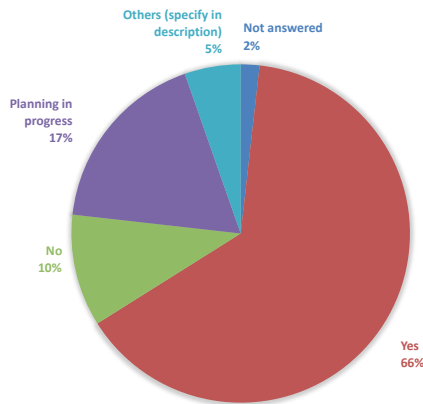


Figure 44. Offer courses to ASP to improve the performance of their duties.

As we have already seen in the training section, the ASP group is where the greatest effort is being made regarding the offer of language training and in the reduction of fees, both in training and in accreditation. Thus, we can see how 60% of universities have implemented specific courses for on-the-job training, 71% apply reductions in training and accreditation rates, and 12% are planning to do so. Also 60% of universities promote certification among the ASP group (Figure 46).

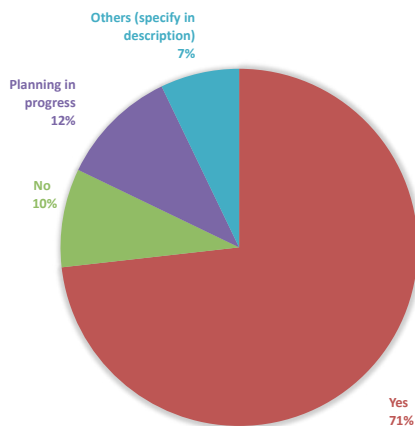


Figure 45. Offer ASP reduced fees for training and accreditation.

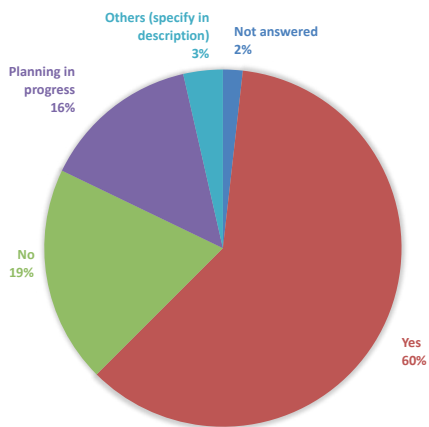


Figure 46. Promotion of language certification among ASP.

3. “To Include the acquisition of a certified level (B2 - C1 - C2) as specific merit for the hiring of new lecturers and administrative and services personnel in those universities that consider these levels of internal promotion.”

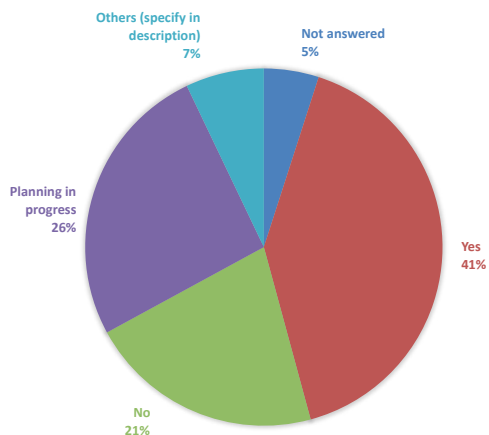


Figure 47. To include the acquisition of a certified level (B2 - C1 - C2) as specific merit.

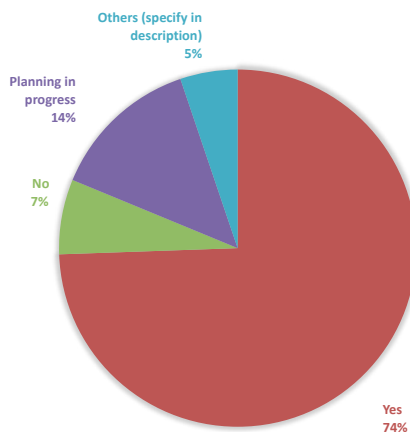


Figure 48. Facilitate ASP attendance at language training.

Only 41% state that having a language accreditation for the new hiring of administrative personnel or for internal promotion is a specific

merit. We believe this data is inconsistent with the training percentages of the group. Compared to 71% who somehow encourage training (or compared to almost 75% who facilitate ASP attendance at language training, figure 48), this commitment to language knowledge is not reflected in the hiring or promotion of personnel.

[3.] CONCLUSIONS

As we mentioned at the beginning of the paper, our main objective in carrying out the online survey for all universities in Spain has been to be able to offer a general overview of Spanish universities regarding the follow-up of the CRUE recommendations and the implementation of their internationalisation plans.

We wanted to check the effect of the aforementioned recommendations on the performance of universities in the field of internationalisation and to what extent they have helped universities to chart their path towards internationalisation. We would like to highlight the fact that in no case do we intend to assess the different particular situations shown through the data obtained.

This section includes our conclusions, based on the majority responses and in general, without mentioning any particular cases. We would like to point out that, although for the presentation of the survey results we have followed the order of the original CRUE document (that is, by recommendations and within each of the three groups), for our conclusions we have preferred to summarise the actions by groups in relation to each of the CRUE recommendations

3.1. STUDENT BODY

Regarding the accreditation of the student's linguistic competence, we have observed that most universities have gradually introduced a language requirement for students to graduate, although we would like to highlight the fact that the requirement of a B2 level is a required requirement in a higher percentage of private universities compared to public ones.

In any case, it must be noted that the vast majority of universities, through their language centres, have worked or are working to offer their own certifications of competence, such as CertAcles, apart from offering certifications from internationally recognized external entities. Regarding the recognition of language proficiency certificates between universities, there is still a way to go, where both ACLES and CRUE are going to play an essential role. In this sense, ACLES is working together with CercleS in mutual recognition at European level.

We also notice an upward trend on the part of universities to offer and improve teaching in other languages, being aware that there is still a long way to go until we have this consolidated offer.

Regarding the situation of universities regarding the measures suggested by CRUE to achieve practical and quality training that helps improve the language skills of students, we have seen that universities are aware of the need to offer complementary training in foreign languages and most do offer it, but they do not have sufficient means so that this additional training would be free for students.

We note that the number of universities that offer specific training aimed at student mobility is still a minority, linguistically, strategically and culturally speaking; the training actions are mainly focused on training for professional development.

At ACLES, we believe that the purpose of education in a language must be modified considerably. The objective of the training is the

development of a linguistic repertoire in which all the linguistic capacities take place. This obviously implies that the languages offered in educational institutions must be diversified and provide the possibility of developing a multilingual competence. Being multilingual means developing a competence in the different languages of a speaker's repertoire, to a different degree of mastery for each skill according to the needs.

In short, the university must prepare students as professionals in accordance with social needs, for which it needs quality staff and faculty who help to provide valuable tools for work and integration in a society that is international.

Finally, regarding incentives for students, it is worth noting the existence of a clear commitment by the vast majority of universities for training through subsidised courses or at reduced prices.

In terms of language proficiency accreditation, most universities offer language proficiency accreditation exams with reduced fees. In this offer, the majority option —both in public and private universities— is that of CertAclesexams: university exams for university students.

In addition to the double investment in subsidised or reduced-price language training and accreditation, most Spanish universities encourage the internationalisation of their students through the possibility of obtaining ECTS credits.

The offer of incentives presented to university students is completed with a growing, but still scarce, intercultural training offer and language exchange programmes as a means of practising the languages studied and interculturality.

3.2. TEACHING AND RESEARCH STAFF

As for the teaching and research personnel, we were able to observe how there is a clear trend towards quality training mainly regarding teaching in the English language. This shows a clear concern for the training and accreditation of lecturers to teach in a language other than Spanish and other official languages.

We would like to stress that most universities make language courses available to lecturers in order to improve their linguistic competence, and on many occasions, lecturer training courses are offered for teaching in English exclusively for TRS. The percentage of institutions that do not have a chapter devoted to language training within their lecturer training plans is very small.

Therefore, we confirm that there is a face-to-face and ongoing training offer specific for this group. However, few universities have yet developed a system for evaluating the quality of training programmes that makes accreditation possible, although some universities are working on it.

It is worth noting that the promotion of internationalisation both by offering training and by enabling linguistic accreditation has similar adoption rates. As training is generally more expensive, this implies a significant investment of resources by universities in internationalisation.

The inclusion of the linguistic level accreditation as specific merit for hiring TRS, applicable in 40% of cases, is of great interest. It is one more indicator that shows how universities actively seek the internationalisation of their teaching and research staff.

We consider the sharing of the teaching load to be an important incentive, that most of the universities surveyed apply to the TRS that teaches non-linguistic subjects in a foreign language or are planning to do so, despite the difficulties that it entails often at an economic level. Evidence of this possible critical problem is that 28% of the universities do not ensure the commitment to maintain the assigned

teaching in a foreign language for a minimum period of three consecutive years, which we believe would encourage more lecturers to participate in teaching in English.

On the other hand, most of the universities promote linguistic revision programmes and actions to improve the competences regarding oral and written expression with the aim of increasing the production and international dissemination of research, or they are planning to do so. This shows a search for multilingualism not only in the teaching field, but also for research and dissemination of scientific production.

3.3. ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICES PERSONNEL

We can see that most universities enable their administration and services personnel to take linguistic accreditation tests at B1 or higher CEFR levels, and there is a growing interest in having a linguistic requirement in the profile of the different positions in job position relationships (staff contracts).

In the case of ASP training, it shows how the vast majority of universities have launched and facilitated the attendance at specific courses, many of them within corporate training plans with different modalities: general language, specific purposes, online resources etc.

Regarding the incentive carried out by the universities, both the linguistic training and the accreditation of linguistic mastery have fee-reductions for the administrative and services personnel in most of the universities, and there is majority support for the mobility of ASP.

Regarding ASP, we observe that, this group is increasingly considered a cornerstone in the internationalisation of universities.

There is a growing interest in having a linguistic requirement in the profile of the different positions, although its reflection in the staff contracts of the different universities with a view to hiring new ASP

and considering CEFR levels in internal promotion processes is not yet very widespread. It is a rather surprising fact, since great efforts are made in training and accreditation of language proficiency CEFR levels. This may be due to the coexistence of internationalisation plans with training and professional training plans organised by the Management Teams of each university for its administration and services personnel.

Furthermore, we believe that, given the high percentage of universities that promote the participation of ASP and TRS in mobility programmes, a study of the benefits obtained by the aforementioned activity would be necessary. We also consider it necessary to study to what extent training impacts the ability of personnel to work in English.

[4.] WHAT DOES ACLES DO?

We highlight the polysemic nature of the concept of quality and the challenges it poses for us as far as centres are concerned. There is clearly a growing social demand for information; the educational system as a whole must respond to the demands that citizens and society pose to them. A quality education must be characterised by the importance it bestows upon educational results. The university must be, therefore, an effective institution, that is, one that achieves the ends, goals and objectives that society expects from it. Quality is achieved when the students learn what they should learn.

We can highlight that the vast majority of universities, through their language centres, have worked or are working to offer their own proficiency checks, such as CertAcles, domain exams accreditation model developed by ACLES, which arises from the need detected by the managing body of the associated Spanish university centres to unify criteria when accrediting levels of knowledge of different foreign languages, thus facilitating mobility between Spanish universities and their internationalisation. In short, it is an exam model created by the universities for the university community. It should also be noted that most language centres offer internationally recognised external entity certifications.

Regarding the recognition of language proficiency certificates between universities, there is still a way to go, through ACLES and CRUE. In this sense, ACLES is working together with CercleS (European Confederation of Higher Education Language Centres) in mutual recognition at European level.

With respect to common European recognition, we must mention NULTE (Network of University Language Testers in Europe), which promotes the standardisation of language proficiency levels and assessment systems. NULTE operates under the CercleS umbrella, which is committed to the highest quality standards in language education and research and brings together more than 350 higher education language centres. Among the objectives of the network is the establishment of standards to recognise the qualifications across borders. It contributes to the expansion of knowledge on assessment in the different centres of training in language evaluation in higher education institutions. The NULTE network has established a system that aims to guarantee quality for university language tests, contributing also to the professionalisation of university language evaluators.

NULTE certificates represent university certification systems developed to measure language proficiency in the context of higher education. NULTE certificates offer a high-quality assessment of language skills with a particular interest on the needs of graduates. These certificates undoubtedly facilitate the mobility of students, lecturers and administrative personnel and services, and they increase the employability of academics from all disciplines.

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[6.] ANNEX: LIST OF UNIVERSITIES THAT ANSWERED THE SURVEY

Universidad a Distancia de Madrid (UDIMA)

Universidad Antonio de Nebrija (NEBRIJA)

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM)

Universidad Católica de Valencia San Vicente Mártir (UCV)

Universitat CEU Cardenal Herrera (UCH)

Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM)

Universidad de Alcalá (UAH)

Universidad de Almería (UAL)

Universidad de Burgos (UBU)

Universidad de Cádiz (UCA)

Universidad de Castilla La Mancha (UCLM)

Universidad de Córdoba (UCO)

Universidad de Deusto (DEUSTO)

Universidad de Extremadura (UNEX)

Universidad de Granada (UGR)
Universidad de Huelva (UHU)
Universidad de Jaén (UJAEN)
Universidad de La Laguna (ULL)
Universidad de La Rioja (UNIRIOJA)
Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC)
Universidad de León (UNILEON)
Universidad de Málaga (UMA)
Universidad de Murcia (UM)
Universidad de Navarra (UNAV)
Universidad de Oviedo (UNIOVI)
Universidad de Salamanca (USAL)
Universidad de Sevilla (US)
Universidad de Vigo (UVIGO)
Universidad de Zaragoza (UNIZAR)
Universidad del Atlántico Medio (ATLMED)
Universidad Europea del Atlántico (EUATL)
Universidad Internacional de Andalucía (UNIA)
Universidad Internacional de La Rioja (UNIR)
Universidad Internacional Isabel I de Castilla (UI1)
Universidad Loyola Andalucía (ULOYOLA)
Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (ADM)
Universidad Pablo de Olavide (OPV)
Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena (UPCT)
Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM)
Universidad Pública de Navarra (UNAVARRA)

Universidad San Jorge (USJ)

Universidade de Santiago de Compostela (USC)

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)

Universitat de Barcelona (UB)

Universitat de Girona (UDG)

Universitat de Lleida (UDL)

Universitat de València Estudi General (UV)

Universitat de Vic - Universitat Central de Catalunya (UVIC)

Universitat d'Alacant (UA)

Universitat Internacional de Catalunya (UIC)

Universitat Jaume I (UJI)

Universitat Miguel Hernández d'Elx (UMH)

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC)

Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC)

Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV)

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