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**Abstract**

Managers at Spanish universities are having to deal with increasingly complex managerial tasks as a result of current changes in higher education. This paper presents the results of a study into the professional development of deans and department heads at universities in Catalonia. At management level, these universities are typically based on an elected, rotating model rather than an appointed or permanent one. The findings from 23 qualitative interviews and a focus group identified three phases in the development of academic management: learning and contextualization, development of functions, and the institutional projection and transmission of management tasks. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Castro, Diego, E-Mail: [diego.castro@uab.cat](mailto:diego.castro@uab.cat)