
SUMMARY

Summary of Report 25/2016, relating to the associate lecturing staff at Catalonia's public universities, academic year 2013-2014

Barcelona, 8 February 2017

The Public Audit Office for Catalonia has issued report 25/2016, relating to the associate lecturing staff at Catalonia's public universities in academic year 2013-2014, in accordance with its Annual Programme of Activities.

This report, which was presented by Board Member Mr Jordi Pons i Novell, was approved by the Audit Office Board at its meeting on 23 and 24 November 2016.

The audit undertaken included analysing numbers, categories, earnings, dedication levels and compliance with legislation applying to associate lecturing staff at the Catalan public universities which offer attendance-based courses: University of Barcelona (UB), Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB), Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC), Pompeu Fabra University (UPF), University of Girona (UdG), University of Lleida (UdL) and Roviri i Virgili University (URV).

The role of associate lecturer is one of the ones envisaged in Spain's Universities Act (*Ley orgánica de universidades*) and in Catalonia's Universities Act (*Llei d'universitats de Catalunya*). Associate lecturers undertake teaching tasks on a part-time basis and are hired from among specialists of acknowledged competence whose professional activities are undertaken outside university academic circles.

In the 2013-2014 academic year the seven Catalan public universities offering attendance-based tuition had a total of 7,698 associate lecturers with whom 8,474 contracts were signed (48.8% of contracts were for the entire academic year), with a total cost of € 35.79m, which represented an average cost per contracted lecturing hour of € 46.74.

The Conclusions section of the report gives the most significant findings arising from the work carried out, of which the following can be highlighted:

- Professional activity is the essential feature of associate lecturing staff; it must be recognised and proof of it must be provided, not only at the time of initial hiring, but also when contracts are subsequently renewed. The audit carried out uncovered findings relating to not requiring professional activity at the time of hiring and/or renewing contracts, the existence of lecturers whose records did not show that they had undertaken any professional activities outside academic circles or without clear documentary

proof of these activities, the existence of lecturers with a professional activity bearing no relation to the subject taught, and the existence of lecturers whose main activity was being an associate lecturer at another university.

- Associate lecturing staff are supposed to be chosen through a competitive selection process. However, lecturers are generally appointed directly the first time, and then subsequently take part in a selection process. Of the 133 lecturers in the audit sample, 75.2% had been directly hired the first time and 63.2% had not been through any selection process by 30 June 2014.
- The hiring of associate lecturing staff is often more related to matters of budget availability than to teaching requirements and is used, on some occasions, to get round the limitations for hiring other types of teaching staff.
- The Collective Bargaining Agreement allows universities, after negotiations with the Workers' Council, to establish up to four categories of associate lecturer, and specifies the conditions for taking up such a post. There are significant differences in how the categories are used by the universities. Thus, some universities have approved regulations setting out a career path for associate lecturers, others only hire at the basic category and others have not established the requirements for hiring at each category level even though they make use them. It must be borne in mind that pay awards in the different categories vary considerably.

Finally, in the Conclusions section of the report various recommendations are also made which, in the view of the Audit Office, would help to resolve some of the issues mentioned in the Findings section.

<p>This summary is solely for information purposes. The audit report (in Catalan and Spanish) can be consulted at www.sindicatura.cat.</p>
