

**MONITORING REPORT FOR THE EFFECTS
OF INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
CNA – COLOMBIA**



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INTRODUCTION

The National Accreditation Council (CNA, for the Spanish original), as the entity in Colombia that undertakes processes to assess the quality of academic programs and higher education institutions, was created by Law 30 of 1992 as part of the National Accreditation System (SNA, for the Spanish original), whose fundamental objective is to “...assure society that institutions that are part of the System comply with the highest quality requirements and fulfill their purposes and objectives”.

The CNA began its work in 1994 with the creation of its first Council. The first programs were accredited in 1998, and the first institutions were accredited in 2002. Throughout the almost 30 years of operations, the Council has managed 3,464 accreditation processes for academic programs as well as institutions. Of these, 2,707 undergraduate programs, 86 graduate programs and 81 institutions have received accreditation, and 590 processes received recommendations for improvement. To date, 1,142 undergraduate and 216 graduate programs have valid accreditation, as well as 52 higher education institutions, including universities, university institutions and technology institutions.

The CNA itself has defined the concept of high quality accreditation, based on which self-assessment guidelines and guides have been developed to accredit academic programs and institutions. These documents are consistently monitored. Consequently, they are updated to take into consideration significant progress made by academic programs and institutions in Colombia, changes in international quality assurance benchmarks, the results of the Council’s own reflections and contributions by other members of the System, including academic peers and the academic community in general.

In this regard, the CNA, in its capacity of accreditation agency, and aware of its responsibility for assuring the quality of higher education and of the growing importance of accreditation in the international arena, has decided to submit its activities to external assessment processes, including through benchmarking with similar agencies at the Latin American and Ibero-American levels; the participation in networks of agencies such as RIACES and RANA, just to name a few, and most importantly, to undergo an assessment by external peers, such as the assessment performed by the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) in 2012, when it received five-year certification, becoming the only Ibero-American agency with certified good practices for accreditation bodies, all for the purpose of attaining a higher degree of credibility, authority and trust in its management. Between 2016 and 2017, it renewed its certification, once again obtaining recognition for 5 years. The above framework includes a scheduled monitoring report on the progress made in the improvement plan during the second half of 2019.

In addition, and in line with the above, in 2018 RIACES proposed a validation of the *Manual para la autoevaluación de Agencias de Evaluación y Acreditación de la Calidad de la Educación Superior en Iberoamérica* (Manual for Self-assessment for Assessment and Accreditation Agencies of Higher Education Quality in Ibero-America) as a tool to identify Good Practices of the various accreditation agencies included in the network, in order to identify those that may be shared amongst the agencies therein, to strengthen their self-assessment processes. The CNA considered participation in this pilot program a valuable opportunity not just to share its experience and good practices, but as a further opportunity to learn from other agencies and improve its work in Colombia.

At the same time, the CNA presented the self-assessment document, following the RIACES guidelines established in the following documents: *Orientaciones de buena práctica para la evaluación de agencias responsables de evaluación o acreditación de la calidad de la educación superior en Iberoamérica* (Guidelines on Good Practices for the Self-assessment of Agencies Responsible for Assessment or Accreditation of Higher Education Quality in Ibero-America); *Guía de antecedentes para la recolección de información* (Guide for collecting background information) and *Manual para la autoevaluación de agencias de evaluación y acreditación de la calidad de la educación superior* (Manual for Self-assessment for Assessment and Accreditation Agencies of Higher Education Quality in Ibero-America). The external assessment visit took place from April 29 to May 1 of this year.

As a result of this process, the CNA received the *highest distinction in recognition of its full compliance with the good practices guidelines (OBP, for the Spanish original) defined by RIACES*. Moreover, the visit report indicates that substantial progress has been made in some areas, beyond OBP recommendations, which suggests the convenience of recognizing its function and importance in other Latin American agencies. The results of this process are under review by the Council in order to include the recommendations in the improvement plan, with the goal of standardizing those that might have common elements, and in particular, defining specific actions related to those that introduce new challenges for both the CNA and the SNA.

The CNA, in keeping with its commitment of strengthening the visibility of both the National Accreditation System and the Colombian Accreditation Model with international leaders, formalized its entry to the Ibero-American Higher Education Quality Assurance System (SIACES, for the Spanish original) in May 2019, which was constituted as a collegiate body by the Ibero-American Secretary General (SEGIB, for the Spanish original) in the framework of the Ibero-American Space of Knowledge (EIC, for the Spanish original), which intends to foster higher education quality assurance in the region and strengthen cooperation among the respective national systems¹.

In a meeting held in the city of Salamanca on May 31 of this year, the CNA's incorporation as full member to the System was made official, and as such, Mr. Guillermo Murillo Vargas, CNA General Coordinator, was named as member of its Steering Committee. This participation will be instrumental in helping shape a regional system that recognizes reliable quality assurance mechanisms, and on that basis, facilitates the recognition of academic courses of study and titles, and favors transferability. Similarly, one of the objectives of SIACES is to promote good practices in national quality assurance systems as a mechanism to help build mutual trust in the assessment and accreditation processes. In these areas, CNA - Colombia has been a pioneer and leader.

Because the initiative to create this system was launched during the Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State, held in Guatemala in 2018, SIACES is projected as a space for high-level coordination thanks to the inter-governmental support. These particularities make it an appropriate scenario to drive common policies aimed at furthering the quality assurance of higher education through international cooperation instruments with initiatives or support from the respective state entities. The involvement of the governments at the level of heads of state or ministries opens up a new dimension to the way of addressing matters related to high-quality accreditation.

In this same context, the CNA is in the process of preparing to voluntarily submit to an international inspection by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), aimed at obtaining reciprocal recognition of its accreditation system. This is in connection with the statement by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), which has determined that by 2023, any doctors from countries other than the United States requesting ECFMG certification must have graduated from a duly accredited school of medicine, with internationally accepted criteria, as those established by the WFME to be able to enter post-graduate studies or exercise their profession in that country.

These international experiences and challenges have produced useful recommendations for strengthening the National Accreditation Council (CNA - Colombia), and the National Accreditation System (SNA, for the Spanish original), which will undoubtedly contribute to the enhancement of the high quality accreditation processes in Colombia.

In this framework, the theme structure of this report is intended to present to the INQAAHE Board the actions CNA has implemented to fulfill the established improvement plan aimed at addressing both improvement aspects and the recommendations made assessment panel in its visit report.

With that aim, initially a brief overview of the National Accreditation Council and the National Accreditation System is provided, illustrating aspects of the regulatory framework that forms the basis for the system's principles and core aspects of the assessment model used to perform accreditation process for programs and institutions in Colombia. The report also provides figures indicating the progress made by the SNA.

Afterwards, reference is made to the CNA's mission and strategic framework, from which the dimensions of the CNA's Continuous Improvement System (CIS-CNA) are derived. This chapter helps illustrate the CNA's planning and management processes through which the improvement plan is defined and the action plan is deployed.

The third chapter is the heart of the report. It presents the actions and projects in progress aimed at addressing the opportunities for improvement pointed out by INQAAHE in its 2017 external assessment visit report. It is important to note that all these actions seek to have a significant, long-term impact on the processes carried out by the CNA, which in turn are reflected in the National Accreditation System.

¹ See Annex 1 – Meeting Minutes SIACES – Salamanca.



1. MISSION FRAMEWORK OF THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL AND EVOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION SYSTEM



1.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Agency name National Accreditation Council (CNA for the Spanish original) - Colombia

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Start year | 1994 |
| Address | Avenida (calle) 26 No. 69-76 - Torre 1 Piso 14 Edificio Elemento Bogotá – Colombia |
| Phone numbers | + 571 4399016 - Extension 1000 |
| Council Coordinator | Guillermo Murillo Vargas |
| Contact person | Luis Enrique Silva Segura – CNA Technical and Academic Secretary Email: lsilva@mineducacion.gov.co |

CURRENT STRUCTURE - CNA



1.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The National Accreditation Council of Colombia celebrated twenty-seventh (27th) anniversary in 2019, which it has dedicated to working towards the attainment of excellence in higher education in Colombia.

The **CNA**, as a sectoral advisory and coordination body, was created by Article 54 of Law 30 of 1992 and it is governed by Decree 2904 of December 31, 1994. It is of an academic nature with roles that include coordination, planning, recommendation and support on issues related to accreditation of undergraduate and graduate programs and higher education institutions in Colombia².

It reports to the National Council of Higher Education (CESU, for the Spanish original), which establishes its rules, roles and organization. Its primary role is to promote and implement the accreditation policy adopted by the CESU and to coordinate the respective processes. Consequently, it provides guidance to higher education institutions on performing their self-assessments; it defines the quality criteria, tools and technical indicators that are applied in external assessments; it appoints the external peers to perform the external assessments; and it conducts the final assessment.

The CNA plans the accreditation process; it certifies quality, understood as the relative distance between the manner in which an institution or academic program provides the service, and the optimum service level according to its nature; and finally, it recommends to the Ministry of National Education to accredit the programs and institutions that demonstrate a high level of compliance with the guidelines that have been established to that end, in a manner that is objective, autonomous and transparent. In that context, it publicly recognizes that an institution or program is fulfilling its mission with high levels of quality.

Its academic autonomy has been fully recognized by the national and international bodies the CNA is associated with. Similarly, the resources required for its operation are guaranteed, especially because the budget allocation has a specific destination that corresponds to the annual operation and investment budget, defined by the CNA itself in accordance with state policies pertaining to budget issues.

1.3 NATIONAL ACCREDITATION SYSTEM

The National Accreditation System (SNA, for the Spanish original) is the set of policies, strategies, processes and organizations whose main objective is to assure society that the higher education institutions that form part of the system meet the highest quality requirements and fulfill their purposes and objectives. Article 53 of Law 30/1992.

The Accreditation is a certificate issued by the state regarding the quality of a program or institution based on a prior assessment process with the intervention of the institution, academic communities and the National Accreditation Council (CNA).

Since its creation, this process has been closely linked to the ideas of autonomy and self-regulation, complemented by the accountability required from higher education by the different social sectors. Therefore, it must be stressed that the legitimacy of the System is closely linked to the aims of the academic community itself and its interactions with society. Said legitimacy is the result of a lengthy deliberations in which consensus has been gradually achieved around the central points of the System: the model and its phases; the concept of quality; the factors and characteristics; the methodology for self-assessment, peer assessment, etc. The external assessment is understood as a complement to these processes, and, therefore, the accreditation certificates essentially reflect the institutions' capacity for self-assessment.

Accreditation arises from the need expressed in multiple situations to strengthen the quality of higher education and to publicly recognize high levels of quality. It also arises at a critical time in response to the needs of the modern world, which grant central importance to the quality of higher education as a means for the country's development. In Colombia, the accreditation process does not arise in the framework of audit and oversight by the state, but as means for the promotion, recognition and continuous improvement of quality. In fact, it is currently recognized that the main and most effective investment in terms of accreditation is not the establishment of the model itself and its assessment processes, but the

² Agreement CESU 01/2017, through which the new National Council of Higher Education Agreement was issued (CNA Regulation).

investment made by the institutions in their improvement plans as a condition to enter the System, or as a result of the self-assessment and reports of the academic peers.

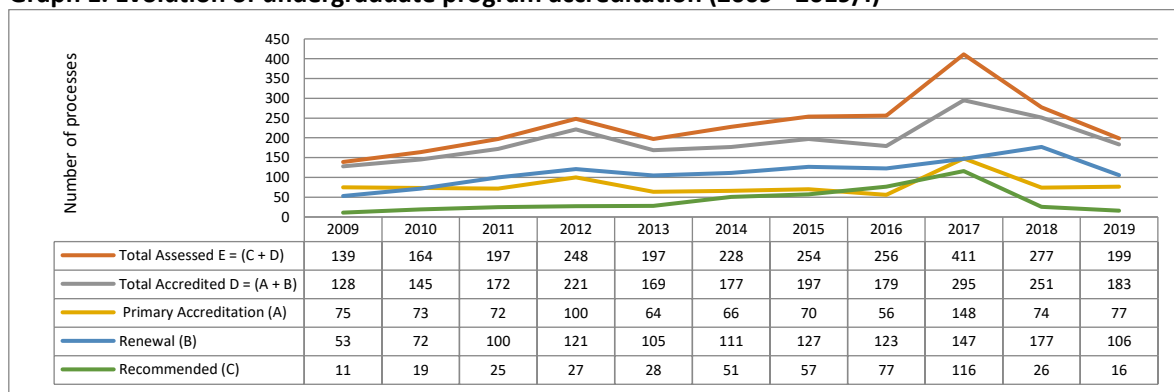
It can be said that in Colombia, accreditation has a mixed nature, as it is comprised of components of both the government and the universities themselves. Regarding the former, taking into account that it is governed by the law and CESU policies, it is financed by the state and the acts of accreditation are issued by the National Ministry of Education. Regarding the latter, the process is led by the institutions themselves, the academic peers and by the CNA, comprised of practicing academics from the different HEIs³.

Through the National Accreditation Council, the National Accreditation System in Colombia develops the following high quality accreditation processes:

- ✦ Accreditation of undergraduate programs across all levels of the education system (professional-technical, technological and university professional) in both the in-person, distance-learning and on-line categories.
- ✦ Accreditation of graduate programs: Medical-surgical specializations; master's degree and doctorate programs.
- ✦ Accreditation of higher education institutions.
- ✦ Renewal of the accreditation of higher education institutions and academic programs.

The aim of the academic program accreditation process is to report on their quality, subjecting them to assessment by academic peers who examine whether they meet the quality requirements established by the academic communities of the respective profession or discipline, and their consistency with the nature and purposes of the institution in relation optimal quality parameters defined in the CNA model. Accordingly, the undergraduate and graduate program accreditation has displayed the following trend:

Graph 1. Evolution of undergraduate program accreditation (2009 - 2019/I)



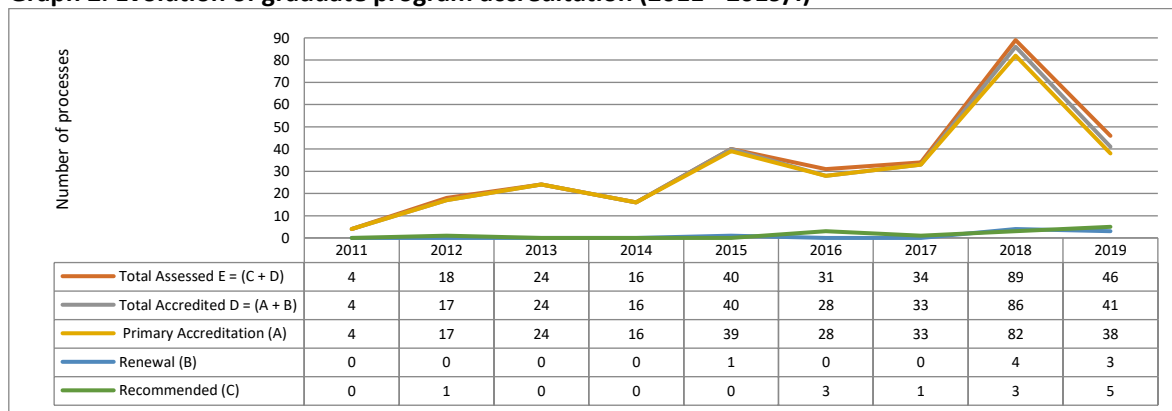
The graph displays the evolution of processes between 2009 and 2019 (at June 30). One of the trends reflected is that since 2010 the volume of *first-time accreditation* processes has remained stable. While this is a sign of sustainability of the culture of quality in higher education, it also underscores how few new programs are presented to the accreditation process by HEIs. As of June 30, 2019, there are 1327 currently accredited undergraduate programs.

In 2017 there was a significant increase in the number of processes, which is explained by the application of regulations that established mandatory accreditation of degree programs assessed between 2016 and 2017.

³ National Accreditation Council (2015). National Accreditation System in Colombia. Consulted at: <http://www.cna.gov.co/1741/article-186365.html>

Of the 2570 processes assessed in the last 10 years, 453 (18%) failed to attain accreditation. However, in the majority of these cases, the programs were accredited in the second round.

Graph 2. Evolution of graduate program accreditation (2011 - 2019/I)

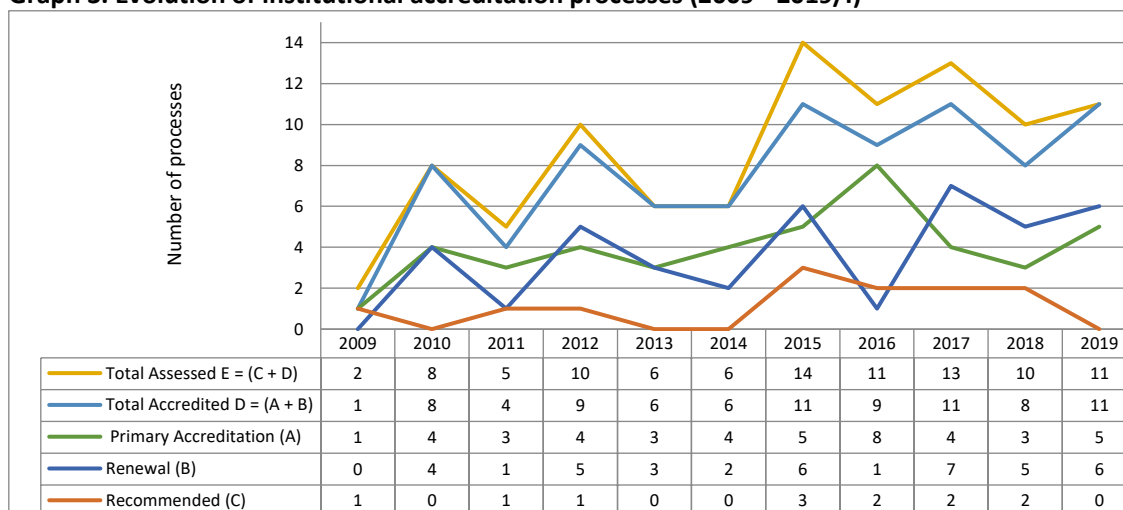


Graduate program accreditation is more recent; it began in 2011 with just a few programs. Significant growth began in 2016, but it was not until 2018 that graduate accreditation really took off. To date, a total of 112 accreditation processes are under way. One feature of graduate accreditation is that it has a high success rate: of the 302 programs assessed between 2011 and 2019, only 13 failed to attain accreditation.

Regarding graduate program accreditation, the accreditation for 32 programs expires between the second half of 2019 and 2020; consequently, many are expected to apply for accreditation renewal during these two years. Of these, 12 are already in process of renewing. The number of new applications is expected to keep growing, especially for medical specialty programs, which have increased their share in the System since the *medical specialties guidelines were issued in 2016*. The percentage of accredited master's degree and doctorate programs is still low (8%). The estimate of graduate requests for the next 2 years is at least 200 new programs, plus requests for renewals.

In terms of institutional accreditation, quality is recognized for the achievement of the purposes as well as the objectives of higher education; for the capacity of self-assessment and self-regulation; for the social relevance of the postulates of the mission and institutional projects; for the way in which the basic functions of teaching, research and social outreach are achieved; for the impact of its academic work on society; and for the development of the administrative and management, wellbeing, and physical and financial resources areas; as well as in relation to the optimal quality factors suggested in the CNA's model.

Graph 3. Evolution of institutional accreditation processes (2009 - 2019/I)



Institutional accreditation is closely associated with program accreditation. Current regulations require that 25% of creditable programs⁴ offered by an institution be accredited in order to request a visit to assess initial conditions and enter the National Accreditation System.

In the area of institutional accreditation, there are 19 HEIs whose accreditation expires between the second half of 2019 and 2020. To date, 8 renewals and 10 requests for new HEIs are being assessed. It is estimated that around 40 institutional processes, including renewals (19) and requests for new HEIs will be received.

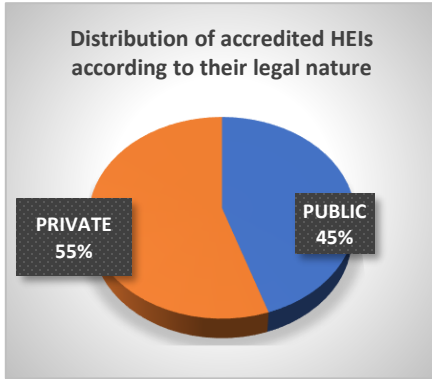
Table 1. Number of HEIs accredited in Colombia according to type:

| HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN COLOMBIA | Total | Accredited | Percentage |
|--|------------|------------|---------------|
| UNIVERSITY | 87 | 49 | 16.44% |
| UNIVERSITY INSTITUTION / TECHNOLOGY SCHOOL | 135 | 7 | 2.35% |
| TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTION | 49 | 2 | 0.67% |
| PROFESSIONAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTION | 29 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Overall Total | 300 | 58 | 19.46% |

As of: July 30, 2019

⁴ An academic program is creditable if it has a valid qualification certification and at least four graduated classes whose professional performance can be monitored.

Graph 4. HEIs accredited according to type

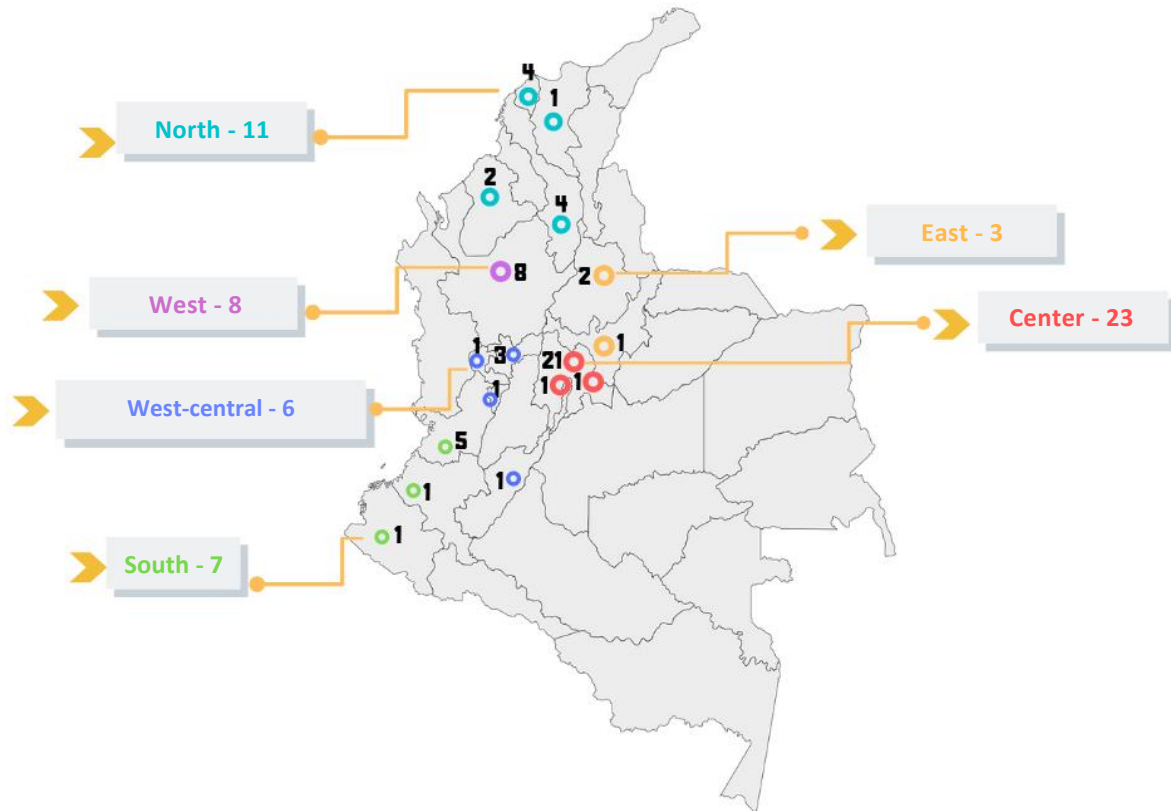


At present, 300 higher education institutions (HEIs) operate in the country; of these, 87 are universities, 135 are university institutions, 49 are technology institutions, and 29 are technical institutions.

Of the 58 accredited HEIs, 32 are private and 26 are public. Compared to 2016 data where the proportion was: 53 HEIs accredited, 29 were private and 19 were public.

Other accredited institutions include: 7 university institutions, which is 2.35% of the total number of university institutions, and 2 accredited technology institutions, which is 0.67% of the 49 technology institutions that operate in the country. As of the cut-off date, there is no accredited technical institution of the 29 that operate in the country.

Figure 1. Distribution of accredited institutions by region





2. THE CNA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM



2.1 THE CNA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Taking into consideration the framework of action assigned by law to the CNA, the responsibilities assigned to it by the CESU, and the context of the higher education public policy, the CNA has defined a strategic framework that is reviewed from time to time and that serves as focus point for performance of its activities.

Mission Statement: Assure society that the accredited institutions and programs meet the highest quality standards and fulfill their purposes and objectives, consolidating an assessment model that maintains their academic nature and is carried out in a framework of respect for the institutions' vocations and identities, aimed at reasserting the plurality and diversity of the country's higher education system and the incorporation and recognition of the National Accreditation System in the international sphere to promote greater visibility and recognition of the accredited programs and institutions.

Vision Statement: CNA will be consolidated as a benchmark of high quality in the national and international context, which will act in coordination with the higher education system in the execution of policies and adoption of strategies, and will strengthen a culture of continuous improvement, grounded in autonomy, willingness, inclusion and integration of the higher education institutions into the National Accreditation System, in the search for higher levels of quality. In this way, it will consolidate a flexible accreditation model that recognizes the characteristics and the institutional and disciplinary specific aspects, supported by strategies and information systems that enable following up and monitoring improvement plans arising from the self-assessment and accreditation process.

The vision includes the following elements:

- The National Accreditation Council (CNA, for the Spanish original) will continue to be an academically and technically autonomous organization, which by having adopted international accreditation system assessment criteria for its International External Assessment process, will ensure the reliability of its decisions and actions in the national and international spheres of higher education.
- The National Accreditation Council (CNA, for the Spanish original) will establish the strategies that enable following up and monitoring improvement plans defined by HEIs arising from the self-assessment and accreditation process, with the support of information systems.
- The National Accreditation Council (CNA, for the Spanish original), jointly with the Colombian government, will adopt mechanisms that encourage the incorporation and maintenance of higher education institutions in the National Accreditation System.

Strategic objectives:

Objective 1. Strengthen and consolidate the national accreditation model: The CNA will continue to carry out its mission and its legally established purpose of contributing to the high quality of higher education, to assure society that the accredited institutions and programs meet the highest quality standards and achieve their aims and objectives.

Strategies:

1. Review and adjust the accreditation guidelines of undergraduate and graduate academic programs and institutions, to ensure they address changes in the context and that they promote the development of the country's higher education, taking into consideration the particularities that must be reviewed for accreditation renewal processes.
2. Review the need to develop new guidelines when required.
3. Maintain the conceptual documents and methodological guidelines updated, to include any adjustments, development and updates to the guidelines.
4. Establish mechanisms to follow up on the improvement plans defined by higher education institutions and programs that have voluntarily participated in the accreditation process
5. Follow up and monitor the impact of accreditation on education and on the higher education institutions, to ensure that such accreditation fulfills its purpose and enables improvements in effectiveness.

Objective 2. Promote and encourage accreditation: The purpose of this objective is to increase the coverage and impact of the actions carried out by the CNA aimed at strengthening the culture of quality and of assessment for the effects of accreditation, contributing to the continuous improvement of the quality of higher education.

Strategies:

1. Consolidate communications and relations mechanisms between the CNA and the higher education institutions through assistance actions, in order to provide the support they require to move forward in the self-assessment and accreditation processes, and to strengthen the assessment and accreditation culture.
2. Communicate and disseminate the guidelines for Accreditation of Institutions and Programs through various types of media and educational programs in the academic community.
3. Promote CNA publications as mechanisms to disseminate the academic products, and as a support strategy and guidance on issues regarding accreditation.
4. Design and implement an internal and external communications plan to publicize the academic activities and results of the CNA's efforts, so that they are fully known and valued by the stakeholders and society.
5. Consolidate mechanisms for the participation of the various agents in order to share best practices and review topics of interest in developing the culture of quality at HEIs and undertake academic research and production processes that enable strengthening the Accreditation System.

Objective 3. Internationalization of the CNA: Educational processes, as well as processes to create, disseminate and apply knowledge, are carried out in transnational areas, as a result of the globalization of science and education. Current changes in the environment have led to the growing internationalization of universities, higher education and assessment and accreditation systems. Consequently, the Accreditation Systems need to develop the capability to operate in an international environment and to fulfill their basic functions and those arising from such interrelationships.

Strategies:

1. Strengthen the internationalization policy of the National Accreditation System, to provide greater visibility and recognition of the quality of Colombian higher education.
2. Participate in cooperation activities and projects and sharing of good practices carried out in the framework of various regional events, and assessment and accreditation networks, by the CNA and by the participating higher education institutions.
3. Strengthen sharing of experience events held by accreditation bodies that promote awareness and mobility of the community interested in assessment and accreditation processes.
4. Adopt and implement quality assurance criteria and guidelines that will enable an international external assessment of the CNA, with results that increase trust by the national and international academic community in the decisions and actions carried out regarding the quality of the academic programs and institutions that participate in Colombia's National Accreditation System.

Objective 4. Improve the efficiency of accreditation procedures: The CNA will continue to develop and implement the Integrated Information System to facilitate transparency, the verifiability of decisions, the interaction with agents in the process and the establishment of indicators that enable analyzing the impact of the actions carried out by the CNA in performance of the accreditation processes and increasing its institutional efficiency.

Strategies:

1. Improve the external assessment processes performed by academic peers regarding selection, training, assistance and performance monitoring.
2. Implement information technology and communications systems that enable providing feedback on the guidelines, processes and management of the CNA, to facilitate management of the accreditation processes, the interaction with other higher education information systems and with stakeholders.
3. Structure mechanisms to manage statistical information in real time in order to improve the efficiency of accountability processes on CNA management actions, procedures and results to the academic community and stakeholders.

4. Improve the efficiency of program and institution accreditation processes by means of the development of the application SACES – CNA and carry out an ongoing awareness-raising, training and assistance processes to improve system usage by the various internal and external agents of the accreditation process for programs and institutions.
5. Strengthen CNA's Continuous Improvement System, by coordinating the planning exercises with management of a system of indicators that supports the mission and administrative efforts of CNA.
6. Strengthen the technological infrastructure of the CNA, understood as improvement of hardware, connectivity, website, databases and IT support.
7. Follow up on the implementation of the improvement plan derived from the planning and self-assessment processes and incorporate the expectations of the academic community.

Objective 5. Prospective of CNA: Given the challenges faced by CNA to meet the national and international demands of higher education and of the Accreditation System itself, it is necessary to strengthen its internal organization to achieve greater financial, administrative and operating independence, in order to be at the forefront of other accreditation agencies worldwide.

Strategies:

1. Modernize CNA's financial, administrative and operating structure to endow it with greater independence and capacity to adequately respond to the expectations of the academic community and to the current demands of higher education in the national and international context.
2. Develop a technology and telecommunications infrastructure that enables meeting its responsibilities and challenges with quality, speed and effectiveness.
3. Make progress in the consolidation of mechanisms to facilitate the transnationalization of the National Accreditation System in order to continue addressing the requests of countries that are familiar with and appreciate the Colombian accreditation model.

2. 2 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (CIS-CNA)

Continuous improvement (or quality assurance) can be described as addressing quality in a continuous, structured and systematic manner in terms of its maintenance and improvement. In the framework of the assessment activities and processes performed by Accreditation Agencies, internal quality assurance must enable "demonstrating that they take the quality of their assessments seriously and that they are committed to setting in motion the means to assure and demonstrate such quality."

In this framework and in developing the process for internationalization of higher education, the CNA has been strengthening the self-assessment, self-regulation and external assessment processes through the recognition of international good practices on quality assurance and continuous improvement, structuring and strengthening in this manner the Continuous Improvement System (CIS- CNA), which is articulated through four dimensions:

Dimension I: Design and consolidate the CNA's Continuous Improvement System.

The objective of this first dimension is to develop learning processes that enable the CNA to continuously improve its assessment and accreditation methodologies, practices and procedures.

Dimension II: Create and strengthen the Internal Quality Assurance Systems (IQAS) in Colombian higher education institutions.

In this dimension, the CNA plays an important role in developing a "quality culture" and in providing support for the development of the mechanisms that develop the Comprehensive Quality Management Systems at HEIs (i.e., improvement plans). In summary, it aims to "support and promote" the culture of quality in providing the public service of higher education in Colombia, to which end it has consolidated the following strategies:

- **Visits to assess initial conditions:** Its intention is to obtain a preliminary overview of the operation of the institution as a whole, for which it analyzes very diverse aspects, including compliance with current laws; academic and administrative organization; faculty; and physical and financial resources, among others.

- **Development of an assistance strategy for the HEIs**

Dimension III: Interaction between the National Accreditation Council and other agents of the Higher Education Quality Assurance System.

It is aimed at strengthening the interaction between the CNA and the other agents of the Higher Education Quality Assurance System, in order to develop a more consistent and integrated system.

- **National and regional meetings and events:** Regional or local meetings, workshops or events are performed aimed at fulfilling the objectives of the Strategy to Strengthen the Quality and Accreditation Culture in HEIs.
- **Performance of academic events:** The CNA organizes different events to discuss topics of interest and the importance of strengthening the culture of quality.
- **Strengthen information mechanisms with HEIs.**
- **Improvement of the Information Systems.**

Dimension IV: Internationalization of the National Accreditation System, and therefore, of the National Accreditation Council.

The CNA carries out various internationalization strategies with the following main objectives:

- Strengthen the CNA's capacity to fulfill its responsibilities through its participation in regional networks (such as RIACES, AUIP) and global networks (such as INQAAHE), through which "best practices" information and the most innovative approaches and instruments are shared aimed at ensuring world class quality in the accreditation processes of undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Perform an International External Assessment of the CNA and the Colombian high quality accreditation system in order to achieve international recognition as backing for the accreditation decisions made on Colombian academic programs and institutions.
- Contribute to the development of international mutual recognition systems (regional or inter-regional) between national accreditation agencies, as a first step towards recognition between countries of accredited programs, aimed at facilitating the process of co-validating academic qualifications, as in the case of ARCUSUR.

Figure 2. Elements of the Continuous Improvement System (CIS-CNA)



2.3 STRUCTURE OF THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND ELEMENTS OF ANALYSIS BASED ON WHICH THE ACTION PLAN IS DEFINED

The improvement plan is derived from the self-assessments, the identification of internal improvement actions and the external assessments. Once the key improvement items have been identified, they are incorporated in actions plans, which in turn incorporate the goals of the national development plan for education, the specific objectives laid out for higher education and the objectives established by the Council Coordinator. The operating plan is derived from this design to guide the day-to-day activities of the Technical Secretariat in order to fulfill the established goals.

At the same time, in order to address the strategies, projects are defined with the purpose of integrating activities that have a common purpose, and which also require specific resource assignments and that are performed in stages or in periods that last more than one year, in order to facilitate their planning, development and control.

| Aspects for improvement suggested by the INQAAHE panel for each guideline | Elements of analysis referenced by the INQAAHE panel | Projects /actions defined to address the comments |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Guideline 1. Structure of the External Quality Assessment Agency (EQAA)</p> <p>Assessment - Substantially complies</p> <p>✚ Endow the CNA with greater autonomy in terms of governance over the planned growth of capacity for quality assessment of higher education, financial autonomy in managing the budget, autonomy for sub-contracting and autonomy in human resource management.</p> <p>✚ Involve students and other stakeholders in the CNA's governance bodies and activities, particularly in the</p> | <p>It is considered that changes are required in the CNA's capabilities in terms of the functional autonomy from the CESU and the MEN, regarding its organizational dependence and broadening of its field of action. Design of a structure that enables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater response capacity to meet the country's new needs, changes in the educational/training, social and economic environments, in the context of greater demand for higher education. - Play a greater role in the integrated development of the higher education (or "tertiary") system. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultation processes with the academic community to define assessment criteria for distance-learning and on-line programs. 2. Consultation processes with the academic community to define assessment criteria for Technical and Technological programs. 3. Consultation processes with the academic community to broaden the scope of application of the guidelines in medical specialties. 4. Participate in the Permanent Monitoring Commission to coordinate activities |

| Aspects for improvement suggested by the INQAAHE panel for each guideline | Elements of analysis referenced by the INQAAHE panel | Projects /actions defined to address the comments |
|---|---|--|
| <p>definition of the objectives of educational/training programs and the assessment of achievements of the programs and HEIs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater financial autonomy in terms of budget management, contracting and human resources management. - Enable greater participation by stakeholders (students, employers, society in general) in the assessment and decision-making processes. - Be positioned in the international context as a benchmark because of having recognized quality assurance processes for higher education. | <p>between the various participants of the Quality Assurance System.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Lead the process to update the High Quality Accreditation guidelines. 6. Lead the process to update the CNA Regulation. 7. CNA participation in external assessment events with renown certification bodies (renewal of the INQAAHE international certification, participation in the agency assessment process with RIACES). 8. Establish a road map required to prepare the CNA to obtain recognition by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME). |
| <p>Guideline 2. The EQAA framework for the external quality assessment at higher education institutions.</p> <p>Assessment– Substantially complies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Broaden the mission and purpose of CNA to include all types of HEIs in the country. ✦ Redesign the assessment processes to increase their sustainability. ✦ During the accreditation processes, assign greater importance to obtaining the competencies defined in the programs that establish the students’ learning results. ✦ Include other stakeholders in the design and performance of external assessment processes (such as students, representatives from the business sector and other labor-related bodies). ✦ Make use of the knowledge available at the Labor Observatory for the accreditation process. | <p>The CNA is considered to have a fluid relationship with the HEIs that are part of the SNA and that it has sufficient capacity to carry out the processes and methodologies it has been assigned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redesign the accreditation system to make it more inclusive and thereby broaden the number of HEIs. - Redesign the assessment processes to incorporate accreditation procedures and methodologies that make them more sustainable: reduce costs and processing and response times. - Take into consideration current trends in university quality, where a key aspect is the assessment of the students’ learning results. <p>Assess mechanisms to take into consideration the opinions of experts from the business sector and public policies in the social and environmental areas, particularly because of the relevance of including them in the study plans and their contribution to regional and national development, in the assessment and decision-making processes.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schedule international events on topics of interest in the context of the quality of higher education. 2. Participate in the Permanent Monitoring Commission to coordinate activities between the various participants of the Quality Assurance System. 3. Lead the process to update the High Quality Accreditation guidelines of academic programs and institutions. |
| <p>Guideline 3. Decision-making.</p> <p>Assessment– Substantially complies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Make more explicit the criteria used by the Council for decision-making. ✦ Provide feedback to peers on the assessment results. ✦ Study the possibility of having the administrative appeals to ministerial resolutions decided on by an ad hoc tribunal comprised by 2 new council members and one external qualified expert from a different country. | <p>CNA is considered to have an adequate system to address and resolve complaints and claims, and that it is applied with impartiality and is positively viewed by stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish indications aimed at standardizing inasmuch as possible the manner in which the Council takes into consideration the specific characteristics of each HEI in issuing the final opinion. - Make more explicit, inasmuch as possible, the criteria used by the Council, in order to enhance the transparency of the CNA. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With the support of the academic community, discuss and agree on specific assessment criteria for accreditation processes of academic programs and institutions. 2. In the new rules on accreditation processes of academic programs and institutions, include more precise descriptions of the elements to be taken into consideration to define time frames for the recognition of quality. 3. Develop a proposal for the structure of the academic peer assessment processes, systematize the results in order to provide feedback to the peers on their performance and to identify |

| Aspects for improvement suggested by the INQAAHE panel for each guideline | Elements of analysis referenced by the INQAAHE panel | Projects /actions defined to address the comments |
|--|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As part of the criteria for assessing the organic structure, it is necessary to assess the creation of an ad hoc tribunal comprised by 2 new council members of CNA and one external qualified expert from a different country, in order to address the administrative appeals filed by the HEIs. | <p>and plan actions to improve the education and training of the peers on an ongoing basis, to promote the continuous improvement of the peer external assessment processes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Establish the structure and develop the contents for the course for accreditation peers, as part of the initiative led by Higher Education Quality Assurance Deputy Office – “School for Peers”. |
| <p>Guideline 4. The EQAA and its relationship with society.</p> <p>Assessment- Substantially complies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Publish the CNA’s external assessment reports. ✦ Establish mechanisms to ensure systematic updating of public information. ✦ Establish mechanisms to enable CNA to manage or control more closely and by its own means the website hosting and design service. | <p>CNA is considered to provide sufficient information to society in general; however, some information is not updated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the applicable legal context for the publication of external assessment reports, as a suitable mechanism to inform HEIs in a timely manner on the results of the processes. - Identify the key factors for efficient management of website content development and information management, so as to comply with applicable guidelines in this regard for public entities. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop the CNA website taking into consideration the guidelines of the Government On Line program. 2. Strengthen the team by hiring a graphic designer or journalist to develop information and maintain the information about CNA, including development of social media, graphics pieces and digital publications. 3. Identify the technical and functional requirements to develop the modules of the SACES – CNA System. |
| <p>Guideline 5. The responsibility of the EQAA</p> <p>Assessment– Substantially complies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Establish a clear strategy at the CNA regarding its relationships with the international quality assurance community. ✦ Group under a single improvement plan the inputs received from the various quality processes that have been performed. ✦ Promote internships by CNA personnel at other quality agencies. | <p>CNA is considered to have a clear desire to establish links with the international community; however, it must focus its strategy on top priority aspects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporate good cooperation practices between agencies such enabling internships at CNA and allowing CNA personnel to perform internships at other well-known quality agencies. - Establish a general policy and clearly define the CNA’s objectives in terms of collaboration with other quality agencies. - Strengthen the CNA’s planning and self-assessment activities. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen regional accreditation processes with ARCUSUR 2. Participate in international events. 3. Participation of council members in international events – Developments and impacts. 4. Strengthen the competencies of CNA’s technical secretary team – Organize and develop an internal training plan. 5. Strengthen accountability processes through annual management reports. 6. Include in the website design the development required to have a consistent and permanent self-assessment process that facilitates the systematization of results. |
| <p>6. Quality assurance in cross-border education</p> <p>Assessment– Substantially complies (Only partly applicable)</p> | <p>CNA is not considered responsible for the quality of cross-border education; however, some components of its guidelines address this issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In view of increased offerings of undergraduate, graduate and even work education programs in recent years, consider the relevance of further developing the general elements and guidelines that have been established to enable the valuation of the quality of cross-border programs and review applicable legal mechanisms. - Strengthen the regional accreditation mechanisms. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen regional accreditation processes with ARCUSUR |



3. PROGRESS IN IMPROVEMENT PLAN BY GUIDELINE



3. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (CIS-CNA)

This progress report is intended to inform about the most significant achievements of the efforts undertaken in 2017-2018 and 2019 by the National Accreditation Council in fulfillment of its improvement plan, indicating the progress made in the different projects and the manner in which they have impacted the development of its strategic lines.

This has been a year of both great challenges and major accomplishments which have significantly impacted the fulfillment of our mission, the continuous improvement of our processes in favor of improved management of the requests from higher education institutions and strengthening the National Accreditation System.

Figure 3. Most Significant Advances of the Improvement Plan



Accordingly, following is a detailed description of each of the actions taken by the CNA which are related to identified improvement actions, grouped here by guideline in order to make it easier to underscore their relationship with the comments made by the assessment panel.

GUIDELINE 1
THE STRUCTURE OF THE EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY (EQAA)

The EQAA is a well-known, credible organization that has earned the trust of higher education institutions and the public. It has adequate mechanisms to avoid conflicts of interest in the decisions it makes, and its staff has the skills required to conduct the tasks associated with external quality assurance. The EQAA has the resources required to carry out its mission.

3.1 CHANGES TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

The Higher Education Quality Assurance System is the set of institutions and entities defined by the regulatory framework in effect in Colombia, which are coordinated by policies and processes designed with the goal of ensuring the quality of institutions and their programs. This system promotes self-assessment, self-regulation and improvement of the areas of training, education, staff, scientific, cultural and extension activities in institutions, thereby contributing to advancing and strengthening its community and academic outcomes under principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and sustainability.

The actors in the Education Quality Assurance System are:

- a) The Ministry of National Education (MEN, for the Spanish original)
- b) The Ministry of Health and Social Protection
- c) The National Council of Higher Education (CESU, for the Spanish original)
- d) The National Accreditation Council (CNA, for the Spanish original)
- e) The National Inter-sectoral Commission for Higher Education Quality Assurance (CONACES, for the Spanish original)
- f) The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (CTI, for the Spanish original)
- g) The Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education (ICFES, for the Spanish original)
- h) The Colombian Institute for Educational Credit and Technical Studies Abroad (ICETEX, for the Spanish original) founded by Mariano Ospina Pérez
- i) The Inter-sectoral Commission on Human Resources for Health (CITHS, for the Spanish original)
- j) Higher education institutions and those authorized by Law to offer and develop higher education programs
- k) The academic and scientific community in general
- l) Academic peers
- m) All entities that participate in the development of higher education

According to the provisions of the Political Constitution of Colombia, the State is responsible for ensuring educational quality through the exercise of comprehensive inspection and oversight of higher education, with the aim of ensuring quality, fulfillment of their goals, and the best ethical, intellectual and physical education of the students, as well as adequate provision of the service. Moreover, to ensure that the quality of higher education is seen in a comprehensive manner, in keeping with the stipulations of Law 30/1992.

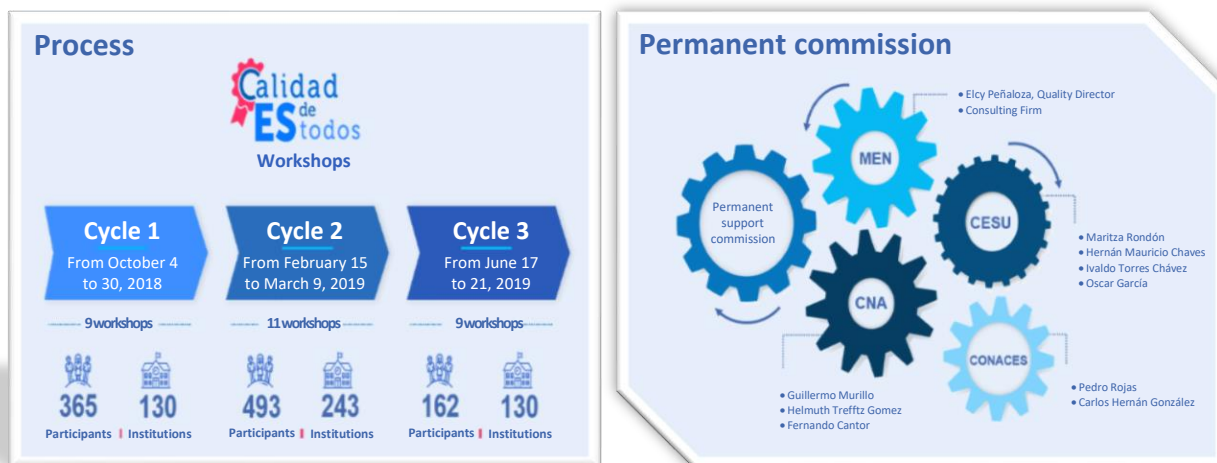
Considering that educational quality is one of the objectives of the Government of President Iván Duque, as defined in the National Development Plan goals (Law 1955/2019)⁵, an agenda was developed to promote higher education, supported by new resources and ongoing talks with the various actors of the sector, aimed at generating new opportunities for Colombia's youth and proposing guidelines and benchmarks aimed at improving educational quality.

In this framework, the Ministry of National Education in view of the concerns expressed regarding the implementation of Decree 1280/2018, has identified the need to develop a process to create a joint vision of higher education quality through

⁵ <https://dapre.presidencia.gov.co/normativa/normativa/LEY%201955%20DEL%2025%20DE%20MAYO%20DE%202019.pdf>

participative reflection exercises with various actors in the sector, with the aim was of receiving their comments, concerns and needs and defining strategies leading to the construction of technical regulatory parameters for the Higher Education Quality Assurance System through workshops called “Calidad ES de Todos” (Quality for All), which were offered between September 2018 and March 2019.

Figure 4. Cycles of the Consultation Process and Creation of the Permanent Commission



Source: Higher Education Quality Assurance Deputy Office - MEN

These workshops helped recognize the institutional characteristics, nature and practices pertaining to the qualification certification, which implies the need for a specific regulation to assess quality conditions established by Law 1188/2008, taking into consideration the various levels of complexity and diversity at institutions. It became evident that there was a need to continue strengthening the quality assurance processes, in accordance with the constitutional mandates, current regulations and principles of governance and governability that can meet the demands for higher education quality in local, regional and global contexts.

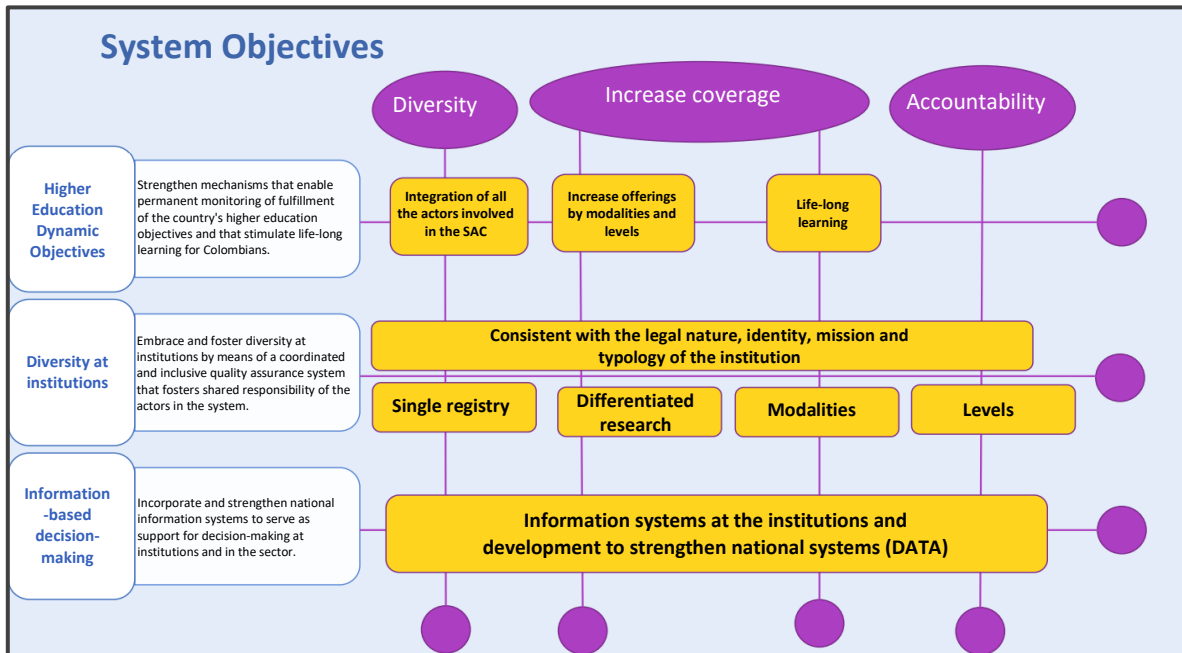
In this framework, on July 25 of this year the National Government issued Decree Number 1330/2019⁶ on the qualification certification concerning quality at higher education institutions. This new regulation establishes the basis of the Quality Assurance System at higher education institutions, thanks to the participation of deans, assistant deans, faculty and directors. These are some of the changes introduced in the System.

1. Consolidation of a shared vision of quality, understood as the set of articulated, interdependent, dynamic attributes built with the academic community as reference, which respond to the social, cultural and environmental demands. This concept recognizes the diversity of higher education institutions, their nature and institutional objectives, in a differentiated manner.
2. Response to new education trends. The Decree promotes the supply of programs in various modalities: in-person, distance, on-line, dual and others that combine and integrate these modalities and proper methodologies to suit population and territorial needs.
3. Coordination among actors that determine quality in higher education (CNA, CESU, CONACES and the Ministry, and other entities). At the same time, it is based on the importance of recognizing the diversity of the institutions that comprise the higher education system to guarantee fairness.

⁶ See Annex 2 – Decree 1330/2019

4. Include assessment conditions for institutions and programs independently in the qualification certification process where not only the capacities and processes are assessed, but also the academic outcomes associated with student learning.
5. Possibility of offering an academic program under a single qualification certification with the same curricular content in various modalities and/or in different municipalities. This would provide institutions greater expediency in offering programs, to respond to the demands for higher education quality in local, regional and global contexts.
6. Training in research to help programs involve the students in these practices in accordance with the education level of their studies (university, professional technical, or technological). This training will take into account the nature of the institution and the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) to achieve learning.
7. Trust in the high quality recognition for institutions and programs issued by the National Accreditation Council. The qualification certification for these programs, its renewal or modification will be granted by the Ministry of National Education in the framework of the process previously undertaken for accreditation.
8. Modernize the Quality Assurance System and foster shared responsibility among all actors in the System through the development of a culture of self-assessment, self-regulation and continuous improvement.
9. The Decree sets forth a period to implement the regulation which allows the various actors in the System to adapt their strategies and procedures for an effective application of the regulation⁷. (See Annex 1: Decree 1330/2019)

Figure 5. Goal of the regulatory change



Source: Higher Education Quality Assurance Deputy Office - MEN

⁷ For more information visit: <https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/w3-article-387336.html>

3.2 ADJUSTMENTS TO THE HIGH QUALITY ACCREDITATION PROCESS

In Colombia, the evaluation of the Quality Assurance System has two levels:

- **The qualification certification is a mandatory and enabling requirement** for higher education institutions, legally recognized by the Ministry of National Education (MEN, for the Spanish original) and those authorized by Law to offer and develop higher education academic programs in the national territory, pursuant to the provisions of Article 1 of Law 1188/2008.
- The **High Quality Accreditation is voluntary and time-bound**. The accreditation is a certification by the state on the quality of a program or institution based on a prior assessment process with the intervention of the institution, academic communities and the National Accreditation Council.

In this context, the amendments introduced by Decree 1330 issued on July 25, 2019 to the process of issuing the qualification certification is based on the framework on which the National Accreditation Council is to develop the high quality accreditation process, provided this process is carried out on the qualification certifications granted.

Although this Decree was issued recently, the CNA has gathered some experience as a result of its participation in the permanent monitoring commission that assists the MEN in the consultation process mentioned at the start of this section, which has become the basis to update the principles, objectives, foundations and procedures of the Accreditation, as well as the guidelines, which will take into account the following aspects, among others⁸:

- ✚ Unified undergraduate guidelines with particular characteristics depending on the level (professional technical, technological and university) and the modality (in-person, distance, on-line and dual).
- ✚ Unified graduate guidelines (master's degree, medical/surgical specializations and doctorate programs).
- ✚ Unified institutional guidelines with particular characteristics depending on the type (professional technical, technological, technical university or school, university).
- ✚ Progress has been made by including the Institutional Governance factor, which requires providing evidence of participation by the university community.
- ✚ The *Academic Processes* factor will be included as an additional characteristic of this factor, taking into account a conceptual base that helps understand the relationship between competencies and learning. Learning outcomes is defined as what the student must know and be able to do at the end of the program. The institution must define a continuous improvement process for the curricula based on the students' degree of attainment of the learning outcomes. In order to advance in this area, the CNA will engage in talks with professional associations to define sets of common learning outcomes by area of knowledge, in those areas of knowledge where it is possible. In the other areas of knowledge, each program will define the learning outcomes that its students must attain.
- ✚ OLE information on employability will be taken into consideration and complemented with the one provided by HEIs.
- ✚ Regarding the gradual nature of the accreditation (4, 6, 8, 10 years), progress has been made in drafting a Resolution that includes some criteria based on the consolidation, sustainability and impact of institutions and programs.
- ✚ It integrates the importance of performing monitoring on the improvement plans of accredited programs and institutions with a report halfway through the accreditation period as one of the requirements for renewing the accreditation.
- ✚ With regard to reconsiderations and appeals, it is believed that the way they are being handled currently is the correct manner in the context of institutional reliability when they are not accredited, and as transparency mechanisms, as the council member who prepared the presentation is not present at the time of the assessment. Appeals are made to the Ministry of Education, which is the entity that issues the accreditation administrative act and the CNA acts as the external entity that advises the MEN on whether or not there are grounds for the appeal. The recommendation for more council members is accepted, which strengthens the CNA. These aspects will be covered by the Regulation.
- ✚ Establish a coordination mechanism between qualification certification and high quality accreditation.
- ✚ Establish adequate transition periods.

⁸ A proposal of updating the High Quality Accreditation Model is currently in the process in the National Council of Higher Education (CESU).

- ✚ Update procedure guides in accordance with the stipulations of the Agreements derived from adjustments to the guidelines.

3.3 EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT PROCESSES CARRIED OUT BY THE CNA

The National Accreditation Council has consolidated and strengthened both its internal quality and planning systems and its continuous improvement system, which has enabled it to successfully carry out the following processes:

✚ RENEWAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION WITH INQAAHE

The National Accreditation Council was recognized for the second time by the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). It was awarded the recognition granted to quality assurance agencies that successfully complete the external assessment process carried out by a panel of international experts on compliance with the Guidelines on Good Quality Assurance Practices.

It should be noted that the CNA decided to undergo an external assessment through INQAAHE for the first time in 2012, obtaining as a result the international certification for five years. Given the importance of continuing to improve the quality assurance system, the Council performed a self-assessment and formally requested a visit to the effect of renewing the accreditation in November 2016. Subsequently, the panel assigned by INQAAHE performed a visit in March 2017.

Representatives of different actors in the system were invited to participate in the external assessment, including: Deans, quality directors, students, officials of the Ministry of National Education, members of CESU, professional associations, academic peers, CNA advisers and former advisers, who during three days held meetings with panel members to discuss the activities carried out by CNA over the duration of the five-year certification, in performance of its mission, objectives and improvement plan, as well as compliance with the Guidelines on Good Quality Assurance Practices.

As a result of this process, on August 23, 2017, the INQAAHE Council made the formal decision of recognizing CNA - Colombia as a Certified Agency for a five (5) year period for its high level of compliance with quality standards for accreditation bodies. This decision is expressed through an opinion that includes recommendations for the entity's continuous improvement, as well as its relations with the other actors of the system, and a prospective view of quality assurance in Colombia.

✚ PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS OF VALIDATING THE AGENCY ASSESSMENT MODEL PROPOSED BY RIACES

In the framework of cooperation among networks and agencies, an action that has been permanently led by the CNA, it was considered relevant to accept the invitation made in 2017 by the Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (RIACES, for the Spanish original) to national, regional and international bodies that formally carry out higher education quality assessment and accreditation processes (hereinafter, the agencies), with the main purpose of validating the assessment documents proposed by the network.

Once the postulation of CNA- Colombia was accepted in this process, whose objective is to make progress in the mutual recognition of the accreditation decisions (and consequently of the quality of the higher education offerings in the different countries) aimed at the regional integration of higher education and contributing to the self-assessment and external assessment processes of the agencies, the self-assessment process was initiated in accordance with the guidelines and other documents established to this effect.

At the same time, the assessment model was reviewed with the purpose of contributing to its enhancement based on the specific assessment experience performed at the CNA.

As a result of the process, the Assessment Committee concluded that the Agency is in compliance with all the assessed aspects and fulfills in an outstanding manner the good practice guidelines (OBP, for the Spanish original), it provides the evidence required to demonstrate fulfillment and it sets an example of good practices in many aspects of its activities. Consequently, the CNA was awarded the highest distinction in recognition of being fully in compliance with good practices guidelines (OBP, for the Spanish original) defined by RIACES, in the framework of the 17th General Assembly held in Madrid, Spain, on May 28 and 29, 2019.

Such recognition reflects positively not only on the CNA, but also on the Colombian Accreditation System, which continues to maintain a privileged position in the national and international context, and is made extensive to the higher education institutions that have currently been accredited as high quality for both their programs and institutions, and the National Accreditation System in general.

CNA'S PREPARATION FOR RECOGNITION BY THE WORLD FEDERATION OF MEDICAL EDUCATION (WFME)

Given that in the United States, international medical graduates (IMGs) account for one fourth of the labor force in this discipline, ECFMG, through its IMG certification program, assesses the doctors to ensure they are prepared for admission to postgraduate medical education in USA. ECFMG certification is also one of the requirements for IMGs to take Step 3 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) and to obtain unrestricted approval to practice medicine in USA.

The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) has announced that starting in 2023 doctors who request ECFMG certification must have graduated from a duly certified medical school. In order to fulfill this requirement, the medical school from which the doctor graduated must have been accredited by means of a formal process that uses criteria that are comparable to those accepted worldwide, such as those developed by the WFME.

Based on the above, the CNA has defined a road map to increase its probability of success of being recognized as an accreditation agency for the WFME, involving the following activities:

1. Analysis of the defined requirements for accreditation agencies

The CNA has performed a detailed analysis of the requirements established by WFME, as well as a preliminary analysis of the current level of compliance.



2. State of the art of accredited medicine programs and design on an assistance plan

This analysis enables learning of the characteristics of the medical programs offered in the country, the level of development achieved by the accredited programs, and the status of the non-accredited programs that are part of the total number of medicine programs in the country, in order to establish criteria for the development of an assistance process and estimate the level of incidence of this project on students and graduates.

3. Planning and performance of the International Medical Education Meeting

The purpose of this event to be held on September 19 and 20, 2019, is to promote learning of international trends in terms of recognition of the accreditation of medicine programs granted in Latin America, in particular in connection with the rules established by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), their implications and challenges. Participants will include officials both of the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the deans and directors of medicine programs, and scientific directors of accredited university hospitals.

4. Engage in the process with the WFME

To this effect, the CNA will carry out the protocol in order to formally establish the timetable of activities and the disbursement of funds to move forward in the process of recognition of the agency in mid-2020, as well as the stages required to consolidate the required information and performance of the corresponding self-assessment document (see Annex 3).

Balance of the Action Plan activities performed and assessment of the progress made

| Objective 1: Strengthen and consolidate the national accreditation model | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Strategies / Actions | Activities and Outcomes 2017 | Activities and Outcomes 2018 | Progress made in 2019 | Percentage of completion to date |
| Review and adjust the accreditation guidelines of undergraduate and graduate academic programs and institutions, to ensure they address changes in the context and that they promote the development of the country's higher education, taking into consideration the particularities that must be reviewed for accreditation renewal processes. | Resolution 03/2017 Amendments introduced in institutional accreditation: modalities, requirements and conditions -Multicampus accreditation | Participation of a commission of advisors in the Permanent Task Group for analysis of Decree 1280/2018, summoned by the CNA, in the capacity of experts. | Analysis of the impacts of the accreditation model derived from enactment of Decree 1330/2019. Participate in the Permanent Monitoring Commission to coordinate activities between the various participants of the Quality Assurance System. Update of the guidelines and their approval by CESU | 90% |
| Maintain the conceptual documents and methodological guidelines updated, to include any adjustments, developments and updates to the guidelines | Dissemination of the medical specialties. Outcome: Three regional events (Coffee-growing region, Caribbean region and Southwest) and two in Bogotá (one meeting with: Universidad Militar, Universidad Nacional, Universidad del Rosario, and another with: Universidad Javeriana, FUCS and Sanitas), to disseminate the guidelines developed for Medical Specialties. | Creation of five (5) consulting regional boards with the academic community to define assessment criteria for distance-learning and on-line programs. Structuring of the proposal on specific assessment criteria for technical and technological programs. | Update and publish procedure guidelines | 90% |
| Adopt and implement quality assurance criteria and guidelines that will enable an international external assessment of the CNA, with results that increase trust by the national and international academic community in the decisions and actions carried out regarding the quality of the academic programs and institutions that participate in Colombia's National Accreditation System. | Renewal of the international certification of the CNA with INQAAHE for five (5) years | Incorporation of the comments of the INQAAHE assessment panel into the action plan and the corresponding adjustments to the action plan. Plan the participation of CNA in the RIACES assessment process. | Reception of the highest distinction in recognition of being fully in compliance with good practices guidelines (OBP, for the Spanish original) defined by RIACES Structuring of the monitoring report for INQAAHE. Progress and completion of the process. Follow-up on the improvement plan and monitoring of the progress made by the projects Establish and develop the Road Map for recognition by WFME. | 95% |

GUIDELINE 2

THE EQAA FRAMEWORK FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The EQAA'S main concerns are the promotion of quality education and the good performance of students. It thus recognizes that quality is primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions themselves, and upholds this principle in its criteria and procedures. They promote internal quality assurance and provide higher education institutions clear guidelines on the requirements for self-assessments and external assessments.

3.4 ACADEMIC EVENTS

During the period 2017-2019 - I, the scheduled activities were carried out as planned, aimed at the academic community and covering important topics, including the following:



Seminar: Collective construction of guidelines for the accreditation of distance and on-line programs, with an international prospective view

The National Accreditation Council has been working on the collective construction of the guidelines for accreditation of distance and on-line programs, with the participation of the academic community.

As part of these academic events, a seminar was held in Bogotá on April 12 and 13: "Collective construction of guidelines for the accreditation of distance and on-line programs, with an international prospective view," with the participation of deans, assistant deans and directors of distance and on-line programs from 70 HEIs that offer programs in these modalities.

National Conferences:

- Challenges of on-line and distance higher education: Rural Education Plan. -Dr. Jaime Vargas. Sub-director of Support for HEIs at the Ministry of National Education.
- Considerations for the recognition of quality of on-line and distance programs in Colombia. - Dr. María del Socorro Guzmán Serna – Academic Director of Politécnico Gran Colombiano.
- Background and outlook for on-line and distance learning in Colombia. - Dr. Jaime Leal Afanador, President of the Colombian Association of Higher Education Institutions (ACESAD, for the Spanish original), and Dean of Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia (UNAD, for the Spanish original). Dr. Constanza Abadía García – Academic Assistant Dean of Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia (UNAD).

International Conferences:

- E-xcellence: The proposal by the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) for quality assurance and improvement of on-line education. Dr. Miguel Santamaria Lancho - Representative of EADTU Europe.
- Assessment of the quality of on-line education in Chile in the context of the accreditation system. – Dr. Paula Collao – Member of the National Accreditation Commission, CNA-Chile.
- Experiences in the development of the methodology for assessment and monitoring; and quality strategies and relevance of out-of-school graduate studies. Dr. Luis Ponce Ramírez - Director of PNPC of the Mexican National Council for Science and Technology and Dr. Arturo Gutiérrez Islas - Sub-director of National Graduate Studies Assessment.
- Experiences of Paraguay in the process of structuring and implementing a model for the accreditation of distance and on-line programs. Dr. Gerardo Gómez - President of the National Council of Higher Education (ANEAES, for the Spanish original), Paraguay.



Second day conferences:

- Proposal for the coordination of the Quality Assurance System. - Dr. Magda Méndez Cortés, Director of Higher Education Quality at the Ministry of National Education.
- Presentation of progress made in the documentation of the “guidelines for the accreditation of distance and on-line programs” in Colombia. Dr. Fernando Cantor – Advisor of the CNA-Colombia

The following were the main conclusions:

1. At present there should be no doubt about the importance of on-line and distance learning, both in Colombia and worldwide. For years this modality has been growing strongly; however, less than 2% of the programs offered under this modality that have been included in the Qualified Registry in Colombia have been recognized as High Quality programs.
2. In order to include a greater number of these programs in the Colombian National Accreditation System, the need has been found to create assessment instruments that enable viewing their specificity and recognizing their quality in accordance with their nature.
3. The CNA has the firm commitment to move forward both in reviewing the guidelines and in developing criteria that enable the recognition of the specificity of on-line and distance learning.
4. The guidelines must also incorporate the conceptual and epistemological framework of the particularities of on-line and distance learning, as well as its methods and resources. The matrices, descriptors or aspects to be assessed at different times during the assessment of a program, from the time it receives the qualification certification (first time), followed by the renewal of the qualification certification, accreditation (first time) to when accreditation is renewed.

Institutional Assistance Event (multicampus - Regionalization Plan)

The central purpose of this event is to contribute to quality assurance and strengthening of self-assessment for the effects of the accreditation undergraduate and graduate programs and higher education institutions in Colombia, creating spaces for interaction to address topics for interest for the institutions that form part of the System or that are interested in taking up this challenge.

This event was held in Bogotá on October 24, 2018, at the campus of Universidad Santo Tomás. The main purpose of this event was to disseminate the changes incorporated in Resolution 03/2017 on institutional accreditation: modalities, requirements and conditions. The event was targeted at the directors of Education Institutions responsible for the quality or accreditation areas, and other members of the academic community.

The following were the main conclusions:

- It is important to take into account that the concept of regionalization is associated, firstly, with decentralization, which is defined as “the process of increasing the power and autonomy of local communities for decision-making and control over resources, responsibilities and competencies” (Mattos cited by Moreno, 1994).
- From the perspective of multicampus institutional accreditation, the development of decentralization processes creates the possibility of establishing a State-Region that views its territory as the scenario where HEIs immersed in both rural and urban contexts have the possibility of deciding and guiding their own development (Castro, 1998). In this sense, three principles must accompany every decentralization process, which are based also on regionalization: an explicit political willingness built around a broad social and cultural consensus; a political and administrative reorganization that modifies the territorial structures, the distribution of competencies, resources and representation and participation mechanisms, and the option for diversity.
- The concept of regionalization is also based on a broad definition of region that not only focuses on geographic and spatial criteria, but also on social, cultural and political dynamics that make groups feel identified with or belonging to a particular territory.
- It is important to take into consideration that in Colombia the Political Constitution of 1991 strengthens the municipalities and maintains the departmental divisions, and also defines indigenous districts and territories as new territorial entities, and establishes new administrative entities including metropolitan areas, provinces, rural districts and communes (Massiris, 2010). Consequently, institutions must reflect on their self-assessment practices in accordance with their immediate environment. Regionalization, viewed from a regional development perspective, also focuses on the search for a spatial redistribution of economic growth in order to increase living standards and reduce imbalances in supply.
- The regionalization of higher education must ensure that territories fulfill the objectives of the higher education system, including access to an inclusive higher education, of high quality, and contribute to the generation of science, technology and innovation.

Workshops to disseminate the criteria for accreditation of programs under the regional university accreditation system of MERCOSUR

With the support of Fundación Universitaria Los Libertadores and the leadership of Dr. José María Passarini, accreditation system expert at ARCUSUR, two workshops were held aimed at disseminating the criteria of the ARCU-SUR quality system among the academic community and to train CNA’s technical team on the system. The events were held in Bogotá on October 19, 2018 with 100 participants, and in Cartagena on October 20, 2018, with 60 participants.

Dr. Guillermo Murillo, CNA Coordinator, opened the event. During the first part, Dr. Passarini presented the structure of the ARCU-SUR system and the criteria established for the various programs. Subsequently, a panel discussion was held with the international expert and two CNA advisors.

Regional Meeting on “Higher education focused on student learning”

Under the leadership of the advisors Dr. Jhoniers Guerrero and Dr. Luis Enrique Silva, the 2018 edition of the regional meeting was held, aimed at reviewing the impact of the methodologies used by the higher education quality assurance systems to assess learning. The event hosted two international guest speakers, from Portugal and Chile, and one from Colombia.

During the first part of the event, the speakers presented their views on the importance of assessing student learning, and during the second part of the event a panel discussion was held. The event was held at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana on November 13 with 100 participants.

Main Conclusions:

- From the perspective of the statements of the Rector during the opening speech, as well as other academics (Brockbank, McGill)... For some time now, higher education in most European and Ibero-American countries has been undergoing a thorough review regarding its quality and relevance, both in terms of the educational processes (syllabus design, didactics and assessment) and of its outcomes or effects... For some, this competencies-based modality is nothing but a variation of a broader approach known “results-based education”, which originated in the 1960s. For others, it is nothing more than a fad influenced by the requirements of the production sector and the social challenges faced by higher education institutions.
- Education and educational processes have been guided and directed by big educational objectives, such as high culture, critical thought, transmission of scientifically produced and validated knowledge. In recent years, with the emergence of a knowledge-based economy in a globalized world where national borders are increasingly blurred, education and especially higher education are facing new challenges, including that of broadening coverage with quality.
- Coverage focused on the inclusion of lower classes that view education as the only means of transforming their environments and improving their living standards. From this perspective, the foundations are set for an education whose central purpose is the development of the human talent required to address the needs of the various economic sectors.
- Educational ideals have focused on an education aimed at developing people with a high sense of humanity and a critical perspective, in processes with broad educational goals, rather than homogeneous and standardized results. Educational research related to models is largely absent. Even so, considering the difficulties, it is possible to infer and articulate three key components:
 - First, the set of curricular activities must aim towards the full achievement of the competencies (Ambròs, 2009; Argudín). Consequently, a single curricular activity or subject is not equivalent to the complete achievement of a given competency, through it does represent accomplishment of partial and limited learning. In other words, the competencies-based graduate profile is a build-up of partial teachings and learnings that become progressively integrated and articulated during the educational process.
 - Secondly, the curricular activities programs or subjects have evolved from a set of knowledge contents towards guidelines for teaching (for teachers) and for learning (for students), and which are adjusted in a dynamic and contextualized manner (González, n.d.; Rodríguez Torres, 2010; Suárez Muñoz & Godoy Merino, n.d.).
 - Lastly, the teaching and learning process is organized around what the student is expected to be able to demonstrate upon completion of the curricular activities in a comprehensive manner by means of learning standards, rather than based on educational intentions. This key element is what is known as the outcomes of learning (Glaser & Cox, 1968; Gosling & Moon, 2002a; Harden, 2002; Harrison & Mitchell, 2006; Jansen, 1999; Jenkins & Unwin, 1996; Killen, 2000). The relationship between competencies and the outcomes of learning is an essential input to design a course program. Whereas the competencies of the graduate profile are the contextualized integration of all the education, the learning outcomes reflect partial integrations manifested in a time series.
- Due to the above it is necessary to study and debate how the learning outcomes are incorporated, appropriated and assessed by the academic communities, in alignment with the institutional education projects (PEI, for the Spanish original) and program education projects (PEP), in order to qualify and improve quality, as part of the great ideal that they should efficiently address the needs of the labor sectors and the ideals of men and women of good will.

2019 Schedule of Events

The CNA plans to hold the following events during this year:

| Event | Start Date | Objective | Target Audience |
|---|--------------------|--|---|
| INQAAHE follow-up as part of the international certification process | August 2019 | Carry out the follow-up visit as established by the international certification body, in order to maintain the certification that was granted. | Adequately assist the assessment panel of experts, with the participation of the various actors of the system, according to the methodology established by INQAAHE to this effect. |
| Begin cycle of talks with Professional Associations | September 2019 | Contextualize and define the Learning Outcomes as a new element of the accreditation process | Deans representing the member faculties of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asociación Colombiana de Facultades de Ingeniería (Colombian Association of Schools of Engineering) Asociación Colombiana de Facultades de Administración (Colombian Association of Business Schools) Asociación Colombiana de Facultades de Ciencias (Colombian Association of Schools of Science) |
| First international meeting on the criteria for the international certification of medicine programs | September 19, 2019 | Promote learning of international trends in terms of recognition of the accreditation of medicine programs granted in Latin America, in particular in connection with the rules established by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), their implications and challenges. | Officials of the Education and Health Ministries Deans and directors of medicine programs, scientific directors of accredited university hospitals. |
| Three (3) peer training events on the ARCUSUR accreditation model (economics, geology and pharmacy) | October 2019 | Perform training for academic peers in the framework of the ARCUSUR accreditation model | Academic peers in the areas of knowledge on which ARCUSUR is to provide training |
| Regional sessions (6) for closing of the course for accreditation peers. | October 2019 | Carry out the face-to-face course closing sessions and handing out of certificates. | Peers who have successfully completed training. |
| Strengthening and assistance event for HEIs - Launch of the invitation for the regional accreditation of programs in the framework of ARCUSUR | November 2019 | Disseminate the invitation for the accreditation of programs in ARCUSUR in 2019-2020. | Programs that fulfill the criteria and the areas of knowledge defined in the invitation. |

Balance of the Action Plan activities performed and assessment of the progress made

| Objective 2: Promote and encourage accreditation | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Strategies | Activities and Outcomes 2017 | Activities and Outcomes 2018 | Progress made in 2019 | Percentage of completion to date |
| <p>Consolidate communications and relations mechanisms between the CNA and the higher education institutions, in order to provide the support they require to move forward in the self-assessment and accreditation processes, and to strengthen the assessment and accreditation culture.</p> | <p>Strengthening of relations between the CNA and the higher education institutions through ongoing assistance and information sharing processes.</p> <p>Outcome: Design of a theme portfolio for the assistance service regarding the accreditation and continuous quality improvement processes in higher education and scheduling of a calendar of events and fielding of requests for assistance on demand by the institutions.</p> | <p>Seminar: Collective construction of guidelines for the accreditation of distance and on-line programs, with an international prospective view.</p> <p>Workshops to disseminate the criteria for accreditation of programs under the regional university accreditation system of MERCOSUR</p> <p>Regional Meeting on “Higher education focused on student learning”</p> <p>Performance of the activities scheduled in the annual schedule of events.</p> <p>Assistance for HEIs depending on demand.</p> | <p>Invitations to the academic community to participate as key players during the external assessment visit by RIACES</p> <p>Planning and development of the International Medical Education Meeting to be held on September 19 and 20, 2019</p> <p>Planning of peer training workshops in the framework of ARCUSUR and launch the invitation for the accreditation of programs 2019-2020</p> <p>Assistance for HEIs depending on demand</p> | <p>85%</p> |
| <p>Communicate and disseminate the guidelines for Accreditation of Institutions and Programs through various types of media and educational programs in the academic community.</p> | <p>Dissemination of the medical specialties.</p> <p>Outcome: Three regional events (Coffee-growing region, Caribbean region and Southwest) and two in Bogotá (one meeting with: Universidad Militar, Universidad Nacional, Universidad del Rosario, and another with: Universidad Javeriana, FUCS and Sanitas), to disseminate the guidelines developed for Medical Specialties.</p> | <p>Task groups with the academic community to define assessment criteria for distance-learning and on-line programs.</p> <p>Event to promote and raise awareness about the accreditation model</p> <p>Institutional assistance event (multicampus - Regionalization Plan)</p> | <p>Plan the process to assist non-accredited medicine programs</p> <p>Performance of the annual schedule of events.</p> | <p>70%</p> |

GUIDELINE 3

DECISION-MAKING

EQAA has policies and procedures in place to ensure a fair and independent decision-making process in the final review of the institution or program. Provide effective procedures to manage claims and complaints.

3.5 STRENGTHENING OF THE EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT PROCESSES PERFORMED BY THE ACADEMIC PEERS

In June 2017, the CNA took on the challenge of developing a School for Peers under the B-Learning modality, led by the Higher Education Quality Assurance Deputy Office, with the objective of strengthening the Higher Education Quality Assurance System in the country and consolidate work tools to assist the various actors in the system. In this context the course for accreditation peers was developed; the process of developing contents and defining reinforcement and assessment activities was completed in April 2018.

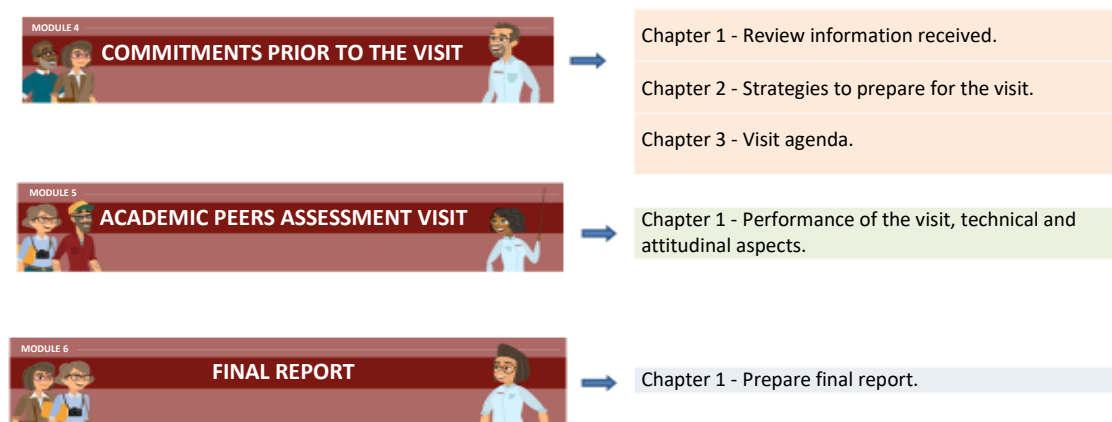
At the same time, work was done on establishing an item-based peer assessment process aimed at assuring a 360º process that incorporates an assessment of the advisor who reviews the external assessment report submitted by the peer, an assessment by the dean on the performance of the team of peers involved in the visit, and a self-assessment consolidated by the visit coordinator to provide a feedback report to the peers on their performance, and at the same time determine aspects that require follow-up regarding the peer’s competencies that were previously established during the course and the activities that the CNA must incorporate into the final peer training process.

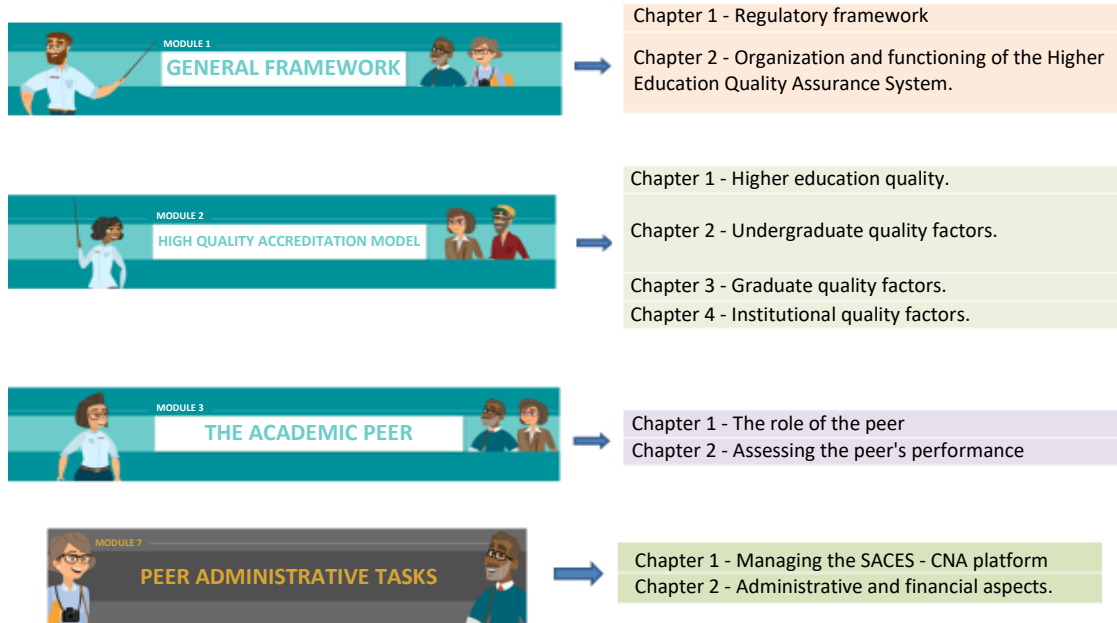
3.5.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING COURSE FOR ACADEMIC PEERS

The main objective of the course is to: “Contribute to training of assessment peers who are knowledgeable of the Quality Assurance System, competent to issue judgments on the quality of higher education programs and higher education institutions, in the framework of the CNA’s accreditation guidelines, to serve as input for the continuous improvement of quality and for decision-making by the Council.”

The **first stage of this project** focused on developing the course contents based on the key training aspects to ensure reinforcement of the essential competencies for each stage of the external assessment process, as follows:

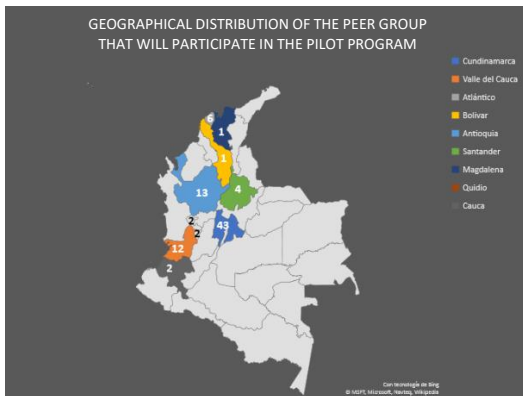
Figure 6. Theme structure: Course for accreditation peers, B-Learning modality





The **second stage of the project** was aimed at presenting the course structure to the academic community and receiving first hand feedback on aspects that would require fine-tuning: “The pilot plan”. A group of academics with broad knowledge of the National Accreditation System was invited to participate in the pilot course, including advisors, former advisors, experienced academic peers and international peers who have provided support for institutional visits. Professors who have recently taken on this key role and members of the CNA team also participated.

The purpose is to assess the contents, structure and relevance of the peer training, and the peers who receive certification can also later act as multipliers of the process both at their own HEIs and as possible tutors for the course in their regions. For this reason, special care was taken to ensure the participation of academics from different regions of the country, from different types of higher education institutions and with specialties in different areas of knowledge.



| Department | No. | % |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
| Cundinamarca | 43 | 48% |
| Valle del Cauca | 12 | 13% |
| Atlántico | 6 | 7% |
| Bolívar | 1 | 1% |
| Antioquia | 13 | 15% |
| Santander | 4 | 4% |
| Magdalena | 1 | 1% |
| Quindío | 2 | 2% |
| Cauca | 2 | 2% |
| International | 3 | 2% |

The aim is to consolidate a base of international peers who are highly knowledgeable of the national model. Validate the model as a mechanism for training other actors of the System, taking advantage of its modular structure and the other topics developed by the school, which enables designing processes to suit the needs of the various target audiences. To serve as a mechanisms for the orientation and re-orientation of advisors and CNA personnel on the National Accreditation System.

The launch event of the pilot program was held on May 28 in Bogotá. Dr. Helmuth Trefftz, CNA Advisor, opened the event.

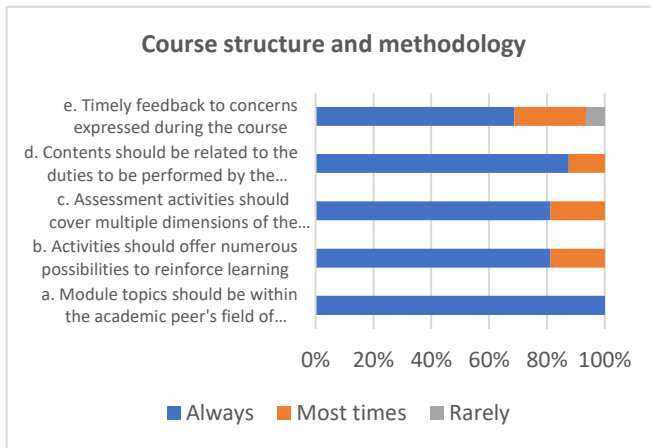
During this event, peers were welcomed, and aspects of the methodology, assessment processes and the timetables for the on-line component were discussed.



As a result of this pilot run, strengths and opportunities indicated by participants have been systematized, in order to enrich the contents, broaden the reinforcement and assessment activities, and fine-tune the contents, in order to invite a new group of peers to join this important process in the short term.

The participants' general assessment of the course

During this face-to-face session of the course, attended by 22 peers, a general assessment of the course was performed, with the following results:

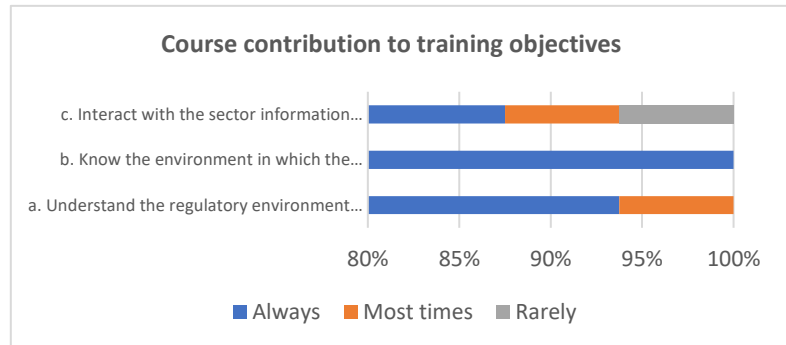


Regarding the course methodology, on average 95% of participants believe the topics are relevant, the proposed activities enable the assimilation of concepts and the assessment activities take into consideration the various dimensions of the peer's performance before, during and after the visit.

Given that the School for Peers has methodologically structured the modules as self-contained units that privilege self-learning, no tutoring assistance is provided.

The only support provided to the peers is to overcome technical problems, acting as a bridge with Colombia Aprende, which is the manager of the website that hosts the contents. For this reason, only 68% assessed this aspect positively.

On average 97% of participants report that the course objective was fulfilled in terms of providing peers structured information about the philosophical, regulatory and procedural context in which the accreditation processes are performed and the importance of the external assessment.



The following were the best-rated aspects by participants:

- ✦ The selection of contents and the course’s contribution to the overall training of peers.
- ✦ Regarding the supporting documentation available for additional information on each module, and the reinforcement and assessment activities, improvement actions have been initiated based on the recommendations made by the peers for each module.

Face-to-face course closing session: The purpose of this face-to-face component is to assess the performance, professional, communications and interpersonal competencies of the candidates to become accreditation academic peers at CNA, in the competencies based on the learning products of the face-to-face stage of the course. It is an 8-hour face-to-face session divided into two 4-hour sections. The first section discusses the preliminary report and the preparation of the agenda for the visit. The second section discusses the assessment visit and drafting of the final report.

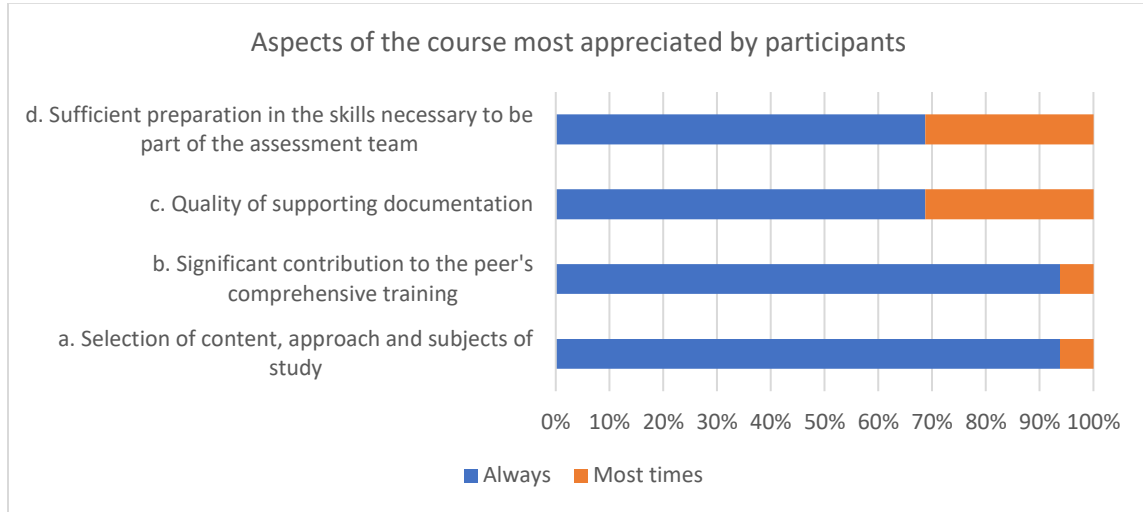
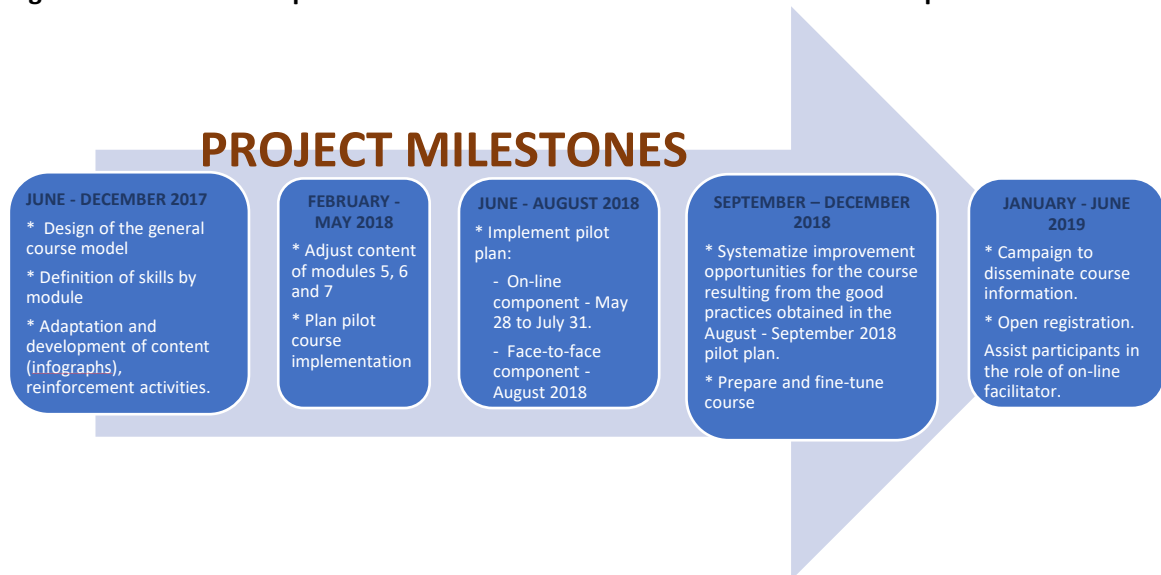
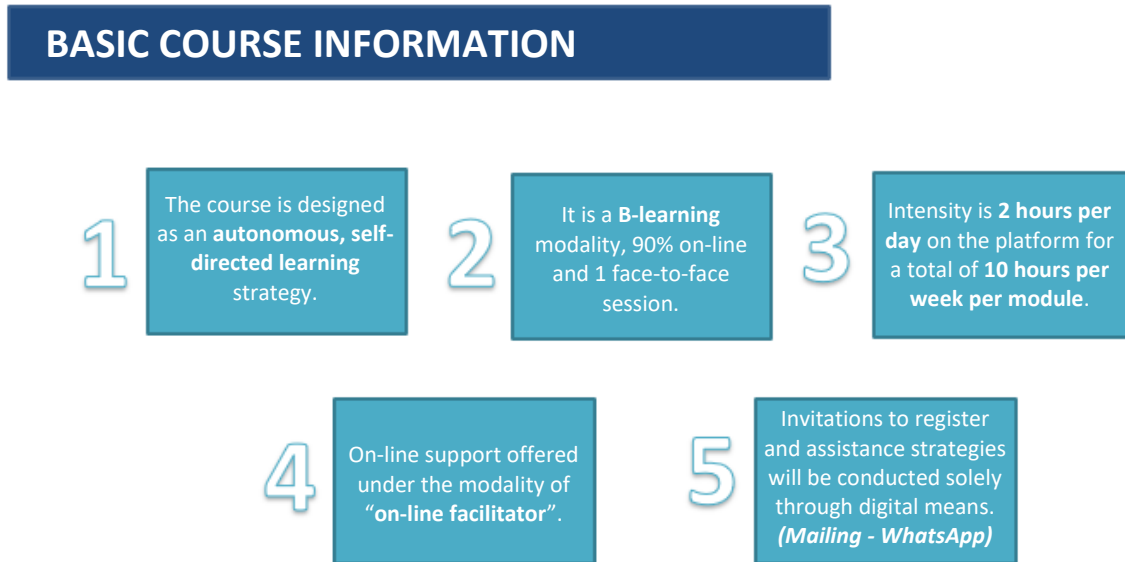


Figure 6. Main activities performed to consolidate the course for accreditation peers



The **third stage** consisted in integrating the comments received during the course to adjust the final version. This stage was carried out during the first half of the year, and in July the new contents were published during the trial stage in the Colombia Aprende platform. At the same time, work was done on consolidating the database of peers who will participate in the first cohorts, with the objective of training 150 peers. (See Annex 4)

Figure 7. Methodological characteristics of the course for accreditation peers, B-Learning modality



The invitation to participate will be made by means of a digital publicity campaign in three stages:

- ✚ During the **information stage**, all messages will be focused on publicizing among the target audience (deans of HEIs - former academic peers) information related to the National School for Peers. What is it? Who can participate? How do they participate? What are the benefits? Key dates for registration and channels to receive additional information.

The invitations are sent out by e-mailing, which requires:

1. Updating the database of deans of HEIs in the country - former academic peers.
2. Creating an account in the Mailchimp e-mail marketing platform to send out mass invitations.
3. Designing the communications pieces focusing on each target audience.
4. Creating registration forms.
5. Scheduling e-mails associated with the registration form.
6. Establishing the communications channels to address any questions about the process. (E-mail account, WhatsApp account, social media).

- ✚ During the **launch stage** (close to the registration closing date) assistance and guidelines will be provided for the registration process, through messages focusing on the procedure for registering and the importance of doing so, including information on deadlines and support channels.



Performance of this stage involves following up on registrations in the School for Peers, encouraging the academic peers to update their information in the SACES system, and addressing all requests through communications channels created to this effect.

Depending on registration trends, a video conference may be scheduled with an expert from CNA’s Technical Secretariat to clarify any doubts on the process in real time, by means of live streaming in social media or in Hangout (YouTube).



- ✚ The **sustainability stage** begins once the registration process has ended, involving communication with those registered, welcoming to the School for Peers, pointing out the advantages of the methodology, good study practices, recommendations focused on fulfilling the learning objectives, tips and interesting facts about the course contents.

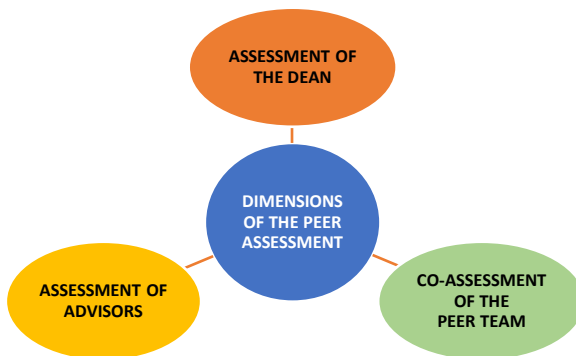
Messages aimed at encouraging to begin the learning process, to complete the full contents of the School and to successfully complete the training process.

These encouragement communications will be on-line, not by e-mail but through the support channels installed in the training platform, such as forums, chats, WhatsApp contacts, etc.

- ✚ The **knowledge management stage**: While the contents are studied, activities will be suggested to enable the peers to input information regarding the identification and assessment of good practices before, during and after the external assessment visit, with the aim of creating a repository of data that can be used by the peers and to begin an academic creation process through articles.

3.5.2 PROPOSED PEER ASSESSMENT PROCESS

During performance of the activities involved in the project on “strengthening of external assessment activities” and the “lessons learned” derived from the course for accreditation peers during the pilot stage, assessment instruments were designed taking into consideration the critical competencies the academic peers are expected to develop in order to ensure optimal performance of their duties. This aspect is related to one of the comments made by the INQAAHE assessment panel, regarding the need to: Provide feedback to peers on the assessment results. (See Annexes 6 to 9)



Once these items are validated, they will be made available to the various actors (deans, advisors and team coordinators) through a form that can be filled out on-line (Daniel is currently working on this), whose results will enable having structured, systematic and comprehensive information available, if possible in real time, on peer performance to enable providing the feedback the peers have so often requested from CNA, and developing a database to cross-check information to report on the following aspects, among others:

- Number of visits in which a peer has been coordinator (experience, performance).
- Number of visits in which a peer has participated.

- Performance of the team regarding the competencies that have a direct and significant influence on performance, in order to identify improvement actions to be implemented by the CNA.
- Number of times reports have been returned.
- Identification of critical aspects of peer performance (definition of education strategies or actions).

It should be noted that the scope of this assessment strategy is limited because the required IT tools are not available to carry out a 360° assessment, which would require the implementation of self-assessment processes for each peer and have automatic tabulations of results and personalized reports consolidated with the identification of improvement actions. Consequently, these requirements should be taken into consideration in future information system developments in order to significantly improve this process.

This exercise will require the effective implementation of actions to ensure it is filled out through mechanisms that make it mandatory for the various participating actors, and the definition of the roles and responsibilities for managing the information and the activities derived from it. Additionally, it will be necessary to define the actions to be taken based on the reviewed information regarding the permanence, monitoring and development of the peers.

From a good practices perspective, the peer feedback process is aimed at assessing the peers' role after the visit, so as to highlight their good work or to indicate aspects for improvement, aimed at strengthening the training process in topics that strengthen their competencies. If despite the training the peer continues to display identified weak points, the peer should be excluded from the peer database.

This activity will be coordinated with the general process that includes the processes of invitations, training, selection, assignment, assessment and development of the peers, which will also be reflected in the update and development of the following documents: Peers manual, guidelines for drafting reports and guidelines for managing and tutoring peer training courses.

Balance of the Action Plan activities performed and assessment of the progress made

| Objective 4: Improve the efficiency of accreditation procedures | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Strategies | Activities and Outcomes 2017 | Activities and Outcomes 2018 | Progress made in 2019 | Percentage of completion to date |
| Improve the external assessment processes performed by academic peers regarding selection, training, assistance and performance monitoring. | Structure and develop the School for Peers Develop, design and adjust the course contents in line with the specific purpose of the external assessment process performed by the CNA | Final report on the pilot course for peers in the B-Learning modality Systematization of the lessons learned and development of the preliminary items for peer assessment | Official launch of the training course for accreditation peers – Planning of cohorts. | 80% |
| Strengthen CNA's Continuous Improvement System, by coordinating the planning exercises with management of a system of indicators that supports the mission and administrative efforts of CNA. | Consolidate the comments of the self-assessment process and the recommendations of the INQAAHE international panel. Action plan- Structuring of projects | Develop the technical sheet of the process with INQAAHE, which includes the progress made on the recommendations made by the assessment panel. | Structuring of the external assessment report for the external assessment process with RIACES. Structuring of the monitoring report for INQAAHE | 80% |

| Objective 4: Improve the efficiency of accreditation procedures | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Strategies | Activities and Outcomes 2017 | Activities and Outcomes 2018 | Progress made in 2019 | Percentage of completion to date |
| | | Development of the technical sheet of the international certification process with RIACES, which includes: timetable, preliminary analysis of fulfillment of the assessment criteria defined for the process and overall table of contents of the self-assessment document. | | |
| Consolidate mechanisms for the participation of the various agents in order to share best practices and review topics of interest in developing the culture of quality at HEIs and undertake academic research and production processes that enable strengthening the Accreditation System. | Develop the thematic and methodological structure of the training course for accreditation peers. | Systematization of the recommendations made by the academic peers during the pilot course for peers. | Regarding the consolidation of venues for sharing, identifying and systematizing good practices and for the production of articles, assistance actions will be implemented and activities will be scheduled with the peers who participate in the training cohorts under the B-Learning modality | 80% |

GUIDELINE 4
THE EQAA AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIETY

EQAA publishes its policies and decisions about institutions and programs, discloses decisions on its own performance and disseminates reports on the results of its quality assurance processes.

3.6 CNA WEBSITE PROJECT

For this project, the CNA performed a diagnosis of its current website according to the usage guidelines and good practices for government websites established by the Government On Line program. The technical sheet is currently under development and the Technology Office of MEN has been requested to provide technical assistance for the website development (programmer- website designer). (See Annex 10)

The objective is to create the new website on a CMS that enables autonomous and simple management by the CNA team, under a more modern platform such as Drupal, Wordpress. The following aspects are to be taken into consideration for the development of the new website:

- ✚ The scope of the new website should include support for the creation of forms and databases to assess and provide feedback on the performance of accreditation academic peers, by means of a gamification methodology in which each academic peer has a profile that groups together information about the visits made, achievements, additional medals or awards.
- ✚ It should support the CNA's self-assessment processes by means of forms to collect data and to consolidate reports.
- ✚ The website should have a search engine for accredited institutions and programs, including a sheet with summarized information that is dynamically updated, given the time-sensitive nature of accreditation.
- ✚ The new website must have a modern design that simplifies and groups current information and that offers various formats for interaction with the end user, such as registration forms to a Newsletter or website, personalized

information depending on the user (academic peers, higher education institutions, students, etc.), access to social media, videos, image galleries, events calendar, surveys, links of interest.

- ✚ It must have a functionality that enables performance of follow-up and monitoring of the improvement plans defined by HEIs derived from the self-assessment and accreditation process, with the support of information systems.
- ✚ The aim is to ensure that mechanisms are in place for autonomous management of the information to be published in an easy manner. The above should be specified in CNA’s internal rules as a strategy to facilitate communications with the community.

Other associated products:

- **Design and validation of the website architecture.** On this item, assistance is required from the technology area to provide guidance on website architecture design and development.
- **Creation of a Corporate Identity Manual** to standardize the institution’s image. Currently, the CNA does not have a logo or criteria on adequate or inadequate usage.
- **Contents management manual.**

These aspects provide the general context to establish the project’s scope and to obtain a more precise budget on the cost of development; however, a joint work plan must be established in order to structure the project’s technical sheet.

It should be noted that starting this year a communications advisor is available for performance of this project and other CNA activities, who will contribute her knowledge and experience to the team, which also enables moving forward with this project and other tasks such as peer training and preparation of the schedule of events.

3.7 UPGRADE FOR THE SACES SYSTEM

For the project to upgrade the SACES system, the Ministry of National Education has signed an association agreement with Universidad Sergio Arboleda, the purpose of which is to “join efforts to identify opportunities and solutions to enable upgrading, automating and innovating the ICT platform that supports the higher educational quality assurance processes.” (See Annex 11)

Under the agreement, the University is to: i) define the business architecture for the system; ii) specify the detailed functional and non-functional requirements; iii) assist the Ministry of National Education during the development, implementation, testing and stabilization stages of the system.

Regarding the second item, on specifying the requirements, a methodology has been proposed involving the teams in order to gather the knowledge of the professionals from the various departments and areas of the Higher Education Vice-Ministry, in order to identify their expectations, interests and requests regarding the new SACES system. Based on the above, we request that you carry out internal consultations with your teams in order to consolidate this first level of information, which will be used as input for mapping out the new system and will be the starting point for the detailed definition of activities, consultations and specific tasks to be programmed into the system. (See Annex 12)

Table 4. Catalog of required adjustments to the CNA SACES application

| STAGE | ROLE | REQUIREMENT | TYPE |
|--------------------|------|--|-------------|
| Initial conditions | HEIs | System parameter administration | Improvement |
| | | Validate or track the name of the legal representative (updated) | Improvement |
| | | Change name of the time of penalty label | Change |
| | | Validate page and record number (not required) | Change |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---|-------------|
| | | Validate the academic program offerings - academic aspects | Change |
| | | Validate warning at the end of the academic offerings form | Change |
| | | Template manager to update or amend the existing ones | Improvement |
| | | A warning must be provided to select a program upon request, except in the case of a preparatory cycle. Usability when selecting the request for a program | Change |
| | | The visiting professor forms should be deleted | Change |
| | | It must be possible to upload visiting professors through a batch process | Improvement |
| Completeness | CNA quality specialist | An inconsistency was found in the valid dates of the qualification certification | Change |
| | | Interoperability with inspection and supervision to certify penalties | Improvement |
| | | Usability when performing analysis of uploaded data | Improvement |
| Assignment of advisors | CNA quality specialist | It must be possible to configure the session for advisors, because it currently automatically creates 1 session per month | Improvement |
| Self-Assessment | HEIs | The system must be capable of generating reports that enable extracting information on the timetables requested in the self-assessment status for approval, in order to be able to estimate the resources and strategies required to address renewals and requests | Improvement |
| | | The % column on program completion in the student factor table should be deleted | Change |
| | | The number 2 of the label % desertion rate SPADIES in the student factor should be deleted | Change |
| | | Organize the footnote of the table in the student factor to match the table | Change |
| | | It must be possible to manage the master information charts for self-assessment - academic processes. | Change |
| | | The methodology's weighting method must instruct the HEI that the scheme cannot be changed once it has been defined or saved, and disable the edition button on the scale. Additionally, it must inform that the maximum score in the numeric scheme is 5.0 and restrict the data type up to 5.0. | Improvement |
| | | A warning is required to notify the user that an overall assessment of the factor is to be made, in the Assessment factors and characteristics tab. | Improvement |
| System | General | Validate that the query scripts are not visible in the application results, for example: peer pre-selection status, list of pre-selected requests and peers. | Change |
| Peers appointed | Operator | The system must generate warnings for the appropriate role to upload information on travel allowances, tickets, etc., in order to upload the information in a timely manner. | Improvement |
| | CNA quality specialist | The administrator must be able to confirm the visit, because the peers occasionally do not sign into the system | Improvement |
| Awaiting report by peers | Peers | Leave only one tab for peers to attach the report | Improvement |
| Review of external | Secretary | Create a query role that enables viewing the advisors' comments when they return reports to peers | Improvement |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--|-------------|
| assessment report | | | |
| For comments by the dean | CNA quality specialist | The system must allow the administrator to set parameters for the survey questions before comments from the deans and to view the peer report. | Improvement |
| With Opinion | CNA quality specialist | The system must enable inputting an opinion, because the central functionality of this status displays errors. Additionally, the institution role must not have access to the information on the opinion or paper | Improvement |
| Recommended | CNA quality specialist | The system must enable inputting a recommendation, because the central functionality of this status displays errors. Additionally, the institution role must not have access to the information on the opinion or paper | Improvement |
| With resolution | CNA quality specialist | The system must enable supervision over the draft resolutions based on the opinions, until its completion or publication (SIGAA STAGE II - digital signature- signature circuit). Another solution would be to validate the process in SACES through interoperability. | Improvement |

Balance of the Action Plan activities performed and assessment of the progress made

| Objective 4: Improve the efficiency of accreditation procedures | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| Strategies | Activities and Outcomes 2017 | Activities and Outcomes 2018 | Progress made in 2019 | Percentage of completion to date |
| Implement information technology and communications systems that enable providing feedback on the guidelines, processes and management of the CNA, to facilitate management of the accreditation processes, the interaction with other higher education information systems and with stakeholders. | Update news on the CNA website | Restructure the CNA website in accordance with INQAAHE recommendations | <p>Diagnosis performed on the current CNA website, according to the usability guidelines established by the ICT Ministry's Government On Line policy.</p> <p>Proposal for new website structure, with support from the technology office of MEN to develop a new website.</p> <p>Structuring of the Corporate Identity Manual: The need was found to develop a Corporate Identity Manual to endow the new website and CNA communications with an identity. Currently, the CNA does not have a logo or criteria on adequate or inadequate usage</p> <p>Migration of the CNA's e-mail to a new domain because it is hosted on a</p> | 70% |

| Objective 4: Improve the efficiency of accreditation procedures | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Strategies | Activities and Outcomes 2017 | Activities and Outcomes 2018 | Progress made in 2019 | Percentage of completion to date |
| | | | server reported as SPAM and is often blocked, produces errors and makes it difficult to use. | |
| Improve the efficiency of program and institution accreditation processes by means of the development of the application SACES – CNA and carry out ongoing awareness-raising, training and assistance processes to improve system usage by the various internal and external agents of the accreditation process for programs and institutions. | Identification of errors in the platform’s undergraduate module | Diagnosis of technical requirements to implement improvement actions on the undergraduate module and the development of the graduate and institutional modules. | Taking into consideration the structure of the information system for Higher Education Quality Assurance, the CNA publishes the diagnosis report on the current requirements for the SACES - CNA system, so they are taken into consideration as inputs for this process. | 70% |
| Design and implement an internal and external communications plan to publicize the academic activities and results of the CNA’s efforts, so that they are fully known and valued by the stakeholders and society. | Outcome: Diagnosis document on the general conditions of the CNA’s communications channels and processes | Diagnosis of the structure of the information contained in the CNA website. Profiling of the communications office. | Corporate Identity Manual: The need was found to develop a Corporate Identity Manual to endow the new website and CNA communications with an identity. Currently, the CNA does not have a logo or criteria on adequate or inadequate usage. | 70% |

**GUIDELINE 5
THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EQAA**

The EQAA has policies and mechanisms for its internal quality assurance that demonstrate its continuous effort to improve the quality and integrity of its activities, its response to changes in its environment and its relationship with the international quality assurance community.

3.8 LINKS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMUNITY

Internationalization activities include the promotion of cooperation and integration with national accreditation agencies and other agents of the education systems of countries of the Latin America and Caribbean region, as well as of other regions such as Europe and North America. Through this initiative, the council intends to put its expertise and know-how in program and institutional accreditation processes at the service of the quality of higher education to improve the processes, and to gain knowledge, create links and learn from international experiences, as well as receive updated information on new trends.

The activities implemented by the internationalization group are aimed at the strategic objective established by the CNA to *“strengthen the CNA’s internationalization to promote national and international recognition of the accredited academic programs and institutions, and help to consolidate the internationalization of the country’s higher education”*. Consequently, the CNA’s participation in regional and global networks has enabled programs of specific areas of knowledge to participate in regional accreditation events, such as the process with ARCU-SUR. It has also made it possible to increase the number of external assessment peers trained under the national model and international criteria, facilitating the expansion of the Council's range of possibilities for carrying out national and international accreditation processes.

As part of the above, the CNA is open to new trends and international development related to quality assurance, accreditation, and internationalization (cross-border education), and has defined an internationalization strategy that covers the following lines:

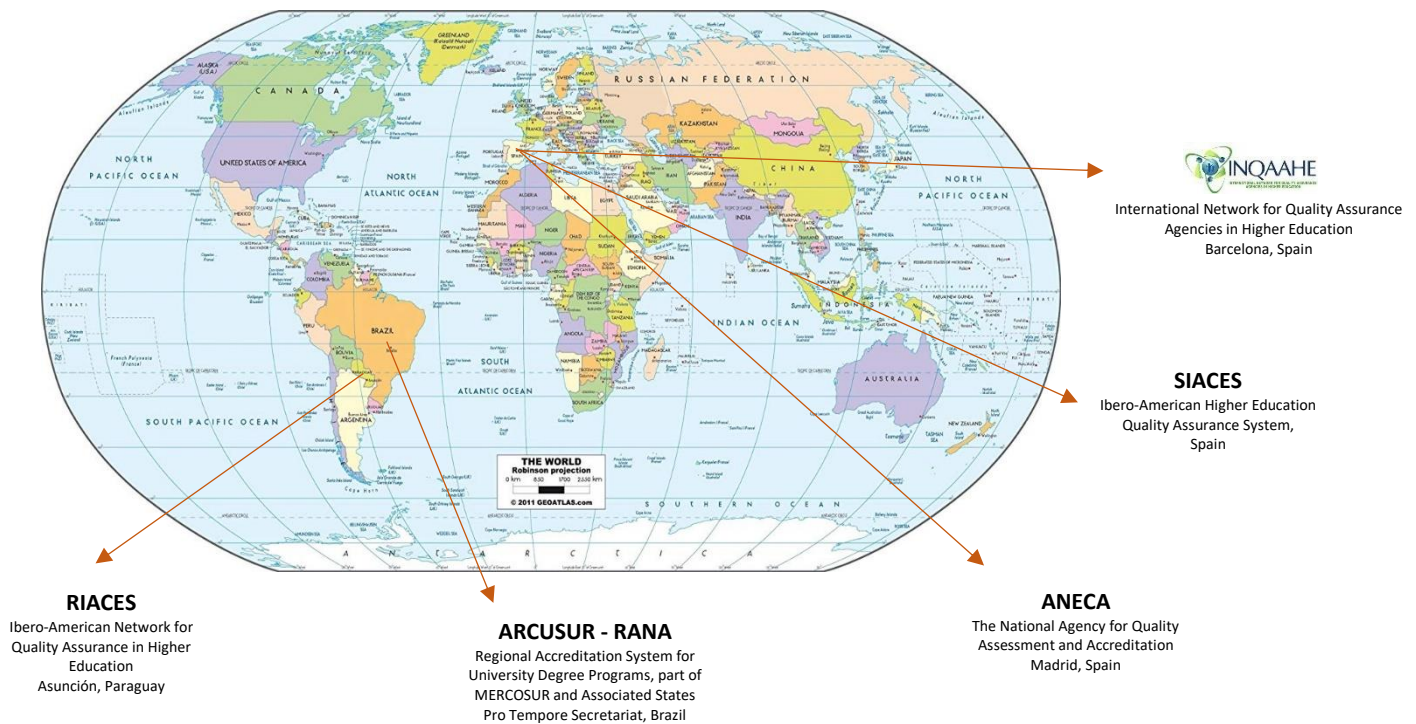
- ✚ Participation in networks and regional events
- ✚ International and regional accreditation
- ✚ Internationalization of the National Accreditation System

In addition to being part of international entities such as RANA, RIACES and SIACES, the CNA's internationalization strategy also involves working on ensuring that national accreditations have validity at the international level and facilitate the recognition of titles and student mobility. One concrete example is ARCUSUR and the accreditation of degree programs at the MERCOSUR level.

On the other hand, the CNA has an improvement plan that is the result of an assessment by INQAAHE and RIACES, which is in line with the current action plan.

In order to strengthen the CNA, it is necessary to engage in meetings with other agencies at the international level. This point will be included in the regulation as one of CNA's strengthening strategies.

Figure 7. Networks in which CNA participates



International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education - INQAAHE

As part of the CNA's participation in this network, and especially as a result of the external assessment process that led to the council's international certification, the recommendations made by the panel of experts have been implemented, especially in the area of international relations through the internationalization actions. The most significant actions in this regard are highlighted below, and details are presented in the annexes to this report. The recommendations have allowed the CNA to guide actions to strengthen joint strategies with networks and associations of Latin America and the Caribbean, and to promote the discussion and communication of good practices in quality assurance. To this effect, it has carried out joint processes, such as conferences and workshops in Latin America and the Caribbean; sharing of experiences, good practices and staff internships; and the training of peers, directors and technicians, among other joint programs.

Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - RIACES

The following are actions that are in the common interest of Spain and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean that participate in the network, aimed at strengthening mutual knowledge of the university systems, facilitating the identification of common and unique problems regarding the assessment and accreditation systems, increasing assessment and accreditation capacity in the region, promoting cooperation projects to speed up the transfer activities between the countries, and facilitating the coordinated development of the assessment and accreditation processes in the region.

General objectives include:

- Promote cooperation, exchange and harmonization of quality criteria for higher education at member agencies and institutions.
- Contribute to strengthening the quality of higher education in the member countries and others that request it.

Specific objectives include:

- Facilitate the transfer of knowledge and information among network members.
- Promote self-assessment and external assessment processes aimed at identifying and strengthening good quality practices in the systems, agencies and entities responsible for accreditation of higher education quality in Ibero-America.
- Foster and support activities that promote and disseminate good practices among network members.

On August 6, 2018, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Paraguay recognized RIACES as the "entity whose purpose is to promote cooperation among Ibero-American countries and sharing of experiences and good practices in the field of higher education assessment, accreditation and quality assurance."

Currently, CNA-Colombia is part of the Network's Academic Committee and is participating in the assessment process aimed at validating the network's assessment documents.

Regional Accreditation System of University Degrees (ARCU-SUR)

The consolidation of these guidelines has enabled performance of regional accreditation processes. In this context, CNA has made three calls to apply for joint accreditation of programs with the ARCU-SUR System in parallel with the internal process with the CNA. The two first calls for applications were made in 2011 and 2014, resulting in eleven accredited programs. The latest call for applications was made in April 2016.

In 2014, three academic programs —two in medicine and one in agronomy— achieved national accreditation by the CNA and regional accreditation by ARCU-SUR, all within the framework of understanding and the agreements made by the regional accreditation system. In 2016, the CNA opened the new call for applications for the parallel accreditation of programs with the CNA and ARCU-SUR – MERCOSUR. This call for applications is for architecture, agronomy, veterinary science and nursing. Twelve national higher education academic programs have been incorporated, which were

shortlisted based on the expiration date of their national accreditation and the field of knowledge of this new call for applications, following the guidelines of ARCU-SUR - MERCOSUR.

As a result of the accreditation processes undertaken by CNA-Colombia, the following programs are currently accredited in the framework of the ARCU-SUR System:

| INSTITUTION | CITY/CAMPUS | PROGRAM | YEAR ACCREDITATION | TERM |
|--|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Escuela de Ingeniería Julio Garavito | Bogotá | Civil Engineering | 2011 | 6 years |
| Universidad del Valle | Cali | Electrical Engineering | 2011 | 6 years |
| Universidad del Norte | Barranquilla | Industrial Engineering | 2011 | 6 years |
| Universidad Nacional | Medellín | Chemical Engineering | 2011 | 6 years |
| | Manizales | | | |
| | Bogotá | | | |
| Universidad del Tolima | Ibagué | Agricultural Engineering | 2014 | 6 years |
| Universidad CES | Medellín | Medicine | 2014 | 6 years |
| Universidad de Santander | Bucaramanga | Medicine | 2014 | 6 years |
| Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas y Ambientales (UDCA) | Bogotá | Veterinary Medicine | 2017 | 6 years |
| Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas y Ambientales (UDCA) | Bogotá | Nursing | 2017 | 6 years |
| Santo Tomás | Bucaramanga | Architecture | 2017 | 6 years |
| Universidad Libre | Cali | Nursing | 2017 | 6 years |
| Universidad de Santander | Bucaramanga | Nursing | 2017 | 6 years |
| Universidad del Tolima | Ibagué | Nursing | 2017 | 6 years |
| Universidad Santo Tomás | Bogotá | Electronic Engineering | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad Industrial de Santander - UIS | Bucaramanga | Chemical Engineering | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad de Caldas | Manizales | Food Engineering | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad de Córdoba | Montería | Agricultural Engineering | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad de Córdoba | Montería | Food Engineering | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad del Valle | Cali | Systems Engineering | 2018 | 6 years |

| INSTITUTION | CITY/CAMPUS | PROGRAM | YEAR ACCREDITATION | TERM |
|--|-------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Universidad del Valle | Cali | Electrical Engineering | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad El Bosque | Bogotá | Medicine | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad El Bosque | Bogotá | Dental Science | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana - Central Campus Medellín | Medellín | Information Technology Engineering | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira | Pereira | Mechanical Engineering | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad Libre | Cali | Medicine | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad Nacional de Colombia | Palmira | Environmental Engineering | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad Escuela de Ingeniería de Antioquia -EIA | Envigado | Biomedical Engineering | 2018 | 6 years |
| Universidad Nacional de Colombia | Medellín | Biological Engineering | 2018 | 6 years |

Peer training: The CNA engages in peer training processes as part of its international cooperation processes, which is provided through the platform of the ARCU-SUR System. Through this platform, with the participation of seven other countries, the database of peers is consolidated for the implementation of the external quality assessment processes, which among other characteristics, enables training of national reviewers in accordance with international accreditation models. To this end, regional training workshops are performed. This year, two such workshops will be offered in the city of Bogotá. At this time, the CNA collaborates with ARCU-SUR for the selection of peers to take part in external assessment visits carried out as part of the accreditation processes in this context.

3.9 PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

The National Accreditation Council seeks to promote and consolidate internationalization processes for Colombia's Higher Education Quality Assurance System, in accordance with the public policy proposed by the Ministry of National Education, to which end it has stipulated the following lines of action:

- Participate actively in the design and development of public policies and activities that favor the internationalization of Colombia's Higher Education Quality Assurance System.
- Permanently strengthen and align the CNA's internal procedures and processes with international good practices codes.
- Participate in regional and global networks in order to ensure quality that transcends national borders in the accreditation of HEI undergraduate and graduate programs in Colombia.
- Contribute to the development of international systems (regional or inter-regional) of mutual recognition by national accreditation agencies, as a first step towards the mutual recognition of accredited programs between countries, thus seeking to facilitate the process of validating academic titles.
- Lead the process of developing Regional Areas of Knowledge that have strategic relevance for Colombia and where mobility is facilitated for students, teachers and the academic community in general, favoring the internationalization of the higher education system.

- Facilitate and/or participate in planning and developing joint experimental accreditation initiatives for academic programs in specific disciplinary fields, in specific geographic regions, or at a bilateral level with peer countries and agencies.
- Contribute to the development of harmonized quality assessment instruments and indicators, especially in the case of graduate programs.
- Project CNA activities internationally through certification activities and support for programs in other countries.
- Discuss and advance in the integration of internationalization criteria in accreditation guidelines for both undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Jointly with the Colombian Presidential Agency of Cooperation (APC, for the Spanish original), consolidate technical cooperation actions of supply and demand to generate concrete actions of collaboration with accreditation agencies from other countries.

In this context, the Council participates in various scenarios where topics of major importance are debated concerning the quality of higher education around the world.

The CNA recently participated in the following international events, where it was represented by its advisors and through training of academic peers:

| Name of the Event | Organized by | City, Country | Purpose | Participants |
|--|--|---|---|-------------------|
| Regional training workshop for assessment peers | National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (INEP) - Brazil | Brasilia, Brazil March 5-7, 2018 | Strengthen the regional Peers Database in the area of engineering in the framework of the regional Accreditation System, ARCUSUR | 6 peers |
| International forum on higher education quality assurance | RIACES, National Council of Universities (CNU, for the Spanish original) in Nicaragua and the Central American Accreditation Agency for Architectural and Engineering Programs (ACAAI, for the Spanish original) | Managua, Nicaragua April 9, 2018 | Share good quality assurance practices in the area of higher education | Álvaro Acevedo |
| 16th General Assembly of the Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (RIACES) | RIACES - CONEAUPA | Managua, Nicaragua April 10-11, 2018 | Present Management Report Define action plan and activities for 2018 | Álvaro Acevedo |
| Meeting RANA I-2018 | Network of National Accreditation Agencies (RANA, for the Spanish original) | Asunción, Paraguay April 17-18, 2018 | Define action plan and activities for I-2018 | Guillermo Murillo |
| Regional training workshop for assessment peers | National Accreditation Commission, Chile | Santiago, Chile May 29-30, 2018 | Strengthen the regional Peers Database in the area of engineering in the framework of the regional Accreditation System, ARCUSUR Medicine and Dentistry | 3 peers |

| Name of the Event | Organized by | City, Country | Purpose | Participants |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Regional training workshop for assessment peers | Council for the Evaluation, Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (CEAACES, for the Spanish original) | Quito, Ecuador July 17-19, 2018 | Strengthen the regional Peers database in the area of engineering in the framework of the regional Accreditation System, ARCUSUR Medicine and Dentistry | 3 peers Luz Amanda Viviecas Prof. Cañón |
| Regional Conference for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean 2018 (CRES 2018) | UNESCO's International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC, for the Spanish original), Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, the National Inter-University Council of Argentina (CIN, for the Spanish original), and the Secretary of University Policies of the Ministry of Education and Sports | Córdoba, Argentina June 11-15, 2018 | Coordinate the declaration and action plan on higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean from the perspective of sustainable human development and the commitment to more just and fair societies | Alvaro Motta |
| Meeting RANA II-2018 | Network of National Accreditation Agencies (RANA, for the Spanish original) | Montevideo, Uruguay October 03-04, 2018 | Define action plan and activities II-2018 | Guillermo Murillo |
| International Seminar: Successful models, processes and practices of higher education quality assurance | Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MESCYT, for the Spanish original) | Punta Cana, Dominican Republic November 21-23, 2018 | Presentation of the experience of collective construction of guidelines for the accreditation of on-line and distance learning programs in Colombia | Fernando Cantor |
| Meeting of the Network of National Accreditation Agencies (RANA, for the Spanish original) of the Education Sector (MERCOSUR) | | Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, Argentina May 22-23, 2019 | <p>Schedule peer training workshops in the areas of Economics, Geology and Pharmacy.</p> <p>It was agreed that Calls to participate can be made independently by any country after the preparation work has been finalized and the Network Meeting has been informed.</p> <p>It was recommended to discuss a scheme to recognize good practices among RANA agencies. Prior experiences regarding accreditation processes at the national and regional levels will be used as input.</p> | Guillermo Murillo |

| Name of the Event | Organized by | City, Country | Purpose | Participants |
|--|--|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 17th General Assembly of the Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (RIACES) | RIACES | Madrid, Spain May 28-29, 2019 | Approval of amendments to the RIACES Good Practices document presented by the Academic Committee. Ratify Dr. Fernando Cantor as member of the Academic Committee. | Guillermo Murillo |
| Meeting of the Ibero-American Higher Education Quality Assurance System (SIACES, for the Spanish original) | Ibero-American Higher Education Quality Assurance System | Salamanca, Spain 5/31/2019 | Incorporation of CNA-Colombia Approval of the statement of Good Practices principles Approved document of general criteria to assess on-line education Dr. Guillermo Murillo is part of the Steering Committee as spokesperson | Guillermo Murillo |

3.10 INTERNAL TRAINING PLAN

With the goal of strengthening skills at the Technical Secretariat, this year a training plan was implemented in which all team members participate:

| TOPIC | Activity Description | DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (Mention who can take charge of the activity) | |
|----------------------------|--|---|--|
| | | CNA team member in charge of internal training | Training with assistance from a MEN department |
| First orientation session | Provide information about the legal, organizational, conceptual and epistemological framework of the National Accreditation System and the general aspects of the Colombian accreditation model. | Dr. Luis Enrique Silva | |
| Second orientation session | CNA Regulation. Aspects related to strategic planning, action plan and international certification. Administrative aspects, SACES-CNA management, and document management. | Jenny Marín, Patricia Amórtegui, Carlos Campo, Estefanía González and Amparo Peñaloza | |
| Document management | Gain the knowledge required to adequately manage in a timely manner the legal parameters pertaining to communications, administrative appeals, inquiries, etc., in the document management system, to ensure efficient processing. | | Citizen Service Office |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Preparatory meeting on Quality Audit to be conducted with ICONTEC | Prepare Technical Secretariat team members for the audit to the MEN Integrated Management System concerning compliance with ISO 9001 and ISO 14000, scheduled for 12-16, 2019. | Gloria Sanchez - Quality Leader Patricia Amórtegui - Planning issues | |
| Some relevant legal situations related to accreditation processes | There has been some confusion in the team and at institutions about the different types of claims submitted during the accreditation process, such as administrative petitions, appeals and reconsiderations. A proper understanding will help address these topics in accordance with current legal requirements and regulations. | CNA - Diana Wilches and Jeny Martín. | |
| Steps to generate qualification certifications and differences between place of development, campus, extension, methodology or modality of the programs. Effects of amendments to a program. | Qualification certification implies a special procedure that is closely related to accreditation. In that regard, the aim is to strengthen the team's knowledge regarding its step by step, as well as some concepts related to categorizing programs and their location. | | Deputy Office of Higher Education Quality - Qualification certification team |
| Integrated Model for Planning and Administration | Explain in detail the MEN's Integrated Management System (SIG, for the Spanish original) in order to promote and facilitate continuous improvement in management, aimed at achieving compliance with the requirements of each standard of reference and those determined in the Integrated Model for Planning and Administration (MIPG, for the Spanish original). | | Deputy Office of Organizational Development |
| Risk Management | Define the CNA's risk matrix, identify and define the process control points and strategies to assess its effectiveness. | | Deputy Office of Organizational Development |
| Quality System process and document management map | Identify macro-processes and processes that impact CNA actions and applicable document procedures. | | Deputy Office of Organizational Development |
| SNIES training | Management of the information system, inquiries management, etc. | | Higher Education Promotion Division - MEN |

This thematic plan arose from the definition of training and information needs that the team requires to perform their activities. To date, 46% of the scheduled activities have been completed.

3.11 MANAGEMENT REPORTS 2018-2019

Every year the CNA puts forth a management report that details the actions undertaken during the year, with the aim of informing the academic community of the progress made (see Annexes 13 and 14).

In addition, external assessment reports and their results are published on the CNA's website to be consulted by National Accreditation advisors.

Balance of the Action Plan activities performed and assessment of the progress made

| Objective 4: Improve the efficiency of accreditation procedures | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Objective 3: Internationalization of the CNA | | | | |
| Strategies | Activities and Outcomes 2017 | Activities and Outcomes 2018 | Progress made in 2019 | Percentage of completion to date |
| Strengthen the internationalization policy of the National Accreditation System, to provide greater visibility and recognition of the quality of Colombian higher education. | | Develop the six-month agenda of activities and commitments derived from the relations with regional and international accreditation networks. RIACES, ARCUSUR, RANA, CRES. | Plan and develop six-month agenda of activities and commitments derived from the relations with networks and other international spaces in which the CNA participates. | 90% |
| Participate in cooperation activities and projects and sharing of good practices carried out in the framework of various regional events, and assessment and accreditation networks, by the CNA and by the participating higher education institutions. | Send out invitations to participate in regional accreditation in the framework of ARCUSUR 2017-2018. | Closing of the registration process for undergraduate accreditation programs in the context of ARCUSUR with 15 participating programs. Send out invitations under the MARCA project. Develop the six-month agenda of activities and commitments derived from the relations with regional and international accreditation networks. RIACES, ARCUSUR, RANA, CRES. Prepare three workshops to disseminate ARCUSUR assessment guides for engineering programs. | Develop peer training processes in the ARCUSUR framework in Economics, Geology and Pharmacy areas. Structure the 2019-2010 calls to register for program accreditation Participation in the MARCA program. Collaborative work with the Ministry's validation group on common topics | 90% |
| Strengthen sharing of experience events held by accreditation bodies that promote awareness and mobility of the community interested in assessment and accreditation processes. | Advisor participation in international events | Advisor participation in international events. | Participate in good practices assessment process undertaken by RIACES. Advisor participation in international events. | 100% |
| Strengthen the competencies of CNA's Technical Secretariat team – Organize and develop an internal training plan. | | Participation by CNA Technical Secretariat members as technicians in program accreditation processes in ARCUSUR registration processes. | Develop internal training plan | 100% |
| Strengthen accountability processes through annual management reports | | 2017 Management Report | 2018 Management Report | 100% |

GUIDELINE 6
QUALITY ASSURANCE IN CROSS-BORDER EDUCATION

The EQAA has policies on imported and exported higher education. These policies take into account the characteristics of the providers and the receivers and refer to all kinds of cross-border higher education.

According to the structure defined by the 1991 Political Constitution and Decree 2094 of 1994, system characteristics regarding the existence of bodies with specific functions to ensure quality, the CNA does not have jurisdiction over the cross-border education offer.

Nevertheless, the CNA seeks ways of cooperating in external quality control in the provision of transnational education, for example, through mutual recognition.

As part of the CNA's cooperation and internationalization processes, collaboration programs have been created between agencies and institutions from other countries, including the following: support modalities for training of experts and technical and administrative staff in accreditation and quality assurance processes; cooperation for the development of joint accreditation processes; training and exchange of assessment peers; participation in international higher education events; and agreements for mutual recognition of quality assurance systems.

In keeping with the above, the CNA has determined the road map for internationalization with the aim of increasing the visibility of the actions taken by the council as well as promoting continuous system improvement by learning from other models.



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