CNA

National Accreditation Council
Republic of Colombia

Guidelines and aspects to be assessed for the high quality accreditation of academic programs

Approved by the CESU at its meeting held on March 23, 2021.

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PRESENTATION

In the second half of 2018, the Ministry of National Education initiated a reflection exercise in relation to quality assurance in higher education through a series of workshops called "Calidad ES de Todos" [Quality IS for Everyone], in order to collectively develop a new public policy on the Higher Education Quality Assurance System whose premises include building on what is already in place. These workshops highlighted the need to strengthen the Higher Education Quality Assurance System and to achieve greater standardization with the National Accreditation System, both of which aim to improve the quality of education in the local, regional and global contexts.

In July 2019, Decree 1330 was issued, which updates the regulations for qualification certification, establishes the modalities of academic offerings (classroom, distance, virtual, dual or other developments that combine and integrate these modalities) and recognizes the diversity of levels of education, professional technical, technological, university, specialization, master's and doctoral programs. It also adopts a concept of quality as a basis for the recognition of quality conditions for both institutions and programs.

At the same time, the National Accreditation Council carried out a reflection exercise on the updating of the high quality accreditation model, considering contributions derived from international assessments, national and international trends, advances in the national reflection exercises on quality assurance and the reflection exercise that has characterized the Council since its inception in 1995.

As a result of this effort, in the second half of 2019 a proposal for updating the high quality accreditation model was submitted to the National Council of Higher Education (CESU, for the Spanish original) from which, and based on the provisions of Decree 1075/2015 as amended by Decree 843/2020, after several revisions and dissemination throughout the country, Agreement 02 was issued by the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) on July 1, 2020, containing components that update the model and adhere to the tradition of the Council, university autonomy, including the recognition of the diversity of institutions and academic programs and the assessment of achievements and results as core components, particularly those of learning, in addition to recognizing the capacities and processes that had traditionally been considered to be part of the comprehensive assessment.

This document contains the guidelines (factors, characteristics and aspects to be assessed) for the high quality accreditation of higher education institutions in accordance with their character and nature and aims to make contributions to raise the quality levels of institutions, with the high quality assessment system as a benchmark in accordance with their realities, challenges and possibilities; and ultimately, to plan the strengthening of the capacities to have a transformation and impact on society.

1.INTRODUCTION

These guidelines correspond to the model for assessing the high quality of academic programs at the professional technical, technological, university professional, medical-surgical specialty, master's and doctoral levels offered by higher education institutions in Colombia. This model aims to be holistic in the sense of including inputs, processes, capacities, activities and results of an academic program; to function as a management tool that supports continuous improvement with forecasts for the future, and to serve as an assessment instrument.

The updating of the high quality accreditation model defined in Agreement 02/2020 of the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) defines a dynamic model which establishes the factors and characteristics, while the aspects to be assessed are specific and also dynamic, insofar as they respond to changes in the social, cultural and environmental context, and have been developed in consultation with the academic community and must be periodically updated.

Based on a working document of its own authorship and in keeping with the Council's tradition of developing guidelines with the participation and input to the academic community, the National Accreditation Council consulted the associations of institutions which, as they have done on other occasions, received the document, analyzed it and made their contributions, observations and recommendations. The academic organizations consulted were the Association of Colombian Universities (ASCUN, for the Spanish original); the Colombian Association of Higher Education Institutions with Technological Education (ACIET, for the Spanish original); the Colombian Association of Institutions with Distance and Virtual Programs (Acesad, for the Spanish original); the Association of Higher Education Institutions of the Colombian Caribbean (Asiesca, for the Spanish original) and the Colombian Postgraduate Network (RCP, for the Spanish original).

The Ministry of National Education has been holding a series of national and international events such as the 2nd Forum on Quality Assurance, which presented the updated model and provided an opportunity to discuss several of its advances and new developments. It is important to mention that the virtual event EducaTed, organized by ASCUN and Redunete, held with the higher education institutions regarding the aspects to be assessed, made relevant contributions, which have been analyzed with those of the associations, by the General Accreditation Board of the National Accreditation Council and are considered herein for the implementation of the high quality accreditation process defined in Agreement 02/2020 of the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) regarding the high quality accreditation of higher education academic programs.

It is important to clarify that the aspects to be assessed are expected to be updated and, consequently, the National Accreditation Council leaves them open to discussion and reaffirms the invitation to the academic community to help contribute to their enrichment and updating and highlight the achievements attained in the academic programs, according to their level, modality and area of knowledge [1][1].

Additionally, and to contribute to the work of the institutions, the Ministry of National Education has developed a Glossary of terms included by Decree 1330/2019 and Agreement 02/2020 in the regulations developed for the qualification certification and high quality accreditation. It is clear that the terms can have many definitions from different epistemological standpoints; therefore, the glossary serves a guideline in the framework of the National Accreditation System and the Higher Education Quality Assurance System.

These guidelines also include a reflection on higher education institutions in the 21st century, the regulatory framework, the high quality accreditation model, higher education policies, recognition of the diversity of academic programs, recognition of the particularities of modalities, high quality in higher education, high quality of academic programs, assessment of the high quality of academic programs, factors, characteristics and aspects to be assessed for the accreditation of academic programs, and finally, the aspects related to the training scenarios and the teaching-service relationship.

[1] The products of the exercise of creation in the field of artistic disciplines, for instance, have specificities that distinguish them from the academic works of scientific disciplines and professions related to technological development. It is the task of the academic community of those who work in the field of these disciplines, in dialog with internationally renowned scholars and creators in this field, to conceptually develop and academically justify the aspects that, beyond the established rules for the assessment of research, must be considered to assess the quality and social importance of their products.

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

2. HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS [2] IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Since their medieval origins, higher education institutions have been centers for reflection, artistic production and generation of knowledge about the broadest spectrum of human experiences. Their development has concurred with the maturity with which societies face the most pressing problems of their times, from the standpoint of reflection, artistic creation and research. It is for good reason that it is one of the longest-lasting institutions in contemporary societies, as well as one of the most widespread human experiences in the world in recent centuries, regardless of cultural traditions. Of course, one of the characteristics that has ensured the success of higher education institutions lies in their adaptability.

Since the 19th century, in particular and without losing their original meaning, higher education institutions have been characterized by the production of knowledge in the various fields of science, as the main stakeholder of the scientific and technological revolution over the last hundred years. In addition to promoting science, higher education institutions also produce knowledge relevant to their environment, which is fundamental in the rapid technological progress that is transforming the global context in which we live. Especially in recent years, an economy is emerging based on the capacity to generate and use knowledge, on the quality of its human resources and on the demanding requirements of entrepreneurial capacity, which requires an agile and flexible institutional framework to respond to the profound changes taking place in the environment. In this context, the capacity for innovation has become an essential link in ensuring that advances in science and technology give rise to effective socioeconomic development and wellbeing for the population.[3]

It was previously thought that the world of science, and therefore higher education institutions, were only concerned with the process of generating knowledge using the scientific method, restricting the topic of its use and application to other areas and other social stakeholders. In the Knowledge Society, this dichotomy is no longer valid. In fact, higher education institutions have been recovering the plural meaning of their practices. The generation of knowledge, even in the so-called hard sciences, is increasingly based on specific contexts and the requirements or needs of specific groups, organizations or communities, which require this knowledge to improve their wellbeing, increase their competitiveness or ensure their sustainability and therefore, their future.[4]

In this context, there has been a significant change in the role of higher education institutions in the Knowledge Society. Indeed, higher education institutions have undergone a remarkable evolution from their establishment in the Middle Ages to the present day. Reference is not made to the advances in knowledge and the scientific and technological revolution that has dominated the last hundred years, but to changes in the roles that higher education institutions play in their society and, therefore, in the way they relate to their environment. Higher education institutions have evolved from the initial conception of a "community of professors and students dedicated to knowledge", to the model of a higher education institution that, while playing the previous role, must relate closely with various social stakeholders in their environment (e.g. businesses, government, communities), aiming to advance the process of social appropriation of knowledge, as well as its application in the revitalization of the productive sectors and to increase community wellbeing.

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[2] In the broad sense, a university is understood to be an institution of higher education and in the Colombian context, it refers to higher education institutions that include professional technical, technological and university institutions or technological schools and universities.
[3] Max Weber: The Politician and the Scientist; Madrid, Alianza, 1998.
[4] Orlando Fals Borda (ed.): Participación Popular: Retos del Futuro [Participation of the People: Challenges for the Future]; Bogotá, COLCIENCIAS/IEPRI/ ICFES, 1998. These reports on the Second International Meeting on Participatory Action Research (PAR), held in Cartagena in 1997, analyze the performance history of this school since the First Meeting on this topic, also held in Cartagena in 1977. See also Orlando Fals Borda and Mahammad Anisar Rahman: Acción y Conocimiento: Cómo Romper el Monopolio con Investigación-Acción Participativa [Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Research]; Bogotá, CINEP, 1991.

Historically, this projection of higher education institutions in their environment arises first in the social and human sciences, due to the role played in this field of knowledge by scientists or intellectuals in their society, brilliantly analyzed by Max Weber at the end of the 21st century [3]. From this perspective arises the so-called "action-research", through which researcher aim to insert themselves in a community or social space, not only to understand it better but also to improve it [4]. Knowledge is placed at the service of the community, through which aims to generate value.

The projection of higher education institutions in their environment has accelerated in the last four to five decades as a result of three complementary and mutually reinforcing factors. Firstly, the spectacular progress that has been made in some fields of knowledge (e.g. molecular biology, new materials, informatics, etc.) has dramatically shortened the distance between laboratory and production line. There used to be a "knowledge application gestation cycle" of 15 to 50 years that separated basic research conducted in laboratories from its possible applications in the productive sector or in the community, either as a new (final or intermediate) product, production process or service. Now, these cycles have been shortened to two or three years in some cases, due to the fact that the results and products of research in scientific laboratories very quickly find applications of various kinds in the productive sector, or in solving social or environmental problems in their environment. The classic distinction between basic research, applied research and technological development is blurring and evolving towards interactive processes or virtuous spirals of generation and use of knowledge that enrich the latter.

Secondly, the impact of scientific progress has been enhanced by another important feature of the Knowledge Society or Knowledge Economy. We are moving from the era of production systems based eminently on physical and energy resources, to production systems based on knowledge, or whose efficiency and productivity depend on their capacity to generate and use knowledge. The latter has become a production factor that plays a fundamental role in solving social and environmental problems.

Thirdly, the problems of social development and sustainability of our society and its environment have increased, despite the remarkable progress of science and technology and the growing capacity to solve the problems generated thereby. The challenges faced today in terms of economic sustainability (creating jobs), social sustainability (ensuring development with social inclusion) and environmental sustainability (sustainable management of biodiversity and the environment) entail the unavoidable need to produce knowledge that is relevant to solving such problems, aiming to apply it to solve them in an innovative manner. In the context of these challenges, in 2015 UNESCO defined the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which serve as an important guide for the definition of the major goals of higher education in the world. The 2019 International Mission of the Wise identified three major challenges for the country's development: Biodiverse Colombia, productive and sustainable Colombia, and equitable Colombia. Hence, higher education institutions, as places of confluence of different ways of learning about and reflecting on society, preserve a close relationship with the productive systems, in addition to their place as centers of critical, open and essentially democratic thought, regardless of the processes of change in contemporary society, in which they themselves participate as direct stakeholders. Moreover, they preserve their character as a place where production and creativity are generated in the broadest of senses: that of sociological criticism, historical and philosophical research, artistic and cultural creativity and many others in which the relationship with the factors of production is not immediate.

This highlights the strategic role that knowledge plays in the contemporary world, and therefore the social responsibility of scientists and higher education institutions as institutions that play a leading role in the construction of a Knowledge Society with the capacity to address these challenges. But knowledge alone does not generate economic and social development if it does not give rise to innovation. Hence the importance of the latter. Innovation is understood as the application of knowledge to improve the living conditions or wellbeing of a community, to strengthen the productivity and competitiveness of a company or production chain, or to increase the effectiveness of public policies and the consolidation of civil society. In this perspective, innovation can be seen as the process by which society generates value from knowledge, by extracting economic and social benefits therefrom.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

3.REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The 1991 Political Constitution of Colombia establishes that education is a personal right and a public service with a social role, and includes the freedoms of teaching, learning, research and the academia. It also ensures university autonomy, orders the State to strengthen scientific research in public and private higher education institutions, and to offer special conditions for their development; and, likewise, it assigns it with the obligation to provide financial mechanisms that enable the access of all eligible individuals to higher education.

Law 30/1992, in developing the duties and rights contained in the Constitution, defines the interest in promoting the quality of educational service as a guiding principle of the State's action; it defines the autonomy of the institutions according to their academic nature and the fields of action in which they are engaged; it reaffirms the nature of the public service of education and, therefore, the need for the State to promote, inspect and oversee it, in order to ensure society that such service is provided in the necessary quantity and quality. It also places state or public higher education institutions in a special regime, defines their modes of organization and the election of their directors and establishes the teaching, administrative, financial, contracting and fiscal control regimes.

This law orders the organization of official institutions as a system; defines the regulations applicable to private higher education institutions; creates the National Accreditation System to ensure that the institutions that voluntarily become part of it meet the highest quality requirements and achieve its purposes and objectives; establishes the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) as the higher education planning and coordination body responsible for, among other roles, the implementation of the National Accreditation System and the definition of the functions and form of integration of the National Accreditation Council, a body also provided for in this law.

Article 7 of the aforementioned law establishes that the fields of action of higher education are: technical, scientific, technological, humanities, art and philosophy. Articles 16 to 19 define professional technical institutions, university institutions or technological schools and universities. The programs they offer and the degrees they award will be in accordance with their nature, and the university institutions and universities were authorized to offer professional technical and technological programs.

Article 213 of Law 115/1994 defined technological institutions as those authorized to offer job training programs, academic training programs in disciplines and specialization programs in their respective fields of action.

Law 749/2002 organizes public higher education service at the technical, professional and technological levels, defines technical and technological higher education institutions and authorizes them to offer and provide academic programs up to the undergraduate level through preparatory cycles. This law enables students to switch between programs and institutions and establishes the requirements or assessment criteria for technical, professional and technological institutions to redefine or change their academic nature.

The same law establishes that "Professional technical and technological institutions, by their nature, are the higher education institutions called on to lead technical professional and technological training in the country, and to respond to the demand for this type of training with quality.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the professional technical and technological institutions may offer professional programs only through preparatory cycles, when they are based on the professional technical and technological training programs. To do so, they must have the qualification certification for each of the cycles that make up the program.

The certification granted to a program structured in preparatory cycles will be considered as a unit, where it is necessary for its operation to maintain the cycles as they were registered in the National System of Higher Education Information (SNIES) [5][5].

[5] Article 11 of Law 749/2002, amended by Article 62 of Law 962/2005

In 2008, Law 1188/April 25 was issued "By which the qualification certification of higher education programs is regulated and other provisions are issued." Among others, it establishes the quality conditions for offering academic programs and provides that "All higher education institutions may offer academic programs by preparatory cycles up to the professional level, in all fields and areas of knowledge, complying with the quality conditions set forth in this law and adjusting them to the different levels, modalities and educational methodologies [6]."[6]

Decree 843/June 14, 2020, "By which Chapter 7 is added to Title 3, Part 5, Book 2 of "Decree 1075/2015 - Single Regulatory Decree for the Education Sector" integrates the stakeholders of the National Accreditation System, regulates the stages of the accreditation process and reaffirms the authority of the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) to define the high quality accreditation model, upon recommendation of the National Accreditation Council.

Through Agreement 04/1995, the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) issues the regulations that determine the roles and integration of the National Accreditation Council. It was subsequently replaced by Agreement 01/2000, which complemented the organization of the National Accreditation Council and, more recently, by Agreement 01/2020, which defines the regulations, roles and integration of the National Accreditation Council.

In turn, through Agreement 06/1994, the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) defined the elements and characteristics that identify high quality accreditation and explained that the accreditation process is "different from the inspection and oversight process exercised by the State, and therefore, accreditation does not replace it."

In addition, Decree 2230/2003, repealed by Decree 4675/2006, which in turn was repealed by Decrees 1306 and 5012/2009, restructured the Ministry of National Education, created the Vice-Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry undertook the roles of promotion, registration, inspection and oversight previously performed by the Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education (ICFES). The National Intersectoral Commission for Higher Education Quality Assurance (CONACES) was also created to provide better integration and rationality to public policies on quality in higher education, in order to unify criteria, concepts, standards, instruments, and methodologies, and to adopt a consistent and viable comprehensive policy on quality and quality assessment.

To support the improvement of institutions and academic programs, new instruments have been implemented to promote, assess and certify quality in higher education, such as the Saber Pro and Saber T&T tests, which assess five generic skills (written communication, citizen skills, critical reading, quantitative reasoning and English) and in some areas of knowledge, specific skills are assessed. In addition, public policies have been formulated at the local, regional and national levels to promote quality and encourage high quality accreditation.

In July 2019, Decree 1330 was issued "Which replaces Chapter 2 and eliminates Chapter 7 of Title 3, Part 5, Book 2 of Decree1075/2015 - Single Regulatory Decree of the Education Sector," which regulates the qualification certification of higher education programs and other provisions are issued. Based on this regulation, the quality conditions are developed, and the concept of quality is established, understood as: "The set of integrated, interdependent, dynamic attributes built by the academic community as benchmarks, which respond to the social, cultural and environmental demands. These attributes allow the internal and external assessment of institutions, in order to promote their transformation and the permanent development of their educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and outreach activities." In this sense, it determines that the Quality Assurance System "promotes the processes of self-assessment, self-regulation and improvement of the institutions' educational, academic, teaching, cultural and extension activities, thereby contributing to advancing and strengthening their community and academic outcomes, based on principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and sustainability."

The decree in question establishes "program conditions", understood as the following, for the purposes of the qualification certification and its renewal: “... Program conditions shall be understood as the necessary characteristics by level that describe its particularities in line with the institutional typology, identity and mission, as well as the different modalities (face-to-face, distance, virtual, dual or other developments that combine and integrate these modalities). Program conditions are: name; justification; curricular aspects; organization of

[6]Article 5 Law 1188/2008.

academic activities and educational process; research, innovation and/or artistic and cultural creation; relationship with the external sector; professors; educational resources and physical and technological infrastructure [7]".[7]"

This means that, based on the qualification certification, the institutions and academic programs must implement quality assurance processes, an important benchmark for the assurance of high quality, which is the ultimate goal of the National Accreditation System.

In relation to academic programs, for the purposes of this document, the provisions of Decree 1075/2015, as amended by Decree 1330/2019, are emphasized:

- **Regarding the name,** it establishes that "The institution must specify the name of the program, in line with the degree to be granted, the level of education, the curricular contents of the program and the graduate profile, in accordance with the regulations in force.

- **Professional technical and technological programs** must adopt names that correspond with the skills of their field of knowledge, so that their name is distinguishable and allows a clear distinction of occupations, disciplines and professions [8][8]."

- **Regarding professors:** "In the case of professional technical and technological programs and programs in the areas of knowledge of art and culture, at any level and modality, certificates of qualification in activities associated with the training, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension work to be carried out and certified work experience will be admitted on an exceptional basis [9][9]."

- **Regarding the offer:** "The institutions that in accordance with Law 30/1992 "Whereby the public service of higher education is organized" and Law 115/1994 "Whereby the General Education Law issued" are classified as Professional Technical or Technological by academic nature, to offer programs at the technological or university professional level, respectively, by preparatory cycles, must reform their bylaws and carry out the redefinition process provided in the Colombian regulations, before requesting qualification certification [10][10]."

Preparatory cycles

Article 2.5.3.3.2.7.1 of Decree 1075/2015, as amended by Decree 1330/2019 states that a preparatory cycle "is a phase of education that allows students to develop in their professional training following their interests and abilities, for which it requires a preparatory component that refers to the process by which a person is prepared to continue their training in higher education, which implies a flexible, sequential and complementary organization of the programs.

Each program that makes up the educational process by preparatory cycles must lead to a degree that independently qualifies a person to work as a professional technician, technologist or university professional, as defined by Law 749/2002 "By which the public service of higher education is organized in the modalities of professional technical and technological training, and other provisions are issued", consistent with the modalities (classroom, distance, virtual, dual or other developments that combine and integrate these modalities), and the legal nature, typology, identity and institutional mission.

The offer of training by preparatory cycles must preserve the independence between the programs that make up the cycle, for which each level must ensure a relevant training profile according to the level offered, which allows graduates to access the job market and in turn enables them to continue their training through access to a higher level of education, provided by the preparatory component included in the curricular design."

[7] Article 2.5.3.2.3.2.1 of Decree 1075/2015, as amended by Decree1330/2019.
[8] Article 2.5.3.2.3.2.2 of Decree 1075/2015, as amended by Decree 1330/2019.
[9] Article 2.5.3.2.3.2.2 of Decree 1075/2015, as amended by Decree 1330/2019.
[10] Article 2.5.3.2.7.1 of Decree 1075/2015, as amended by Decree 1330/2019.

Postgraduate programs

Articles 10 and 11 of Law 30/1992, consistent with Article 2.5.3.3.2.6.1 of Decree 1075/2015, as amended by Decree 1330/2019, establish that postgraduate education is carried out after obtaining an undergraduate degree and is identified with the levels of specialization, master's and doctoral programs.

Likewise, this regulatory provision that regulates the qualification certification considers that "postgraduate programs must define their objectives, in line with the modalities (face-to-face, distance, virtual, dual and other developments that combine and integrate these modalities) and their legal nature, typology, identity and institutional mission. These objectives must be aimed at students' development of the following, among others:

- **a)** Elements to broaden their knowledge of the theoretical framework and future perspective of their occupation, discipline or profession;
- **b)** Understanding the usefulness and application of knowledge in social and institutional settings, from an ethical perspective;
- **c)** Advanced, in-depth knowledge in the fields of science, technology, arts or humanities;
- **d)** Communication, argumentation, validation and acquisition of knowledge in different areas, according to the complexity of each level of education to disseminate the developments of the occupation, discipline or profession in society;
- **e)** Experiences that develop and encourage cultural appreciation and lifelong personal development."

Articles 2.5.3.2.6.2 to 2.5.3.2.6.6 of the aforementioned decree describe the educational purposes of each of the postgraduate levels as follows:

Specialization programs

The purpose of these programs is to acquire more in-depth knowledge in an area of the occupation, discipline or profession in question, aiming for a higher qualification for professional and job performance. Institutions may offer professional technical, technological or professional university specialization programs, in accordance with their academic nature.

Master's programs

The purpose of master's programs is to broaden and develop knowledge, attitudes and skills for solving disciplinary, interdisciplinary or professional problems and/or to provide individuals with the basic instruments to qualify them as researchers. In order to fulfill this purpose, according to current regulations, master's programs may be course-based or research-based.

A course-based master's program will be inclined to advance the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills for solving problems or analyzing particular situations of a disciplinary, interdisciplinary or professional nature, through the assimilation or acquisition of knowledge, methodologies and, as the case may be, scientific, technological, artistic or cultural developments. In order to obtain the degree of the course-based master's program, students may comply with the requirements established by the institution to graduate, by carrying out a research project that may be in the form of a case study, the solution of a specific problem or the analysis of a particular situation, or any other requirement defined by the institution as sufficient to obtain the degree.

Research-based master's programs will be those inclined to develop knowledge, attitudes and scientific skills and advanced training in research, innovation or creation to generate new knowledge, processes and technological products or artistic works or interpretations of cultural interest, as the case may be. The research project resulting from the educational process must demonstrate the scientific, disciplinary or creative skills of the researcher, creator

or artistic performer, in accordance with the provisions of the National Science and Technology System or its equivalent.

Course-based and research-based master's programs will have separate qualification certifications, given that their curricular conditions and graduate profiles are different.

Medical-surgical specialties

These are programs that allow physicians to deepen their knowledge in a specific area of medicine and acquire knowledge, develop attitudes, abilities and advanced skills for the care of patients in the different stages of their life cycle, with pathologies of the different organic systems that require specialized care.

Theoretical and practical teaching-learning processes are required for this level of education. The practical aspect includes completing the service time in medical training scenarios and intervention in an adequate number of cases to ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes sought by the program. Students in these programs must have the required support and monitoring.

In accordance with Article 247 of Law 100/1993, these programs will be treated as equivalent to master's programs.

Doctoral programs

The purpose of a doctoral program is to educate researchers with the capacity to independently conduct and guide academic and research processes in a specific area of knowledge and to develop, strengthen or deepen the knowledge, attitudes and skills required at this level of training. The results of the research conducted by students at this level of education must contribute to the advancement of knowledge, in accordance with the provisions of the National Science and Technology System or its equivalent.

HIGH QUALITY ACCREDITATION MODEL

4.HIGH QUALITY ACCREDITATION MODEL

The National Accreditation Council, since its first Council in 1995, has conceptualized and built an accreditation model that is ultimately geared towards institutions as a whole. Accreditation in Colombia began for undergraduate academic programs, and over the past 25 years, guidelines have been developed for these academic programs, for medical-surgical specialties, for master's and doctoral programs, and for institutions. However, as one of the results of the reflection carried out by the Ministry of National Education and the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) in relation to higher education quality assurance, the National Accreditation Council considered it appropriate to reflect on the accreditation model, taking into account several situations and recommendations. This work resulted in Agreement 02 of the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) issued on July 1, 2020, which updates the high quality accreditation model.

The National Accreditation Council, as the advisory body responsible for assessing the high quality of academic programs and institutions in Colombia, interacts with and is part of international organizations such as the Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (RIACES, for the Spanish original); the Ibero-American System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (SIACES, for the Spanish original); the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE, for the Spanish original) and the Regional Accreditation System for University Degrees of the States Parties to MERCOSUR and Associated States (ARCU-SUR, for the Spanish original), through which several academic programs of Colombian institutions have obtained international accreditation and, in fact, recognition at the level of member countries.

The National Accreditation Council is the first Ibero-American accrediting body to undergo an international assessment and has been certified by the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) since 2012, initially for 5 years and then renewed until 2022. In 2019, it also underwent the validation of Best Practices by the Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (RIACES) and achieved the highest score. These experiences, in addition to further committing the National Accreditation Council, have familiarized it with the state of the art of high quality evaluation at the international level and to acquire elements for updating the model in the perspective of recognition, at the global level, of the quality of our academic programs and to enable the mobility of graduates to continue their studies abroad and for professional practice.

In this context, the National Accreditation Council is in the process of preparing to voluntarily submit to internationally inspection by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), aimed at obtaining the reciprocal recognition of its accreditation system, in response to the requirement of the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) which determines that, as of the year 2024, any physicians from countries other than the United States who apply for certification by the Educational Commission must be graduates of a medical program duly accredited with globally accepted criteria, such as those established by the WFME, in order to access postgraduate studies or practice their profession in that country. Likewise, the National Accreditation Council considers it important to promote a similar process for Colombia to be included in the Washington Agreement for academic programs of engineering.

Useful recommendations have resulted from these international experiences for strengthening the National Accreditation Council and the National Accreditation System, which will undoubtedly lead to the improvement of the high quality accreditation processes in our country.

At the national level, Decree 1330/2019, which amended Decree 1075/2015, establishes the quality conditions, which are a starting point for the assessment of high quality and, consequently, the high quality accreditation model must not only be consistent with the proposals of the decree, but must also demonstrate, through factors and characteristics, high quality benchmarks that are reflected in the operation and improvement of institutions and academic programs through continuous improvement processes.

It is, therefore, relevant and urgent to promote the strengthening of internal quality assurance systems in institutions to address the processes of qualification certification and high quality accreditation. The internal quality assurance system must have integrated information systems, assessment mechanisms and promotion actions.

The high quality accreditation model was updated by Agreement 02/2020 in aspects such as:

a) Recognition of the high quality of higher education institutions, in accordance with their legal nature, identity, mission, typology and regional context.

b) Recognition of the high quality of the academic offerings, according to their level of education (professional technical, technological, university professionals, master's and doctoral programs and medical-surgical specialties) and modality (classroom, distance, virtual, dual or other developments that combine and integrate these modalities).

c) The inclusion of achievement indicators in the processes of self-assessment and external assessment of academic programs and institutions, in addition to the indicators of capabilities and processes.

d) The incorporation of learning outcomes assessment in the processes of undergraduate and postgraduate academic programs.

e) The unification of the guidelines for accreditation of academic programs, which are complemented with aspects to be assessed. These aspects to be assessed are built with the academic communities.

Practically 25 years after the first Council was formed and after having covered the regulations of academic programs and institutions, the high quality accreditation model was updated in accordance with the aforementioned proposals, among others, in order to:

a) Respond to the demands faced by graduates in a highly competitive job market, which requires that the learning outcomes obtained to be relevant, not to mention that the dynamics of knowledge require lifelong learning and that motivation should also be encouraged by the quality of the education received;

b) Be internationally comparable and contribute to the international recognition of national accreditations;

c) Contribute to consolidating a learning and student-centered training model;

d) Include achievements and impacts as key elements in self-assessment processes for accreditation purposes.

As a result, updating the high quality accreditation model:

- updates the concept of high quality, considering the way in which the institution provides the public service of education, the achievements attained and the impacts generated.
- advances in the search for a Quality Assurance System that recognizes and differentiates the quality promoted by Decree 1330/2019, which amended Decree 1075/2015, from the high quality recognized by accreditation.
- respects the tradition of the National Accreditation System and advances in the assessment of achievements and, therefore, assesses capabilities, processes and results. incorporate learning outcomes as indicators of achievement, in line with the evolution of quality at the international level.
- incorporates the monitoring and assessment of the improvement plans formulated by institutions, as part of the high quality assurance.
- strengthens confidence in the Higher Education Quality Assurance System.
- promotes the consolidation of the internal quality assurance systems of institutions, in order to meet the requirements for the qualification certification and accreditation of high quality.
- respects the autonomy of institutions by guiding the assessment based on their own statements.
- is dynamic in that the aspects to be assessed are changing and specific, and their identification responds now and in the future to changes in the social, cultural, scientific, technological and innovation contexts.

The main changes introduced by Agreement 02/2020 are as follows:

- A single document that serves as a unified guide for the accreditation processes of institutions and academic programs.
- High quality accreditation is standardized with policies of the Ministry of National Education, the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, such as: the graduation and retention policy, the inclusion policy, the wellbeing policy, the good governance policy and the Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) policy, among others.
- It updates the principles and objectives of high quality accreditation in Colombia.
- It includes definitions of terms used in high quality accreditation processes [11][11].
- The accreditation period may be six (6), eight (8) or ten (10) years, depending on the degree of consolidation, sustainability and impact of the institution or academic program.
- For the duration of the recognition of institutional high quality accreditation, the percentage of accredited academic programs over accreditable ones is considered so that continuous improvement is evident.
- It standardizes high quality accreditation processes with the qualification certification processes established in Decree 1075/2015, as amended by Decree 1330/2019.
- It defines and unifies the stages and activities of the high quality accreditation procedure of institutions and academic programs, in accordance with Decree 843/2020.
- It includes the follow-up and assessment, by the National Accreditation Council, of the improvement plans designed by the institutions following the recognition of accreditation.
- It establishes particular factors and characteristics for the high quality accreditation of academic programs and for the high quality accreditation of institutions. It recognizes diversity according to the typologies of institutions in relation to their academic character and nature, as well as the different modalities and levels of training of the academic programs.
- It defines the scope of multicampus high quality accreditation and high quality accreditation by place or places of development.

[11] Other terms may be consulted in the Glossary of terms of the Ministry of National Education.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

5.ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

This section contains the conceptual elements of training in higher education, with emphasis on the levels (professional technical, technological, university professional, course-based master's, research-based master's, medical-surgical specialty and doctoral programs) and their modalities (face-to-face, distance, virtual, dual or other developments that combine and integrate these modalities).

5.1 Academic levels and levels of training

Higher education and, in particular, academic training programs are defined by Law 30/1992 and Law 749/2002 [12], which establish that higher education is provided at two academic levels: undergraduate and postgraduate[12].

The undergraduate level, in turn, has three levels of training:

- **Professional Technical**
- **Technological**
- **University Professional**

The postgraduate level comprises the following levels of training:

- **Specializations (professional technical, technological and university).**
- **Master's**
- **Doctoral**

Law 30/1992 regarding the fields of action and academic programs establishes:

Article 7: The fields of action of Higher Education are: That of technics, science, technology, humanities, art and philosophy.

Article 8: Undergraduate and graduate programs offered by higher education institutions shall refer to the fields of action mentioned above, in accordance with their educational purposes.

Article 9: Undergraduate programs prepare students to perform jobs, exercise a specific profession or discipline of a technological or scientific nature, or in the area of humanities, arts and philosophy. Undergraduate programs are also those of a multidisciplinary nature, also known as liberal arts studies, understood as general studies in the sciences, arts or humanities, with emphasis on some of the disciplines that are part of these fields.

For the purposes of these guidelines for the high quality accreditation of academic programs, the following levels of training are part of the undergraduate programs [13][13]:

a. **Professional Technical**
b. **Technological**
c. **University Professional**

[12] Law 749 of 2002 organizes the public service of higher education in the technical, professional and technological training modalities.
[13]Law 749/2002 arranges the public service of higher education into the categories of technological and professional technical education.

And the following levels of training are part of the postgraduate programs:

a. **Course-based master's**
b. **Research-based master's**
c. **Medical-surgical specialties**
d. **Doctoral**

5.2 Modalities

Modality "is the way in which a set of organizational and/or curricular options are integrated to meet specific requirements of the level of education and satisfy conceptual characteristics that enable student access in diverse conditions of time and space." This is related to the existence of different means to carry out the act of education [14]. The modalities through which teaching can be exercised are: face-to-face, dual, distance, virtual or other developments that combine and integrate these modalities.[14]

[14]Decree 1330/2019.

NATIONAL POLICIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

6.NATIONAL POLICIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Wellbeing policy

Since the issuance of Law 30/1992, the Ministry of National Education has been working on the construction of policies to support the coverage and quality of higher education. Some developments are the result of reflections within the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) in association with entities such as organizations of higher education institutions, among others.

In 1995, the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) established university wellbeing policies through Agreement 03 of the same year:

- **Article 1.** University wellbeing programs must cover the entire community that makes up the institution (students, professors-researchers and administrative staff), considering the diverse conditions of each person in particular: their role within the institution, schedule, methodology and hours, age, socioeconomic level, needs and individual aspirations, as well as their interests, hobbies and skills.

- **Article 2.** Higher Education Institutions must define strategies to encourage participation in University Wellbeing activities; the offering of these activities must be extensive, diverse and attractive to achieve the largest possible number of opportunities and alternatives.

More recently, in 2014, the National Council for Higher Education (CESU) led a national reflection with the extensive involvement of the academic community, and the results were included in the document "Agreement for Higher Education 2034", which resulted in the updating of policies and the construction of new perspectives, at that time with a 20-year projection. It demonstrated the need to update the concept of wellbeing [15][15] based on theoretical premises gathered from the concepts of human development, comprehensive education, quality of life and community building. The Ministry of National Education proposes to higher education institutions a concept of wellbeing that, within the framework of their autonomy and in response to the characteristics of their educational community, serves as a benchmark and starting point for them to take on this institutional role.

"Wellbeing in higher education institutions is a strategic and crosscutting function that includes institutional policies, processes and practices, as well as an institutional culture that promotes the co-responsibility of the stakeholders that coexist in the context of institutional life to promote comprehensive education, the full development of human capabilities and community building."

Dropout and retention

This aspect has been, and continues to be, of special interest not only to the Ministry of National Education, but also to higher education institutions in the country and at the international level. One of the base documents of this discussion is the "National Agreement to reduce higher education dropout rates. Policy and strategies to encourage retention and graduation from higher education 2013-2014" and more recently, in 2015, the Ministry of National Education published a guide [16][16] for the construction of a retention and graduation model to support the formulation and adoption of policies, plans and projects related to student retention and graduation. The Ministry of National Education presented to the educational community an instrument that provides strategies, actions and

[15] Wellbeing Policy Guidelines for Higher Education Institutions. MEN, 2016.
[16] Guide for the Implementation of the Student Retention and Graduation Management Model in Higher Education Institutions. MEN, 2015.

tools to guide higher education institutions in the design of the implementation of an efficient student retention and graduation management model, based on the improvement of the quality of higher education.

Inclusive higher education policy [17][17]

The Ministry of National Education has developed the Inclusive and Intercultural Education Policy Guidelines, which aim to encourage higher education institutions to define actions and strategies to strengthen quality conditions from a differential approach in terms of access, retention and graduation.

The Inclusive and Intercultural Higher Education Policy, as well as its complementary documents, are framed in the 1991 Constitution, which recognized the rights and ensured the special protection of the various population groups (the disabled population, ethnic groups - indigenous, black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal, Palenquero, Rom people, victims of the armed conflict, border population).

The Inclusive and Intercultural Higher Education Policy Guidelines define inclusive education as a core strategy for achieving social inclusion, which goes beyond the traditional concept associated with exclusion and allows the design of an open and generous educational model, which considers diversity as an inherent characteristic of human beings and life, in all members of the educational community.

The purpose of this policy is to make headway in closing gaps, through the full exercise of rights and access to opportunities, by means of structural public policy measures that promote the consolidation of a more equitable country for all.

Inclusive education is an ongoing process that recognizes, values and responds in a meaningful manner to the diversity of characteristics, interests, possibilities and expectations of children, adolescents, young people and adults, whose objective is to promote their development, learning and participation, with peers of the same age, in a shared learning environment, free from discrimination or exclusion, that ensures, within the framework of human rights, the support and reasonable adjustments required in their educational process, through practices, policies and cultures that eliminate any barriers in the educational environment.

Decree 1421 was issued in August 2017 [18][18], amending Decree 1075/2015, which regulates the addressing of educational needs of the disabled population in the framework of inclusive education. The challenge set by this decree is to ensure a quality education for all our students, within the framework of inclusive education.

The Decree includes the challenges of each of the responsible parties: Ministry of National Education, Secretaries of Education, educational establishments, families, students, and this is why it has suggested progressive implementation.

In relation to publications, the Ministry of National Education has: Gender Approaches and Identities, Inclusive Higher Education Policy Guidelines and the Higher Education Inclusion Index.

[17] In September 2013, the Ministry of National Education published the document Inclusive Higher Education Policy Guidelines. See also: https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/w3-article- 374740.html?_noredirect=1.
[18] Decree 1421/2017, which amended Decree 1075/2015, contains provisions that for the most part apply to preschool, primary and high school education. At the higher education level, the provisions in force refer to promotion actions by the MEN.

Good governance policy

The topic of Good Governance has been consolidating throughout this century, and it is directly related to international trends in favor of transparency, not only in Higher Education Institutions but in all areas of public and private administration.

University governance as an essential topic in the organization and management of higher education institutions is relatively new in our country. By 2014 and as a result of the international Telescopi project (Colombian Observatory of Good Practices in Strategic University Management), the Ministry of National Education conducted a study that is discussed in the document "Recommendations for a Public Policy on Good University Governance in Colombia [19][19]; this document later gave rise to the public policy issued by the National Council of Higher Education (CESU) in 2017 through Agreement 02. This study considers that good governance is a fundamental component to increase the quality and relevance of higher education and also the possibilities for inter-university cooperation.

Article 1 of CESU Agreement 02/2017 states that the main objective thereof is "to define the principles of good governance, provide recommendations and identify good practices, aimed at qualifying the governance of higher education institutions and thus ensure the highest quality and relevance in the fulfillment of their mission functions."

Today it is considered necessary to develop and implement good governance policies that ensure institutional stability and the generation of transparent, effective and efficient governance systems, in compliance with the rights and duties of individuals and the responsibility to be accountable before society.

[19] Recommendations for a Public Policy on Good University Governance in Colombia. Pontificia Universidad Javeriana - Javeriana School of Government and Public Ethics Telescopi- Colombia, 2014.

RECOGNITION OF DIVERSITY IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

7.RECOGNITION OF DIVERSITY IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

One of the core components in updating public policy on quality assurance in our country is precisely the recognition of the diversity of institutions; academic programs and the contexts and particularities in which educational processes are provided.

The Colombian higher education system, among other particularities, is a system made up of different types of institutions, organized according to their academic nature: professional technical, technological, university institutions or technological schools and universities. Depending on their legal nature, they may be public or private, and the former in turn may be public establishments or autonomous university entities.

Decree 1330/2019, which amended Decree 1075/2015, states that: "In accordance with the global dynamics of higher education, regulations are required to recognize the diversity of supply and demand of programs, levels of education, modalities (face-to-face, distance, virtual, dual or other developments that combine and integrate these modalities) and methodologies. This is in order to strengthen the quality assurance system from a dynamic perspective such as higher education." (Underlining added for emphasis).

The foregoing, among others, is defined in the same decree with the recognition of quality in the framework of diversity, establishing that "Institutions wishing to offer an academic program with identical curricular content, through different modalities (face-to-face, distance, virtual, dual or other developments that combine and integrate these modalities), may apply for a single qualification certification, provided that the quality conditions are guaranteed for the modality(ies) it intends to offer, consistent with their legal nature, typology, identity and institutional mission."

In turn, the Agreement by which the high quality accreditation model is updated, in terms of the concept of high quality and in the development of the principles and objectives, refers to diversity as an important component in assessment for accreditation purposes:

High Quality. This term refers to the synthesis of traits that make it possible to recognize an Academic Program or an Institution and to make a judgment, within the framework of continuous improvement and its diversity, on its capacity for transformation, given the proximity between the optimum conditions corresponding to the nature of the Academic Program or to the legal nature, identity, mission and type of Institution, and the way in which it provides the public service of education, the goals achieved and the impacts thereof [20][20].

Diversity as a principle: "Diversity. The recognition of the distinguishing and unique particularities of the institution and the academic program, as opposed to its reference peers, that enrich the higher education system without affecting quality and high quality standards [21][21].

Diversity of objectives:

a. To promote a culture of high quality that demonstrates the principles and comprises institutional diversity through the sustained commitment to continuous improvement, contributing to the strengthening of the social role of higher education.

b. To serve as an instrument through which the Colombian State attests to the high quality of institutions and academic programs, in the context of the global dynamics of higher education, assumed by the diversity of Institutions as a value of the Colombian higher education system, in order to effectively promote regionalization, equality, inclusion and inter- and multiculturalism."

[20] Subsection a) Section 2.1 of Article 2 of CESU Agreement 02/2020.
[21] Subsection i) of Article 4 of CESU Agreement 02/2020.

Based on the foregoing, to carry out the self-assessment exercise in the institution and for the assessment in the accreditation procedure, the recognition of diversity is considered in all factors and characteristics; however, in the case of the academic programs, there are factors that are impacted the most:

a. Levels of training

- Professional Technical
- Technological
- University Professional
- Medical-surgical specialties
- Course-based master's
- Research-based master's
- Doctoral

b. Impacted program accreditation factors

- Professors
- Academic aspects and learning outcomes
- Interaction with the national and international environment
- Contributions of research, innovation, technological development and creation, associated with the academic program
- Physical and technological resources

RECOGNITION OF THE PARTICULARITIES OF THE MODALITIES

8. RECOGNITION OF THE PARTICULARITIES OF THE MODALITIES

The particularities in the modalities of academic programs will refer to the following aspects: students, academic and service staff, infrastructure and assessment.

Students. For training programs offered in non-face-to-face modalities, it is important for the institutions to properly define the profile of target students and the prior information provided to them. As for the students' profile, it is important to consider their digital skills, whether they have access to the Internet, whether they have previous experience in distance learning programs, whether they have family responsibilities, whether they are going to combine work and studies or whether they are enrolled in other academic programs, for example.

In these teaching modalities, there is a greater demand for independent work by students, so it is necessary for them to be self-disciplined and, depending on their circumstances, also have notable time management skills. The institution must also know if the student has a disability and the nature thereof (hearing or visual, for example), in order to determine the necessary adaptations. It is essential for the student to know the requirements of the program beforehand, especially in terms of workload and the type of activities, synchronous or asynchronous, to be performed. That is, potential students must be provided with detailed information on how their study process will be carried out and how they will be evaluated.

Both aspects, dedication and evaluation methodology, must be closely related and justified in the teaching-learning methodology to be followed. Likewise, it must be specified whether the student has to attend any module/subject/course of the study plan in person. If the training program includes any mandatory external face-to-face apprenticeships, the institution must clearly inform students about this aspect and where they can carry them out. Likewise, they must be provided with practical information on connectivity needs, equipment availability and the standards they must meet for the proper development of the educational process.

Tutoring and monitoring of students is a key issue in these modalities, in order to avoid high dropout rates. Therefore, the frequency of professor/tutor interaction with students must be defined and, in particular, in which cases alarms will be activated for contact, for example when students fail to complete tasks or do not submit them on time. In the case of enrollment in countries with different time zones, the measures taken to guarantee tutoring and follow-up services must be detailed. Thus, response time to student queries is an indicator that can be used to measure the quality of the program.

In short, among the information that should be available to potential students before starting the training plan to ensure good performance, it is important to mention the following:

- **Technological and connectivity requirements** necessary to carry out the training activities provided in the academic program.
- **Required dedication:** estimated number of hours per week that the student must commit to the study program, to carrying out synchronous activities, asynchronous activities and independent work.
- **Evaluation methods:** clearly indicate to the student the type of evaluation, evaluation dates, the expected learning outcomes and the deliverables of the process. In addition, it should be specified whether evaluations will be face-to-face, distance or technology-mediated and under what conditions.
- **Tutoring and monitoring of students:** number of tutoring hours per week or per month available to students and whether they will be provided synchronously or asynchronously.
- **Change in modality:** conditions under which students could change to the face-to-face modality for the same degree.
- **External apprenticeships:** list of centers and the conditions under which they can be carried out.

Once the student's enrollment has been formalized, institutions must provide training on the use of the virtual platform and the communication channels between the student and the institution or program. Students should be provided access to learning resources, such as on-line libraries, and information on how to use those resources. The institution's student support services (student orientation service, information and employment center, support centers, administration, among others) must be adapted to the virtual environment, be easily accessible, meet students' needs in relation to the pedagogical model, technological mechanisms and administrative support, and be available during the learning period. Given the importance of support mechanisms, they must be part of the institution's policy and strategy. In addition, distance or virtual students must also be aware of their rights and obligations as students and, specifically, have access to the regulated participation of students in the academic areas of the institution, in accordance with the institution's bylaws.

Academic and service staff

In distance and virtual education, it is common to find staff who may not have a formal academic degree but have experience and a history in sectors related to the training fields of the program, whose main function is not to teach but to support students throughout their training and monitor their performance. These figures reinforce contact and proximity between students and the institutions in this type of education, and are key to avoiding the high dropout rates associated with them. In some cases, they act as academic tutors for the students and help them with the content of the subjects and in the performance of the scheduled academic activities. They are, therefore, collaborating professors. In other cases, they are support staff who do not provide academic support, but are responsible for informing students about the schedule of evaluations and assignments; reminding them of the deadlines that are about to expire or the activities they have pending; they are in charge of referring student doubts or requests for tutoring to the program professors, for example.

For all these reasons, and given the diversity of pedagogical models, different figures can be found in the staff assigned to a distance or virtual program, whose profile must be adapted to the tasks they perform:

- **The full or main professor** is the one who coordinates and designs the program. The faculty must be permanently employed by the institution in order to ensure the continuity of the program's development. In addition, the faculty must have accredited teaching and research experience in the field of the subject.
- **Collaborating professors** may work at the institution part-time. Since they perform academic tutoring functions, they must have experience and knowledge in the field of the subject they are tutoring, as well as experience and training in non face-to-face teaching. Consequently, they must at least have an undergraduate degree or the equivalent in accordance with the applicable regulations.
- **The support staff** in charge of supporting students in administrative and academic processes must have experience in non-face-to-face and hybrid learning environments. Since they do not perform teaching functions, they do not have a specific degree requirement.

Additionally, the institution must indicate who is responsible for the development, monitoring and updating of educational materials required to support learning, and therefore must be consistent with the pedagogical model and include pedagogical and didactic strategies to enable the achievement of learning outcomes. For this reason, they must be reviewed regularly and qualified according to the results of the assessment carried out.

The frequency of this review is an indicator to be considered when assessing the high quality of this type of teaching. In the case of digital content, institutions may use third-party services for its development, but they must ensure that such content is appropriate for the achievement of the academic outcomes expected in the academic program. Likewise, the institution must state that it has the authorization or ownership for the use of the teaching materials.

The institution must have an ongoing professor training plan that addresses, among other topics, aspects related to virtual teaching technologies, pedagogical model and teaching innovations. It must also ensure that the rest of the staff assigned to the program have the necessary experience and qualifications to participate in the delivery and/or implementation of the program in distance or virtual mode, and ensure the updating of such skills in accordance with the continuous technological innovations.

Finally, the institution must ensure that the faculty (in-house and collaborating) as well as the support staff, have teaching and technological support infrastructures at all times.

Infrastructure

The requirements related to the technological infrastructure are particularly important since they support virtual learning environments (teaching system or platform, virtual campus, technological tools, Moodle, Blackboard and CANVAS, among others), so the institution must have software that is robust enough to meet the demands of the teaching activities planned in the distance or virtual programs offered, such as the number of simultaneous users. Indicators for this criterion include the number of simultaneous connections supported by the system and, in particular, the functional integrity and load tests that ensure it.

Institutions must also have an information security plan in place that includes:

- Electronic security measures (user, encryption, backup systems) to ensure the validity and integrity of the information.
- A centralized system that provides support for the creation and maintenance of the infrastructure for "non-face-to-face" or "hybrid" education.

In turn, platform connectivity must be guaranteed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and activities must be designed with flexible schedules. In addition, the platform must be designed to allow easy user access to the content, that is self-descriptive and adapted to the needs of disabled students.

The institution must have mechanisms in place to secure students' identity and prevent fraud. This is a highly relevant issue in this teaching modality. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the institutions to ensure system reliability and security, as well as its availability. These aspects must be a part of the strategy of the institution, which must commit to using resources to provide this type of teaching with full guarantees. To this end, the institution must define indicators to ensure the aforementioned aspects, such as the following:

- Number of existing and available innovative equipment and materials.
- Whether end-to-end connectivity is guaranteed.
- Whether the technological equipment has a valid warranty.
- Number of notices issued due to deficiencies in the operation of technological equipment.
- Percentage of maintenance notices for technological equipment addressed
- Time elapsed from the processing of the notice to the resolution of the problem.
- Number of complaints received as a result of the use of technological equipment.
- Whether there are redundant computer systems and control systems to ensure the availability of the virtual learning environment. Whether failure and disaster recovery protocols are in place.
- Whether there are technical support contracts for computer and telematic systems, for cases in which the service is outsourced.
- Details of the human resources for support and maintenance of the systems, their roles and whether there is 24/7/365.
- Whether the non face-to-face teaching system or platform used has any type of recognized certification.

Evaluation

As mentioned in the students section, one of the key issues they should be aware of before enrolling in the training program is the evaluation processes. The institution must establish the evaluation systems used in the program and those specific to each subject/area/course/module, among others. The evaluation methods must make it possible to assess the acquisition of skills and learning outcomes. They must also consider the diversity of students and educational models. In the distance and virtual modality, both continuous evaluation techniques and evaluation tests can be applied. In both cases, adequate control of the authorship of the evaluation tests must be ensured.

Ongoing evaluation is the sum of activities, projects, open book exams, digital portfolios and author interviews, among others. In this case, there must be a record of the procedure and criteria applied, and it must be possible to follow the traceability of each student's participation and interaction in the subjects, courses, discussion forums and proposed tasks. In the case of individual tests, the main challenge is to ensure that the tests have been taken by the student without external help. This may justify the requirement for onsite testing. An appropriate combination of technology and human resources can also be chosen to ensure student identification and the control of the environment, for a correct evaluation by demonstrating the achievement of each student's learning outcomes.

Based on the foregoing, and considering that in order to carry out the self-assessment exercise in the institution and for the assessment in the accreditation procedure, the recognition of diversity is considered in all factors and characteristics; however, in the case of the modalities, as well as in the case of levels, there are factors that are impacted the most:

a) Modalities

- Face-to-face
- Dual
- Distance
- Virtual
- Combination or integrations thereof

b) Impacted program accreditation factors

- Students
- Professors
- Interaction with the national and international environment
- Wellbeing of the program's academic community.
- Educational media and learning environments
- Physical and technological resources

HIGH QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

9.HIGH QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A program has quality to the extent that it makes its concept effective, both in relation to its universal characteristics, as well as in relation to the characteristics arising from its own education project, the field in which it operates and the type of institution to which it belongs.

High quality refers to the synthesis of traits that make it possible to recognize an academic program or an institution and to make a judgment, within the framework of continuous improvement and its diversity, on its capacity for transformation, given the proximity between the optimum conditions corresponding to the level of education of the academic program or to the legal nature, identity, mission and type of institution, and the way in which it provides the public service of higher education, the goals achieved and the impacts thereof [22][22].

In order to approach this ideal, the National Accreditation Council has defined a set of general characteristics of high quality. The quality of institutions and academic programs is assessed with regard to these characteristics, but the more specific determination and relative weight of these characteristics will be conditioned by the nature of the institution, the level and modality of the academic program.

Although the assessment is based on universal benchmarks, it is the differentiated reading of these characteristics that enables the assessment of the high quality of higher education institutions and academic programs of the most diverse types. This differentiation will be determined by the benchmarks corresponding to what is recognized in the present historical moment and in the specific society as customary to the type of institution or academic program (the existing regulations, the basic directions of the educational sector) and by the components of what the institution specifically defines as its specificity or primary vocation (the mission of the institution) and the way in which this mission is expressed in the academic programs.

In this context, an academic program is considered to be of high quality to the extent that it makes its concept effective, and that it has proximity to its ideal, both in relation to its universal aspects as well as the kind of institution to which it belongs, and the specific project of which it is a part and which constitutes completion.

In turn, in order for the high quality to become effective, higher education institutions and programs must, in addition to ensuring the possibility of learning and know-how by the student corresponding to the community of which he/she will be a member thanks to the education process, assume the fundamental task of being spaces for education in the general values of the academic culture; these values are characteristic of all higher education institutions.

Naturally, in order for quality to be achieved, a favorable institutional climate and suitable organizational, administrative and governance conditions are also required.

The high quality of higher education is the raison d'être of the National Accreditation System; recognizing it, ensuring its increase and promoting its development, gives meaning to the actions of the National Accreditation Council. High quality, thus understood, implies the continuous effort of institutions to comply responsibly with the requirements of each of their educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension tasks, which, ultimately, can be reduced to teaching, research and extension or social outreach, which receive different emphases in the various institutions, giving rise to additional specificities.

[22] Subsection a) Section 2.1 of Article 2 of CESU Agreement 02/2020.

HIGH QUALITY OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

10.HIGH QUALITY OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The high quality of an academic program, from the accreditation perspective, is recognized by considering references based on which it guides its action and implies complex, highly demanding challenges, identifying its own particularities, in accordance with the legal nature, identity, mission and type, as well as the level of education of the academic program.

The high quality of an academic program involves considering the following aspects [23][23].

a) Response to the institution's internal quality assurance system, which demonstrates achievements in academic aspects and learning outcomes, interaction in the national and international environment, contributions in research, innovation, technological development and creation, associated with the academic program in accordance with the level of education thereof.

b) Alignment with a strong culture of institutional self-regulation and self-assessment aimed at continuous improvement, appropriated by the academic community with the participation of students, professors and graduates.

c) Highly qualified faculty, with the proper hierarchical ranks, that leads the academic processes and allows the constitution of consolidated academic and research communities. This faculty responds to the projected learning outcomes and the type of learning environments.

d) The existence of processes for educational research and scientific research, innovation, technological development and creation, in line with universal knowledge and in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program.

e) A declared commitment to the comprehensive education of individuals in order for them to face, with ethical, social and environmental responsibility, the challenges of endogenous development and play a role in building a more just and inclusive society, which recognizes and promotes diversity, in accordance with the respective level of education of the academic program and the modalities thereof.

f) The social relevance and applicability of having inclusive educational environments and flexible, heterogeneous learning environments to properly respond to the educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension requirements in their respective environments.

g) Graduates who can validate the educational process and learning outcomes, and make an adequate contribution to the academic program through their professional, research, innovation and creation experiences.

h) Contribution to the development of institutional good governance policies that ensure the stability of the academic program, the generation effective management systems that ensure fulfillment of the rights and duties of individuals and social accountability.

i) Internationalization, with all its implications, in the form of cooperation for academic and scientific mobility of professors and students, bilingualism as a need for interaction with foreign communities, international academic recognition, foreign networks and alliances, and joint publications with foreign authors, among others. The internationalization strategy must account for how the institution creates strategies so that its students and graduates can perform in a global context.

j) Flexible and interdisciplinary educational processes for the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities required in current social, work and research dynamics, and that contribute to the development of learning outcomes, in accordance with the level of education of the academic program.

[23] Article 15 of CESU Agreement 02/2020.

k) The organization, administration and financing of the academic program to successfully fulfill the mission functions. Based on these resources, the academic program and the institution have defined standards that allow them to adhere to significant practices for carrying out their educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension activities.

l) Capacity to impact society and, in particular, the public and private business sectors, and all other sectors that need to be considered in order to establish meaningful long-term relationships with the environment, through research and social outreach activities that show measurable results.

m) Consolidation of research, innovation, technological development or creation projects and the consequent scientific publications of results, in accordance with the identity, mission and type of academic program and institution.

n) The processes of generating knowledge, technological development and innovation to be placed at the service of society, business and academia, with the ultimate purpose of improving the wellbeing of a community or population in terms of economic, social and environmental sustainability, in line with the mission of the institution and the level of education of the academic program.

ASSESSMENT OF THE HIGH QUALITY OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

11.ASSESSMENT OF THE HIGH QUALITY OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

High quality education is a priority in order to guarantee future generations the development of all their capabilities and especially their inclusion in the dynamics of a world marked by uncertainty and permanent change. In this sense, it is essential to advance in the consolidation of educational systems that, through a process of continuous improvement and ongoing assessment, can be more relevant and provide a more appropriate response to the dynamics of today's world. In this sense, below are some of the concepts that can serve as benchmarks for the design, management and assessment of curricular processes.

Ongoing assessment of the curriculum [24][24]

This is a process of ongoing assessment that enables a dynamic of transformation and permanent qualification of curriculum management in order to determine the degree of consistency between curriculum design (stated) and curriculum management (actual), to establish the integration between the training profile, learning objectives, pedagogical strategies and assessment processes, both of learning outcomes and curriculum management.

The ongoing assessment of the curriculum involves addressing the different stages involved in a curriculum management process, as they transcend the curriculum and go into how the curriculum structure addresses the different external and internal aspects that determine it. For a better understanding of how the concept of ongoing assessment of the curriculum is integrated, within the framework of university autonomy and the development of internal quality assurance systems, in the quality processes of a program, below is an illustration of the stages that comprise it and how they respond to different assessment criteria, which contribute to ensuring the high quality of the educational process when met:

Macro planning:

This is a stage prior to program design that researches the scientific and technological context of the fields of knowledge that make up the curriculum, the scientific, social, historical, political, economic, environmental, cultural and institutional aspects, among others, and the characteristics of the target population of its educational offer. In turn, an analysis of national and international trends in the offer of related programs and the state of the art of the disciplinary fields must converge in the curricular structure, in light of the educational profile formulated. This clearly implies theoretical, social, contextual and market research, not only in the perspective of the possible demand for the program, but also, and mainly, of the potential contribution of the program and its future graduates to the community in general and to the development of the country.

Program design:

This is the structuring of the curriculum and the curricular management processes that will be involved in its offer. At this stage, experts are expected to participate in disciplinary areas, curriculum design, pedagogy and research, along with educational administrators, among others, in order to structure a curriculum that will make the program's educational goals viable and the conditions of physical and technological infrastructure and human and financial resources to ensure its permanence and development over time. This stage will be assessed before (all preliminary studies carried out in the macro-planning stage) and a subsequent assessment based on impact studies, learning

[24] Some international certifying agencies, when referring to Learning Outcomes, use assessment as "one or more processes that identify, collect and prepare data to assess the achievement of learning outcomes (skills). Good assessment practices in engineering programs in Colombia. ACOFI,2019

outcomes, graduates' skills, job placement, and contributions to the development of the communities with which it interacts, among others.

Execution:

It is the deployment of the program and with it, the generation of all the human, physical, technological, wellbeing, and environmental interaction conditions, among others, through which the educational process is carried out. At this stage, different types of assessments are played out:

From the perspective of skills-based education, this implies fostering understanding as a fundamental goal of education, since understanding transcends the mere acquisition or application of concepts or skills and is installed in a state of consciousness that allows us to "be aware", that is, open to knowledge, to dialog, to transformation and enables us to be in and to be a part of the world with the ability to understand that everything is transformed and that beyond knowledge per se, there is knowledge with meaning.

Thus, knowing (knowledge), know-how (skills) and knowing how to be (attitudes) become skills when the individual is able to perform actual actions for the execution of tasks, decision making and social coexistence. Within the framework of this perspective, the notion of competence plays a fundamental role, since it is a category conceived based on the constitution and formation of subjects in different dimensions of their development, basically referring to potentials and/or capabilities.

This implies thinking of a comprehensive educational process aimed at the development of all dimensions of a human being, so that they are able to face the problems of the global and local context, thanks to their potential to build, innovate and acquire scientific, technological and humanistic knowledge, their ability to put it to use in solving problems in real situations and their willingness to create habits to learn how to learn.

Pedagogical strategies

In the educational field, pedagogical strategies are action plans or courses of action that contribute to teaching-learning processes. From this perspective, it is important to distinguish between teaching strategies and learning strategies.

Teaching strategies

Teaching strategies could be defined as the procedures, methods or resources used by the professor to promote the intended learning outcomes. They require design, planning, control and permanent and dialogical feedback with learners. Only then can their effectiveness be established.

In addition, the formulation of teaching strategies requires not only in-depth knowledge of the discipline being taught but also of the way in which this knowledge has been constructed and of the didactic potential of the activities proposed for specific learning. In addition, it is important to be clear about the type of knowledge being taught and how each type of knowledge requires a particular way of being taught.

Learning strategies

Learning strategies are a set of steps or skills that the learner intentionally puts into play to perform a learning task; they require specific procedures, techniques, operations or activities. They are always intentional and pursue the achievement of a purpose; they are executed voluntarily and intentionally by students, whenever they are required to learn, remember or solve problems about certain learning content.

These strategies are characterized by:

- Always be conscious or deliberate and aimed at a learning-related objective.
- Guide the actions to be taken and precede any other action procedure [25][25].
- Be a set of processes that serve as the basis for the performance of intellectual tasks.
- Constitute a set of mental procedures and processes employed by the individual in a particular learning situation to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge [26][26].
  Enable each person to identify their learning styles and thus make their educational process more efficient.

The possibility of learning through learning strategies and conscious decision making facilitates meaningful learning, enabling students to establish relationships between what they already know (their own knowledge) and the new information (objectives and characteristics of the task to be performed), deciding in a less random way which of the procedures are appropriate to do so. Students learn how to use certain procedures when, why and how to use them, which favors the resolution of the task.

Both teaching and learning strategies must be explained by the professor so that the students are aware of their educational purpose, their contribution to the development of learning and the role they play in the acquisition of certain contents.

The contents

are made up of everything that is to be taught, although they have traditionally referred only to the list of topics related to concepts; they include not only the knowledge related to concepts, but also to procedures and attitudes. They are an essential tool for the development of learners' capabilities; therefore, they must not be an end in themselves, but a means to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

According to the type of content, a differentiated and explicit didactic treatment is required in the teaching, learning and evaluation strategies. It is important to bear in mind that conceptual content refers to facts (events or occurrences), data (specific information) and concepts (notions that enable us to interpret and make sense of and recognize types of natural, social and cultural objects).

In turn, procedural contents refer to know-how, understood as ordered actions aimed at the achievement of a task. They can be classified as: general, algorithmic and heuristic; with a motor component and cognitive component, among others. Procedural contents must not be confused with the methodology or the learning activities carried out by the professor in class; they refer to the actions, to the ways of acting and solving problems that the student must construct. They are fundamental for learning other content, such as conceptual and attitudinal content.

In practice, they have generally been worked on together with the other contents; however, they can only become curricular contents if the professor has the explicit intention of carrying out learning activities that enable the student to acquire them, regardless of the concepts or attitudes; this type of contents are essential to enhance the student's ability to learn independently.

Finally, attitudinal contents refer to the values that are demonstrated in attitudes, understood as the tendencies to act in accordance with a value system; they involve cognitive components such as knowledge and beliefs, affective components such as feelings or preferences, and behavioral components such as manifest actions. Attitudes have a dynamic nature that depends on new information and circumstances, other people's attitudes and levels of moral development. This type of learning is made possible through the interaction of the individual with others and with him/herself. They can be facilitated by incorporating group strategies, problem solving, and case studies, to name a few. Attitudinal contents do not constitute a separate area; on the contrary, they are an integral part of all learning areas. Besides being contents in themselves, they guide the perceptual and cognitive processes that lead to learning the other types of contents.

[25] Schmeck, R.R. (Ed.)(1988). Learning Strategies and Learning Styles. New York: Plenum Press.
[26] Derry, S. I. and D. A. Murphy (1986). Designing systems that train learning ability. Review of Educational Research, 56:1-39.

As can be seen, the integration between pedagogical strategies and contents is fundamental to ensure learning outcomes and in this sense they need to be selected, developed and assessed in a conscious and consistent manner, understanding that although we speak of learning outcomes, they are not just a product that can be measured but a means for assessing the entire process and in this sense, they must be monitored before, during and after the educational process in order to ensure the quality of learning and the development of the individuals' capabilities.

In this sense, assessment is a practice that permeates the entire teaching-learning process and that, in some way, demonstrates the degree of integration between the different constituent elements of the educational process. Indeed, current pedagogical trends believe that within this process, learning objects, methodology, pedagogical strategies, learning outcomes and even the context in which the assessment action is situated must be considered.

With the emergence of new models, the assessment perspective is revised based on the analysis of its functionality and scope as a reflection of the learning process; thus, it is assumed that in addition to becoming a conceptual x-ray of the student, the assessment format must account for his or her mental schemes and, consequently, the strategies adopted to achieve the proposed goals. From this perspective, the questions that guide the assessment process change to: What happens in the student's learning and what are the implications of the outcomes identified, and these are aspects from which a more integrative perception of the educational process is configured.

Thus, assessment must provide an estimate of the degree of learning achieved by students, while offering a means of assessing the teaching process in order to consider the pedagogical and curricular adjustments necessary to qualify processes and implement strategies aimed at maximizing the skills of the subject, that is, to develop students' learning potential.

Assessment of an academic program

In the National Accreditation Council's model, the final assessment of the high quality of an academic program is the result of an integrated consideration of the twelve factors that comprise it. In turn, each factor is examined based on an integrated consideration of the different characteristics that constitute it. The degree of compliance with each quality characteristic must be established through a comprehensive assessment of the different aspects identified by the National Accreditation Council and those identified by the institution that drive the factors and characteristics in accordance with its institutional identity, level of education and field of action.

Thus, the final assessment is based on successive syntheses of assessments on sets of components of increasing complexity (aspects to be assessed, characteristics and factors). In this comprehensive approach, the assessment is carried out on all the factors and characteristics and not on isolated components.

For the high quality accreditation process of academic programs, the factors identified by the National Accreditation Council as pillars for the assessment are the following, which must be seen from a systemic perspective, since they are expressed in an interdependent manner.

The factors selected in the accreditation model of the National Accreditation Council support high quality and can be grouped into four dynamics:

Say what you do

- A high quality academic program must have a clear foundation, consistent with its mission, vision and institutional education project, and clearly expressed in the educational project of the program, or its equivalent. These elements must be clearly known and appropriated by the academic community. Additionally, they must provide true, ethical and verifiable information to the community, and demonstrate that it is done in this manner.

Do what you say

- A high-quality academic program must show great consistency between what it says it does and what it does to achieve it, which is reflected in its highly qualified faculty, quality teaching, excellent scientific research, recognized artistic creation, outstanding students, adequate funding sources, and academic freedom.

Prove it

- A high quality academic program must demonstrate the high quality of what it says and what it does through processes of self-regulation, self-assessment and external assessment, supported by reliable and comprehensive information systems.

Improve it

- A high-quality academic program must demonstrate that it has a continuous improvement and innovation plan that responds to the needs shown by the self-assessment processes.

All of the above is materialized in factors that enable the appraisal of conditions for the development of the institution's educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and outreach activities of each high quality academic program. These factors can be individualized as follows:

1. Education project of the program and institutional identity
2. Students
3. Professors
4. Graduates
5. Academic aspects and learning outcomes
6. Retention and graduation
7. Interaction with the national and international environment
8. Contributions of research, innovation, technological development and creation, associated with the academic program
9. Wellbeing of the program's academic community
10. Educational media and learning environments
11. Organization, administration and financing of the academic program
12. Physical and technological resources

The above factors are assessed according to characteristics corresponding to universal and particular references of high quality, which are demonstrated in accordance with aspects to be assessed by distinguishing the levels (professional technical, technological, university, medical-surgical specialty, master's and doctoral programs), and the modalities (face-to-face, distance, virtual, hybrid and the combinations or integrations thereof).

It is important to stress that the institutions, in developing the flexibility of the accreditation model, are free to use their own instruments for gathering information and, furthermore, in response to the level, modality and field of knowledge, may define characteristics and aspects to be assessed in addition to those established in Agreement 02/2020 and in these guidelines, which may consider the factors and characteristics of the guidelines for the high quality accreditation of academic programs and in accordance with the criteria inspired by the National Accreditation System [27][27].

[27] Article 19 of Agreement 02/2020 of the National Council of Higher Education (CESU).

FACTORS AND CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

12.FACTORS AND CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

“An Institution must demonstrate its ongoing effort to consolidate its identity through an organizational culture based on continuous improvement and academic innovation, which, in the case of high quality academic programs, is perceptible in each of the following factors:"

FACTOR 1. EDUCATION PROJECT OF THE PROGRAM AND INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY

A high quality academic program is recognized for its clear culture of continuous improvement, which defines the philosophical, pedagogical and organizational references set out in its institutional guidelines and policies, which are consistent with each other, and are established in the education project of the program or the plan serving as such, function as fundamental references for the development and fulfillment of its purposes, and mark the identity of its academic community, which is recognized by society.

CHARACTERISTIC 1. EDUCATION PROJECT OF THE PROGRAM

"For the academic program, an educational project has been defined that is consistent with the institutional mission and identity, as well as with the fields of action of the professions or disciplines, and that guides the development of educational, academic, teaching, scientific and cultural activities. According to the level of education and modality, the program's educational project clearly defines the educational objectives and learning outcomes considered in the curricular aspects, the curricular planning and assessment policies and strategies, and the proposal for continuous improvement as part of the framework of the internal quality assurance system. The documents that set out the education project of the program or the plan serving as such must be publicly available."

In the case of academic programs in the area of health, the relationship and consistency between the higher education institution and the scenarios where the training practices are carried out will be taken into account.

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the integration between the program's educational project and the institutional educational project, or the equivalent thereof, which accounts for the development of graduates' skills and curricular mechanisms.
- Demonstration of the impact of curricular planning and assessment policies and strategies and the proposal for continuous improvement.
- Evidence of the integration between educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension activities in the program's educational project.
- Evidence of the evolution of the program's educational project or its equivalent, as part of the framework of the self-assessment and self-regulation processes, ensuring its continuous improvement.
- Evidence of the evolution of the program's educational project or its equivalent, in the consolidation of its identity and in the participation of the academic community and its stakeholders.

CHARACTERISTIC 2. ACADEMIC RELEVANCE AND SOCIAL APPLICABILITY OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

In accordance with the level of education at which it is offered, the academic program responds to previously defined and supported local, regional, national or international needs, regardless of the modality or modalities in which it is offered.

Aspects to be assessed:

- Presentation of the analysis of trends, needs and lines of development of the discipline or profession, at the local, regional, national or international levels.
- Evidence of studies aimed at identifying the needs and requirements of the local, regional or national environment, in terms of production and competitiveness, technology and human talent.
- Demonstration of the impact, academic relevance and social applicability of the program, from the perspective of the academic community and its stakeholders.
- Evidence of social transformations relevant to the context and territory in which the academic program is offered, and of the national and international environment.
- Evidence of how the academic program, its curricular structure and management strategies respond to the needs of the environment and the sectors in which the graduates work.
- Evidence of how the skills acquired and the attitudes displayed by graduates demonstrate the relevance of their education and the commitment of the academic program to the education of technicians, technologists, university professionals, master's or doctors who contribute solutions to the problems of the environment, to the generation of knowledge and to the education of independent researchers.
- Appraisal of professors, students, graduates and employers regarding the social applicability and academic relevance of the program for the region of influence.

FACTOR 2. STUDENT

A high quality academic program is recognized for its tradition and culture of continuous improvement that enables students to develop attitudes, skills, abilities and knowledge, during their education process. This process is guided by philosophical, pedagogical and organizational goals that translate into the achievement of learning outcomes, consistent with the identity of the academic program.

CHARACTERISTIC 3. PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES OF COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

The participation of students in research, technological development, innovation, artistic and cultural creation, and sports activities is demonstrated, as well as in business development projects, national and international relations and other actions of complementary education, in an environment conducive to comprehensive education, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program.

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the application of policies and strategies defined by the academic program for the comprehensive education of students, referring explicitly to curricular and extracurricular activities.
- Presentation of the perception analysis of the curricular, extension, research and wellbeing strategies that enable students to access a comprehensive education and the development of all their social, humanistic, professional, emotional, ethical and social responsibility dimensions.
- Presentation of the perception analysis of student participation in research, technological development, innovation, artistic and cultural creation, and sports activities, as well as in business development projects, national and international relations and other continuing education activities, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the program, and whose effectiveness is evaluated on an ongoing basis.
- Evidence of the total student population of the academic program, number of students who effectively participate in study groups or centers, experimentation or business development projects or in other academic and cultural activities other than the teaching provided by the institution or the program to contribute to their comprehensive education.
- Statement of strategies and actions, consistent with the identity and mission of the institution. For comprehensive education, they must be accessible, known and used by the educational community of the academic program.
- Students' and professors' appraisal of the comprehensive education activities.

CHARACTERISTIC 4. STUDENT GUIDANCE AND FOLLOW UP

"The academic program exhibits processes of guidance and academic follow-up of its students, with a clear impact on their education, in accordance with their characterization at the time of admission."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Presentation of the analysis of the results of support policies and mechanisms that enable students to achieve their educational goals and the development of all their social, humanistic, professional, emotional, ethical and social responsibility dimensions.
- Demonstration of the impact of the student guidance and follow-up processes in their education , in accordance with the characteristics of admission.

CHARACTERISTIC 5. CAPACITY TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY

"Students demonstrate skills and abilities to work independently that the academic program recognizes, assesses, encourages and develops in the learning process. The Institution provides the means, spaces and environments necessary to promote independent work, promotes follow-up strategies and develops activities to improve them."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the evolution of students' skills and abilities for independent work, based on the development and fulfillment of the defined curriculum, enabled by the means, spaces and environments required for this purpose, which are assessed and improved on an ongoing basis.

- Evidence of how the assessment and follow-up of the learning outcomes contribute to the development of skills for students' independent work.

- Demonstration of the impact of the strategies, mechanisms, activities and resources available for the development of student autonomy.

CHARACTERISTIC 6. STUDENT REGULATIONS AND ACADEMIC POLICY

"The institution demonstrates the disclosure, application and updating of student regulations and approved academic policies, which define, among other aspects, the rights and duties, disciplinary system, participation of the academic community in decision-making, and the academic conditions and requirements for retention and graduation, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Demonstration of the impacts and results of the application and constant updating of academic policies and student regulations on student participation in their academic community, in decision making and in the academic conditions and requirements of retention, according to the level of education and modality of the academic program.

- Evidence of the application of mechanisms used for the dissemination and appropriation of the student regulations and academic policy.

- Appraisal by students and professors of the academic program regarding the relevance, validity and application of the student regulations and academic policies.

- Presentation of statistics that provide evidence of the application of the rules set out in the student regulations and academic policies to address situations with the students.

CHARACTERISTIC 7. INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

"The academic program demonstrates benefits for its students through the provision of academic incentives and socioeconomic support, distributed with objective criteria that address diversity, pluralism and inclusion."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Demonstration of the impact of implementing policies and strategies on academic incentives and socioeconomic support for students that address diversity, pluralism and inclusion.

- Presentation of the analysis of statistical data on the level of use of the incentives and support offered by the institution and the academic program by the student community.

- Students' appraisal of the application of academic incentives and socioeconomic support by the academic program or institution.

FACTOR 3. PROFESSORS

"A high quality academic program is recognized for its tradition and culture of continuous improvement that defines philosophical, pedagogical and organizational references that identify its academic community, which is clear in the academic level, hours, type of contract, quality and relevance of professors, in accordance with the level of

education and modality of the academic program. It also follows up on the academic and pedagogical development, retention and ongoing qualification of its professors."

CHARACTERISTIC 8. SELECTION, CONTRACTING AND RETENTION

"The institution demonstrates the transparent and effective application of the criteria established for the selection, contracting and retention of professors, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the transparent and effective application of the institutional policies, strategies and processes for the selection, contracting and retention of professors, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program and place of development.
- Evidence of the application of policies, conditions and mechanisms for the selection, inclusion, assessment and retention of its professors and their impact on the quality of the educational process.
- Evidence of the application of criteria related to the training of professors (degrees and academic experience, among others), as part of the selection, contracting and retention processes.
- Appraisal by directors, professors and students on the application, relevance and validity of the policies, regulations and academic criteria established by the institution for the selection, contracting and retention of professors.
- In the case of programs in the health field, professors' responsibilities in the areas of basic sciences, clinical sciences, behavioral sciences and social sciences must be explained in detail. This explanation must be provided both for professors assigned to the institution offering the academic program and for the faculty of the apprenticeship scenarios.
- In the case of programs in the health field, it must be explained in detail for the core professors of the program, if their contract is exclusively with the institution offering the program or if there is a shared contract with the apprenticeship scenarios.

CHARACTERISTIC 9. FACULTY BYLAWS

"The institution demonstrates the application of bylaws that promote teaching careers, inclusion, recognition of merit and promotion in hierarchical ranks, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the appropriation, application and dissemination of the faculty bylaws or their equivalent, regarding the professors' teaching careers, inclusion, recognition of merit and promotion in the hierarchical ranks, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program.
- Presentation of statistics that demonstrate the impact of the application of the bylaws on the teaching career, recognition of merits, promotion in the hierarchical ranks and the quality of the essential functions offered by the academic program.
- Appraisal by professors and directors of the relevance, validity and application of the faculty bylaws.

CHARACTERISTIC 10. NUMBER, HOURS, LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

"The academic program has a number of professors working the hours, and with the level of education and experience required to carry out educational, academic, scientific, cultural and extension activities, in order to serve all students enrolled, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program, directly or through the respective faculty, school or department."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of consistency between the number, hours, level of education and experience of full-time professors, with the number of students, level of education and modality of the academic program.
- Evidence of the existence of a basic core of full-time professors, preferably with permanent contracts, and their relationship with the education of the academic community of the program and the fulfillment of the essential functions of the program, with high quality.
- Appraisal by directors, professors and students of the academic program assigned directly or through the respective faculty or department, on the quality and sufficiency of the number and hours of the professors at the service of the program.
- Evidence of the existence and use of systems and criteria to assess the number, hours, level of education and experience of the professors of the academic program, assigned directly or through the respective faculty or department; frequency of this assessment; actions taken by the institution and the academic program, based on the results of the assessments carried out in this area.

For professional technical and technological programs

Level of education: The program must have professors with at least a Specialization degree.

Experience: Demonstrate experience and/or certifications related to the professional field of education of the academic program.

Number: Demonstrate that the academic program has sufficient faculty to adequately serve the number of students and ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes, the fulfillment of the assigned functions under quality conditions and considering international standards, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program.

For university professional programs

Level of education: The program must have professors with at least a Specialization degree.

Number: Demonstrate that the academic program has sufficient faculty to adequately serve the number of students and ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes, the fulfillment of the assigned functions under quality conditions and considering international standards, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program.

For medical-surgical specialties

Level of education: The academic program must have professors with a university degree in medicine and at least one medical-surgical specialty.

Experience: Demonstrate experience in the training scenario related to the medical-surgical specialty.

Number: Demonstrate that the academic program has sufficient faculty to adequately serve the number of students and ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes, the fulfillment of the assigned functions under quality conditions and considering international standards, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program.

For master's programs

Level of education: The academic program must have professors with at least a master's degree. For research-based master's programs, professors must have at least a master's degree and also provide proof of research experience or have a doctoral degree.

Experience: In the case of research-based master's, demonstrate scientific, artistic and/or cultural outputs.

Number: Demonstrate that the academic program has sufficient faculty to adequately serve the number of students and ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes, the fulfillment of the assigned functions under quality conditions and considering international standards, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program.

For doctoral programs

Level of education: The academic program must have professors with at least a PhD.

Experience: Demonstrate that the entire faculty of the academic program actively participates in the generation of new knowledge products or artistic and/or cultural creation.

Number: Demonstrate that the academic program has sufficient faculty to adequately serve the number of students and ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes, the fulfillment of the assigned functions under quality conditions and considering international standards, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program.

CHARACTERISTIC 11. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

In relation to the institution's policies, the needs and the education objectives of the academic program, the results of faculty development are demonstrated in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program. Faculty development responds to student diversity, teaching modalities and the requirements of internationalization and inter- and multiculturalism of professors and students.

Aspects to be assessed:

- Demonstration of the impact of implementing policies and strategies that promote faculty development, consistent with the evolution of the institution, the place of development, the identity of the academic program and the education of students.

- Presentation of the analysis and results of the implementation of institutional policies and strategies for the comprehensive development of the faculty, including training and updating in academic, professional and pedagogical aspects related to the level of education and modality in which the program is offered.

- Demonstration of the impact of the resources applied by the institution for faculty development, considering the diversity of students, the forms of teaching, the requirements of internationalization and inter- and multiculturalism of professors and students.

- Appraisal by directors and professors of the academic program assigned directly or through the respective faculty or department, on the impact of the actions geared towards the comprehensive development of the professors on the enrichment of the quality of the academic program.

CHARACTERISTIC 12. INCENTIVES FOR TEACHING EXPERIENCE

"The academic program and the institution demonstrate the dissemination, application and updating of academic criteria in a system of incentives that recognizes and offers benefits for the qualified practice of educational, academic, teaching, scientific and cultural activities."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the application of academic criteria and resources allocated to grant incentives for the advancement of professors' academic life.

- Evidence on the coverage, in terms of professors, category in the hierarchical ranks and places of development, in relation to the incentives granted for the performance of their educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension work.

- Demonstration of the impact of the incentives defined by the institution, on the development, retention and academic life project of professors in line with the improvement of the academic program.

- Appraisal by directors and professors of the academic program, assigned directly or through the respective school or department, on the impact of the faculty incentive system, created to enrich the quality of the program, for the qualified exercise of teaching, research, innovation, artistic and cultural creation, extension or social outreach, contributions to technical and technological development and international cooperation.

CHARACTERISTIC 13. PRODUCTION, RELEVANCE, USE AND IMPACT OF TEACHING MATERIAL

"The professors produce their own materials for the level education they are teaching to carry out the various academic activities, which support the learning environments and which are periodically assessed based on previously defined academic criteria and mechanisms, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the production, use and assessment of teaching aids, relevant to the level of education and modality of the academic program.
- Appraisal by the students and directors of the academic program on the relevance and quality of the teaching aids produced and used by the professors assigned to the program and their relevance according to the level of education and modality of the program.
- Presentation of the analysis of the results of applying the teaching aids in the academic improvement of the academic program, which are assessed and updated as part of the self-assessment and self-regulation processes.

CHARACTERISTIC 14. MERIT-BASED REMUNERATION

"The remuneration received by professors is in line with their academic and professional merits, their contribution in carrying out the educational, pedagogical and assessment components, the interaction and social relevance, the level of education and modality of the academic program."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Appraisal by professors regarding the correspondence between remuneration and academic, pedagogical and professional merits, based on their teaching, research, technological, innovation, artistic or cultural creation and social outreach activities.
- Demonstration of the impact of implementing institutional policies and regulations on faculty remuneration that consider professional and academic merit.
- Evidence of the evolution and increase in the number of professors in proportion with remuneration and their correspondence with the academic improvement of the academic program.

CHARACTERISTIC 15. FACULTY ASSESSMENT

"The academic program demonstrates periodic and ongoing processes of comprehensive assessment of its professors, covering the different activities and their performance in the educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension activities. These processes are established, disseminated and known by them beforehand, and involve and integrate the educational, academic and all other activities incorporated in the education project of the academic program, taking into account the level of education and modality thereof."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Presentation of the appraisal by professors, directors and students of the criteria and mechanisms for the assessment of their professors; their transparency, equity and effectiveness, and their consistency with the nature of the institution, level of education and modality of the academic program.
- Evidence of assessment of the professors assigned to the academic program and actions taken by the institution and the program based on the results thereof.
- Evidence of a training plan and support for professors to improve their professional, didactic and pedagogical performance.

- Evidence of the training plan and support for student learning outcomes and continuous improvement of the academic program.

- Appraisal by the professors assigned to the program of the criteria and mechanisms for the assessment of professors, their transparency, equity and effectiveness.

FACTOR 4. GRADUATES

"Based on its tradition and clear culture of continuous improvement, the academic program shall define academic, philosophical, pedagogical and behavioral references that identify its academic community, which translates into the performance of its graduates and their impact on the academic project and the processes of social, cultural, scientific, technological or economic development of their respective environments.

CHARACTERISTIC 16. FOLLOW-UP OF GRADUATES

The academic program shall demonstrate that it follows up on the location of the sector and the activities carried out by its graduates, in terms of learning outcomes and in a manner consistent with the purposes of the institution and the academic program."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Demonstration of the impact of the existence, implementation and results of the graduate follow-up policy.

- Evidence of plans, programs, projects and strategies for the communication and involvement of graduates in the different institutional initiatives.

- Evidence of the follow-up by the academic program on its graduates, analyzing the correspondence between the occupation and professional placement and the training profile, as an input to ensure its relevance and to make adjustments to the program, in response to the needs of the environment.

- Evidence of the use of information obtained from the follow-up of graduates for the design and implementation of programs to complement and update their education and promote lifelong learning.

CHARACTERISTIC 17. IMPACT OF GRADUATES ON THE SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

The academic program shall demonstrate its recognition of the high quality of the education received, the outstanding performance and contribution of graduates to the solution of economic, environmental, technological, social and cultural problems, through their practice of the corresponding discipline, profession, occupation or trade, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program.

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence in the last five years of the results of applying institutional policies in the academic program in terms of flexibility, interdisciplinarity, integrality and assessment of the curriculum, and its contribution to the development of professional, occupational and personal skills of graduates.

- Appraisal by employers in terms of updating and relevance of graduates' professional and occupational profile.

- Presentation of awards, distinctions and achievements in the profession by graduates, in line with the educational process carried out in the academic program.

- Presentation of studies regarding the impact of graduates on the social and academic environment, as a mechanism to establish the contributions of the academic program in the creation and innovation of knowledge.

FACTOR 5. ACADEMIC ASPECTS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Based on its tradition and clear culture of continuous improvement, and supported by academic innovation, the academic program shall define academic, philosophical, pedagogical and organizational references that identify its academic community and enable its recognition as part of the national and international academic community of the corresponding profession, discipline, occupation or trade, as a result of an educational process focused on learning outcomes based on disciplinary and international trends and institutional contexts, in accordance with institutional standards regarding the curriculum.

CHARACTERISTIC 18. INTEGRALITY OF CURRICULAR ASPECTS

"The academic program shall demonstrate that the curricular aspects contribute to the formation of values, attitudes, aptitudes, knowledge, methods, skills and abilities, in accordance with the state of the art and with the practice of the discipline, profession, occupation or trade, and that it pursues the comprehensive education of students in a manner consistent with the institutional mission and the objectives of the academic program. Student performance is perceptible through the achievement of previously defined learning outcomes, which respond to the job skills required for their performance."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Presentation of the educational project of the program or its equivalent, explaining the academic, philosophical, pedagogical and organizational benchmarks that identify its educational community and enable its recognition as part of the national and international academic community of the corresponding profession, discipline, occupation or trade.

- Demonstration of academic, scientific and extension or social outreach activities, in national and international cooperation, with verifiable products, in which both students and professors of the academic program participate, according to the level of education and place of development of the program. Evidence for the last five years must be provided.

- Existence of courses, projects and extracurricular activities that enable the development of generic and specific skills, in accordance with the profile and level of education of the academic program.

- Evidence of the application of ongoing exercises to assess the integrality of the curriculum leading to adjustments and improvements to impact student learning outcomes.

- For programs organized by preparatory cycles, evidence for the last five years of actions carried out between the institution and other institutions of the public or private sector (educational, business and financial, among others) to integrate and affirm the sequential and complementary nature of the cycles, from the academic and labor perspective, according to the level of education and modality of the academic program.

CHARACTERISTIC 19. FLEXIBILITY OF CURRICULAR ASPECTS

"The academic program shall demonstrate that the curricular aspects are flexible and relevant, and that they stay up to date to enable student mobility, through educational pathways that they build themselves, based on their own experience and their interests and aspirations. These pathways can be taken by choosing from the offering of the

same institution or that of other institutions in Colombia and abroad. All the activities that are part of the learning pathways contribute greatly to their comprehensive education and promote interdisciplinarity."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the flexibility, mobility and revitalization of the curriculum, which enable students to interact with other academic programs at the institutional, national and international level, access to dual degree processes; integrate undergraduate and postgraduate education; and the recognition of academic credits, among others.
- Evidence on the results of flexibility through interdisciplinarity and interculturality, on roadmaps, times and spaces, with a view to lifelong learning, and the consideration of different learning environments considering the modalities.
- Evidence of the number of students of the academic program benefited through physical or virtual interaction strategies with other national and international institutions in the last five years. In the case of mobilities abroad, preferably in a second language.
- Evidence of academic offerings that enable the application of flexibility criteria, with a view to ensuring students' participation in the design of their own academic plan, according to their interests and needs, in the last five years.
- Evidence of educational alternatives adopted by students based on their needs and interests, resulting from the curricular flexibility strategies defined by the institution.

CHARACTERISTIC 20. INTERDISCIPLINARITY

"The academic program shall demonstrate curricular aspects that promote and encourage interdisciplinarity through interaction with other disciplines. Therefore, it designs strategies and implements them, and allows students to complete the program without affecting their retention."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence throughout the curriculum of how problems relevant to the academic program and work are addressed through interdisciplinary guidance by professors and students.
- Existence of academic plans, projects and activities that demonstrate interdisciplinary strategies specific to the academic program and the institution.
- Evidence of the mechanisms, criteria and results of implementing the curricular interdisciplinarity of the academic program.

CHARACTERISTIC 21. PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES

"The academic program shall demonstrate consistency between the pedagogical strategies used, the level of education and modality of the academic program. Pedagogical strategies shall be designed in accordance with the expected learning outcomes and taking into account the contributions of pedagogical research and processes to keep professors up to date.

In the case of academic programs in the area of health, through teaching-service agreements, teaching and learning strategies shall be demonstrated in suitable and sufficient training scenarios to support this education."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Existence of pedagogical guidelines that direct classroom practices, in accordance with institutional commitments, the educational profile, the skills to be developed and the specificities of the level of education and modality of the academic program.
- Existence of a system to demonstrate the integration of the pedagogical guidelines with the pedagogical strategies used by professors so that students achieve the learning outcomes, and their consequent impact on the development of the skills provided in the educational profile.
- Evidence of the impact of different pedagogical strategies implemented for managing the curriculum and achieving the expected learning outcomes.
- Evidence of appraisals regarding the learning systems developed or implemented by the academic program.
- Existence of apprenticeship scenarios for the academic programs that require them, in conditions of quality, relevance, support and adherence to the specific regulations for their development.
- Evidence of the impact of apprenticeships on the development of skills by the students and their contribution to the communities where they are carried out.

CHARACTERISTIC 22. STUDENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The academic program shall demonstrate that it uses a student assessment system based on clear, universal and transparent policies and standards. This system must periodically, or in a formative and permanent manner, assess the achievement of learning outcomes, attitudes, knowledge, skills and abilities acquired, according to curricular aspects, and must be applied in accordance with the level of education and modality. Assessment systems incorporate innovation to cause deep transformations in learning and include dynamics in reference to changes in knowledge.

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence that the student assessment system defined by the institution and implemented by the academic program contributes to recognizing and appraising the learning outcomes of students and that its periodic analysis contributes to the continuous improvement of the educational process based on educational innovations.
- Evidence of the existence, implementation, dissemination and application of student regulations, in terms of student assessment criteria, in line and in correspondence with the level of education and modality of the academic program.
- Evidence of appraisals regarding the learning systems developed or implemented by the academic program.
- Evidence of the degree of knowledge and appropriation of the learning assessment system by professors and students and its impact on student learning outcomes.

CHARACTERISTIC 23. LEARNING OUTCOMES

"The academic program shall demonstrate the existence of a continuous improvement process, in which the degree to which students achieve learning outcomes is assessed periodically and at different times throughout the study plan, and, based on this assessment, actions are taken to adjust curricular aspects and teaching-learning methodologies."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the application and results of an institutional policy that sets parameters for the formulation, assessment and continuous improvement of learning outcomes, in alignment with the educational profile, skills and learning objectives established in the academic program, in accordance with the level of education and modality.
    - Evidence of the continuous improvement process related to the assessment of the degree to which students achieve the expected learning outcomes, and the adjustments of curricular aspects and teaching-learning methodologies derived from such assessment.
    - Existence of improvement plans for the adjustment of curricular aspects and teaching and learning methodologies, based on the learning outcomes achieved by students, in line with the changes and needs of the context.
    - Demonstration of the impact of the pedagogical guidelines of the institution and/or academic program on the relevance, interdisciplinarity and contextualization of learning outcomes.
    - Evidence of students' knowledge of the assessment mechanisms implemented in each subject/area/course/module, among others, and how they are integrated with the learning outcomes of the academic program.

CHARACTERISTIC 24. SKILLS

"The high quality academic program explicitly defines the competencies it intends to develop in students and demonstrates consistency between the defined competencies and the level of education, defined learning outcomes and other curricular aspects."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the result of applying strategies for the implementation of a plan for the development of the skills provided in the educational profile of the academic program.
- Evidence of the strategies implemented by the academic program so that the learning outcomes contribute to the development of the skills provided in the educational profile.

CHARACTERISTIC 25. ASSESSMENT AND SELF-REGULATION OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

"The academic program shall demonstrate the existence of a high quality culture that applies clear criteria and procedures for the ongoing assessment of the objectives, processes and achievements of the academic program, in an environment of continuous improvement and innovation that assesses on a periodic basis, among others, the degree to which students achieve learning outcomes and the relevance of its contents in relation to the context in which it is developed."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Existence of a self-regulation and permanent assessment process of the academic program that contributes to its qualification and adaptation to the trends and needs of the field of knowledge and the sectors of performance of future graduates.
- Evidence of self-regulation and periodic assessment of the academic program, reflected in the implementation of improvement plans that contribute to qualification and innovation in its management.
- Evidence of ongoing curricular assessment, consistent with national and international trends, advances in the disciplinary areas and the educational profile required by the contexts and sectors of performance.
- Appraisal by the members of the community of the academic program (professors and students) regarding its quality and relevance.
- Evidence of compliance with improvement plans resulting from the self-assessment process of the academic program.

CHARACTERISTIC 26. INVOLVEMENT AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

"The academic program shall demonstrate the impact of the strategies, mechanisms and/or activities for social interaction that establish its involvement with society through curricular aspects."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Demonstration of the impact of the academic program's involvement in different social sectors and its contribution to the updating, adjustments and improvements of curricular aspects.
- Evidence of the participation of professors and students in the social outreach of the academic program.
- Evidence of a strategy for integration with the social sectors and how they contribute to the strengthening of the academic program.
- Presentation of periodic and systematic analyses regarding the level of contribution of the strategies and actions of its students and professors to the degree of satisfaction of the stakeholders previously defined by the academic program.

FACTOR 6. RETENTION AND GRADUATION

"The academic program shall demonstrate the existence of a high quality culture that applies clear criteria and procedures for the ongoing assessment of the objectives, processes and achievements of the academic program, in an environment of continuous improvement and innovation that assesses on a periodic basis, among others, the degree to which students achieve learning outcomes and the relevance of its contents in relation to the context in which it is developed."

CHARACTERISTIC 27. POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND STRUCTURE FOR RETENTION AND GRADUATION

"The academic program shall demonstrate the impact of its policies, strategies, structure, existence and results of programs to support students' retention and graduation, including, among others, induction processes, vocational orientation and adaptation to university life, guidance for graduation projects and apprenticeships."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Existence of an orientation process for students to identify educational roadmaps in accordance with their abilities and interests and to overcome their learning difficulties, in order to ensure their retention and the adequate completion of their educational process within the time and conditions foreseen in the curriculum.
- Demonstration, based on diagnostics and the characterization of students, considering the academic nature of the institution and the level of education and modality of the academic program, that the policies, strategies and structure have had a positive impact on student retention and graduation, and demonstrating the implementation of improvement actions therein.
- Demonstration of the evolution of strategies for academic support of students throughout the academic program, based on self-assessment processes regarding the retention and graduation of students in the program.
- Evidence of the existence, implementation, dissemination, application and results of the retention and graduation policy.
- Demonstration of the impact of institutional policies and strategies on student retention and graduation rates.

CHARACTERISTIC 28. STUDENT CHARACTERIZATION AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

"The academic program shall demonstrate the impact of the characterization of its students, in terms of admission conditions, performance, and retention in the program. The early warning system shall give an account of its effectiveness in the diagnosis and differentiated attention of students in relation to retention and graduation rates."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the existence and implementation of an early warning system for recognizing the particularities of students according to their socio-cultural context and implementing actions that favor their educational process.
- Existence of support strategies to identify students' difficulties and create mechanisms to overcome them, in order to ensure their retention and graduation.
- Evidence of the impact of strategies related to the early warning system and the support process on the academic performance, retention and graduation of the students of the academic program.
- Evidence of curricular adjustments resulting from the follow-up analysis of students' academic performance, retention and graduation.
- Presentation of student diagnostic and characterization studies for the identification of specific actions aimed at improving retention and graduation rates, as well as their integration with the national policies, guidelines and regulations in force regarding inclusion and diversity.

CHARACTERISTIC 29. ADJUSTMENT OF CURRICULAR ASPECTS

"The academic program shall demonstrate the impact of the characterization of its students, in terms of admission conditions, performance, and retention in the program. The early warning system shall give an account of its effectiveness in the diagnosis and differentiated attention of students in relation to retention and graduation rates."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Existence of a permanent curricular assessment mechanism that enables the academic program to constantly review and adjust its curricular and management processes, considering the particularities of its population and the needs and dynamics of its contexts.
- Presentation of the analysis of the results of the early warning system and its impact on the curriculum to improve students' academic performance, retention and graduation.
- Evidence of curricular adjustments resulting from the follow-up analysis of students' academic performance, retention and graduation.

CHARACTERISTIC 30. SELECTION MECHANISMS

"The academic program shall demonstrate the analysis of the relationship between selection mechanisms, retention and graduation, as well as the adjustment of the selection processes resulting from these analyses."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Demonstration that it has systematic processes for the assessment of the mechanisms and criteria for student admission, and that based thereon, it carries out actions leading to the improvement of the process for student retention and graduation and the monitoring of the results of such actions.
- Evidence of the relationship between students registered, selected and enrolled, in order to establish the level of absorption of the academic program.
- Demonstration of the existence, implementation and dissemination of institutional policies and student regulations, and the adoption of mechanisms and criteria for the selection, retention, promotion and assessment of students that enable their graduation under quality conditions, which must be coherent and consistent with the level of education and modality of the academic program.
- Presentation of the correlation analysis between the selection, academic performance, retention and graduation mechanisms, resulting in adjustments to the selection processes.

FACTOR 7. INTERACTION WITH THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

"Based on its tradition and clear culture of continuous improvement and the philosophical, pedagogical and organizational purposes that identify its academic community, the academic program shall strengthen cooperation processes with other communities, both national and foreign, for carrying out educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension activities."

CHARACTERISTIC 31. INSERTION OF THE PROGRAM IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC CONTEXTS

"The academic program shall demonstrate that it uses the trends, the state of the art of the discipline or profession and the quality indicators recognized by the national and international academic community as a reference when organizing and updating its curricular aspects."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the impact of curricular internationalization, as a result of continuous improvement actions arising from the academic analysis of national and international trends in their area of knowledge, as well as the assessment of good practices identified by professors and students in their interaction with national and foreign academic communities.

- Evidence of the impact of curricular adjustments resulting from the analysis of the academic context, place of development, social relevance and interaction with different and diverse national and foreign communities.

- Evidence of the impact of applying policies and strategies of cooperation with other communities, national and foreign, for the development of educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension activities.

CHARACTERISTIC 32. EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS

"The academic program shall demonstrate the impact of academic and scientific cooperation of professors and students with other national and foreign institutions or entities, for carrying out educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension activities."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Presentation of the analysis of the activities and impact of the academic program derived from the interaction and cooperation of professors and students with other academic, social and business communities consistent with its legal nature, institutional typology and place of development of the program.

- Demonstration of the result of academic and scientific cooperation, derived from applying policies and strategies that favor the interaction of professors and students with their counterparts in the sector, both nationally and internationally, and which is evident in cooperative projects, exchanges and networks, among others.

- Evidence of specific cases of national and international cooperation between professors and students in different academic dimensions, such as teaching, research, social outreach or artistic and cultural creation.

CHARACTERISTIC 33. COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

"The academic program shall demonstrate the effect of the strategies employed for the development of second language skills during the students' education process and in their interaction with non-Spanish speaking communities, taking into account the country's cultural diversity."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the existence of strategies, plans or projects followed by the academic program for the approval and use of a second language. Evidence of results or progress in the implementation of strategies, plans or projects.

- Evidence of the impact of the strategies employed for the development of second language skills during the educational process and the interactions of professors and students with other non-Spanish speaking communities in accordance with the level of education and modality of the program.

FACTOR 8. CONTRIBUTIONS OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATION, ASSOCIATED WITH THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Based on its tradition and clear culture of continuous improvement, the academic program shall define philosophical, pedagogical and organizational references that identify its academic community and shall demonstrate that it contributes to inspiring an investigative, artistic, creative and innovative spirit in students for their critical and permanent interest in the state of the art in the area of knowledge of the academic program that promotes independent, critical and ethical thinking that enables them to identify and formulate problems with alternative solutions. Likewise, the academic program shall demonstrate the impact on society of its scientific, technological, cultural, innovation and creative contributions.

CHARACTERISTIC 34. EDUCATION FOR RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION AND CREATION

"The academic program shall demonstrate that it promotes, through professor-student interaction, the development of the skills of inquiry and research, critical, creative and innovative thinking and training in different methods of research, innovation and creation, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the development of inquiry and research skills and of creative and innovative thinking on the part of students, in accordance with the target field of action (technics, science, technology, humanities, art and philosophy) of the academic program.
- Evidence of the development of skills aimed at fostering the creation, development and transmission of knowledge in its different forms and expressions.

For professional technical and technological programs

- Evidence, through measurement and results, of the development of research, innovation or artistic and cultural creation skills in students, as a result of an educational roadmap with strategies implemented throughout the academic program, consistent with the legal nature, typology and profile of the institution.
- Demonstration of the impact derived from the development of projects, strategies and methods that, through learning outcomes, demonstrate the development of skills and abilities for research, innovation or creation, specific to the level of education of the program.

For university professional programs

- Evidence of the implementation of projects, strategies and methods that, through learning outcomes, demonstrate the development of research or artistic creation skills and abilities, specific to the level of education of the academic program, consistent with the nature, typology and profile of the institution.
- Evidence, through measurement and results, of the development of research, innovation or artistic and cultural creation skills in students, as a result of an educational roadmap with strategies implemented throughout the curriculum.

For medical-surgical specialties

- Evidence of the implementation of projects, strategies and methods that encourage students to improve their research skills and the production of knowledge in the disciplinary field of the academic program.

- Evidence, through measurement and results, of the development of research, innovation or artistic and cultural creation skills in students, as a result of an educational roadmap with strategies implemented throughout the curriculum.

For master's programs

- Evidence of the implementation of strategies and methods that encourage students to improve their research skills and the production of knowledge or artistic creation in the field of knowledge of the academic program.

- Evidence, through measurement and results, of the development of research, innovation or artistic and cultural creation skills in students, as a result of an educational roadmap with strategies implemented throughout the curriculum, consistent with the type of master's program, whether it is course based or research-based.

For doctoral programs

- Evidence of the existence of projects, strategies and methods that promote the development of independent researchers and the production of new knowledge or artistic creation in the field of knowledge of the academic program.

- Evidence, through measurement and results, of the development of research, innovation or artistic and cultural creation skills in students, as a result of an educational roadmap with strategies implemented throughout the curriculum.

CHARACTERISTIC 35. COMMITMENT TO RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION AND CREATION

"The academic program shall demonstrate that the professors carry out research, technological development, innovation or creation activities, recognized by the National Science and Technology System, and have institutional conditions and resources to do so. The academic program shall demonstrate that the outcomes of these activities strengthen curricular aspects and students' education and contribute to the generation of new knowledge or to the solution of social problems."

Aspects to be assessed:

For professional technical and technological programs

- Evidence of the coherence between the commitments declared by the academic program at the level of research, innovation, technological development or artistic and cultural creation, and the institutional conditions and resources of another order (human, physical, technological and financial, among others).

- Evidence of research and innovation activity of the academic program, linked to at least one research group recognized by the National System of Science, Technology and Innovation.

- Evidence of productive, technological, environmental and business projects that account for the development of knowledge produced at these levels of education.

- Evidence of professors' classroom practices, where they involve their own experience and results of artistic and cultural creation or research.

- Evidence of achievements derived from research, innovation, technological development or artistic and cultural creation processes that impact the development of the academic program, its relevance and applicability, and the development of research skills in its students.

For university professional programs

- Evidence of the coherence between the commitments declared by the academic program at the level of research, innovation, technological development or artistic and cultural creation, and the institutional conditions and resources of another order (human, physical, technological and financial, among others).

- Evidence that professors involve their own experience and results of artistic and cultural creation or research in classroom practices.

- Evidence of the research activity of the academic program, linked to research groups classified in the National System of Science, Technology and Innovation.

- Evidence of professors' contribution to the development of research skills in their students, through the existence of strategies such as research workshops or other educational practices.

For medical-surgical specialties and master's programs

- Evidence of the coherence between the commitments declared by the academic program at the level of research, innovation, technological development or artistic and cultural creation, and the institutional conditions and resources of another order (human, physical, technological and financial, among others).

- For the development of research in course-based master's programs, evidence of having research projects linked to research groups classified by the National System of Science, Technology and Innovation, preferably in categories B or higher, and evidence of the application of systematization processes that enable students to deepen or apply specific knowledge associated with their disciplinary areas.

- For the development of research in research-based master's programs, evidence of having research projects linked to research groups classified in the National System of Science, Technology and Innovation, preferably in categories A or higher, and evidence of the application of research methods that enable students to generate knowledge.

- Evidence of the contribution of professors to the development of students' research skills, through the existence and implementation of strategies specific to the level of education of the academic program.

For doctoral programs

- Evidence of the coherence between the commitments declared by the academic program at the level of research, innovation, technological development or artistic and cultural creation, and the institutional conditions and resources of another order (human, physical, technological and financial, among others).

- For the development of research in doctoral programs, evidence of having research projects linked to research groups classified in the National System of Science, Technology and Innovation, in categories A or higher, and evidence of the application of research methods that enable students to generate new knowledge.

- Evidence of the contribution of professors to the development of their students' research skills, through the existence and implementation of strategies specific to the level of education of the academic program.

FACTOR 9. WELLBEING OF THE PROGRAM'S ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Based on its tradition and culture of continuous improvement and the philosophical, pedagogical and organizational purposes that identify its academic community, the academic program shall have institutional wellbeing programs that are relevant and address the needs of its academic community, whose outcomes are demonstrable.

CHARACTERISTIC 36. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

"The academic program shall demonstrate the implementation of institutionally defined wellbeing policies that pursue human development and the improvement of the quality of life of the individual and the institutional group as a whole (students, professors and administrative staff). These actions shall take into account the conditions and needs of each level in each site, wherever they operate, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program, within the framework of pluralism, diversity and inclusion."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Demonstration of the impact derived from the implementation of wellbeing policies that consider the conditions and needs of the institutional community in each of the places of development, within the framework of pluralism, diversity and inclusion, and consistent with the level of education, modality and place of development of the academic program.

- The academic program and the institution show evidence of the search for innovations in the offer of wellbeing services that can generate strategies to contribute to the social, cultural, affective and economic dimensions.

CHARACTERISTIC 37. PARTICIPATION AND FOLLOW-UP

"The academic program shall demonstrate that it has the organic structure and infrastructure to implement the plans and activities offered institutionally in the program, as well as for the promotion and follow-up of student participation in such programs and in the use of the infrastructure provided for wellbeing."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of systematic assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of wellbeing programs, strategies and services, as well as their integration with existing national policies, guidelines and standards on wellbeing, inclusion and diversity.

- Evidence of systematic analyses of the results of actions aimed at the inclusion of the vulnerable and disabled population, as well as improvement actions aimed at increasing student retention of this population.

- Evidence of the impact of an organizational structure, sufficient infrastructure and activities for the follow-up and participation of students, including the vulnerable population and those with disabilities, on the wellbeing of the program's academic community.

FACTOR 10. EDUCATIONAL MEDIA AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Based on its tradition and culture of continuous improvement and the philosophical, pedagogical and organizational purposes that identify it, the academic program shall ensure the availability and use of educational resources for the creation of learning environments consistent with the expected outcomes and in accordance with the level of education and modality.

CHARACTERISTIC 38. PROFESSOR SUPPORT STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES

"The academic program shall demonstrate that it has supporting resources and has implemented pedagogical, technological and assistance strategies to strengthen professors' communication and interaction with students, in order to achieve the continuous improvement of their teaching, research, technological development, innovation and creation, in line with the learning objectives in accordance with the level of education and the modality of the academic program."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Appraisal by students of the effectiveness of the strategies and support resources provided by the academic program for the development of teaching-learning practices.
- Demonstration of the impact of the implementation of support strategies and resources (pedagogical-didactic) on the professors' contexts, for the improvement of their teaching-learning practices, considering diversity and inclusion.
- Existence of teaching support resources and/or supporting strategies for professors to strengthen their skills for relations with students.
- Evidence of the social appropriation of learning environments by the academic community of the program, for the fulfillment of the educational goals.
- Demonstration of the impact of the updated educational resources on the fulfillment of the comprehensive education objectives in the academic program.
- Evidence of systematic assessment by students of the performance of the core professors of the academic program and those of the apprenticeship in the case of programs in the field of health and wellbeing.
- In the case of academic programs in the field of health, evidence of categorization as an accredited or university hospital of the main training scenario of the academic program.

CHARACTERISTIC 39. STUDENT SUPPORT STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES

"The academic program shall demonstrate the availability, access, use and appropriation by students of spaces, resources, tools and equipment to enrich the processes of teaching and learning, in accordance with the level of education and the modality of the academic program, taking into account the context thereof and the principles of pluralism, diversity and inclusion."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Appraisal by students of the usefulness and relevance of the strategies and support resources provided by the institution for the development of their educational process in different contexts.
- Evidence of the consistency between the developments expected by the academic program and the availability, access, use and appropriation of the learning environments by its students, for the achievement of the learning outcomes.
- Evidence, with support from the last five years, of the adequate provision of laboratories, instruments and workshops with equipment and materials, in accordance with the modality and requirements of the academic program, complying with bio-sanitary and biosafety, industrial safety and occupational health standards, and standards for the handling of living beings, in accordance with current regulations.

- Evidence, with support from the last five years, of the availability and capacity of workshops, laboratories, equipment, audiovisual media, training scenarios, experiment stations and farms and virtual simulation scenarios, among others, for the optimal development of teaching, research and extension activities, in accordance with the requirements of the academic program.

- In the case of academic programs in the field of health and wellbeing, demonstration of the availability of specialized and simulation laboratories updated on the institutional campus and of modern and advanced technologies in the main scenario required for student training.

CHARACTERISTIC 40. BIBLIOGRAPHIC AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

"The academic program shall demonstrate that it has bibliographic and information resources to serve all students, in accordance with the level of education and the modality of the academic program."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Demonstration of the impact and continuous improvement of bibliographic and information resources, updated in accordance with the expected learning outcomes and to serve all of the students in the academic program.

- In the case of academic programs in the field of health, evidence of a repository of student and resident publications and theses, and a record of the proportion of such production indicating the main training scenario, in addition to that of the institution.

- Evidence, in the last five years, of applying strategies and mechanisms aimed at encouraging students to search and use bibliographic material.

- Evidence, in the last five years, of periodic analyses for systematizing the appraisal by students and professors regarding the relevance, updating and sufficiency of the academic program's bibliographic material to support the different academic activities, in accordance with the level of education and modality of the academic program.

- Evidence, in the last five years, regarding the annual investment in the acquisition of books, specialized journals, databases and subscriptions to periodicals related to the academic program.

- Evidence of properly equipped study spaces, including Internet connectivity available in the main training scenario and in the teaching-service agreement scenarios.

FACTOR 11. ORGANIZATION, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCING OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Based on its tradition and culture of continuous improvement and the philosophical, pedagogical and organizational purposes that identify it, the academic program shall have an administrative structure and governance processes in place at the service of teaching, research, technological development, innovation and creation, in accordance with the level of education and modality thereof.

CHARACTERISTIC 41. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The academic program shall demonstrate that its organizational structure has a collegiate body (or bodies) with the participation of at least representatives of professors, students, and graduates, and that it has implemented the necessary administrative mechanisms to ensure high quality.

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the participation of representatives of the academic community, through formal organizational structures defined by the institution, in the development and improvement of the academic program.
- Evidence of the correspondence between the organization, administration and management of the academic program, and the purposes of teaching, research, innovation or artistic and cultural creation, extension or social outreach and national and international cooperation in the program.
- Appraisal by professors and students assigned to the academic program, of the efficiency, effectiveness and orientation of the administrative processes towards the development of the educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension work of the academic program.
- Evidence of management structures, with the number of persons and the profile required to manage the academic program, both in the academic and administrative areas, to comply with the institutional mission.
- Evidence of legal and administrative controls to ensure the transparent management of resources.
- Evidence of the regular functioning of the academic program committee with student and professor representatives; and in the field of health, in postgraduate programs, in addition, with resident representatives.
- Evidence of the perception of the quality of administrative support provided by the academic program through professors, students and residents within the main training scenario.

CHARACTERISTIC 42. MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

"The academic program shall demonstrate leadership in its governance, with defined guidelines known by professors and students, which contribute to the administrative and academic dynamics. It shall also demonstrate the existence of clear processes, steps and procedures known by the academic community and stakeholders related to the academic program."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the coherence between the direction and management of the academic program, and the purposes of teaching, research, innovation or artistic and cultural creation, extension or social outreach and national and international cooperation, with guidelines defined by the members of the academic community of the program.
- Existence of management and administration policies for demonstrating the correlation between the administrative management and the students' academic guidelines.
- Evidence of the application of efficient mechanisms for the academic community to participate in the management of the academic program, and analysis of the impact of said participants, in accordance with the analysis of each management period, from the perspective of their representatives.
- Demonstration of the leadership, integrity and qualification of those responsible for the management of the academic program and its areas.
- Appraisal by professors and students of the quality of administrative support.
- Evidence, in the case of doctoral programs, of the existence and functions of the academic program's advisory or scientific committee.

- In the case of medical-surgical specialties, appraisal by the administrators of the main training scenario regarding the leadership and initiatives deployed by the academic program, which contribute to strengthening the hospital as an accredited or university hospital.

CHARACTERISTIC 43. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

"The academic program shall demonstrate that it has mechanisms in place to facilitate communication between all members of its community and established and accessible information systems, as part of the framework of data protection rights."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Demonstration of the impact of using relevant information and communication systems and channels on the management and improvement of the academic program.
- Demonstration of the impact of applying communication strategies and scenarios to facilitate the interaction of the institutional community.
- Evidence of the effectiveness of the duly updated institutional website to keep users informed about topics of institutional interest and to facilitate academic and administrative communication.
- Evidence of the application of mechanisms for document management, organization, updating and security of academic records and files of students, professors, management and administrative staff.
- Presentation of studies on professor and student assessment and satisfaction regarding the suitability and quality of the communication and information resources and systems mediated by information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the last five years.
- Presentation of statistics on the implementation of strategies that ensure the connectivity of members of the program's academic community, in accordance with the modality thereof.
- In the case of academic programs in the field of health and wellbeing, documentation of the records of participation in medical teaching activities as staff of the discipline, or academic meetings held in the training scenario by the academic program on a regular basis, demonstrating the participation of the program's core faculty and professionals in the main field of training.

CHARACTERISTIC 44. STUDENTS AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

"The academic program shall demonstrate that the total number of students enrolled is compatible with the institutional capacities in terms of human, technical, technological and financial resources, among others, necessary for the retention, academic development and graduation of the students."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of coherence between the institutional educational model or guidelines, the skills and learning objectives declared by the academic program and the institutional capacities in terms of human, technical, technological and financial resources, among others, for the retention, academic development and graduation of students.
- Evidence of the application of institutional policies to define the number of students admitted to the academic program, in accordance with the faculty and academic support resources available to ensure adequate support, so as to promote their performance and academic success.

- Appraisal by professors and students of the academic program with regard to the relationship between the number of admitted students, the number of professors or academic stakeholders associated with the different educational components, and other resources required in the modality offered by the institution.

- In the case of academic programs in the field of health, evidence of long-term teaching-service agreements with accredited health care institutions or university hospitals, and the inter-institutional dynamics therein denoting balance and reciprocity.

CHARACTERISTIC 45. FINANCING OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

"The academic program shall demonstrate that it has the financial resources for its operation and investment, in accordance with the level of education and modality thereof, as well as the legal nature of the institution and its identity, mission, type, and context."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the coherence between the fulfillment of the educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension tasks of the academic program, its investment and continuous improvement plans and the financial resources that back them.

- Evidence of applying follow-up and verification mechanisms for the budgetary execution of the academic program, based on improvement and maintenance plans in the last five years.

- Evidence of the allocation and distribution of the budget in the last five years, for teaching, research, artistic and cultural creation, social outreach, institutional wellbeing and internationalization activities, which are directly or indirectly reflected in the academic program.

- Presentation of the programming and execution of the investment and operating budget of the academic program and control mechanisms.

- In the case of academic programs in the field of health and wellbeing, demonstration of the impact, in economic terms, on the academic program as a result of the medical teaching actions carried out by professors and residents in the main training scenario.

CHARACTERISTIC 46. ASSURANCE OF HIGH QUALITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

"The academic program shall demonstrate that it has a culture of continuous improvement, that it applies criteria and procedures for the periodic and participatory assessment of its strategies, processes and learning outcomes, and that it formulates and develops its objectives, plans and projects, in accordance with the level of education and modality thereof."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Existence of a quality culture that applies clear criteria and procedures for the periodic assessment of the objectives, processes and achievements of the academic program, for its continuous improvement and innovation. This is done with the participation of professors, students, graduates and employers, considering the applicability and social relevance of the academic program.

- Existence and consolidation of an internal quality assurance system to demonstrate the achievements in training, research, social outreach and internationalization, in accordance with the level of education of the

academic program, and the actual practice of periodic self-assessment processes leading to improvements in the program.

- Evidence of the degree of participation of professors, students, directors, and technical and administrative staff in the improvement processes.

- In the case of academic programs in the field of health and wellbeing, evidence of periodic assessment of the functioning of the current teaching-service agreement with the main training scenario and other specific educational scenarios.

FACTOR 12. PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

A high quality academic program is recognized, based on its tradition and culture of continuous improvement and the philosophical, pedagogical and organizational purposes that identify its academic community, for having the resources required to fulfill its education project, in line with its objectives and in accordance with the level of education and modality thereof.

CHARACTERISTIC 47. PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE RESOURCES

"The academic program shall demonstrate that it has, among others, physical spaces, classrooms, laboratories, workshops, simulation centers, technological platforms, library and study halls, for the fulfillment of its educational, academic, teaching, scientific and cultural activities, in accordance with its objectives, the level of education and the modality thereof."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the coherence between infrastructure resources and the needs for the development and fulfillment of the educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension activities of the academic program.

- Demonstration of the existence of classrooms, laboratories, workshops, simulation centers, technological platforms, a library and study rooms, for the fulfillment of educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension tasks, in accordance with the objectives of the academic program, its level of education and modality.

- Evidence of spaces actually used for carrying out each of the educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension activities of the academic program and of the areas used for institutional wellbeing.

- Existence of plans and projects underway for the conservation, expansion, improvement and maintenance of the facilities of the academic program, in accordance with the respective technical standards.

- Demonstration of capacity, compliance with technical standards, adequacy, safety, sanitation, lighting, availability of space, equipment, transportation facilities and access to recreational and sports areas. Projection for use by persons with physical limitations.

- For professional technical, technological and university professional programs

- Demonstration of the coherence between the availability of physical and technological infrastructure resources and the number of students in the academic program and the educational activities defined in the curriculum. In view of the fact that the foregoing items change over time, the academic program shows evidence of the adjustments made to the infrastructure as a result of the continuous improvement processes.

For medical-surgical specialties

- Demonstration of the existence and effective use of professors' offices in the main training scenario and the training scenarios referenced in the self-assessment, as well as meeting rooms, classrooms with audiovisual equipment, technological devices for teaching support and Internet connection.

- Presentation of the actions and measures aimed at solving the deficiencies, deterioration, outdatedness and insufficiency of scientific, technological and locative resources identified in the main training scenario and other scenarios as a result of the self-assessment, that impact the high quality education of the residents.

- Evidence of actions aimed at preventing biological and occupational health risks, by implementing protective measures among residents in clinical and surgical internships in the training scenarios.

For doctoral programs

- Demonstration of the coherence between the availability of physical and technological infrastructure resources and the number of students in the academic program and the educational activities defined in the curriculum. In view of the fact that the foregoing items change over time, the program shows evidence of the adjustments made to the infrastructure as a result of the continuous improvement processes.

CHARACTERISTIC 48. IT AND COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

"The academic program shall demonstrate that it has up-to-date IT platforms and computer and telecommunications equipment (licensed hardware and software) suitable for the design and production of content, the implementation of pedagogical strategies and the continuous support and follow-up of the students' academic activities, in accordance with the level of education and modality thereof."

Aspects to be assessed:

- Evidence of the coherence between IT and communication resources and the needs for the development and fulfillment of the educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension activities of the academic program.

- Evidence of the coherence between technological-pedagogical resources and the needs for the development and fulfillment of the educational, academic, teaching, scientific, cultural and extension activities of the academic program.

- Evidence of the data architecture of up-to-date information systems associated with the academic program (information systems, databases, platforms, digital resources, hardware and licensed software) suitable for the design and production of content, the implementation of pedagogical strategies and the continuous support and follow-up of students' academic activities, in accordance with the level of training and modality thereof.

- Evidence of the resources and tools for conducting assessment tests where the student is located and that can be monitored and supervised from different locations through the use of telematic resources (proctoring) and security to ensure the integrity, reliability and accessibility of the academic information.

- For virtual and distance learning academic programs: a) Evidence of the existence of a technological platform that offers the necessary spaces and resources to carry out curricular activities in compliance with the educational objectives. b) Evidence of connectivity, interactivity and access to information systems, support and resources for learning, without restriction as to mode, time or place.

- Appraisal by directors, professors and students of the academic program on the relevance, coherence and sufficiency of the IT and communication resources available to the academic program.

- In the case of academic programs in the field of health and wellbeing, evidence of the mechanisms established and their functioning to ensure the support and follow-up of students and residents performing their medical teaching work in the training scenarios and regular, efficient communication with those responsible for academic coordination on behalf of the training scenario.

13. CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS WITH EDUCATIONAL TRAINING IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE TEACHING-SERVICE RELATIONSHIP

In accordance with Article 50 of CESU Agreement 02/July 1, 2020 and Article 2.5.3.2.9.2. of Decree 1075/2015, academic programs that offer educational training carried out in the framework of the teaching-service relationship, must submit, along with their self-assessment report, evidence of either of these two actions:

- Having submitted a request, which is currently being processed, for modification in the Higher Education Quality Assurance System (SACES), in order to update the program's teaching-service relationship.

- Having received, in the form of an administrative act issued by the Ministry of National Education, through a procedure associated with a qualification certification (first time, renewal or modification), the authorization of the teaching-service relationship of the program and that the conditions regarding which such authorization was granted have not changed. Additionally, a commitment must be submitted to carry out the necessary modification process(es) before the Ministry of National Education while the high quality accreditation procedure is underway when the conditions based on which the teaching-service-teaching relationship was authorized change.

CNA

Republic of Colombia

National Accreditation Council

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