

Foreword

As president of the Catalan Association of Public Universities (Associació Catalana d'Universitats Públiques [ACUP]), it is my honour to introduce the sixth edition of the report on Research and Innovation Indicators of Catalan Public Universities, which is designed to be a compendium of the activities carried out at our universities between 2014 and 2018. This initiative, which began in 2012 and has been consolidated with each edition, means that the historical series on the evolution of research and innovation (R&I) indicators can be used to compare us with Spanish and European universities and even get us to appear in international rankings. This report is yet another example of the commitment of our public universities to being accountable to society by exercising transparency.

In this report, we are dedicating the monograph to human resources strategies aimed at the professional development of researchers, which we have adapted to European standards. All Catalan universities have drafted multi-year action plans to implement these strategies, and we have been recognised by the European Commission in the form of the HR Excellence in Research seal of quality, which identifies universities that generate and foster work environments that stimulate research.

The report showcases the excellent level of university research in Catalonia in the European and global context, putting us on the same level as benchmark countries in Europe, and all of this is despite the underfunding that university research has been suffering in recent years, which may jeopardise, as already noted in previous reports, the current position.

We should also take into account the creation of a large number of new research structures, which sometimes, far from stimulating innovation and transfer and adding to the cause, compete with universities and attract the resources that universities once attracted. We believe in the need to defend the role of universities in the field of research, transfer and innovation, as has become patently clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, where universities have responded so efficiently to our society's needs. Hence, it is probably a good idea to showcase all the activity that Catalan universities have been doing in this field.

As my predecessors have always done, and as is so very justified, I would like to thank everyone at the ACUP Executive Secretariat and the technical teams at our universities for all their hard work.

María José Figueras Salvat

President of the Catalan Association of Public Universities