

Chapter 16

Quality Assessment of Higher Education in Latin American University: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the chapter is to present the experience of the evaluation based on competences, through an institutional evaluation program that verifies the quality of the training as a process of quality assurance and as part of the Quality Management System in a Latin American university. It will describe the academic process called Assessment Center that designs, manages, and implements the program of undergraduate and postgraduate evaluation in face-to-face and virtual modality, and that has an objective to develop the project of Evaluation in Higher Education by Competences based on the Pedagogical Model of the College. Finally, this chapter aims to demonstrate from an experience in higher education the importance of quality as an integral part of the institutional culture of a Latin American university, as well as the collective and individual intentionality of the educational communities, in such a way that it is reflected in the processes and tasks that are carried out in the university institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of quality in higher education has been an important pillar to improve the performance of institutions. Many countries have developed evaluation methods to know the academic performance of students in different institutions, specifically in universities (Melo-Becerra, Ramos-Forero, and Hernández-Santamaría, 2017). In Latin America, countries such as Peru, Mexico, Argentina, Chile and Colombia have developed competence-based assessment approaches (De Lima, 2016). These approaches are linked to the Institutional Education Project that each institution is developing, and they are supported by various integral education theories and approaches. They promote the fulfillment of the institutional philosophy (Jiménez, Hernández, and Alfonso, 2013). In the specific case of the The EAN University (EAN University, 2014), its main purpose, its mission and vision statements focus on: the education of integral professionals with sustainable entrepreneurial aptitude that contribute to the economic and social development of the population.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the analysis of education assessment (EAN University, 2016), taking The EAN University as a referent, since it has been working on a comprehensive educational evaluation system for more than ten years. This evaluation approach evidences the competences of alumni from undergraduate and graduate programs from the The EAN University.

This chapter briefly describes the aforementioned elements. So, it is necessary to make explicit that evaluation makes sense if quality is taken into consideration. This fact gives meaning to what it is for, and it makes reference to its core area. There is an evaluation because there is quality from its concept, its processes and therefore its results and analysis. Another key aspect to mention is the assessment system, where all processes, techniques and procedures are related. The area of education considers evaluation as a necessary process of all academic aspects, the strategy itself, the assessment of programs, professors, curriculum, learning process, teaching strategies, and also relationships promoted in the university. The assessment plan of the University is proposed in terms of tests and evaluation periods. The assessment methods are listed according to the types of evaluation. Assessment and quality referents at the The EAN University are expanded in order to demonstrate the way in which the Institution applies and manages superior quality evaluation (EAN University, 2014).

Finally, the aim of this process is to identify the real value of evaluation as a teaching and learning process for competent professionals, which is observed in how they perform in their professional life. There, context plays a vital role in the process, in terms of how competences are evidenced. Not only referring to the competences of students, but also competences of all actors that are involved in the education processes for higher education (EAN University, 2016).

BACKGROUND

The EAN University developed an Education Approach in the teaching and learning process of its students. It is based on the principle of learning through developing competences, in order to evaluate the performance of members of the institution, especially students and professors. “The education approach applied to teach students at the The EAN University is a demonstration of the institutional philosophy, which refers to the integral education of its students. This fact gives education a valid sense as a process to construct knowledge in a permanent way and develop competences, abilities, attitudes and skills, encouraging professionals to be actors of growth and social change. The EAN University proposes its

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