

# EQUAM-LA

**ENHANCING QUALITY MANAGEMENT &  
RECOGNITION IN LATIN AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITIES TO UNDERPIN THE LATIN  
AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SPACE**

**WP1 - PREPARATION**

**WORKSHOP FOR E+ PROJECTS AND  
ITS OUTCOME REPORT**



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Enhancing QUALity Management & Recognition in Latin American  
universities to underpin the Latin American Higher Education Space



# Report on national quality assurance systems in Latin America





## Argentina

In Argentina, the Higher Education Act of 1995 states that the evaluation and accreditation correspond to the National Commission for Evaluation and University Accreditation (CONEAU) or to private entities incorporated for this purpose, duly recognized by the Ministry of Education. ConEAU is a decentralized body operating in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education of the Nation. Its institutional mission is to ensure and improve the quality of university careers and institutions operating in the Argentine university system through evaluation and accreditation activities. By legal mandate, it has the functions of performing institutional evaluation, as well as the accreditation of those undergraduate careers that are defined as in the public interest and of all graduate careers.

The CONEAU is composed of twelve members of recognized academic and scientific hierarchy, with experience in university management. They exercise their duties in a personal way, regardless of judgment and without assuming the representation of any institution. Its members are appointed by the National Executive Branch on the proposal of the following bodies: three members by the National Interuniversity Council (CIN), which brings together the rectors of university state-run institutions; a member of the Board of Directors of Private Universities (CRUP); three, by the Chamber of Deputies of the Nation; three, by the Senate of the Nation; one, by the National Academy of Education; and one by the Ministry of Education of the Nation. The organization is completed with a technical team composed of university professionals with various disciplinary profiles. Neither accreditation nor evaluation has a cost to institutions.

As stated, CONEAU has among its functions the evaluation of state or privately run university institutions. The institution must carry out a self-assessment process that is completed by CONEAU's external assessment that observes the developments and characteristics of university institutions within the framework of its institutional projects, missions and objectives. Evaluations are carried out with the participation of peer evaluators and have as their main objective to promote in institutions the implementation of proposals for quality improvement; external evaluation reports make



improvement recommendations and are public in nature.

In addition, the Ministry of Education monitors private university institutions that have temporary authorization. To this end, it relies on annual reports by CONEAU to assess its academic level and the degree of fulfilment of its objectives and action plans. After six years of operation, the institution may request the final recognition that allows it full autonomy. The Ministry of Education bases its decision on the report made by CONEAU. In all these cases, the CONEAU convenes experts to analyze the capacity of the project or the university institution to meet the minimum quality for the functioning of university institutions.

In the case of national university institutions, which are created by the Law of the Congress of the Nation, the CONEAU analyses whether the institutional project has a proper justification, if it conforms to the principles and standards of the Higher Education Act. If feasible and consistent, if it contains an academic development plan that contemplates the teaching aspects, research and extension, as well as the infrastructure in which it will carry out its activities.

CONEAU is also involved in the authorization of new private university institutions. While the Law of the Congress of the Nation creates national universities, the Higher Education Act provides that the provisional authorization of private university institutions granted by the Executive Branch pre-require a favorable report from the CONEAU. The unfavorable opinion is binding on the granting of such authorization, but the favorable opinion does not oblige the ministry to grant authorization where it has reason to do so.

Career accreditation is carried out on the basis of compliance with the standards approved by the Ministry of Education in accordance with the Council of Universities, a coordinating and consultation body of the university system chaired by the Minister of Education (or by whoever he designates with a non-inferior category) Secretary). It consists of representatives of public and private universities through the CIN and CRUP, a representative of each Regional Higher Education Planning Council (CPRES) who must be rector of a university institution, and a representative of the Federal Council of Education. For undergraduate career evaluation, standards are



defined by discipline; instead of postgraduate studies, there are minimum criteria common to all of them.

The process of accreditation of degree degrees is a necessary condition for the official recognition of the degrees and their consequent national validity by the Ministry of Education. It is made through calls organized by those degrees that the Ministry of Education in agreement with the Council of Universities has defined as in the public interest and for which it has established accreditation standards. For these careers, accreditation is mandatory and so far, the following have been presented: Medicine, Engineering, Systems, Dentistry, Veterinary, Pharmacy and Biochemistry, Agronomic Engineering, Geology, Biological Sciences, Genetics, Chemistry, Architecture, Nursing, Psychology, Law and Accountant. There are other qualifications that has been defined as public interest, but the standards have not yet been approved so that they can be convened by the agency for accreditation.

Accreditation deadlines have three options. May be six years for degrees that conform to defined standards. Could be three years for those who they conform the intended profile and do not have a full dictation cycle or which, despite having not achieved the intended profile, present improvement plans that they can conform within a reasonable time. Finally, could be no more time or non-accreditation for those that do not conform the expected quality criteria.

The accreditation of postgraduate degrees is mandatory for all specializations, master's and doctoral degrees. In this case, THE CONEAU makes periodic calls for two types of processes differentiated by the state of the races presented for evaluation: new races or running races. New careers are evaluated for the only purpose of the provisional official recognition of their degrees to initiate academic activities. This recognition is granted on the condition that accreditation is applied for in the first call after the start of activities and expires if the institution does not apply. Careers in operation, obtain an accreditation period of six years if they meet the intended profile and accredit for the second time or on subsequent occasions, as long as they have graduates. If they meet the profile and credit for the first time or accredit on subsequent occasions, but without graduates, their term is three years. They can also obtain non-accreditation.



Both undergraduate and postgraduate accreditation processes include a career self-assessment, an external evaluation report by the committee of evaluators and finally the decision of the National Commission. In this way, the Commission base its decisions based on the recommendations made by the evaluator committees.

The quality assurance system in Argentina has recently incorporated the evaluation of the Institutional Distance Education Systems (SIED) that university institutions that dictate careers with this pedagogical option must have. The Ministry of Education, in agreement with the Council of Universities, has defined that, in the framework of the institutional evaluation by the agency, the institutions submit their SIEDs for evaluation and then validation by the Ministry. SIEDs are the processes, actions, standards, equipment and human and didactic resources that allow the development of distance-dictated races. In the future, this evaluation will be carried out within the framework of external evaluations developed by university institutions. CONEAU, meanwhile, has made calls for institutions with or planned to develop distance careers to submit their SIEDs for evaluation, as their validation is a necessary condition for the Ministry of Education to grant national validity to titles in this modality. It is also a requirement that they must meet in order for the agency to evaluate the graduate and graduate programs at a distance that must be accredited on a mandatory form.

Finally, CONEAU was evaluated in 2007 by the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) of the United Nations For Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) and in 2015 by a Committee of International Experts composed of the General Director of University Higher Education of Mexico, the Director of the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain and the Chairman of the Council for Evaluation, Accreditation and Assurance of the Quality of Higher Education of Ecuador.



## Bolivia

The Education Act of 2010 created in Bolivia the Plurinational Agency for the Evaluation and Accreditation of University Higher Education (APEAESU) and defined that it would be decentralized in nature and the Supreme Decree would regulate its operation and financing. Now, this regulation has not been implemented and the agency has not been put into operation. However, it advocates reaching levels of agreement on its funding and the formation of its Board by public universities, private universities and state instances that are in charge of quality assurance.

Since 2008, the Ministry of Education has delegated to the Vice-Ministry of Higher Education of Vocational Training and to the Directorate General of University Higher Education the assurance of the quality of higher education, and constituted by Ministerial Resolution the National Commission for accreditation of University Careers (CNACU). Its objective is to coordinate the evaluation processes for the accreditation and certification of educational quality within the framework of the ARCU-SUR<sup>1</sup> System; to form and manage the registration of evaluators and observers; promote the processes of self-assessment; coordinate the development and monitoring of the external evaluation process carried out; and finally manage the implementation of the APEAESU created by Law.

THE CNACU is made up of the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Vocational Training (VESFP), who chairs it, a representative of the Directorate General of University Higher Education; a representative of the Executive Committee of the Bolivian University (CEUB) that brings together the country's public universities, one of the National Association of Private Universities (ANUP), a representative of the

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<sup>1</sup> ARCU-SUR is the regional accreditation system for university careers for Mercosur, for the recognition of degrees in Mercosur and associated states. The system is in charge of the National Accreditation Agencies, which make up the Network of National Accreditation Agencies (RANA) and so far the degrees of Agronomy, Architecture, 6 specialties of Engineering, Veterinary, Nursing, Dentistry, Medicine, Geology, Pharmacy and Economics have been included. Its antecedent was MEXA, a mechanism implemented between 2002 and 2006 and which was a previous experience for the creation of the ARCU-SUR



Vice-Ministry of Science and Technology (VCyT) and a Secretary who is appointed by the Ministry of Education.

While in Bolivia the guidelines for accreditation have not yet been approved and national processes for quality assurance have not yet been implemented, the races are voluntarily presented to the call-up of the Network of National Accreditation Agencies (RANA) for ARCU-SUR accreditation. To this end, THE CNACU, through the Vice-Ministry of Higher Education and Vocational Training and the Directorate General of University Higher Education, convened the peer evaluators. In addition, CNACU was responsible for the entire operational process that included self-assessment workshops for accreditation and peer-forming careers in which quality criteria were worked and reporting was guided. THE CNACU must also issue accreditation or non-accreditation opinions and finally the Deputy Minister informs the Minister of Education of the decision.

In the public university system CEUB, through the Secretariat of Evaluation and Accreditation, carries out the processes of accreditation of careers. CEUB is an executive body for the coordination, planning and programming of the activities of the Bolivian University, which brings together public universities in the exercise of their autonomy. The CEUB accreditation system has no state recognition, it is only valid for the public system. For their part, some private universities have been accredited with foreign agencies, particularly in the United States and Chile, but these accreditations are not recognized by the State of Bolivia.

While CEUB has outlined documents for institutional evaluation, no public institution has yet undergone this assessment. In the case of private universities, between 2000 and 2006, the Ministry of Education carried out a process called Universidad Plena, which consisted of an institutional accreditation of private universities to ensure that they met the minimum quality conditions. In that instance, seven universities were closed and some were given a deadline after which they had to make a second process of verifying compliance with minimum quality. Following this process of Universidad Plena, no institutional evaluations have been carried out at the universities of Bolivia.





With regard to graduate programs, there are currently no instances for accreditation. Private universities must submit them to the Ministry, which conducts a review of the contents, verifies infrastructure and equipment, and issues a ministerial resolution for their operation. For their part, public universities have full autonomy for graduate dictation. Universities design their programs and are approved by Rectorate Resolution.

As regards the authorization for the functioning of universities, in the case of private universities, the Ministry of Education applies the General Regulations of Universities that determines the conditions to be confirmed. The Ministry does a documentary review and a visit. In a second stage, a review of the programs is carried out to verify that they meet the conditions. Finally, the decision is taken by the Council of Ministers through a Supreme Decree. For the creation of public universities, a Supreme Decree is issued or created by Law of the Legislative Assembly. Public universities have autonomy to create programs that can be put into operation once approved by CEUB instances.

Finally, CNACU does not have state funding. University institutions solve accreditation processes in terms of operating expenses and fees of peer evaluators.

Without considering accreditations with foreign agencies at private universities and the CEUB accreditation process at public universities, program accreditation began in Bolivia with the Experimental Accreditation Mechanism (MEXA) in 2004. Since 2000, institutional accreditation has been implemented only for private universities in order to guarantee the minimum quality floor for its operation as a university institution. Prior to the establishment of the CNACU, an *ad hoc commission* was formed by the Vice-Ministry of Higher Education, representing CEUB and ANUP, to carry out the accreditation process through MEXA. Quality assurance continued to be developed with the regional accreditation of the ARCU-SUR System, in a context where the implementation of APEASU is in process.





## Brazil

In 2004, by Law No. 10861, the National System of Avaliação da Educação Superior (SINAES) was created to evaluate higher education institutions, courses, and academic performance of students, with the mission of improving the quality of higher education. Within the scope of the Ministry of Education, the National Commission of Avaliação da Educação Superior (CONAES), a collegiate coordinating and supervisory body of SINAES, was established in order to guide general aspects of higher education. CONAES is made up of a representative of the National Institute of Education Estudos e Pesquisas Anísio Teixeira (INEP), one of the Fundação Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES), three of the Ministry of Education, a representative of the academic body of higher education institutions, one from the administrative technical body of higher education institutions, a representative of students and five members elected by the Ministry of Education with a track record in scientific knowledge, philosophical and artistic and recognized competence in the evaluation and management of higher education.

For the definition of quality criteria and evaluation procedures, INEP works in conjunction with CONAES, which is the body that, among other aspects, proposes procedures and mechanisms for institutional evaluation, programs and student performance. INEP has a matrix instrument and specific criteria for health, law, teachers and engineering programs, both in face-to-face and remote mode. There are no calls for disciplines so programs from different disciplines can be evaluated at the same time.

The technical body of external evaluation of higher education institutions, careers and student performance is the responsibility of INEP, an autonomous body created in 1937, which is linked to the Ministry of Education. Its president is appointed by the Ministry and the Ministry in turn selects the directors of the areas and the general coordinators of the agency. INEP performs the evaluation and produces the quality reports. The political decision-making on evaluation and accreditation is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. It receives applications for institutional accreditation and programs and after a prior evaluation, sends them to INEP.

Similarly, the process for the creation of new private university institutions



begins in the Ministry of Education, which sends it to INEP for evaluation. On the basis of in EP's recommendation, the Ministry decides on the authorization of its opening.

In Brazil, accreditation of institutions, undergraduate programs defined by the Ministry of Education and all postgraduate courses, is mandatory. Evaluation and accreditation processes have no costs for public institutions. Instead, private institutions must pay a fee when applying for accreditation with the Ministry. These funds are used to cover the expenses of the evaluator pairs.

For the accreditation process, INEP convenes three experts for institutional accreditation and two for program accreditation. The evaluation includes a visit to the institution, after which INEP sends a report to the Ministry and the institution evaluated. The Ministry may establish a protocol of commitments for both an institution and a program. If an institution or program does not meet the requirements to be sent to INEP for evaluation, the Ministry rejects the application and archives the procedure. To this end, while INEP is the main input, the Ministry may consider historical evaluations of the institution or other elements it deems necessary to define accreditation.

The accreditation of graduate programs is the function of CAPES, which was created in 1951 in order to ensure the existence of qualified personnel in sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of public and private ventures. It is also responsible for supporting the Ministry of Education in the formulation of national postgraduate policies. After several modifications, since 2007 CAPES is governed by the rules and guidelines of the Federal Union, which are linked to the objectives of the National Education Plan (PNE).

Las principales actividades de la CAPES pueden resumirse en: acompañamiento and evaluation of postgraduate training (particularly Master's and Doctoral); granting scholarships for the improvement of top-level researchers; and promote training of initial and ongoing teacher training for primary education in face-to-face and distance formats.

For both institutions and programs, evaluation results are assessed according to five levels of meeting the criteria: four or five are the highest levels of compliance;



three, compliance with minimums needed; and a result of one or two is that it does not meet the criteria to be able to prove. The validity of an institution's accreditation is five, eight, or ten years, depending on whether it is a university, faculty, or university center.

Finally, INEP also applies the National Student Performance Examination (ENADE), which evaluates graduates of undergraduate programs in relation to the curriculum provided for in the curriculum guidelines of the courses, the development of the skills and skills necessary to deepen general and professional training, and the level of student update on Brazilian and global reality. To do this, it convenes specialists from each area and forms advisory commissions that build a bank of possible items to be included in the exam.



## Chile

In Chile, quality assurance of higher education is governed by Law No. 20129 of 2018. This legislation states that the National Higher Education Quality Assurance System is composed of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), through the Undersecretariat for Higher Education, the National Council of Education, the National Accreditation Commission (CNA) and the Superintendency of Higher Education. Higher education institutions are also part of this System. This system is coordinated by a committee composed of the Under-Secretary for Higher Education, who chairs it, the President of the ANC, the Superintendent of Higher Education and the President of the National Council of Education.

The new Law meant substantive changes for the evaluation of the quality of higher education in the country. Unlike previously, the ANC became the only Chilean accrediting agency that can perform institutional accreditation and undergraduate and graduate programs, functions it previously shared with private agencies.

The Superintendency of Higher Education is an institution created as a decentralized public service. It has the function of monitoring and monitoring compliance with the legal provisions governing higher education institutions, particularly that they allocate their resources for their own purposes in accordance with the Law and its statutes. The granting of leave to new institutions of higher education is the function of the National Council of Education, which also exercises the guardianship of the institution for a period of six years. After this deadline, the institution has a maximum of two years to apply to the ANC for accreditation.

The ANC is an autonomous body, which enjoys legal personality and its own assets whose budget is defined by law. Evaluations and accreditations come at a cost to institutions, which can meet the costs of these quality assessment processes. To do this, annually the Budget Directorate of the Ministry of Finance sets the amounts tariffs to be charged for process development. Such tariffs can be paid up to ten monthly payments and constitute the Commission's own revenue.

The ANC was created in 2006 and its Board consists of twelve members: four university academics of recognized prestige and background in institutional



management, undergraduate teaching or postgraduate training; four teachers or professionals of recognized prestige and background in professional technical training or institutional management in technical training centers or professional institutes; a teacher or professional of recognized prestige and trajectory in the area of innovation, selected by the Production Development Corporation; a university academic of recognized prestige and track record in scientific or technological research selected by the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research; and two student representatives of accredited autonomous higher education institutions, representative of each subsystem, safeguarding the participation of student federations. Three of the university academics and three of the teachers or professionals of technical training centers or professional institutes are appointed by the President of the Republic according to three-fifths of the Senate.

The Commission administers and resolves the institutional accreditation processes of the autonomous higher education<sup>institutions 2</sup>, and the degree and postgraduate careers they teach; develops and establishes quality criteria and standards for institutional accreditation, and undergraduate and graduate careers, according to the type of institution, whether this one of the professional or university technical subsystem, after consultation with the Coordinating Committee of the National Higher Education Quality Assurance System; and implements and promotes actions for the continuous improvement of the quality of higher education institutions, in particular, identify, promote and disseminate among higher education institutions good practices in ensuring the quality of higher education.

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<sup>2</sup>By definition of MINEDUC, higher education institutions, depending on their operating regime, may be autonomous, licensed, examined or supervised.



Until the sanction of the new Law in 2018, flexible criteria relating to general themes were worked on. But since then, it has been established that evaluations should be carried out on the basis of criteria and standards for accreditation that are developed by the ANC in consultation with committees made up of experts from higher education institutions. The National Council of Education also approves disciplinary standards for Pedagogy careers.

Institutional accreditation is mandatory and valued on the basis of three levels: basic, advanced and excellence. Institutions that are not accredited cannot exist in the system. Institutions that obtain the level of excellence enjoy full autonomy. In case of obtaining the basic level, they can only operate as they are until they reach the next level, but they cannot open programs or new quotas. This can be done at the advanced level, requesting the corresponding authorization. The institution can accredit at the basic level up to twice and cannot continue to function if it re-accredits at this level in the third time. Accreditation at the basic level lasts for three years, at the advanced level of four or five years and six or seven years at the level of excellence.

If a higher education institution obtains a non-accreditation, the National Board of Education follows up that has a maximum duration of three years. At the end of this period, you must re-apply to the ANC for accreditation. If it is not accredited in this instance, it is reserved to the Ministry of Education for closure.

The Commission also accredits undergraduate and graduate degrees (doctorates, master's degrees and medical and dental specialties). At the level of degree, accreditation for Medicine, Dentistry and Pedagogy is mandatory. The latter reaches all teachers of General Education parvulario, basic, medium and differential. To teach these careers, the university and the program must be accredited. If a program whose accreditation is mandatory does not accredit, it enters a five-year oversight period by the National Council of Education, and then must be re-submitted to the ANC for accreditation. For the rest of the bachelor's degrees, accreditation is voluntary. From the new Law, the accreditation is carried out by calls and by accreditation cycles. The accreditation period is two to seven years.

At the graduate level, accreditation of doctorates and volunteers, master's





degrees and health specializations is mandatory. However, in order for health specialists to be able to perform in the public sector and be part of a public register of providers, they must be graduated from accredited careers. Accreditation of graduate programs is valid for two to ten years.

According to the new Law, since 2026, higher education institutions must have advanced institutional accreditation in order to voluntarily submit programs for accreditation, and cannot be presented if their accreditation is of a basic level, except in the case of careers whose accreditation is mandatory.

Assurance of the quality of higher education began in Chile in 1999 with a pilot program for the accreditation of careers that then continued with the realization of institutional accreditation. In 2006, the Higher Education Quality Assurance Act created the ANC. Among its functions was to rule on applications for authorization submitted by private agencies responsible for accrediting undergraduate programs, master's degrees and specialties in the area of health. In addition, the ANC commented on institutional accreditation and conducted program accreditation in cases where there were no authorized agencies in that particular area of knowledge. As we saw, these functions change with the 2018 Act that grants the exclusivity of accreditation to the ANC.

In 2017, the ANC was internationally certified by the International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (INQAAHE). This certification establishes that the ANC complies with the proposed good practice guidelines for quality assurance.



## Colombia

The system of assurance of the quality of higher education in Colombia had its beginnings in 1992 from the promulgation of Law No. 30 and was supplemented by Decree No. 2230 of 2003, Law No. 1188 of 2008 and Decree No. 1306 of 2009. From this regulation, the different instances that act in the field of quality assurance were formed with their different functions.

This system consists of the following bodies: the National Council for Higher Education (CESU); National Accreditation Council (ANC); the Chambers of the National Intersectoral Commission for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (CONACES); and the Standing Commission for the Quality Assurance System.

The governing body for higher education is CESU, a body under national government that has planning, coordination and advisory functions on issues related to higher education. It is a collegiate body with sixteen members representing different sectors of the university system, public and private, the Ministry of National Education and representatives of the productive sector. It also has the representation of the Rector of the National University of Colombia. The CESU has the functions of organizing the higher education system in terms of institution-building; the formation and functions of the ANC; and establish the requirements for the creation and operation of academic programs.

The ANC is an accreditation body involved in ensuring the quality of higher education. It is linked to the Ministry of National Education, with coordination, planning, recommendation and advisory functions on the subject of accreditation of programs and higher education institutions. The Board consists of nine directors representing various discipline areas: health sciences, engineering, education, social sciences, legal sciences, economic and administrative sciences, natural sciences, and a counselor for technical and technological programs. One of them exercises the Coordination of the Council. The councillors are selected through public competitions and last in his term five years, without renewal. Public competitions are conducted by CESU. Accreditation decisions are taken by the Council and communicated to the Ministry of National Education together with the evaluation report. On the basis of the report and recommendation



issued by the ANC, the Ministry issues an administrative decision. While the issuer of the accreditation resolution is the Ministry of National Education, the RECOMMENDATION of the ANC is binding.

The ANC carries out high quality accreditation, voluntary and free, on different levels: institutional accreditation, accreditation of undergraduate careers and accreditation of graduate careers. The latter include medical specialties, master's and doctoral degrees.

The accreditation period may vary depending on the results or robustness presented by the continuous improvement processes. Currently, the deadlines are under review by CESU, but can be for four, six, eight and ten years. In the event that the program or institution does not reach accreditation, the result is "recommended" and the recommendations that must be resolved to file a new application are reported. While accreditation is voluntary, its impact has been growing because it depends on the stimuli granted to the population to enter high-quality programs.

A third instance involved in ensuring the quality of higher education is the CONACES Chambers through the Qualified Register. The CONACES Chambers are made up of the Minister of National Education, the delegate of the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation and representatives of the advisory bodies of the National Government in the field of higher education and academia. Its main functions are the assessment of compliance with the requirements for the creation of higher education institutions, their transformation and redefinition and their academic programs. For this purpose, CONACES forms different disciplinary or sectoral chambers made up of academics from all over the country who are selected by public calls. The term of office lasts for two years with the possibility of renewal of the office. These Chambers evaluate the projects of institutions and programs by verifying the minimum quality requirements. The evaluation of the CONACES Chambers ends with the granting or renewal of the Qualified Register - a requirement for the operation of institutions and programs - and with the registration in the National Higher Education Information System (SNIES). This involves obtaining an operating license for programs of all training levels. It has a validity period of seven years, after which it must be renewed. Entry and



stay in registration is mandatory and tariffed. The Qualified Registry is administered by the Ministry of National Education in consultation with the CONACES Chambers

The evaluations of institutions are carried out by a specific Chamber called the CONACES Room for Institutional Procedures. This Chamber intervenes for the creation of institutions and the creation of sectionals. On the basis of the Council's recommendations, CESU takes the decision and the Ministry issues the administrative ruling. The mechanism is similar for public and private institutions. This Chamber also evaluates technical or technological institutions wishing to become a university institution. On the other hand, there is a specific room for master's and doctoral degrees.

The ANC and the CONACES Chambers are independent bodies. To achieve consistency between the two agencies, in mid-2019, on the initiative of the Ministry, workshops were held throughout the country for diagnostic purposes on the situation of higher education in Colombia. One of the elements observed was the discrepancy of criteria between the two bodies, particularly in the field of program names.

The designations are regulated by the Qualified Register, but signals from the ANC were identified in this regard. To avoid inconsistencies, a Standing Commission for the Quality Assurance System was established, consisting of members of CESU, con ACES Chambers, the ANC and the Ministry of National Education through the Director of Quality of Higher Education and the Deputy Minister. This Commission was established in July 2019 and is at the thread of the changes envisaged in the debate on new standards relating to quality assurance at its various levels.

The Council received two-time recognition from the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). This evaluation involves successfully completing the external evaluation process carried out by a panel of international experts on compliance with the Good Practice Guidelines on Quality Assurance. The last evaluation was carried out in 2017 and is valid for five years.



## Costa Rica

The National Higher Education Accreditation System (SINAES) is the institution that publicly attests to the quality of institutions and higher education careers that voluntarily undergo an evaluation process demonstrating that they meet established quality criteria. It is constituted by public and private university higher education institutions that voluntarily submit to their evaluation process and demonstrate compliance with established quality criteria. Its members can be full -those institutions that have met the membership requirements and maintain in force the minimum official accreditation of postgraduate careers - associates - who have been temporarily admitted by SINAES, on the condition that they comply with the commitments referred to in the Membership Regulations - or para-university institutions.

The SINAES National Accreditation Council consists of eight members, four elected by state universities and four by private universities, including a President and a Vice-President.

In Costa Rica, SINAES defines the criteria and standards for accreditation of undergraduate and professional master's degrees, academic master's degrees and doctorates. Accreditation comes at a cost to all institutions, both public and private, that contributes to the full financing of the accreditation process. In 2002, Law No. 8256 gave SINAES the power to evaluate and accredit undergraduate and graduate careers. In 2010, Law No. 8798 expanded these powers so that it could accredit two- or three-year parauniversitarian careers and university and parauniversitarian institutions, while providing state funding, which it did not have until then. The central interest of the SINAES constitution was concern about the quality of the system in the face of the strong expansion of private higher education institutions in the 1990s. While it originates from public universities, the agency did not get up and running until four private universities joined. Careers from all areas of knowledge are accredited, dictated in face-to-face or remote mode. SINAES does not make calls but works on demand. However, from knowing the institutions that are carrying out the self-assessment process, the agency can project the number of careers to be evaluated. The Act provides that graduates of



accredited careers are entitled to preferential recruitment treatment by the State and its institutions.

SINAES maintains an up-to-date list of professionals, nationals and foreigners, who can be appointed as external pairs in the accreditation processes that are carried out. Accreditation of a career or program is valid for four years. Once the period has expired, it must be requested for review and re-accreditation.

The first stage is the self-assessment of the race, culminating in a report to be submitted to the SINAES Council. Then two international and one national evaluators are convened, and an institutional visit is made. Evaluator pairs should prepare a report with their ratings. The SINAES Council session discusses and decides on accreditation, which may differ from peer recommendations.

Moreover, the Convention for the Coordination of State University Higher Education in Costa Rica created the National Council of Rectors (CONARE) formed by the Rectors of the public institutions signatory to the Convention. CONARE regulates and coordinates aspects for the joint exercise of university autonomy in various areas of the signatory institutions.

The National Council of Private University Higher Education (CONESUP) is the institution that authorizes the creation of private universities and the programs that are taught therein. It is a body made up of the Minister of Public Education, who chairs it, a representative appointed by CONARE, a representative of all private universities, a representative of the Office of National Planning and a representative appointed by the Federation of University Professional Colleges. CONESUP is also responsible for the inspection and control of the country's private universities. So far, no institutional evaluations have been carried out. However, there is a draft law that reformulates some aspects of higher education and quality assurance. One of the changes being discussed is the obligation of institutional evaluation as well as engineering and health careers.

Prior to the existence of SINAES, programs were evaluated in Costa Rica through foreign agencies, in some regional cases, especially for engineering and graduate careers. In 1997, CONARE proposed the creation of SINAES, which was then regulated in 2002 by law, acquiring an official and mixed character, being able to enter



public and private universities. In 2001, the Costa Rica Private University Rectors Unit (UNIRE) had created the Private University Higher Education Career Accreditation System (SUPRICORI), when SINAES was not yet in operation. With the subsequent creation of this agency, SUPRICORI was left without effect.

Finally, SINAES was evaluated externally in 2008 by the Central American Accreditation Council and in 2010 and 2019 by the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).



## Cuba

In Cuba, the national government body, armed by the Ministry of Higher Education, is the National Accreditation Board (JAN). Its mission is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of Cuban higher education through the development and implementation of the Higher Education Assessment and Accreditation System (SEAES).

Jan is the agency that evaluates and accredits the quality of higher education institutions and the programs they provide. It is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education and institutions pay no cost for accreditation processes. It is headed by a President, an Executive Secretary and a nine-member Executive Secretariat. This Secretariat relies on the JAN plenary - made up of forty-eight people whose membership is renewed every four years - and the Technical Evaluation Committees. The latter are made up of up to thirty experts of high national and international prestige who voluntarily participate in these processes. The plenary meets at least three times a year and votes openly for any category of the institution or program.

The JAN proposes the criteria for evaluating institutions and programs which are approved with the consensus of rectors, the university community and employers. For the elaboration of the proposals, international experiences and pedagogical trajectories of Cuban higher education are considered. Programs dictated by higher education institutions are authorized by the Ministry of Higher Education, through the Undergraduate Advisory Commission, for the approval of undergraduate careers; of the National Graduate Advisory Commission, for master's degrees and specialties; and the National Scientific Degree Commission for PhDs. These commissions are made up of professionals from all over the country.

Jan accredits undergraduate and graduate institutions and programs, through three categories: qualified, certified or excellence. The technical committees evaluators make a preliminary category proposal that then approves the plenary. The Minister of Higher Education may participate in the plenary, but cannot veto or revoke any decision of the JAN. Once an evaluation is given to a program or institution, that result cannot be changed. In the case of programs, if the institution obtains the qualified category, the term is five years, seven years if certified and nine years if it is of excellence.





In both institutional and programs, *on-site evaluation* lasts one week and an evaluator pair is convened for each of the six dimensions analyzed. In general, evaluators are professors of the country's universities, but in some cases foreign experts have been summoned, either as evaluators or as process observers.

In order for a university to apply for institutional evaluation, it must have 60% of its undergraduate programs and 60% of its graduate programs accredited with one of the categories (qualified, certified or excellent). Institutional evaluation culminates in a report. Evaluators also meet with employers of graduates of the evaluated university. If these graduates are foreigners, attempts are made to obtain information from employers in the country where the graduate performs. In addition, the Plenary approves the corresponding category by handing over the certificate to the university. If the category is not obtained, the institution receives the report, but the accreditation result is not published. Approval of new higher education institutions requires a Decree of the President on a proposal from the Ministry of Higher Education, which analyzes the application for its creation and operation.

Program accreditation is voluntary for all qualifications. However, foreigners can only pursue postgraduate and graduate programs that have been accredited. In the case of postgraduate studies, the Ministry may require the closure of programs that have obtained a non-accreditation report from or expired the JAN.

In the process of accrediting undergraduate programs, the agency applies exams to students, who are prepared by the peer evaluators who also observe some classes. In addition, the performance of graduates is evaluated through interviews with their employers. In the case of medical sciences, the evaluation of graduates is carried out in the health centers that are visited in the accreditation processes.

Rectors may apply for program accreditation from foreign agencies, but these must be accredited by the JAN. There are some universities that have applied for accreditation with other agencies or agencies after being accredited by the JAN, a practice that is valued by the agency to collect an external look at quality assurance.

The processes of ensuring the quality of higher education began in Cuba with the accreditation of master's degrees in 1999. In 2000, through a Ministerial Resolution,



the National Accrediting Board was established as a specialized unit independent of the rest of the functional addresses of the Ministry of Higher Education.



## Ecuador

The quality assurance system in Ecuador is governed by the Organic Law on Higher Education sanctioned in 2010 and reformed by Supplement No. 297 of 2018. According to Article 15, the bodies that make up the National Higher Education System are: the Higher Education Council (CES), the Higher Education Quality Assurance Council (CACES), and the governing body of higher education public policy, the Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (SENESCYT).

Other functions of SENESCYT include establishing coordination mechanisms between the Executive Function and the Higher Education System; identify careers and programs considered to be in the public interest in accordance with the National Development Plan and create the necessary incentives for higher education institutions to prioritize them in their academic offering; design, implement, manage and coordinate Ecuador's National Higher Education Information System and the Leveling and Admission System; prepare technical reports for knowledge and resolution of the Higher Education Council in all cases related to the objectives of the National Development Plan; and prepare the technical reports required by the Higher Education Council to support its resolutions.

CES is the body responsible for the planning, regulation and coordination of the Higher Education System, and the relationship between its various actors with the Executive Branch and Ecuadorian society. It consists of ten full members: four representatives of the Executive who come from the Secretariat of Higher Education, Science Technology and Innovation or its delegate, the National Planning Secretariat, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Production. The remaining six members are academics chosen by public competition of verification and opposition. In addition, three representatives of students from universities or public polytechnic schools, private universities and institutes or conservatories participate in the sessions with a voice but without a vote Upper. Student representatives are elected by contest opposition and merit. They also have permanent delegates, with the right to voice, but without voting three representatives of the Assembly of the Higher Education System and an advisor to the CACES.



The SSC also has the function of designing in a coordinated manner with the governing body of higher education policy and with the Higher Education System, the Development Plan of the Higher Education System that sets strategic objectives in terms of coverage and quality. In addition, it produces concluding reports for competent bodies on the creation or repeal of higher education institutions. These reports are supported by THE CACES and the Technical Secretariat of the National Planning Council. Only concluding reports in favor of creation or repeal shall be considered by the competent bodies to proceed with the relevant procedure. Thus, once compliance with the basic quality criteria and standards established by the CACES has been verified, CES approves the creation, suspension or closure of higher education institutions, as well as the creation of graduate careers. It also has the power to impose sanctions on institutions that do not comply with the regulations and requirements for their operation.

The role of quality assessment at the institutional, graduate and graduate levels is carried out by CACES. This Council is composed of three academics selected by public merit and opposition competition organized by the National Electoral Council, and three academics appointed by the President of the Republic. Equity, alternation and gender parity are respected for its designation. This Council rules on institutional self-assessment and implements external evaluation and accreditation processes. Higher education institutions, both public and private, and their undergraduate and graduate careers must be subjected to external evaluation and accreditation. In addition, they must organize processes that contribute to internal quality assurance.

On the other hand, higher education institutions can undergo evaluation processes that are aimed at obtaining the highest quality academic qualification. This activity is voluntary and an accessory to institutional accreditation. Academic qualifications can be at the institutional, career level and is the result of the evaluation carried out by the Higher Education Quality Assurance Council for no accreditation purposes. It refers to the fulfilment of its mission, vision, purposes and objectives, within the framework of the principles of quality, relevance and integrality.



For the evaluation of institutions and programs, CACES establishes models with quantitative and qualitative criteria and standards. Where a higher education institution or program is not accredited for non-compliance with these standards, CACES provides the institution with the formulation and implementation of an improvement plan of up to three years, with the accompaniment of this body. At the end of the deadline, a new external evaluation should be carried out. Failure to comply with the criteria and standards provides for the closure of the institution or program. It is for the CES to take the decision on the closure of institutions or programs, supported by the evaluation report by the CACES.

For undergraduate accreditation, the requirements set out in the assessment of the learning environment must be met. For this purpose, students from the last academic period carried out by CACES are tested as part of an accreditation. While this assessment is done through the Council, it is carried out in coordination with the governing body of public policy on higher education. In the event that a percentage greater than 40% of students in a program or career are not able to pass the exam during two consecutive occasions, the higher education institution is partially involved in the academic unit responsible for the career or program and evaluated by the Higher Education Council.

CACES also conducts an enabling exam and issues the certificate for the professional exercise of careers that could compromise the public interest. The qualifications that are the subject of this qualification are defined by the governing body of the public policy of higher education in coordination with the CES. For these qualifications, curricula should take into account the basic curriculum content and the criteria on the intensity of the training established by CES in coordination with higher education institutions and professional colleges in these careers. In the case of careers in the field of health, the examination is a prerequisite for the exercise of the year of practice determined in health regulations.

The current system is based on the Organic Higher Education Act, enacted in 2010 in an attempt to reorder the higher education system. Its implementation involved the closure of some university institutions and the establishment of accreditation as a



quality assurance model. Although CACES was created in 2018, it has an institutional continuity with the work initiated by the Council for Evaluation, Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (CEAACES) created in 2010.





## El Salvador

The El Salvador Higher Education Act was passed in 1995 and gives the Ministry of Education the power to develop evaluation processes for higher education institutions (IES), in order to check the academic quality of them and their careers. This System has three subsystems: Qualification, Evaluation and Accreditation. The first two are mandatory enforcement by the IES, while accreditation is completely voluntary.

A proposal for a National Higher Education Policy prepared by all members of the Multisectoral Pact for the Construction of the National Higher Education Policy was presented in 2018, involving the Ministry of Education (MINED), the Ministry of Economy (MINEC), the Higher Education Council (CES), the MINED Quality Accreditation Commission (CdA), the Central American Accreditation Council (CCA), the Council of Professional Associations of El Salvador (CAPES), the Salvadoran Institute of Vocational Training (INSAFORP) and the legislative commission on culture and education. Also participating were José Simeón Cañas Central American University, Don Bosco University, Francisco Gavidia University and El Salvador Catholic University. It proposes to create a national system of accreditation of the quality of higher education, with autonomy, efficiency, adequate financial solvency and the ability to develop gradual processes in the improvement and promotion of quality. It is also intended to implement mandatory institutional accreditation subject to high standards that, in turn, has an incentive system based on recognized advances in its quality. Finally, the accountability of actors in the National Higher Education System (SNES) on the fulfillment of declared institutional purposes is promoted.

With these objectives, it is proposed to create a Council of Rectors as a responsible body committed to the governance of the SNES, constituted by the highest executive authority of the IES, and whose objective is the collective construction of proposals that harmonize with the vision of the governing body. In addition, the

Council for Higher Education, Science and Technology (CESCYT) as an instance of strategic impact on decision-making and public policy promotion.

Between 2000 and 2005 accreditation was an optional instance implemented by the Higher Education Quality Accreditation Commission, an entourage attached to the



Ministry. It consisted of seven academic members of notorious capacity and honesty, who did not represent any institution and were appointed by mutual agreement, between the Minister of Education and the Higher Education Council.

Due to the impossibility of using direct sources that participate in the quality assurance of higher education in the country, the information collected here comes from the bibliographic review and a survey of secondary sources.







## Guatemala

In Guatemala, the public and private education system unfolds with absolute independence. In this sense, they do not have any organic linkage instances or maintain formal effort coordination actions. However, as their own initiative, the Rectors of all universities meet at a forum.

The fifth section of Guatemala's Constitution recognizes the autonomy of the University of San Carlos de Guatemala (USAC), the only public university in the country. She is also rector of state higher education and has the power to dictate her own rules and regulations. In addition, it is the only one that can recognize degrees or university diplomas extended abroad.

On the one hand, the University of San Carlos is particularly regulated by its Organic Law. It is established that the government is exercised by the University Higher Council, the highest decision-making body, chaired by the Rector and composed of the deans of each of the approved faculties, one representative by the students, another by the titular professors and one graduate for each faculty.

Moreover, article No. 86 of the Political Constitution establishes the Council for Higher Private Education (CEPS), a body to which the Constitution assigns the functions of ensuring the maintenance of the academic level in private universities. This Council has the function of authorizing the creation of new universities and specifying sanctions in cases of irregularities. Its rules of procedure state that it consists of two USAC delegates; two delegates from private universities and a delegate elected by the presidents of the Professional Colleges, who does not serve in any university.

Since CEPS authorizes the operation of a private university, it enjoys independence to carry out, in accordance with its statutes, regulations and other internal provisions and regulations, the following activities: creating its faculties, departments and institutes; develop their academic, teaching, scientific research, culture dissemination and study activities and solving national problems; unwrapping their plans and 19/100 programs; and award degrees and academic degrees that allow professional practice. This implies that it is up to the institutions themselves to organize private higher education.



Once the Guatemalan university system makes available to the company the professionals it forms, the professional practice is specifically regulated by the Law on Compulsory Professional Collegiation. Through this Law, it is established that university professionals must be collegial, for the control of their exercise and with the aim of moral, scientific, technical, cultural, economic and material improvement of the university professions.

Due to the impossibility of using direct sources that participate in the quality assurance of higher education in the country, the information collected here comes from the bibliographic review and a survey of secondary sources.





## Honduras

According to the Constitution of the Republic, the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) is the rector of the higher education system. The Higher Education Council is the highest governing body of the higher education system and is made up of the rector of ADHD who chairs it, six representatives of the same university, six rectors or directors of higher education centers, and the head of the Directorate of Higher Education, who has a voice but does not vote.

This Council established in 2010, by Agreement No. 2304/2010, the Honduran Higher Education Quality Accreditation System (SHACES), responsible for developing the quality assessment and accreditation processes of institutions, careers and higher education programs in the country. ShaCES' organizational structure began to be established in March 2016, with the formation of the National Commission for Accreditation of the Quality of Higher Education, which is its highest authority. They complete the organization of the system, an Executive Directorate, which is responsible for carrying out the policies that come with the Commission, a Technical Committee, *the ad hoc Specialized Committees* and the Academic Peer Committees.

The National Commission for accreditation of the quality of higher education is composed of: six representatives of public universities, six representatives of private universities, a representative of the National Council of Competitiveness and Innovation, a representative of the Federation of Professional University Colleges of Honduras and a representative of the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise. The Agreement notes that if the number of public universities increases in the future, UNAH will maintain its permanent representation.

SHACES was established as an autonomous body in academia, technical, administrative and financial and is responsible for developing the quality assessment and accreditation processes of institutions, careers and higher education programs in the country. He is responsible for dictating the criteria, standards, definitions, instruments and indicators with which the various evaluations are carried out. For state contributes 50% of operating costs. The remaining 50% is funded by higher education institutions, both public and private, distributed according to the number of students



enrolled in the previous academic period. Institutional or program accreditation is expected to have a cost to be regulated by the National Accreditation Commission.

Licensing of institutions and programs is the power of the Higher Education Council; SHACES does not intervene in this process. The Agreement provides that institutional and undergraduate accreditation is mandatory and does not provide for accreditation at the graduate level. If an institution is not in a position to accredit, it must apply an improvement plan and then enter the evaluation. The improvement plan is designed under a format or protocol provided by SHACES and its implementation is mandatory. In this way, there are still institutions that have not carried out institutional accreditation. The accreditation of undergraduate degrees has not yet been implemented but it is planned that the first call will be made soon. The accreditation period shall be five years or three years with the implementation of an improvement plan.

ShACES shaping is recent. For this reason, the institutional accreditation of some higher education institutions was started, but career calls have not yet been made. Prior to its formation, some universities such as the National Autonomous Of Honduras and the National Pedagogical Had been accredited by foreign agencies.



## Mexico

Two quality assurance subsystems coexist in Mexico. On the one hand, there are private accrediting bodies that are recognized and supervised by the Council for the Accreditation of Higher Education (COPAES). On the other hand, there is a subsystem coordinated by the Inter-Agency Committees for the Evaluation of Higher Education (CIEES). Higher education institutions can apply for accreditation of degree programs to both COPAES and CIEES regulated. In addition to these two agencies, it intervenes in quality assurance in Mexico, the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT) that performs accreditation at the graduate level, and the National Evaluation Center for Higher Education (CENEVAL). At the moment, the State is a promoter, but not an authority on quality assurance.

A relevant instance of the university system is the National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education (ANUIES). ANUIES is a pluralistic non-governmental association that adds to the country's leading higher education institutions, in order to promote comprehensive improvement in the fields of teaching, research and the extension of culture and services. The Association is made up of 197 universities and higher education institutions, both public and private throughout the country. In 2000, this association agreed to the establishment of the Council for the Accreditation of Higher Education (COPAES), a non-governmental body responsible for regulating the accreditation of programs through the authorization of specialized agencies by discipline for this purpose. At the moment, there are thirty quality assurance accrediting bodies regulated by COPAES.

COPAES operates in agreement with the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP). It is led by a General Assembly composed of a representative from each partner entity: SEP, ANUIES, the Federation of Mexican Particular Institutions of Higher Education (FIMPES), the Mexican Academy of Sciences, CIEES and professional colleges. COPAES' role is to evaluate and authorize disciplinary accreditation programs that evaluate and accredit educational programs at grade level. COPAES' evaluation is mandatory for agencies as it enables them to operate. There are accrediting bodies that pre-form subsystems, such as the National Council for Teaching and Research in Psychology, an



organization aimed at evaluating psychology programs, which was created in the 1970s. At different times, the other organisms were created, each with a different disciplinary mission.

COPAES defines the guidelines and reference frameworks with which specialized agencies should evaluate programs. This instrument has ten categories and general indicators. Each body has the power to adjust the frame of reference to its discipline field. Once authorized by COPAES, the bodies are constituted with authorities, academic staff and peer evaluators - teachers from educational institutions or recognized experts in the area. Accrediting bodies must renew their authorization every five years, where they can obtain different results: COPAES can grant renewal, renewal with conditioning, or remove recognition.

Degree accreditation is not mandatory but voluntary. Depending on the discipline, higher education institutions may apply for accreditation from the relevant accrediting body. The results are accreditation or non-accreditation. The validity of the accreditation is five years. At two-and-a-half years, a visit is made to evaluate the follow-up to the institution's improvement plan, based on the recommendations made. If a program does not accredit, you must follow the recommendations and re-apply for accreditation.

For their part, CIEES emerged in 1991 and started the culture of the quality of higher education in Mexico. The highest authority of the CIEES is its General Assembly of Associates, which consists of the holders of the following institutions: the Undersecretariat for Higher Education of the PMI, the ANUIES, FIMPES, the Mexican Academy of Sciences (AMC), COPAES and the State Commission for the Planning of Higher Education in the State of Guanajuato (COEPES Guanajuato).

THECIEES are made up of nine Inter-Agency Committees, organized according to areas of expertise. The nine committees are made up of academics who come from all types of higher education institutions (IES) and from all states of the country and are regularly renewed. Its role is to rule on the quality of IES educational programs as a whole.



Institutional accreditation is carried out by THECIEES since one of the committees has this specialty. Institutional accreditation is modular. They also evaluate programs of different disciplines, modalities (mixed, face-to-face and remote) and levels (degree and postgraduate), as well as evaluate and accredit normal schools, teacher training and intervene in the granting of licensing to private institutions. CIEES are federally subsidized.

The accreditation process begins with the self-assessment that is supported by a group of agency advisors. This stage extends between five and seven months. Once completed, a committee composed of three disciplinary evaluator pairs from different institutions is assigned. From the peer report, THECIEES issues an opinion containing two parts: the level of accreditation, which may be three or five years, and recommendations that the institution must comply with and which are reviewed within a certain period of time.

FIMPES nucleate and accredits individual institutions. However, institutions may apply for accreditation from another body.

CONACYT is the body responsible for the evaluation of the postgraduate level carried out through calls. Accreditation deadlines vary depending on professional, academic or doctoral master's degrees. The Council evaluates professional and research master's degrees, doctorates and medical specialties. CONACYT also grants graduate scholarships linked to career accreditation.

CENEVAL also participates in the quality assurance system of higher education. It is a non-profit civil association whose main activity is the design and application of knowledge assessment tools, skills and competencies, as well as the analysis and dissemination of test results. Its highest authority is the General Assembly, consisting of educational institutions, professional associations and colleges, social and productive organizations, as well as government educational authorities. It is the body responsible for the entrance exam to the university, both at the undergraduate and graduate level, in addition to the exams of graduating from careers in different disciplines. While this entrance exam is not mandatory in Mexico, some IES establish it as a graduation requirement and others propose it as an alternative to the thesis. The institutions implementing this review make an agreement with CENEVAL, which charges a tariff to



carry it out.

The licensing of higher education institutions is the faculty of the PMI, the Secretariats of Education of the Federal Entities and the Autonomous Universities. It is done across multiple instances depending on higher education subsystems. Currently in Mexico there are thirteen<sup>subsystems</sup><sup>3</sup> that vary depending on the autonomy and the government agency that regulates them. Seven of these subsystems depend directly on PMI through different agencies: the General Coordination of Technological and Polytechnic Universities (CGUTyP) coordinates polytechnic and technological universities; Mexico's National Technology (TecNM) coordinates centralized and decentralized technology institutes; the Directorate-General for Higher Education for Education Professionals (DGESPE) coordinates public educational training institutions; the Directorate-General for University Higher Education (DGESU) coordinates state public universities; and the General Coordination of Intercultural and Bilingual Education (CGEIB) coordinates intercultural universities. On the other hand, some autonomous universities have the power to grant this recognition to other institutions that provide higher education in the Federal Entity to which they belong, provided that they do not conflict with their own activities. This recognition granted by an autonomous university is not valid throughout the country, but is limited to the State where the authorization was sought.

Privately run institutions may request the state or federal authority to start their operations. Currently, the state or federal authority grants permits based on the assessment of minimum requirements. Once the institution has graduates, it is accredited with account of its compliance. While there are private institutions that are operating without such official recognition, this is expected to change with the reform of the national education system, currently under consideration.

<sup>3</sup> Subsystems are State Public Universities; Federal Public Universities; Federal Institutes of Technology; Decentralized Institutes of Technology; Technological Universities; Polytechnic Universities; Publicly run teaching training schools; State public universities with solidarity support; Intercultural Universities; Public Research Centres; Other public higher education institutions; Private universities; Privately run teacher training schools.





All agencies that perform the function of accreditation of programs and institutions are civil associations. Only CONACyT is a decentralized governance body. COPAES as a regulator receives support from the federal government, not the thirty accrediting agencies it regulates. CIEES receive federal subsidies directly.

In 2019 the treatment of the General Education Law was initiated, which would be supplemented by a General Law on Higher Education. In the debate on these new regulations, the creation of a single quality system is being considered at the time of publication. The intention is to unify the different instances currently living together in the country for the assurance of the quality of higher education.



## Nicaragua

In 2006, Law No. 704, the National Council for evaluation and accreditation of the National Education System (CNEA), was established to ensure quality assurance and the continuous improvement of the national public and private education system, at all levels. According to the Act, non-academic state entities, professional colleges, employer representations, professional and scientific associations, trade union associations and parents participate, in accordance with their nature and purposes.

The CNEA is a collegiate body composed of a President, a Vice-President and three members elected by the National Assembly, who last in their duties for five years. Universities, the President of the Republic or the Council of Universities, propose to members who must have ten years of teaching experience, a minimum degree of master's degree and have knowledge in education or educational quality.

Among its functions, the CNEA accredits the academic quality of institutions and programs; approves the criteria, quality standards and indicators to be used in accreditation processes; constitutes national evaluation and accreditation commissions for the various educational subsystems; and forms the National Register of Peer Evaluators. In addition, the CNEA authorizes and supervises the creation and operation of private quality of education accreditation agencies.

The CNEA created national commissions for each educational subsystem, which function as academic technical support agencies. The commissions developed the quality standards to be reviewed every five years.

Higher education institutions, public and private legally established in the country, must undergo institutional evaluation. To do this, they must first develop for no more than two years a process of self-assessment that includes all headquarters, research centers and social extension.

Once self-assessment is complete, the CNEA develops a process of external verification using evaluator pairs that are selected from the National Register of Evaluator Pairs and an improvement plan is determined. This plan reflects the actions that the institution must take over the next three years depending on the limitations or inadequacies found in self-assessment and external verification. After these first five



years, a check is carried out to assess whether they meet the minimum quality.

If it is fulfilled, the institution enters a second cycle: again it must undergo a self-assessment of two years and another three years of compliance with the improvement plan. While there is still debate as to whether institutions should partially or fully meet the minimums, if they do not, a notification is sent to the National Assembly for the closure of the institution. If the institution or program meets the criteria, standards, and indicators, the CNEA grants you the Accreditation Certificate valid for seven years.

Currently the universities of Nicaragua are going through the first cycle of self-assessment, improvement plan and verification of quality minimums. Under the Act, these universities will be in a position to obtain institutional accreditation by 2025, when they have transited the second cycle of self-assessment and improvements. Only accredited universities can accredit their degree and graduate programs. This process is done before agencies authorized by the CNEA. As a result, in Nicaragua until 2025 the programs cannot be accredited.

Universities must pay the cost of the evaluator pairs that are selected from the country's academic community. International pairs are also incorporated from agreements with the National Accreditation Board (JAN) of the Republic of Cuba and with the agencies of Costa Rica and El Salvador.

With regard to the creation of universities, public universities are created by the National Assembly and private ones are authorized by the National Council of Universities (UNC) which also follows up for two years after its creation.

The first CNEA was integrated in 2007 but did not operate because of problems Budget. In 2011, a new Law was enacted by which the National Education Quality Assurance System. In 2013, the CNEA Higher Education Commission began operating.



## Panama

The National System of Evaluation and Accreditation for the Quality Improvement of University Higher Education of Panama was created by Law No. 30 in 2006. Just four years later the decree was issued so that the system has been operating since 2011. Law No. 52, the Regulations of which were adopted in August 2018, were passed in 2015. These temporary spaces between the sanctioning of the Law and its regulations have generated discontinuities in accreditation processes and imply that the system is still in development: the instruments are being adapted to the new regulations.

The System consists of the Ministry of Education, the National Council for the Evaluation and Accreditation of University Higher Education of Panama (CONEAUPA), the Technical Commission for Academic Development (CTDA), the Council of Rectors of Panama and the Association of Private Universities of Panama. The latter two act as consultation bodies.

CONEAUPA was conceived as an autonomous body and representative of the different sectors that make up the Panamanian university system. Its board consists of eleven members distributed as follows: a representative of the Ministry of Education; a representative of the Ministry of Economy and Finance; a representative of the Secretariat of Science, Technology and Innovation; a representative of the Committee on Education, Culture and Sports of the National Assembly; the Executive Secretary of CONEAUPA (voice-only); two representatives of public universities; two representatives of private universities; a representative of the National Council of Private Enterprise; a member of professional organizations; and, a member of the National Council of Education.

For its part, the CTDA is chaired by the rector of the University of Panama and composed of the five official universities operating on a state budget. This Commission is responsible for approving all curriculums, statutes and their amendments, as well as monitoring the quality of academic activity and the recognition of the qualifications they teach. The Commission is the one who tracks new institutions, raises reports to the CONEAUPA and authorizes the presentation to accreditation of its academic programs.



According to the Law, the body responsible for implementing and developing accreditation processes is CONEAUPA. Through this body, the system performs institutional, undergraduate and graduate program accreditations. All processes involve three phases: self-assessment, external evaluation by evaluating pairs and the accreditation decision issued by CONEAUPA. CONEAUPA also develops and implements the documents that guide the development of evaluation processes: it establishes the criteria, indicators and quality standards.

To carry out the evaluation, *ad hoc technical commissions are convened* integrated by a minimum of three members evaluators that are selected from the External Academic Peer Data Bank, depending on the nature and context of the University, taking into account the area of specialization and career. If the university is official, most peers must be from official universities; on the other hand, if particular, most must come from a particular university.

Institutional accreditation is mandatory for all institutions, public or private, that have served ochor years since its creation. Younger institutions can volunteer. Institutional accreditation has a validity of six years and after this period, they must be subject to a new accreditation. Prior to the sanction of the new Law, between 2011 and 2014 CONEAUPA had carried out accreditation processes. Starting with the 2018 regulations, a new call for 2020 is scheduled to be launched.

CONEAUPA must also make discipline calls for graduate programs. Under the Act, Universities must accredit at least two graduate programs per call. That is, accreditation is mandatory for at least two programs per university and is voluntary for the rest.

So far, only the call for undergraduate careers in Health Sciences has been made and graduate accreditation has not yet been launched. At the time of this report, neither the postgraduate levels to be included nor the disciplines to be convened have been defined. Private universities must have a favorable CTDA report as a prerequisite for both institutional accreditation and bachelor's and graduate degrees. The validity of the accreditation can be four, five or six years, depending on the degree of compliance with the indicators.

The agencies acting for the licensing of new institutions are CTDA, CONEAUPA



and the Ministry of Education issuing the final decision. The CTDA is responsible for approving the institutional project and offering the new institution, as well as reviewing its statutes and curriculum. Based on the CTDA technical report, CONEAUPA produces an executive information on the consistency and feasibility of the institutional project and then sends the procedure to the Ministry of Education. This procedure is carried out both for the granting of the provisional and definitive authorization for the creation of institutions and for their cancellation in cases where breaches are detected in the minimum requirements established. In addition, CTDA is the body responsible for monitoring and auditing private universities. It also submits reports to CONEAUPA and authorizes the accreditation of its academic programs.

With regard to the financing of agencies, both the Commission and CONEAUPA have a national budget to finance their activities and make the necessary contributions for the performance of their functions. It is also established that official and private universities must pay an amount established to cover institutional evaluation and accreditation services, carreras and programs.

Panama is currently home to the Central American Higher Education Accreditation Council (CCA), a second-level accreditation agency responsible for giving international validity to the accreditation of the quality of Superior Education that is carried out in different countries of the Central American region. This Council also promotes quality improvement processes through agreements with extra-regional bodies, such as the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) and the High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES).

The CCA was created by seven States: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Belize. Until 2016 he worked at the University of Costa Rica and since then, the five public universities of Panama, offered to host him. These accreditation processes are voluntary in all cases and come at a cost to agencies. Accreditation deadlines can be three, five and seven years.



## Paraguay

The system of assurance of the quality of higher education in Paraguay consists of four agencies: the National Council of Higher Education (CONES), the Ministry of Education and Sciences, the National Agency for evaluation and accreditation of higher education (ANEAES); and the National Council of Science and Technology of Paraguay (CONACYT).

ConES was created by Law No. 4995/13 and is the governing body of higher education. Its main function is the empowerment, closure or intervention of higher education institutions and their programs. In addition, it has the power to sanction the institutions in the event of irregularities or in case of non-compliance with the requirements laid down. For decision-making, CONES draws on evaluation reports prepared by ANEAES which it operates as an advisory body. ANEAES must submit all the career and institution reports it makes for CONES to become aware and act accordingly. There have been cases of title registrations that have been closed, others intervened and others that have been audited.

According to the Law, CONES is a collegiate body made up of incumbent and alternate members representing thirteen institutions linked to the National System of Higher Education, among them: the Minister of Education and Sciences; the rector of the National University of Asunción; the Catholic University; public universities; private universities; the National Council of Education and Culture; the Higher Institutes of the public sector; the Higher Institutes of the private sector; public universities; private universities; the National Council of Science and Technology; a student representative of public universities; and a student retet of private universities.

The Ministry of Education and Science has the function of registering bachelor's and graduate degrees, but its functions are administrative. ANEAES is responsible for the evaluation and accreditation of the academic quality of undergraduate, graduate and institution programs. In addition, it has as a secondary function produce technical reports on the academic requirements of careers and higher education institutions. The agency was established in 2003 from the enactment of Law No. 2072. Its governing body is the Board of Directors, which consists of a representative of the Ministry of Education



ad Sciences, two of the body that nucleates public and private higher education institutions, one of the federations of professional organizations unitingrsitarios and one by the federations that make up the associations of the productive sector.

The Agency carries out its work through a National Model for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education that was developed and launched in 2009. This model consists of three evaluation mechanisms: undergraduate careers, graduate careers and higher education institutions.

The evaluation and accreditation mechanism for undergraduate careers has definitions of calidad criteria for each of the degrees. They were elaborated and validated in a participatory manner from advisory committees that had representation of public and private higher education institutions, trade union associations, relevant actors within the disciplinary area - for example, the Ministry of Education and Sciences, the Ministry of Public Health - and other entities related to the professional exercise of these degrees. Once validated by the academic community, these criteria are approved by the Board of Directors of the ANEAES. Currently, the National Model has 32 quality criteria corresponding to the degree mechanism with which more than forty degrees are evaluated. Work is currently under way to develop criteria for another ten.

The evaluation and accreditation mechanism for graduate programs was developed by a consultancy and validated in face-to-face meetings involving representatives of institutions with more postgraduate progress, CONES and the Board of Rectors. It is currently approved and in deployment. This mechanism has a quality matrix and valuation for the evaluation of Master's and Doctoral programs and, another for the specialty is medical. These have specific quality criteria, developed and validated according to the same procedures as undergraduate careers. To date, there are criteria for four medical specialties and work is under way on the development and validation of four others.

With the support of an international consultancy, the Agency is focused on the development and validation of two mechanisms for the evaluation and accreditation of undergraduate and postgraduate careers, respectively, implemented in the modality of





distance education.

The institutional evasion and accreditation mechanism was developed and validated with the support of an international consultancy. Between 2015 and 2016, an experimental mechanism was implemented in some higher education institutions, public and private for diagnostic purposes. These evaluations issued a number of improvement recommendations without resulting in accreditation. Finally, in 2019 the Agency approved the institutional evaluation and accreditation mechanism and its guiding documents.

All evaluations are carried out through the formation of expert peer committees made up of two national and one foreign professionals. For the formation of the committees, draws are made by degree. This criterion was taken in an a logy with the establishment of the ARCU-SUR System peer team. The agency has a national register of peer evaluators that includes national experts and foreign professionals from the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), Mexico, Colombia, Panama and Costa Rica. To be part of that record, a selection and training process must be traversed.

As established by Law No. 2072/03, participation in external evaluation and accreditation processes is voluntary except for careers in law, medicine, dentistry, engineering, architecture and agronomic engineering, and for those that grant degrees that enable them to practice professions whose practice may mean damage to the integrity of individuals or their heritage. For the purpose of giving greater clarity to this article of the Law, the agency defined the degrees that have a mandatory evaluation character defining 44 degrees of degree and all medical specialties for postgraduate studies. The accrediting is done as long as the races have graduates. ANEAES also conducts assessments



for diagnostic purposes to careers that do not have graduates.

As for the periodicity of the processes, the agency makes between one and two calls per year. Until 2018, accreditation deadlines were five years. As of 2019, the system was modified and accreditation deadlines may vary from four to six years depending on a numerical rating. Races that have re-saharan weaknesses in the short term are granted a nine-month postponement. Improvements must be implemented in that period, a report made, and a peer visit received. Subsequently, an accreditation or non-accreditation decision is issued.

For its part, CONACYT, is a collegiate body whose mission is the promotion of scientific and technological research, the generation, dissemination and transfer of knowledge; invention, innovation, scientific and technological education, the development of national technologies and management in science, technology and innovation. It is responsible for the research projects that are carried out in higher education institutions in such a way that there is a close and coordinated link between ANEAES and CONACYT. The agency convenes advisory committees for the definition of evaluation criteria that may be made up of academics linked to CONACYT research programs.

In terms of costs, private universities must pay tariffs that vary depending on a degree accreditation, a diagnostic assessment, or a verification assessment of the career improvement plan whose accreditation received a postponement. For public institutions, evaluations and accreditations are free of cost. In graduate evaluations, visits must be paid and their value is linked to the discipline area and the number of programs that are evaluated simultaneously.

The beginnings of quality assurance of higher education in Paraguay are recorded in the accreditation processes of the Experimental University Degree Career Accreditation Mechanism (MEXA). ANEAES has also gone through external evaluation processes through the Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (RIACES). Between 2017 and 2018 conducted the self-assessment process and received a visit in 2019. The report concluded that ANEAES is aligned with RIACES' good practice guidelines. Currently, the agency is conducting the self-assessment



process with the International Network of Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies (INQAAHE).





## Peru

In 2006, through Law No. 28740, the National System of Evaluation, Accreditation and Certification of Educational Quality (SINEACE), an agency enrolled in the Ministry of Education whose function is to accredit institutions and programs at all educational levels, was created. According to the Act, SINEACE is the set of bodies, standards and procedures that establish the criteria, standards and processes of evaluation, accreditation and certification in order to ensure the basic levels of quality that educational institutions must provide. The Council for Evaluation, Accreditation and Certification of the Quality of University Education (CONEAU) is the operating body in the field of university higher education.

In 2014, a new Law was passed, creates a new system of university governance and reformed the quality assurance system. This Law established a model of regulation of universities in Peru: new evaluation and accreditation mechanisms were established and a process of reorganization of SINEACE was initiated, of which regulation of its operation is still pending.

Moreover, this Law created the National Superintendency of University Higher Education (SUNEDU), a specialized technical body, attached to the Ministry of Education, whose responsibility is to conduct the evaluation process for licensing purposes for the university higher education service or, that is, verify compliance with the basic quality conditions and authorize their operation. His spirit has been to order the university system due to strong institutional and tuition growth, facilitated by a regulation of the year 1997 that did not provide for mechanisms that would ensure compliance with a minimum quality floor of the new university institutions. This concern for quality led to the implement of a Quality Assurance Policy for University Higher Education, which has as fundamental pillars licensing and accreditation, modifying the criteria from which it was working in Peru and prioritizing licensing and control.

From this new Law, the agencies are responsible for the assurance of the quality of university higher education, SUNEDU, linked to the new licensing model, which establishes basic quality conditions that institutions and programs must have; and SINEACE, whose function is the accreditation of quality. The Ministry of Education is the



governing body of university education in place of the National Association of Rectors (ANR) that granted the licenses to create institutions, but did not carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the quality. The resolution body of SUNEDU is the Board of Directors; the Minister proposes to the Superintendent and the councilors are selected by public competition.

The licensing model sets out basic quality conditions that institutions must have. The university is asked to submit information through which it is evaluated if it meets certain conditions, a verification visit is made and a technical licensing report is issued that is rising to the Consejo Directivo who decides whether to grant the license. If the analysis of the documentation or verification that is performed on the visit shows that the university does not meet the basic conditions, you are asked for an adequacy plan. The institution proposes a plan with actions, and after this stage the same procedure is performed again. If you receive denial, you must establish a closing process that can take up to two years, during which you ensure that students join programs at other universities.

Under the Act, SUNEDU also serves the role of monitoring the basic quality conditions that programs must meet. While mandatory for all undergraduate programs, it was decided to prioritize those that could have a greater impact on society: it began with the licensing of medical careers. The careers presented must have gone through the evaluation of institutional licensing, as a guarantee that the university institution meets the minimum quality.

While the licensing of institutions and programs is a function of SUNEDU, institutional and program accreditation is the function of SINEACE, which is at a stage of redefining its structure and evaluative processes changes under the new Law. Sun EDU's institutional licensing has also been prioritized as a precondition for institutions to engage in institutional accreditation and program processes.

External evaluation in institutional and programmed accreditation is carried out by external evaluating entities, which are authorized and supervised by SINEACE. Institutions choose an evaluating entity, which may be public or private, and which has been constituted only for the purpose of carrying out the operational processes of



external evaluation for institutional accreditation or program purposes. These entities are not accrediting agencies in the strict sense, as they are constituted only for the purpose of carrying out external evaluation processes. Both the criteria and procedures, the definition of standards for the accreditation of institutions and programs and the decisions of accreditation correspond to the SINEACE, which also accompanies the institutions during their self-assessment process.

SINEACE also authorizes and supervises entities that certify the competences of professionals and workers to recognize the quality of learning, regardless of whether these skills have been acquired in the education system. It is a voluntary certification, which is not binding to practice the profession or occupation, so it is distinguished from the qualification of a professional degree. Some of these entities are professional colleges that perform this certification function authorized by SINEACE.

On the basis of the new Law, CONEAU was repealed as a body although accreditation will remain the function of SINEACE. It has an *ad hoc* management consisting of a president, a representative of the Ministry of Education, a representative of the National Council of Science, Technology and Technological Innovation, and the management of the agencies responsible not only the acronym at the top level but also the evaluation of basic and technical education, and the certification of skills of workers and professionals in the country.

According to the 2006 Law, accreditation of graduate programs in the areas of health, education and law is mandatory. However, redefining this obligation and its relationship to the licensing of programs; the status of accreditation of programs that have already obtained sunshamp licensing should be defined. Until now, the accreditation of graduate programs is voluntary, but the Law determines that, as of the reform of SINEACE, it will be mandatory.

SUNEDU's licensing processes are free of charge or for institutions; in the case of institutional and program accreditation, the institution must meet the costs of external evaluation carried out by the evaluating entities, but SINEACE does not receive any tariffs.

The quality assurance system in Peru is in the process of reorganization through



the licensing of institutions and programs and, at the same time, the restructuring of SINEACE and the review of accreditation processes. The Law passed in 2014 and the creation of SUNEDU involved changes to the system, but the adoption of regulations regulating SINEACE and the accreditation of institutions and programs is still pending. For this reason, the accreditation processes that begin to develop in Peru from 2006 are under review, prioritizing compulsory licensing to ensure minimum quality of institutions and programs.



## Dominican Republic

In 2018, Law No. 139/01 created *the Dominican Subsystem* of Quality Assurance of Higher Education (SIDACES). SIDACES is part of the National System of Higher Education, Science and Technology, whose rectory corresponds to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MESCYT). His founding document proposes, among its fundamental purposes, "to generate a culture that promotes and develops quality as a continuous and integral process, as well as the establishment of public policies aimed at its pursuit".

With the aim of organizing, articulating, managing and developing the set of mechanisms and non-regulatory processes of AIDSCES, the creation of the Dominican Agency for the Assurance of the Quality of Higher Education (ADACES) was proposed as a decentralized public body, attached to the MESCYT and endowed with technical and administrative autonomy. ADACES is in the process of being formed but is expected to be under the supervision of the Council for quality assurance of higher education (COACES). This Council shall consist of: the Minister of Higher Education Science and Technology or by delegation, the Deputy Minister for Evaluation and Accreditation; an Executive Director, who will serve as secretary, with a voice, but without the right to vote; four members of the academic community appointed by the National Council of Higher Education, Science and Technology (CONESCyT); and a member representing the Academy of Sciences of the Dominican Republic, selected by that entity. They will also form part of their management structure, on an advisory basis and at the invitation, bodies or entities such as schools or professional guilds, among others. The Assembly of Rectors shall be a permanent advisory body, through a designated representative.

In the Dominican Republic, there are several instances involved in quality assurance processes. On the one hand, the authorization for the opening and commissioning of new IES is the power of CONESCyT. Similarly, it is for this body to approve the new curriculum presented by the IES. For its part, ADACES will exercise its evaluating action both in terms of institutions, as well as the different programs they offer.





This evaluation will be carried out on a systematic and continuous basis, through cycles followed by plans of improvement, monitoring and monitoring to the implementation of such plans. This is therefore in place to form a mechanism for permanent progressive improvement.

In addition, ADACES is expected to develop standards for the institutional context, inputs, processes, results and impact of the performance of IES and its programmatic offerings. The Students will be oriented to guide the work of the IES, in order to help their graduates to exercise their citizenship in an environment of solidarity, respect and promotion of civilized coexistence; and that, as professionals, they can be effectively and creatively inserted into the national and international productive system.

In this regard, in 2019 a commission made up of CONESCyT and the Vice-Ministry of Evaluation and Accreditation of IES created the document Framework Standards for Institutional Evaluation and Accreditation in Dominican Higher Education. For its formulation, national and international benchmarks on quality assurance and required standards were convened in the context of higher education. The document states that the evaluation process should be organized around eight dimensions: Institutional Management; Academic Management; Research; Linkage to Medium/Extension; Students; Academic Staff; Vocational Services and Support Structures; and Quality Assurance.

Based on these standards, public and private IES must undergo a Five-Year Assessment (EQ) by private accrediting entities. This process, which is carried out voluntarily every five years, involves a diagnostic evaluation of the institutional elements in their different regulatory and operational instances, which allows to ensure compliance with the standard quality criteria.

The five-year evaluation process is in practice an accreditation, but not in the regulations. The Act defines accreditation as a temporary social and institutional recognition, through which public faith is given of the merits and the level of quality of a higher education institution, a program, one of its functions or its constituent elements. Complete with a certification that the institution or program evaluated meets



the preset quality standards.

A valuation system was recently approved in the Five-Year Assessment: if the university does not achieve the minimum score, it must submit an improvement plan and cannot enroll students until it does not attend the observations made in the process. There is a possibility that the closure of the institution may be issued until it is complied with the provisions of the current rules. In these cases, opinions are issued by the Vice-Ministry of Evaluation and Accreditation.

On the one hand, universities have up to a year to complete their self-study. An external evaluation is then carried out, including an expert visit to the University. Accreditation periods have not yet been defined, but based on international criteria, it is expected to be valid for five to seven years.

Universities must bear the operational costs of evaluation and accreditation, such as passages and evaluators' fees, but as a public service by a state agency, no fees are charged.

ADACES is also intended to carry out institutional evaluation and senior, graduate and graduate technical programs. In principle it will also be voluntary, but it is evaluated to define the obligation of accreditation of some degrees. It is further anticipated that ADACES will be the official entity that assesses the relevance of other national and international agencies to be recognized by CONESCyT.

Some universities in the Dominican Republic already have an international accreditation in their programs. It should be mentioned that there is a headquarters of the Greater Caribbean Regional Engineering Accreditation System (GCREAS) in the country.

Finally, Law No. 139/01 stipulates the conduct of a diagnostic test of students entering the upper level of Dominican education. It is the responsibility of the MESCYT and is aimed at measuring the level of income and providing establishing admission criteria, developing leveling programs and planning training.



## Uruguay

The system of assurance of the quality of higher education in Uruguay has undergone a recent transformation from the creation of the National Institute of Accreditation and Evaluation of Tertiary Education (INAEET). On 8 January 2020, Law No. 19852 was passed and is scheduled to take office from 1 January 2021. So far, the quality assurance system in Uruguay is carried out by the Ministry of Education and Culture, through an ad hoc Commission *responsable* for the implementation of the Regional Accreditation System of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the ARCU-SUR. Accreditation resolutions are issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture, although the Commission's decisions are binding on the Ministry. The Commission is composed of two members proposed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, two proposed by the University of the Republic and one by the Council of Rectors of Private Universities.

The Uruguayan university system is characterized by being predominantly public: 85% of university enrolment belongs to this sector. The recent Law creates the quality assurance body, INAEET. The Institute will consist of a Board of Directors composed of nine incumbent members and nine alternate members who will be appointed by the President of the Republic acting in agreement with the Minister of Education and Culture. Of these, five holders and their alternates will be proposed by public tertiary institutions through the National System of Public Tertiary Education, three holders and their alternates, will be proposed by the private tertiary institutions recognized or authorized to function as such through the Council of Rectors, and one and its alternate will be proposed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, who will preside over it. The functions of the agency will be: accredit the university and non-university tertiary institutions that voluntarily present the same, as well as their units and their careers; and develop evaluation processes for institutions, academic units and careers at their request. The Law does not specify whether graduate careers will be included.

INAEET will be responsible for defining accreditation standards and criteria in



coordination with convened specialists from tertiary education institutions and in the professional and academic field.

Accreditation shall be granted for periods of up to six years. Although it is established as a volunteer, on the basis of the evaluations carried out and the information generated by INAEET, the formalities carried out by the accredited institutions before the Ministry will be simplified or abbreviated with respect to those carried out by the uncredited degrees. These procedures will include regular updating of information and modifications to processing plans to incorporate identified changes into the accreditation process.

So far, the quality assurance system operates under the ARCU-SUR Regional Accreditation System and the standards used for program accreditation are those approved by this System. ARCU-SUR accreditation is also voluntary. Almost all of the races in the engineering area obtained the ARCU-SUR accreditation, consolidating a culture of quality and evaluation. In terms of costs, institutions must currently cover the costs of evaluator fees governed by the ARCU-SUR payment system.

The Consultative Council for Private Tertiary Teaching (CCETP) is another body involved in ensuring the quality of higher education in Uruguay. It consists of seven full members: two representatives of the Ministry, three representatives of the University of the Republic (UDELAR), two representatives of private universities and a representative of the National Administration of Public Education (ANEP). This body manages the creation of new public and private institutions and careers as well as the assurance of university quality. The criteria for the licensing of institutions are regulated by Decree No. 104/14 which establishes mainly qualitative and very exhaustive guidelines.

The first rating is temporary and valid for five years. The Council monitors annually and, after that period, is re-evaluated. The evaluation is carried out every three years in those institutions or careers that are less than twenty years old and every five years the ones that have the most. Also, where an institution does not meet the minimum requirements for its operation, it is closed. There is also the possibility that races will close when departing from the initial conditions in which they were enabled.





## Venezuela

In 2002, the Ministry of the People's Power of University Education (MPPEU) was created with the aim of coordinating the national higher education system, as well as homogenizing and articulating the objectives and quality of institutions. In 2008, the MPPEU created the University Assessment, Monitoring and Accreditation System (SESU) with the aim of ensuring the quality of institutions and programs, both public and private, through their evaluation, monitoring and accreditation, in a set of criteria and indicators of relevance, relevance and quality. In order to conduct these processes, that same year, according to Official Gazette No. 39032, the National Committee for evaluation and accreditation of University Education Programs and Institutions (CEAPIES) was formalized.

The purpose of CEAPIES is to coordinate the evaluation and accreditation processes of institutions and careers; recognition of university degrees, in accordance with established agreements and State policies on university education, and articulate with international accreditation processes within the framework of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). It is composed of twenty-seven university professors or academics of proven literature in both training and teaching activity, as well as in scientific and intellectual production, in accordance with criteria of gender equity, profession, areas of knowledge and geographical location - according to territorialization policies it is set by the MPPEU.

Since its creation until 2014, CEAPIES has participated in the ARCU-SUR System and the Network of National Accreditation Agencies of MERCOSUR (RANA). After that date, no activity has been posted.

On the other hand, there is in Venezuela the National Council of Universities (UNC), the governing body of the higher education system attached to the Ministry, made up of more than forty members with the right to vote and six with the right to a voice. The UNC is chaired by the MPPEU and composed of the rectors of the national and private universities; three representatives of professors from national universities, experimental and private universities; three student representatives; two professors appointed by the Congress of the Republic; and a representative of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICIT). The UNC is responsible for approving projects for the creation of new universities, institutes and public or private



colleges. In addition, you must lay down the requirements for the creation, elimination or modification of faculties, schools or institutes of all units, as well as to approve the corresponding applications. Current UNC initiatives have been identified to create a new system of evaluation, supervision, accompaniment and university accreditation, but this process is still in question.

Due to the impossibility of using direct sources that participate in the quality assurance of higher education in the country, the information collected here comes from the bibliographic review and a survey of secondary sources.

