The knowledge map and 'periodimetro'

Study by CEIC (ESADE Centre for Culture Industries Business School), commissioned by Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid. April 2008.

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1. Study Introduction

This Quality of Journalism Education study has been carried out by CEIC (the ESADE Centre for Culture Industries) and commissioned by the Madrid Press Association (APM). The team of ESADE researchers participating in the study includes professors Joan Sureda (joan.sureda@esade. edu) and José Maria Álvarez de Lara (josemaria .alvarezdelara@esade.edu) and research assistants Maria Sureda (maria. sureda@esade.edu), Manuel Soufflard and Omar Ghalayini.

The aim of the study is to provide the community involved and interested in journalism education in Spain with a comparative framework on the perceptions and criteria held by both the educational universities and the students regarding the quality of the education currently offered in Spain compared to that in other European countries such as France, Italy and Denmark, and the mid-term development they forecast for the various subject matters included.

The directors, faculty and students of the universities in Spain, France, Italy and Denmark included in Annex 7.1 have collaborated to greater or lesser extent with our study.

Their participation has not just been limited to answering

questions and processing the questionnaires; at some universities, a true debate has been initiated, a reflection which has led to some very relevant comments regarding the quality of education offered and its development.

This study has allowed us to elaborate a common *Knowledge Map* between all participants and a synthetic indicator we call the *Periodímetro* which allows us to quickly view the situation in the sector and in the educational universities and compare these to those in other universities and countries.

1.1 Study Methodology

Our research developed along the following stages:

1.1.1 Sample Selection. The participants were selected based on a list of educational universities in Spain and in Europe. This selection took into account criteria such as the universities' geographical location, the type of university (public or private) and the types of programmes offered (undergraduate degree or second-stage degrees) in order to have a minimum representation of the different models available.

1.1.2 Identification of the Target Audience and Sample Validation. The various universities were contacted directly to identify those

in charge (deans or programme directors) who could participate in the study.

- 1.1.3 Analysis of Course Programmes. Our first approach to these universities served to analyse their course programmes, identifying the elements they all share and the differentiating factors between them.
- **1.1.4** Preparation of a List of Items to Evaluate and Grouping by Subject Areas. After the previous analysis, a single list of the subjects included in the course programmes was prepared to gather information about the latter. The different items detailed in this list were then grouped together into large subject areas based on the similarity of the items included or their content.
- **1.1.5** Preparation of the Periodímetro. The final base indicator for this study, called the Periodímetro, was prepared based on the previous list of questions and factors to be analysed, determining the categories to be used for scoring on each variable. This stage ended with the meter's validation by a panel of experts.

Differentiated versions of the Periodimetro were created for the universities and the sample of students who took part in the study. In addition, the indicator was translated into various languages for the European sample (English, French and Italian).

1.1.6 Field Work. After the indicator was validated, field work began with the universities chosen, gathering the responses of both target audiences. The first phase focused on gathering responses to the Periodímetro based on personal interviews with the universities and by sending out the questionnaire.

In the second stage, we broadened the sample to universities in other European countries (France, Italy and Denmark), in addition to gathering responses from the students in participating universities.

- **1.1.7** Results Analysis. Once the field work had concluded, data was gathered, tabulated, validated and analysed.
- **1.1.8** Preparation of the Knowledge Map. We set out to build a Knowledge Map based on the set of questionnaires and interviews, incorporating the perceived importance of each of the subjects taught in Journalism in Spain.
- **1.1.9** Preparation of the Report. We prepared the report presenting our results with the principal conclusions.

Figure 1: Study Phases. The final study was aimed at two audiences:

1. Deans, programme directors or others in charge of Journalism and Communications programmes from the sample of universities



chosen previously: We gathered their opinions regarding:

- —the importance of each of the subjects included in the indicator;
- —an appraisal of how well the university teaches each of the subjects (current quality and that forecast over the mid term);
- —an appraisal of the level of quality they perceive within the sector as a whole (current quality and that forecast over the mid term); and
- -proposals on ways to improve how journalism is taught.

The meetings with the universities were primarily in situ

and consisted of a brief interview to present the study and the indicator. This methodology allowed us to gather qualitative data in addition to the direct quantitative data gathered from their responses to the *Periodímetro* questionnaire regarding the educational quality in each of the universities and in the sector as a whole, in addition to their reflections on the proposed indicator.

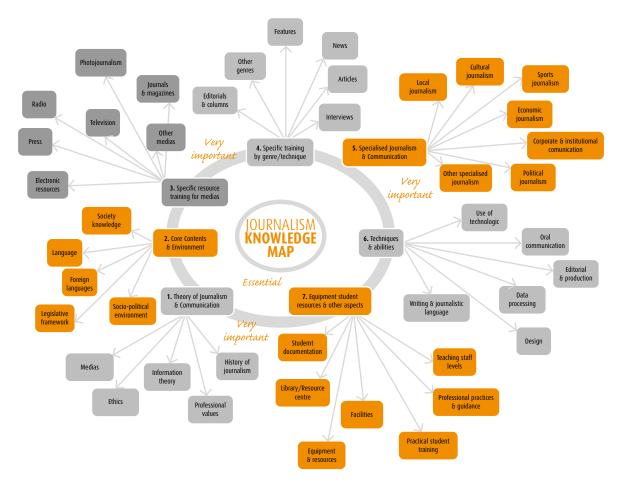
In those cases in which we were unable to organise a personal interview, we contacted the universities by telephone to present the study and the indicator, sending the questionnaire by email to the person in charge and later gathering the results.

2. Students in their final year and recent graduates.

After adapting the indicator on education quality, we distributed the survey among students in the final year of the programme or recent graduates to gather their opinions regarding:

- —the importance of each of the indicator subjects in journalism education and
- —the quality of their own university in terms of each indicator item.

To distribute the questionnaire among students, we counted on the support of the universities once the interviews with those in charge had been completed. An



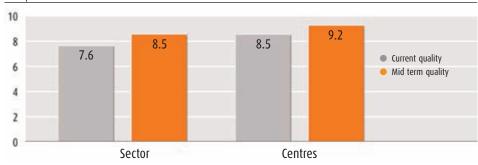
online questionnaire was made available for students to respond to the indicator. Other alternatives were also available, adapting the format to the specific universities as needed.

2 The Knowledge Map. Universities in Spain

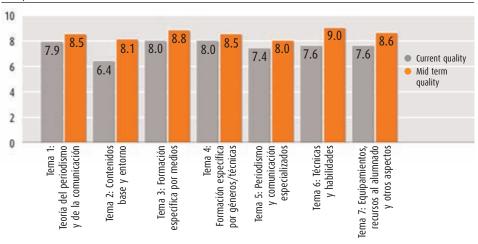
The Knowledge Map offers a global and synthesised view of the

required subject matters for a degree in journalism. Additionally, it demonstrates the relative importance of each of the 7 subjects selected. This map was prepared based on the course programmes of the universities and the relative importance of the subject matters as expressed by those surveyed at each university. The map's format allows us to associate the items to the main





2. Spain Sector Periodímetro



subjects and weigh each, locating them on the map according to their importance (ranging from 'Essential' to 'Very Important').

3 Spanish Centres' Perspective

3.1 The Spain 'Periodímetro'

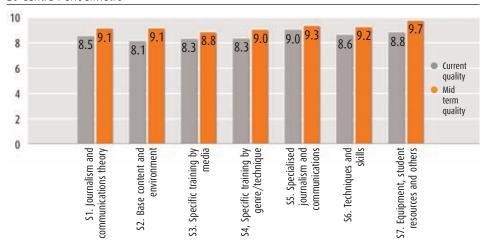
The Spain *Periodímetro* allows for a graphic and synthesised view of the current and forecast situation over the mid term for the sector

and the centres (graph 1).

The Sector *Periodimetro* (graph 2) details the current and mid-term view of the sector for each of the subjects included in the *Knowledge Map*.

The Centre *Periodimetro* (graph 3) reflects the vision of the universities within the sample in terms of their current situation and their mid-term forecast for each of the subject matters.

3. Centre Periodímetro



3.2 The Quality of Journalism Programmes in Spain.

The responses from the sample of Spanish universities included in this study reveal the following results with respect to the quality of journalism education in Spain.

The surveyed universities evaluated the level of quality of the education they provide their students with in terms of the different subject matters and items included in the Periodimetro.

These results reveal that the universities give special emphasis to "Specialised journalism and communications," receiving an average score of 9 out of 10 points in terms of quality.

This factor is especially noteworthy if we compare it to the importance each university gives this specialisation. Paradoxically, it

is not considered one of the educational priorities and, in fact, it is considered less important than the other subjects.

Nevertheless, the level of quality in the different branches of specialised journalism is highly valued, receiving a mark of over 9 on average except in terms of sports journalism and local iournalism.

Graph 4: Centre's Own Quality The second most highly rated subject in terms of quality is Subject 7, 'Equipment, student resources, and others', with a score of 8.8. The students also rate this area favourably. This is also coherent with the fact that it is considered the most important area within the educational programme. Survey participants place special emphasis on the



faculty's high level of quality and the offering of professional internships and orientation, both receiving a score of over 9 points.

The remaining subjects included in the indicator received lower scores, without exceeding 8.7 points on average. The area in which the universities feel they offer the lowest level of quality is in 'Base content and environment' (8.1 points).

3.3 Development - Forecast

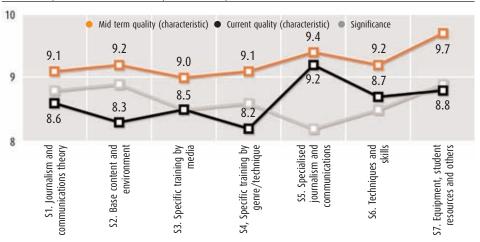
The centres themselves forecast that the education they currently provide will improve as revealed by their answers in terms of the level of quality they expect over the mid term.

Especially noteworthy is how highly rated the forecast level is in the 'Equipment and student

resources' area, with a score of 9.7, making this subject the one with the highest level of quality over the mid term and with the greatest prospects for improvement. This makes clear the interest the universities have in improving in this area, considered the most important, especially in terms of 'Student documentation', 'Equipment and resources' and 'Library'.

A greater improvement is only expected in terms of 'Base content and environment', with a difference greater than one point between the current quality and that expected over the mid term. This is due to the fact that it is the subject with the lowest level in terms of current quality, including the item ranked last overall in terms of current quality, foreign

5. Development: Current Quality and Quality over the Mid Term



languages (the only item with a score under 7 points but which is expected to improve by two points over the mid term, reaching a score of 9). As such, the level of quality expected globally for the 'Base content and environment' subject area is 9.1, occupying the fifth position overall.

3.4 The Sector

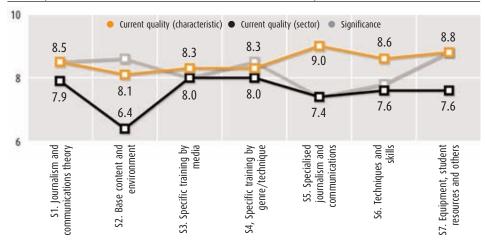
In addition to analysing the teaching quality within the universities surveyed, the interviews also served to gather information about the universities' vision regarding the level of quality within the sector as a whole.

The results of this strategic diagnosis (graph 5) reveal that their appraisal of the sector is less favourable than it is for themselves. In all seven subject

areas, the sector receives lower scores than those the universities give themselves, with averages below 8 points (compared to the self-evaluations which were all above that level).

Especially noteworthy is the score given to 'Base content and environment', with 6.4 points on average. This score ranks the subject's level of quality below that given to the remaining 6 subjects and well below the average score the universities give themselves (8.1). As such, the universities feel that the level of quality of the education offered in this area within the sector is generally insufficient (given the score and the importance of the subject area according to their own answers). However, the evaluation is slightly more positive when the





universities analyse themselves, expecting a noticeable improvement over the mid term.

Another area given a low score in terms of sector quality is 'Specialised journalism and communications', receiving 7.4 points on average. This score, however, is coherent with the fact that it is not considered one of the most important areas within educational programmes.

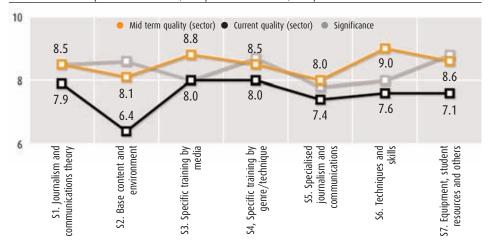
The most highly ranked subjects in the sector are: 'Specific training by media' (Subject 3) and 'Specific training by genre/techniques' (Subject 4), both with a score of 8 on average.

As a result, there is a significant disparity when we compare the level of quality currently offered according to the universities' self-evaluations and how they rate the

offering available in the sector as a whole (graph 6). Especially worth noting is the difference in Subjects 2 and 5, in which the universities give themselves scores almost two points higher than the sector average.

The results of this strategic diagnosis also reveal a forecast improvement in all subjects for the sector as a whole. By comparing the scores between the current level of quality and the quality forecast over the mid term, once more we see a great improvement in the subject 'Base content and environment' (although the midterm score is 8.1, the second lowest among the seven subjects). Although considered one of the weak points in the current educational offering (the worst rated subject), it is forecast that it

7. Sector Development: Current Quality vs. Mid-term Quality



will improve given the subject's importance.

The second subject with the greatest forecast increase in terms of quality is 'Techniques and skills', growing by 1.4 points, followed by 'Equipment and student resources', growing by 1 point.

As such, the universities themselves feel that the sector will improve, especially in terms of the two subject areas highlighted as the most relevant, though the current level of quality and the expected level are still below the others as occurs with 'Specific training by media' (Subject 3) and 'Techniques and skills' (Subject 6). The sector's development (graph 7) in terms of 'Base content' and 'Equipment and student resources' coincides with the forecast improvement in quality in the

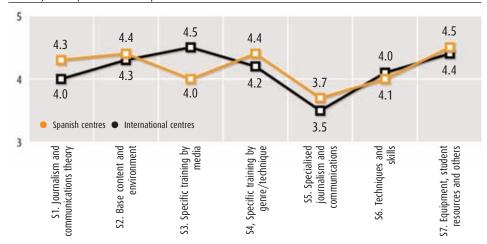
universities themselves, though they also reflect greater differences between the current level of quality and the expected quality over the mid term.

4 International Context

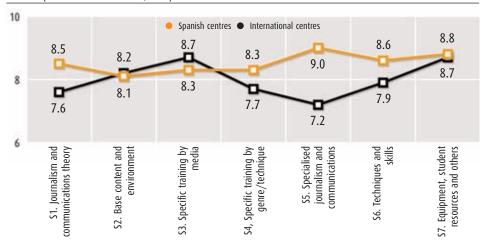
In addition to the responses received from Spanish universities, this study is complemented by evaluations from a sample of European journalism schools (in France, Italy and Denmark) with the aim of analysing the differences between them and determining possible similarities.

The international universities stand out for the importance they give to 'Specific training by media'. This subject is rated the most relevant for all the items it includes, receiving an average score

8. Subject Importance: Comparative International Context



9. Comparison of Current Quality in the International Context



of 4.5. These results differ notably from the ratings given by Spanish universities which consider this subject to be one of the least important, ranked only above 'Specialised journalism'.

The second most important

subject in the international context according to our sample coincides with the most important subject for Spanish universities, that is, 'Equipment and student resources' (Subject 7), given a rating of 4.4 on average. Certain

agreement also exists in terms of 'Specialised journalism's' little importance, ranked the lowest in both France and Spain (3.5 in France and 3.7 in Spain).

The other European universities (graph 8) not only feel that specific training according to media is important, but they also distinguish the quality of how it is currently taught. In the diagnosis of their own educational offering, the surveyed universities give this area more than 8.7 points on average. As such, this subject and 'Equipment and student resources' are the two most highly rated.

On comparing the selfevaluation or diagnosis the universities carry out on the quality of their own educational offering, it's worth noting that the evaluations the Spanish universities provide are by and large more positive than that provided by the other European universities. The latter's evaluations are only more positive than the Spanish universities with respect to two subjects, 'Specific training by media' and 'Base content and environment'.

Spatially, the important difference in terms of 'Specialised journalism' is worth noting. It is in this area of specialisation where other European universities feel they are the weakest, giving it the lowest score of all with 7.2 points,

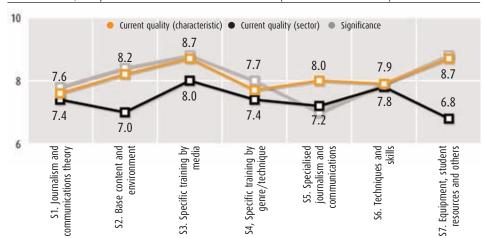
almost two points below the score given by Spanish universities.

When we incorporate the strategic diagnosis of the sector as a whole compared to the universities' own diagnosis (graph 9), the same occurs as with Spanish universities, giving themselves a higher score than the sector.

This is the case globally with respect to the sector though there is one subject which receives a higher score at the sector level than the universities give themselves, 'Specialised journalism'.

The responses provided by the international universities also reflect that they expect the education provided to improve (graph 10, on next page). However, the forecast development is not as pronounced as occurs in Spain. Additionally, for one subject, they even reflect lower forecast levels over the mid term than the current levels of quality provided ('Specific training by media').

These universities expect to achieve the greatest improvement in terms of 'Specialised journalism' and 'Journalism and communications theory'. In fact, these two subjects are the greatest source of forecast improvement (the gap between current quality levels and forecast mid-term quality levels are the greatest here) and are the only subjects in which



10. Current Quality: The Centre Itself and the Sector (International Context)

the forecast levels are greater than that found in the Spanish context (graph 11).

5 The Students' Perspective – Spain

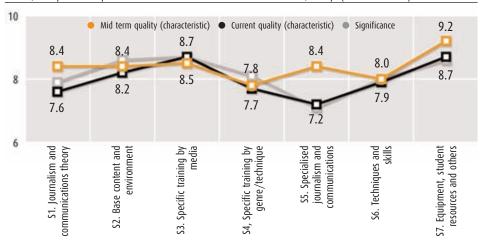
In addition to the respective universities' opinions as presented above, our study also includes an evaluation by a sample of students at the different Spanish universities. Thanks to the collaboration provided by these universities, we were able to survey students in their last year of course work or those who had recently graduated.

The analysis of their responses reveals how the students feel and allows us to contrast or compare their opinions with those of the universities themselves. In broad brushstrokes, two general observations clearly stand out from the data gathered:

- 1. There is a high degree of coincidence between universities and students in terms of their respective appraisal of each subject area's relative importance, that is, the universities' and student's respective knowledge maps coincide.
- 2. By contrast, this situation varies noticeably when we analyse the quality of the education provided (from the universities' perspective) or that received (the students). The students are more critical with the quality of the education received, giving the subject areas much lower scores than the universities.

5.1 Comparative 'Knowledge





Map between Centres and Students

The first element worth noting in the students' evaluation is the high score given to all 7 subjects as a whole. The average score for all of them in terms of their importance is 3.4 out of 5 (or 6.8 out of 10), placing all subjects within the 'Very important' or 'Essential' categories.

The area students consider most important is 'Equipment, student resources and others' (Subject 7). It is the only subject included within the 'Essential' category with 4.5/5 points on average.

By contrast, on the opposite end we find 'Specialised journalism' (Subject 5, with an average score of 3.4) and 'Journalism and communications theory' (Subject 1, with a score of 3.6).

By comparing these results with the universities' responses, we see a very similar situation. Both target audiences coincide in terms of the most relevant subject, 'Equipment and student resources and others' (though the universities give this subject a slightly higher rating with a 0.1 point difference). They also coincide in identifying the least important area compared to the rest, 'Specialised journalism' (the students giving it 3.4 points and the universities 3.7). In the remaining subject areas, the differences between both groups are very low (with less than half a point difference), with the exception of Subject 1, 'Journalism theory' (more important for the universities who give this subject 4.3 points compared to the students who give it 3.6) and Subject 2, 'Base content

and environment' (with 4.4 points from the universities and 3.9 from the students). As such, we can conclude that both universities and students coincide in their respective appraisal of the optimal *knowledge map*, that is, the importance given to each of the large educational blocks, though students give less importance to theory and the surrounding environment.

It is worth repeating that the differences between both audiences are small, though the appraisals of the universities are slightly higher than that provided by the students. The latter only consider two subjects to be more important than the universities: 'Specific training by media' (Subject 3) and 'Techniques and skills' (Subject 6). However, in both cases, this difference is less than 0.1 points on average.

This comparison is depicted in graph 12 which reflects the scores provided by both students and the universities.

The coincidence between the students' and universities' evaluation of the large blocks or subject areas is due to the similarity between their respective appraisals of the 43 items these subjects include. In the majority of cases, we find less than a 0.1 point difference in scores with the universities' appraisal being slightly higher than that given by

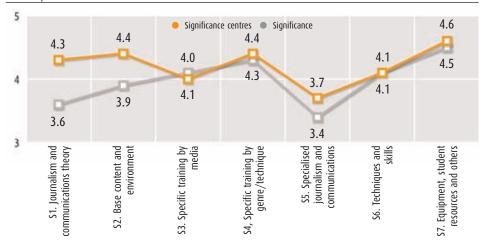
the students. We should highlight that we find the biggest difference in 'Journalism and communications theory' (Subject 1), with the greatest disparity in terms of the items the subject includes (in four out of the five items, the universities' evaluations are 0.5 points or higher than the students'). However, the item registering the greatest difference is 'Knowledge of society (sociology, psychology, etc.) within Subject 2 ('Base content and environment'). The universities give this item an importance of 4.7 compared to the 3.5 rating provided by the students.

In addition to the similarity between the student's and the universities' knowledge maps, another aspect reflecting this homogeneity in terms of how both groups rate the importance of the seven subjects is the fact that there is agreement between the different universities and their respective students. At all participating universities, the average appraisal of the students coincides in terms of the least important subject, 'Specialised journalism' (Subject 5) and only in one university do students not rank 'Equipment, student resources and others' as the most important subject.

5.2 Students' Results

While the knowledge map for both students and universities is very

12. Importance for Students & Centres



similar, our analysis of the perceived quality of education reveals a clearly differentiated situation. Our analysis of the students' responses demonstrates that they are clearly more critical than the universities themselves.

According to our sample, students are critical with their own universities and give the education obtained a global score of 5.7 out of 10. We can draw the following conclusions when we analyse the situation of each of the seven subject areas:

-The most highly valued area by students is 'Equipment, student resources and others' (Subject 7), with a score of 6.4.

—This subject is followed by 'Journalism and communications theory' (Subject 1), with a score of 6.3.

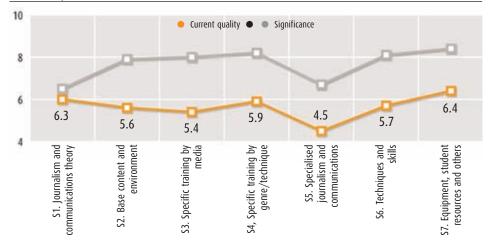
—By contrast, the subject students are most critical of is 'Specialised journalism' (Subject 5), the only one failing in terms of level of quality, with an average score of 4.5.

—The remaining subjects receive average scores of between 5.4 and 6 points.

—In other words, the students give the quality of education received a score of between 5.4 and 6.4 points, except the extreme case of 'Specialised journalism' which is much more negatively rated.

Logically, the level of quality of the education received varies from university to university. However, it's worth noting that, while there are greater differences here compared to what occurs with the knowledge map, there are also similarities in terms of the





students' appraisal of the education received:

—In all the participating universities, the students feel that the subject 'Specialised journalism and communications' offers the lowest quality. It was only given a score of over 5 points at one of the universities.

—Students also agree in terms of their most positive appraisal. In all the universities except for one, the subject offering the best quality is 'Equipment, student resources and others'.

—The greatest deviation between students' evaluations occurs with the subject 'Base content and environment' (Subject 2) for which scores ranged from 4.8 to 6.6 depending on the university.

—By contrast, the students' rating of 'Techniques and skills' is the most homogeneous subject area between universities, receiving scores between 5.2 and 6.4.

If we compare these results to the knowledge maps described earlier, we can analyse the weak points and the areas for improvement according to the students' evaluations. The analysis of education quality reveals the students' level of satisfaction with the education received. When we analyse these ratings and combine them with the importance of each subject area, it can help us determine the specific actions that can improve the students' level of satisfaction. In other words, attempts to improve the quality of the different subject areas should not be focused exclusively on the most negative scores in terms of quality. Rather,

these attempts should be prioritised in terms of the subject areas which students feel are the most important (which also coincide with the universities' opinions).

As such, we have seen that students rate the level of quality of education received below that provided by the universities themselves. By using the same scale according to students, the level of quality received is 20% below the level of importance they assign to each subject area. Only 'Journalism and communications theory' has a lower difference (9%) and, as already seen, it is the second least important subject though the second best rated area in terms of the quality of education received.

5.3 Comparison between Centres The opinions reflected by the students regarding the education received is substantially different to that provided by the universities themselves (graph 13).

As previously mentioned, the students give the education received a substantially lower score than that given by the universities. While the average score provided globally by the universities for the different subject areas is 8.5 points, the students rate the quality of the education received with an average score of 5.7 points. This more

critical evaluation occurs in all seven subject areas though there are significant differences between them.

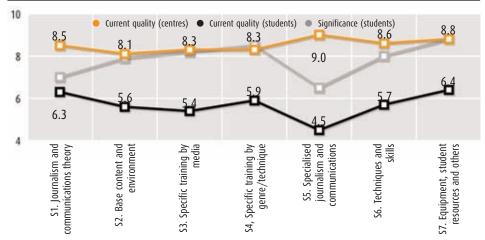
The enormous difference found in 'Specialised journalism' (Subject 5) is especially worth noting. According to the universities, this is the subject area with the highest quality currently, with a score of 9 points. By contrast, students give this subject a much lower rating. For the latter, it is the most poorly rated subject matter and the only one scoring under 5 points. As such, there is a significant discrepancy between the student's perspectives and the universities', with 4 points difference between their respective scores.

6 Conclusions

In this survey, 11 of the 12 selected Spanish universities agreed to participate, while 6 of the 10 selected centres in the European sample also chose to take part. In addition, the involvement of the faculty and directors at these universities enabled us to have over 200 students participate.

The difference between the centres' and the student's assessments of the educational quality provided and received is one of the conclusions worth highlighting. By the same token, there is great similarity between





both groups in terms of the subject areas they feel are the most important. This is clearly positive and comforting as it reinforces the convergence of perceptions while students are at university.

The international component is one of the subjects to receive the greatest number of comments and proposals, especially among Danish centres. The possibility of carrying out exchange programmes or specific courses in international journalism is more frequently raised among international universities than those in Spain where the local focus is important and the linguistic issue is more prevalent.

Specialisation is not considered a key factor in basic educational programmes though it is relevant in programmes carried out after the basic courses.

A constant concern mentioned is related to keeping up to date, especially in terms of the knowledge required after completing the basic programmes and the continual changes occurring within communications media and the speed of technological changes.

Without doubt, with this study we have a clear and coherent picture of the quality of educational programmes in journalism and guidelines for its future development as expressed by both universities and students in this field, a field which encompasses the hopes and passions of its professors, directors and students (graph 14).

7 Annexes

7.1 List of Participating Centres

–Domestic centres

Barcelona: Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona (School of Communications Sciences), Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Journalism Studies), Universitat Ramon Llull (Blanquerna School of Communications Sciences).

Madrid: Universidad Complutense (Information Sciences), Universidad Carlos III (School of Humanities. Communications and Documentation) y Universidad San Pablo-CEU (School of Humanities and Communications Sciences).

Málaga: Universidad de Málaga (School of Communications Sciences).

Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra (School of Communications)

Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca (School of Communications).

Santiago de Compostela:

Universidad de Santiago de Compostela (School of Communications Sciences).

Valencia: Universidad de Valencia (Department of Language Theory and Communications Sciences)

Vizcaya: Universidad del País Vasco (Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y de la Comunicación). -European centres

Denmark: Danish School of Journalism (Danmarks Journalisthøjskole, DSJ); University of Southern Denmark (Center for Journalism, CfJ).

France: École Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille, ESJ-Lille; Centre de Formation des Journalistes, CFI-Paris; Institut Pratique de Journalisme, IPJ-Paris; École des Hautes Études en Sciences de l'Information et de la Communication, Celsa-Paris IV.

Italy: Istituto Carlo de Martino per la Formazione al Giornalismo di Milano; Scuola Superiore di Giornalismo di Bologna; Universitá Cattolica Sacro Cuore di Milano: Alta Scuola in Media. Comunicazione e Spettacolo (Almed); Universitá di Milano.

7.2 'Periodímetro' Subjects

List of subjects included in the Periodímetro:

- S1. Journalism and communications theory: 1, History of journalism and/or communications:
- 2, Communications media:
- 3, Information theory; 4, Ethics and deontology; 5, Professional values (integrity, humbleness, etc.).
- S2. Base content and environment: 6, Legislative framework (right to information, etc.); 7, Social-political setting; 8,

Knowledge of society (sociology/psychology, etc.); 9, Own language; 10, Foreign languages.

- S3. Specific training by media: 11, Written press; 12, Radio; 13, Television; 14, Online media (Internet, multimedia, etc.); 15, Publications and magazines; 16, Photojournalism; 17, Other media.
- S4, Specific training by genre/technique: 18, Editorials and op-ed articles; 19, Chronicles; 20, News; 21, Reports; 22, Interviews; 23, Other genres.
- S5. Specialised journalism and communications: 24, Political journalism; 25, Financial journalism; 26, Sports journalism; 27, Cultural journalism;

- 28, Corporate and institutional communications; 29, Local journalism; 30, Other (science, religion, etc.).
- S6. Techniques and skills: 31, Journalistic writing and language; 32, Oral communication; 33, Design; 34, Use of technology; 35, Edition and production; 36, Data processing (statistical and graphics).
- S7. Equipment, student resources and others: 37, Facilities; 38, Equipment & resources (computers, technology, etc.); 39, Library/Resource centre; 40, Student documentation; 41, Professional internships and orientation; 42, Faculty level; 43, Practical student training.