

EQUAM-LA

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

COUNTRY REPORT ARGENTINA



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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.