

# Orientación y calidad educativa universitarias

## Guidance and Quality of University Education

PEDRO ALLUEVA TORRES (COORD.)



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# UNIVERSITY ORIENTATION PLAN OF THE FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY AND ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF ZARAGOZA

## ABSTRACT

Phases 1 and 2 of the University Orientation Plan (POU) of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts comprise actions and activities aimed at promoting the personal, social and academic integration of students into university life. This plan is included in the University Orientation Plan of the University of Zaragoza (POUZ), which was implemented in the 2015–2016 academic year. In the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, the objectives of Phase 1 of the POUZ, aimed at new students, are embodied in a set of actions related to academic, social and administrative areas. The objectives of Phase 2, focused on students in the second and later years, are defined in activities scheduled for their guidance and training in academic issues, mobility, work placements or employability, as well as in the implementation of the Tutor Programme. As a result of the faculty's POU, support and guidance are offered in small groups as part of the Tutor-Mentor Programme, and individually with personal tutorials, in the ten undergraduate degrees the faculty teaches. From the second year onwards, actions are included for student orientation and guidance in the curricular itinerary, in work placements, mobility or employability. The Tutor-Mentor Programme is extremely important during the student's integration period at the University. During the 2017–2018 academic year, a total of 22 mentors and 35 tutors participated in this programme and they indicated a high level of satisfaction with it. The students also positively valued the activity their mentors and tutors performed, as well as the activities the faculty planned.

## KEYWORDS

University Orientation Plan, support, orientation, guidance and integration.

## INTRODUCTION

The University Orientation Plan (POU) of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts is part of the University Orientation Plan of the University of Zaragoza (POUZ), which was implemented in the 2015–2016 academic year. This university and others have worked hard on student orientation and guidance in the past decade and the Tutoring Among Equals Programme, implemented at the Faculty of Arts of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), is one example.

The POUZ encompasses several support, orientation and guidance services and activities offered by the University to all students, such as study, psychological or legal advice. More specifically, support is provided by the faculty's POU in small groups, for example as part of the Tutor-Mentor Programme (comprising tutors and mentor students), and individually, in personal orientation and guidance tutorials. Attendance at the sessions organised as part of this programme is voluntary for students, as are the activities organised to promote their integration into university life.

## OBJECTIVES

The POUZ is implemented in three phases (*Orientation Plan Document*, 2017). The first phase, or Phase 1, contains the general lines of action of the POUZ, with a special emphasis on introducing students into university life. It was established in the 2015–2016 academic year and its specific objectives included implementing the Tutor-Mentor Programme for all undergraduate degrees at the University. Consequently, the programme began for the 10 undergraduate degrees taught by the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts. Mentors and tutors are selected in May every year (which is when the Vice-rectorate of Students and Employment announces the call for applications) to make it easier for them to coordinate and work with each other. In the 2017–2018 academic year, 22 mentor students and 11 first-year tutors participated in the Tutor-Mentor Programme. Actions related to academic, social and administrative areas were also implemented.

The second phase, or Phase 2, was established in the next year in the undergraduate degrees of this Faculty of Philosophy and Arts to implement support, orientation and guidance actions for students in the second and third years and 'work and academic guidance' support actions for students in their final year. This involved scheduled activities for student guidance and training in academic and mobility issues, work placements in companies or institutions and the implementation of the Tutor Programme. In the 2017–2018 academic year, 24 tutors of the second year and above participated in this programme. The aim of

the third phase, or Phase 3, currently being planned, will be support and guidance actions for graduates.

With the aim of implementing Phases 1 and 2 of the POUZ in the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, the POU coordinator (Vice-dean of Students and International Relations) organises several information, coordination, planning and monitoring sessions with tutors and mentors throughout the academic year.

## METHOD

The main lines of action of the POU of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts are checked throughout the academic year (in Phases 1 and 2 of the POUZ) and, specifically, at six key times in the academic schedule. These are the period before the academic year begins, when it begins, and at the beginning and end of each of the two terms.

The lines of action are as follows:

A) This section details the main support, orientation and guidance actions for students at pre-university levels, or before the course begins, for students who have already enrolled in the first year. These actions are:

1. Visits to secondary schools in Aragon (and in other autonomous communities) organised by the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts and specifically by the Vice-dean of Students and International Relations. The aim is to provide information, orientation and guidance sessions between January and May in every academic year on the undergraduate degrees taught by this faculty that may be of interest to upper secondary school students to help them choose the degree course they wish to study.
2. *Fridays at the Faculty* (<https://fyl.unizar.es/alumnos-de-nuevo-ingreso>) are sessions organised by the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts between January and May in every academic year (one Friday in each of these months) aimed at informing and guiding students at secondary schools on our 10 undergraduate degrees. These sessions end with a visit to the *María Moliner* Humanities Library, which includes an explanation of the library's facilities and the services it provides to students.
3. Aragon's Geography Olympics (<http://geografia.unizar.es/noticias/olimpiadageografia-2018>), which is held in March to encourage an interest in this subject in students in their second upper-secondary-school year. It is organised by the Aragon Branch of the Professional Association of Geographers and by the Geography and Land Management Department of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts.
4. Latin and Greek Translation Competition for students in the second year of upper-secondary education ([http://www.unizar.es/actualidad/vernoticia\\_](http://www.unizar.es/actualidad/vernoticia_)



ng.php?id=35433), organised in May by the Aragon section of the Spanish Society of Classical Studies in collaboration with the Vice-rectorate of Students and Employment of the University of Zaragoza.

5. Some departments also hold a Professionalisation Day (such as the one planned by the Department of History of Art) in April or May. Several external lecturers and professionals take part in this event to inform and guide students in their fourth degree year on possible postgraduate studies and career opportunities. This day is open to students pursuing other degrees at the Faculty.
6. Zero Courses or preparation courses in some basic skills needed in humanities degrees (<https://fyl.unizar.es/alumnos-de-nuevo-ingreso>). These courses go over the most important and basic concepts studied in pre-university education. Their purpose is to standardise students' knowledge at the start of their university studies and to try to fill in any gaps. Since the 2015–2016 academic year, the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts has organised three Zero Courses: *History and History of Art*, *English Studies* and *Spanish Philology and Classical Studies*. These take place the week before the academic year begins (in September) and last 20 hours. Zero Course registrations in the 2017–2018 academic year were 45 students for *History and History of Art*, 34 for *English Studies* and 18 for *Spanish Philology and Classical Studies*. It is interesting to note that in this year 156 students were enrolled for the History degree, 72 for History of Art, 68 for Spanish Philology, 18 for Classical Studies and 99 for English Studies.<sup>5</sup> The number of students participating in these courses in September 2017 was double that of the first time they were held in 2015.

On the last day of the course the students filled in an evaluation questionnaire whose results highlight their high level of satisfaction with the programme and its contents as they help them to integrate into university life.

B) This section presents the activities the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts implements at the beginning of every academic year to help students integrate well into university life, as well as other orientation and guidance sessions taking place later. The actions include:

1. Induction Day for new students pursuing undergraduate degrees at the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, planned in Phase 1. It takes place on the first day of the academic year and it is for all first-year students. This Induction Day begins with a reception and welcome event hosted by the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts and other institutional

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5 Data provided by the Secretary's Office of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts (May 2018).

representatives; it includes a presentation of university services (including the University Office for Students with Disabilities, Green Office and Sport Activities Service). Undergraduate degree coordinators, lecturers, tutors and mentors and the faculty's student representatives attend the ceremony. Next, the degree coordinators hold information meetings on their respective degree courses in rooms reserved for that purpose. A general presentation of the Tutor–Mentor Programme is also given by the tutors and mentors.

This Induction Day ends with a visit to the *María Moliner* Humanities Library, which includes an explanation of the library's facilities and the services it provides to students.

2. Induction Day for Master's degree students at the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts. It takes place on the first day of class for the Master's degrees (October) and it is for all the faculty's students. It is attended by the Master's degree coordinators and teaching staff. After a general presentation of the official Master's degree education, the coordinators hold information sessions on their respective courses.
3. Start of the Tutor-Mentor Programme, which is an initiative of the Vice-rectorate of Students and Employment and of the ICE (Institute of Education Sciences) of the University of Zaragoza in close collaboration with the management teams of all the schools and faculties at the University of Zaragoza.

Tutor-Mentor Plans were integrated into just one plan to establish a tutor-mentor pairing as the basis and key tool to provide students with attention, guidance, orientation and support, especially in their first year while they are integrating into university life.

The POU coordinator organises the first POU coordination and planning session of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts at the beginning of the academic year. This session is attended by the faculty's tutors and mentors. The tutors and mentors also hold the first tutorial-mentoring session to inform students about this programme and learn their requirements. Attendance at these sessions is voluntary. Tutored and mentored new students are given information and guidance on academic, social and administrative areas. Students in their second and third years are given information and guidance on academic issues, mobility, developing skills or work placements. Students in the fourth year receive career and academic guidance.

C) This section describes the main support, orientation and guidance actions devised for students in the first weeks of the academic year:

1. Courses via the ADD (virtual campus) on a Moodle 2 platform. They are organised and given by Zaragoza University Library (BUZ) and their

purpose is to ensure students acquire general basic skills on 'information management'. The courses are:

\**Course on information skills* (basic level), which takes place as part of undergraduate degrees for first-year students. In this course, taught by personnel from the *María Moliner* Humanities Library, students receive an ideal educational tool to improve teaching and learning processes. The faculty's student mentors are invited to participate in the first session.

\**Course on information skills for the final degree project* (advanced level), which is aimed at fourth-year students to help them with their final degree projects.

2. Tutor-Mentor Programme with group and individual tutorial and/or mentoring sessions to respond to the needs found at the beginning of the year and to monitor the first term.
- 3.- Participation in the CIPAJ (Youth Information Centre) Outreach Project (in the university category). The call for applications is published by the City Council of Zaragoza in June with appointments taking place one month later. One student from our faculty is put forward to provide outreach services by providing their peers with the information supplied by the CIPAJ. In collaboration with the faculty, the outreach student also has to manage the noticeboards and information stalls throughout the faculty during the academic year.

D) This section contains the main support, orientation and guidance actions for students at the end of the first term:

1. Scheduled activity for student training, orientation and guidance entitled International Mobility Workshop. It takes place every year with a high number of attendees (around 100 students) in November (lasting two hours). Its aim is to inform and guide students in international mobility (most important grants, Universtage Programme, European Voluntary Service, etc.). This initiative improves students' personal, educational and professional development, in other words, their chances of joining the job market. This workshop is given by Universa career guidance experts. It is especially targeted at students in the third and fourth years of their degrees at the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts. It supplements the information session on Spanish and international mobility programmes (SICUE, Erasmus+, etc.) that the faculty holds for students at around the same time.
2. Implementation of the Tutor-Mentor Programme with group or individual tutorial and/or mentoring sessions scheduled to monitor students during this term and advise them on assessment tests.
3. Collaboration programme established between the City Council of

Zaragoza and the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts and managed by Universa called Street Tourist Guides. This enables students from our faculty studying a variety of degrees and also students from the University School of Tourism to form part of the team (after a training course held in February and receiving financial support) working with visitors to the Aragon capital in the city's tourist offices and on the routes touring the most important artistic and cultural places. This programme is vital for integrating students into the workforce. In the 2017–2018 academic year, 45 students from this faculty participated in this programme.

4. Faculty students are also informed about the Training Plan for Career Guidance and Development of Personal and Professional Skills for Employment, which includes talks and workshops given by Universa experts every year.

E) This section describes the main support, orientation and guidance actions for students at the start of the second term:

1. Implementation of the Tutor-Mentor Programme with group or individual tutorial and/or mentoring sessions held to give students specific guidance on tasks, projects or learning strategies that are required for every subject in the second term. Based on the results of the assessment tests of first term subjects, these sessions are held to inform students on 'how to tackle the second term.'
2. Activity planned for student training and guidance called Workshop on Job-seeking Techniques and Career Options in February. Its aim is to provide information and guidance on employability and career opportunities for students in the last years of all the undergraduate degrees taught at the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts. This workshop, given by Universa career guidance experts, is free and lasts for four hours.
3. Faculty students are also informed about the Training Plan for Career Guidance and Development of Personal and Professional Skills for Employment, which includes talks and workshops given by Universa experts.

F) This section contains the main support, orientation and guidance actions for students at the end of the second term:

1. Implementation of the Tutor-Mentor Programme with group or individual tutorial and/or mentoring sessions. The main aim of these sessions is to give students guidance on assessment tests and subjects studied in the next year.
2. Activity scheduled for student training and guidance entitled Workshop on Programmes and Actions for Entrepreneurial Spirits. Taking place in May and lasting two hours, this is a presentation by OTRI (Office for the

Transfer of Research Results) and the Zaragoza company Initland of the SpinUP Unizar programme services and the features of the Initland Project. Its aim is to promote graduate access to the job market, provide innovative approaches and to encourage future entrepreneurial endeavours.

3. The tutor of the fourth year of the History of Art degree organises open sessions, which all faculty students are invited to, as part of the *Tools for Working Professionally as an Art Historian* subject (code 28238, S2) on career opportunities in this area. The sessions, held on Thursdays in May from 10.30–12.30, are taken by practising art historians. This tutor has also created a 3L (long-life learning) repository of additional education opportunities (grants, calls, job offers, etc.).

At the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, all students can also use a number of information and support services and orientation and guidance activities. The information provided is available at this link: <https://fyl.unizar.es/> Other sources of information and guidance for our students are social networks, such as the Facebook page of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts (<https://es-es.facebook.com/filosofiayletraszaragoza>) and of this faculty's departments.

## RESULTS

At the end of every academic year, the University Orientation Plan of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts is summarised in an annual report written by this faculty's POU coordinator. This report contains the main lines of action and the activities (group and/or individual) planned and implemented for every undergraduate degree based on the year (first, second, third and fourth) and term. Specifically, in the 2017–2018 academic year, 35 tutors, of which 11 were first-year tutors, and 22 mentor students of the 10 undergraduate degrees taught at this faculty participated in the POU.

The report also analyses the average number of students that have attended the tutorial-mentoring sessions and the tutorial sessions in the second and following years. We can deduce from analysing the POU<sup>6</sup> monitoring reports that the average attendance is usually around a third of all the students in the year, but

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6 The WebPOUZ platform contains all the reports written by coordinators, tutors and mentors using established models. Access is restricted and there are several access levels, from documents available to the general public to documents and reports only accessible by the faculty's POU coordinator.

the figure varies depending on the degree studied and scheduled activities. A slight decrease in the number of students attending the sessions was noticed in the second term compared with the first. The most debated subjects at the meetings held by tutors and mentors of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts—excluding the presentation of the Tutor-Mentor Programme and the assessment of the first days of the academic year, which took place in the first session—are study methods (perseverance, class and tutorial attendance), subjects (type and difficulty) and assessment systems (exams and evaluation system). Comments were also made on possible student needs on an individual and academic level. This report ends with an evaluation section with improvement proposals for the next academic year.<sup>7</sup>

Based on the results of student assessment surveys at the end of the second term, tutors and mentors are satisfied with the activity they perform as part of the University Orientation Plan, and the students are satisfied with this programme and the activities the faculty plans to integrate them into university life.

Lastly, in the 2015–2016 academic year a programme was implemented entitled: *Incentive Programme of the University Orientation Plan at the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts of the University of Zaragoza* (PIPOUZ\_15\_059, as part of the Teaching Innovation call for proposals, 2015–2016, of the Vice-rectorate of Academic Policy of the University of Zaragoza). This programme was managed by the POU coordinator of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts in collaboration with six tutors and two mentors (Vázquez and Carretero, 2018). The aim of this programme was to improve orientation, guidance and support for the personal, social and academic integration of new students into this faculty. The mechanism used was two questionnaires: one given to all new students and the other to the mentors. These questionnaires made it possible to collect information and evaluate the support, orientation and guidance services and activities offered by the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts to its students and to learn whether these met their current needs and requirements.

Question 6 of the questionnaire for new students rated their participation in activities and actions organised by the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts every year to encourage their university integration and orientation. As can be seen, most of the students (73.6%) attended the Induction Day, participated in the Tutor-Mentor Programme (70.1%) or skills training courses via the ADD virtual campus (74.7%) (diagram 1). Participation in the Zero Courses, which were implemented for the first time in our faculty in the 2015–2016 academic year, was far less (20.7%), although this activity has always been rated positively by students.

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7 The faculties' annual reports are available on the WebPOUZ platform.

DIAGRAM 1  
GRAPH SHOWING THE RESULTS OF QUESTION 6  
IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NEW STUDENTS

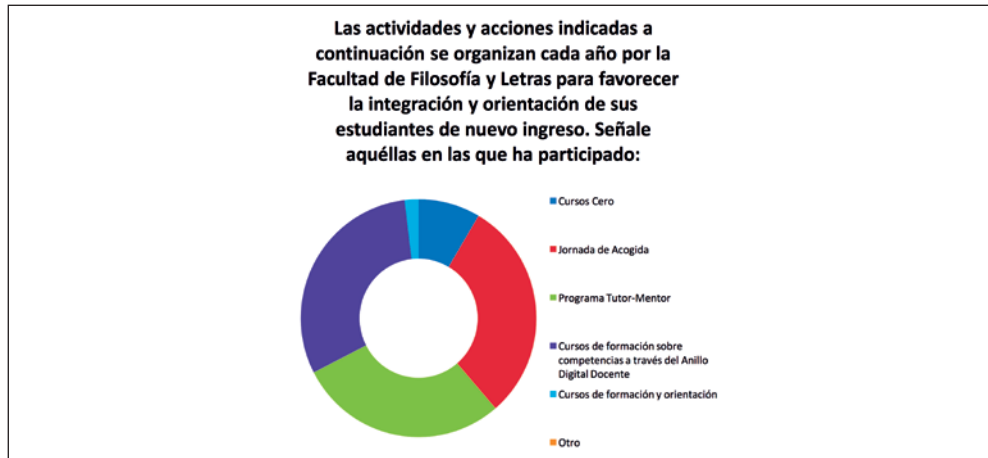


DIAGRAM 2  
GRAPH SHOWING THE RESULTS OF QUESTION 9  
IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NEW STUDENTS



Also worth mentioning is question 9, which rated the level of overall satisfaction of new students who participated in the Tutor-Mentor Programme with this activity in this academic year. Based on this data, the overall rating and level of satisfaction with this programme is positive, given that 29.7% of the students give it a score of 8, 21.9% a score of 9 and 17.2% a score of 10 out of 10. Consequently, the percentage of positive responses (from 5 to 10) is 92.2%. The students also considerably valued the efforts made by the mentors in the Tutor-Mentor Programme (diagram 2).

Members involved in this project (PIPOUZ\_15\_059) rated it as very satisfactory, since it made it possible to learn the new students' overall level of satisfaction with the adaptation and integration actions scheduled for them by this faculty in the first year of implementing the POU. More importantly, it managed to detect their requirements, leading to the suggestion of improvement actions that have been implemented in later years and included in the annual reports of the POU of the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results obtained, these actions implemented by the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts encourage the integration, orientation and guidance of students at the University. Although these actions are considered appropriate and sufficient, improvement proposals are put forward at the end of every academic year to respond to any requirements that have been noticed.

Lastly, the involvement of the faculty's tutors and mentors has been considerable and has resulted in successful implementation of the POU. The level of satisfaction of all the people involved is high, as seen in the results of the assessment surveys completed by students and the impressions obtained from the three coordination and planning sessions of the faculty's POU organised by its coordinator during the academic year.

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