

EDITORIAL

QUALITY AS A GUIDE TO PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT AT UNIVERSIDAD LIBRE, CARTAGENA

According to the Real Academia Española (RAE), quality is a property or group or properties that are inherent to something that judges its value. The concept of quality applied to the Institutions of Higher Education, alludes to an attribute of public service of education in general, and particularly to the way how this service is provided according to the type of institution. In this sense, the quality of higher education supposes a continuous effort of the institutions to meet the demands of each one of the substantive functions: teaching, research and social outreach.

The concept of quality in the education service in Colombia is oriented towards the models of accreditation, certification, quality assurance, through actions that lead to the evaluation of the IES aiming to obtaining the official registration (essential to offer academic programs) and the institutional or programs accreditation, this is, the seal granted by an evaluating assessor, who determines if the criteria that merit a distinction have been met, in this case, of the highest quality.

In Colombia there are 288 higher education institutions, out of which only 27 enjoy institutional accreditation; that is, 9.37%. Regarding the accreditation of academic

The accreditation systems evaluate the institutions or the program in relation to its own processes and a number of standards, and therefore, they can provide public guarantee of their quality, i.e the capacity to observe the internal requirements (purposes), and external ones (standards).

Currently Universidad Libre has been making activities in order to obtain the institutional accreditation, promoting quality as an ongoing process that leads its evaluation. Thus, quality is determined by the achievement of the goals, by the capacity of self assesment, by the appropriateness of its institutional mission's postulates, goals, and the Educational Project (PEI). This series of activities becomes a proper venue for the creation of a self assesment process that guarantees quality and improvement of the academic processes.

This way, the need to be accountable for its quality and being under the scrutiny of an accrediting organization that considers the appropriateness, profile of the graduate students, the results thrown from the set goals, the way we make way into the social context, and the resources that guarantee the achievement of our goals, has brought upon positive changes by operating with the resources that allow to satisfy the requirements of the set profile. In this case, it becomes more real for the students community and the staff through the academic exchange of students, professors taking doctorate and masters courses, access to learning a new language. All in all, the effects of

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the process of quality that our site leads, will benefit not only our students but also all the staff involved in this process.

The challenge for the development of our institution, which is committed to quality as the final destination, is not easy. Hard decisions must be made in this changing process of implementation of a new culture adapted to the requirements of the XXI century, but that will contribute to the formation of better professionals capable of transforming our country.

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