



**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA**

*La Universidad Católica de Loja*



**MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA**

**SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS OF THE DISTANCE HIGHER  
EDUCATION PROGRAMS BASED ON THE “VIRTUAL CENTER  
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY STANDARDS FOR DISTANCE  
HIGHER EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN”  
PROJECT**

**FIRST DOCUMENT**

**INTRODUCTORY DOCUMENT**

**(Standards, Indicators, Instruments and Assessment)**

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## INTRODUCTION

This work has been done based on the quality standards created for the project “Virtual Center for Development of Quality Standards for Distance Higher Education in Latin America and The Caribbean”. These standards are in the book “Memoria” (2003) (Proceedings) and on the website: [www.utpl.edu.ec](http://www.utpl.edu.ec), link “Centro Virtual de Estándares de Calidad” (Virtual Center of Quality Standards). This project was sponsored by the “Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo” (BID) with the participation of the “Consortio de Red de Educación a Distancia” (CREAD), the “Asociación Iberoamericana de Educación a Distancia” (AIESAD). The project was carried out by the “Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja”.

These standards have already been assessed by professionals from different institutions which are interested in the subject by using a database that is on the previously mentioned website. An example of the results of the assessment of Criterion 1 during the pilot test can be observed in Annex 1.

This project was motivated by the need to rely on a self-evaluation system which is able to provide information for the continuous improvement of Distance Education programs, something which interests us since nowadays educational quality is a requirement of society.

Also due to this need, the project “Virtual Center for Development of Quality Standards for Distance Higher Education in Latin America and The Caribbean” emerged. Many national and international institutions are interested in this project, including the following:

Consejo Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación (CONEA), Ecuador

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú

Universidad Tecnológica Metropolitana (UTEM) Chile: “Primer Encuentro Internacional de Expertos en Educación a Distancia” Event, link Chile 2004

Universidad Católica del Norte de Chile which is applying a self-evaluation with these standards.

Furthermore, there have been opportunities for discussing Distance Education at different events. This project has been presented at the following events:

- ↪ VI Congreso de Educación a Distancia MERCOSUR “Tendencias de la Educación a Distancia en medio de la revolución Informática” (Chile, 2002).
- ↪ “XI Congreso Internacional sobre Tecnología y Educación a Distancia” (UNED-Costa Rica, 2002).
- ↪ “X Congreso Iberoamericano de Educación Superior a Distancia” (Costa Rica, 2003).

- ↪ “Seminario Internacional sobre Universidades Virtuales en América Latina y el Caribe”. IESALC-UNESCO (Ecuador, 2003).
- ↪ Seminario Internacional “La otra educación – pedagogía alternativa para el Tercer Milenio” (Ecuador, 2003).
- ↪ II Encuentro de Reflexión Pedagógica a Nivel Superior. ¿Fin del academicismo? Por una educación participativa y renovadora. (Ecuador, 2003).
- ↪ IV Conferencia Internacional sobre Educación, Formación y Nuevas Tecnologías. “Virtual Educa 2003”(Miami, 2003).
- ↪ Tecnología de Información y Comunicación y Educación a Distancia, “Desafíos en el Desarrollo de América Latina” (Dominican Republic, 2003).
- ↪ V Encuentro Internacional sobre Educación, Capacitación Profesional y Tecnologías de la Información, Virtual Educa 2004 (Barcelona, July 2004)
- ↪ Seminario Internacional sobre Educación a Distancia - Santa Cruz de la Sierra, (Bolivia, July 2004)
- ↪ VI Encuentro Internacional de Educación Superior UNAM - Virtual Educa (México 2005), y XI Encuentro de la Asociación Iberoamericana de Educación Superior a Distancia (July 2005)
- ↪ “Las nuevas fronteras de la Educación a Distancia (ICDE) (Puerto Rico, August 2005)

We have begun to apply the project standards to the process of self-evaluation in our Accounting major.

Measurement instruments have been produced for each criterion. These instruments are shown in the 9 working papers that UTPL presents.

In this introductory document, first, we will show the foundations of the project “Centro Virtual” (Virtual Center) and second, the basic guidelines for self-evaluation and the process to be followed in the other 9 documents.

## **1. “VIRTUAL CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY STANDARDS FOR DISTANCE HIGHER EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN” PROJECT.**

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT**

The general objective of the project was the development of the basis for an accreditation system and quality standards for distance higher education programs in Latin America and the Caribbean (Virtual Center), and carrying out a preliminary assessment of this basis through studies and pilot tests.

The specific objectives were the following:

-To promote the idea that higher education institutions can successfully improve, carry out and manage distance education programs based on information technology, and

-To contribute to the capacity of governments to regulate, assess and accredit their distance education programs.

## **1.2. GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT**

POTENCIAL MARCO REGULADOR: Potential Regulator Framework

EQUIPO EXPERTOS: Experts Team

DOCUMENTOS: Documents

RETROALIMENTACIÓN: Feedback

CONSULTAS: Consultation

REUNIÓN TÉCNICA: Technical Meeting

DESARROLLO DE LAS BASES DE ESTÁNDARES DE CALIDAD: Development of the criterion for quality standards

NECESIDAD DE APLICACIÓN: Need for application

MUESTRA REPRESENTATIVA: Representative sample

DEMANDA Y BENEFICIOS DE ESTÁNDARES: Demand and benefits of standards

C. COORDINADOR: Steering Committee

G. ACADÉMICO: Academic Group

G. ESPECIALISTAS: Group of Specialists

(chart pgs. 9 and 10)

EQUIPO SISTEMA COMUNICACIÓN: Communication System Team

CENTRO VIRTUAL: Virtual Center

COMPARACIONES: Comparisons

DISCUSIONES INTERACTIVAS: Interactive Discussions

RETROALIMENTACIÓN: Feedback

PRUEBA PILOTO 4 INSTITUCIONES E. SUPERIOR: Pilot Test. 4 institutions of higher education

CENTRO VIRTUAL A DISPOSICIÓN: Available Virtual Center

## **BASIS OF A SYSTEM OF QUALITY STANDARDS**

A team of experts analyzed a representative sample of the of distance higher education courses that are presently available in Latin America and the Caribbean. They focused on university level distance education quality standards, technological infrastructure, scope and the content of national and international courses offered. They also focused on improving systems of distance learning support and logistics of the courses. They also analyzed the needs and the benefits of a system of quality standards for universities and institutions in the public and private sectors of the region.

Based on this analysis and through the elaboration of a working paper, the team of experts proposed specific standards through which distance courses (traditional and virtual) in Latin America and the Caribbean will be evaluated. Similarly, a potential regulating frame was proposed for offering international virtual courses with the purpose of ensuring quality

on-line education for Latin America and the Caribbean (the participating organizations decided that this document would be added to the standards).

The document of standards introduced by the team of experts has been analyzed by the members of the steering committee (Executive directions of UTPL, CREAD and AIESAD), a team that was selected by the steering committee which is made up of qualified professors (“Academic Group”) from specialized institutions and international specialists in the subject through electronic communications.

The working paper was reviewed during the technical meeting about standards described below.

**WORK MEETING:** The purpose of this meeting was to improve and ensure support for the evaluation model. During the meeting, the model was reviewed and consolidated and the content of the working paper was discussed. Modifications were suggested and the paper was approved for later publication. Most of the discussions were focused on the quality standards proposed in the working paper that was reviewed. These quality standards were the motivation for later on-line interchange among specialists in distance education from Latin America and the Caribbean. These interactions resulted in modifications of the initially proposed standards.

## **Concerns Raised in the Work Meeting**

Some aspects that distance education universities from Latin America and the Caribbean were concerned about were discussed:

In different countries there are different evaluation and accreditation policies, in some more advanced than in others, but all the institutions are moving towards improving their evaluation and accreditation policies.

It was agreed that there is a need for ensuring the quality of education; however this should be done using a different methodology than the current ones being applied. Consequently, common criteria for measurement of distance education quality will have to be established.

It has been suggested in international reports that universities use different systems for the same types of courses. Therefore the differences between distance and on-campus education are disappearing. We are seeing that the system once considered as second-class, is today socially appealing not only for universities devoted to social labor but for important universities worldwide which have become attracted to virtual education through the Internet.

There is no doubt that we are in an internationalization process of higher education and this means that most of the universities are going to participate at an international level. It implies that we have to know what quality levels we are managing as a group, a continent or inside each country.

Every university that has seriously adopted a distance education system obtains benefits from the required quality levels.

The group of experts stated that “We are in an important position: we can work at a university and specialist level and there is still time to work, but we must consider what quality distance education is. The principal focus of the project is to be capable of starting to define and talk about what we consider acceptable minimum standards to work in this system with mutual trust.”

One of the problems of the definition of acceptable minimum standards is that there is no common language when we talk about standards. For this reason, it is important to reach an agreement. The standards model proposed has given elements for thought and debate.

According to the opinion of experts, adopting a quality management model gives a rational meaning to the organization of all the standards. Three points are considered:

1. This is simply a proposal, but it offers an important contribution to the subject.
2. This is an excessively ambitious proposal and therefore it is easy to eliminate what is not of interest and to extract a simplified version.
3. It is a provisional proposal that has been made with criteria, standards and indicators that require measurement and evaluation instruments that will be developed in a predictable second stage of the project.

Taking into account that the term “standard” can be very confusing, we have chosen to define it in the following way: a general measurement of quality. The need for including not only the suggestions on the topic but also a glossary that allows for understanding of the proposal has been determined.

#### **1.4.CREATION OF THE PROTOTYPE OF A COMMUNICATION SYSTEM**

The technical needs for the use of standards in the context of institutions and specific programs in Latin America and the Caribbean were identified. Based on these needs an on-line communication system was created. This is aimed at enabling the use of the evaluation model by users such as universities, educational authorities and researchers.

A team was formed to develop communication instruments and to design a database that permits users to compare any proposed standards, to analyze the justification for the inclusion of standards, and to analyze them by organizing them in different ways. This way the educational leaders of a country or institution could investigate how professors in their country categorize the standards added to the evaluation model. They will be able to comparatively evaluate these results with those produced by institutions or professors from other countries and to make several kinds of contrasts between the features of their distance education programs and the quality standards. This database system took into account models with similar purposes that have already been applied in the United States and Europe.

This communication system provides on-line formats (for comparisons and data capture) and “interactive discussions” that allows users to share important comments for the use and enrichment of the evaluation model.

A test was carried out to check if the system was operational, and if it could be implemented in four higher education institutions with prior experience offering distance

higher education courses. During this time, the technician in charge analyzed the feedback received about the use of the system and the suggestions to extend it or review it. Finally, the final version was presented to the institutions, governments and professors in the field of distance education via the public website <http://www.utpl.edu.ec/centrovirtual> .

## **1.5.METHODOLOGY**

The methodology used to develop quality standards is the following:

- a) To choose a definition of quality
- b) To consider general objectives
- c) To choose a quality management model
- d) To deploy the model

### **a. To choose a definition of quality**

From the different definitions of quality the one established by the Organización Internacional de Normalización or ISO for short (International Organization for Standardization) in its standard ISO 9000:2000 it is stated that quality is the “extent to which a group of inherent features comply with the requirements”. In turn, the term “requirement” is defined as “an established need or expectation that is generally implicit or obligatory.” All of this connects to the adopted definition of standard: “Level or extent that is necessary for something to be considered acceptable” (Díaz, 2001).

Notwithstanding and according to Juran (2001), from the many meanings of the word “quality”, there are two essential ones:

1. Quality means those features of the product that fit the needs of the customer and consequently, the customer is satisfied.
2. Quality means the absence of deficiencies: absence of mistakes that require redoing the work or that results in failure in operation, dissatisfaction of the customer, complaints, etc. In this sense, quality in reference to costs.

The considerations of Juran about the quality of a product can be extended to a service and consequently to a distance program. Furthermore, it implies that, in addition to a framework for the requirements of quality, a framework for the management of the program needs to be considered. In other words, it is not our intention to take an economic approach. However, the development of a high quality program has no reason to exclude the good management of resources by the staff involved.

### **b. To consider general objectives**

General objectives have to be defined similarly as in the commercial field. These objectives are: reduction of costs, improvement of quality, customer service, increase of flexibility and meeting the deadlines (Machuca et al., 1995). These general objectives are relevant at the strategic, tactical and operative levels.

**Reduction of costs:** This is achieved through the improvement of the use of resources and making investments that improve the technology used. Consequently, an increase in efficiency is intended, that is to say, desired results are obtained with fewer resources.

**Improvement of quality:** This is considered to be a continuous improvement of a recurring activity to increase the capacity to comply with the requirements (ISO 9000, 2000).

**Increase of flexibility:** Improvements of the institution's ability to respond to any external or internal change.

**Meeting deadlines:** Delivering work on time and reducing the time needed to finish projects, among other time reduction priorities, such as the delivery of didactic material in distance higher education.

**Customer service:** It must be of high quality, in this is a way an institution can achieve a competitive advantage through differentiation.

The following dimensions of the quality of service must also be taken into account. (Parasuram, Zeithalm, Berry, 1985):

**Tangible elements:** Appearance and condition of facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials.

**Reliability:** Ability to provide the promised service in a reliable, safe and careful way. This means to provide the service correctly from the beginning.

**Response capability:** The ability to support customers and provide fast service. It includes meeting deadlines and fulfilling promises.

**Professionalism:** Having the required skills and knowledge to provide the service.

**Courtesy:** Attention, consideration, respect and kindness of the personnel.

**Credibility:** Honesty and ethics in the provided service.

**Confidence:** Customer belief that problems are in good hands. Absence of doubts.

**Accessibility:** Accessible and easy to contact.

**Communication:** To keep customers informed using a language that they can understand. Listening to their feedback.

**Understanding the customer:** To make the effort to know customers and their needs.

**c) To choose a quality management model**

For the process of definition of quality standards, three options have been analyzed:

- Development of standards within a management quality model
- Development of standards within the guidelines of the entitlements or majors elaborated by the pertinent organizations of every country
- Development of standards, starting from methodologies such as QFD (Quality Function Deployment) or la “Casa de la Calidad” (House of Quality), which is a procedure defined by Akao . It is structured and disciplined and provides a way to translate the request of the customer into requirements of the service or quality features through a series of stages in which all the areas in an organization participate.

Additionally, classic subsystems in distance education have been considered. Due to the indissoluble association between “standard” and “quality”, we have looked for tools that allow us to develop a structure that includes both classic and contemporary elements.

As a consequence of the possibility of using different methodologies, such as the QFD, in a quality management model and also the acceptance of other models at an international level, the “Development of Quality Standards for Distance Higher Education” has been chosen.

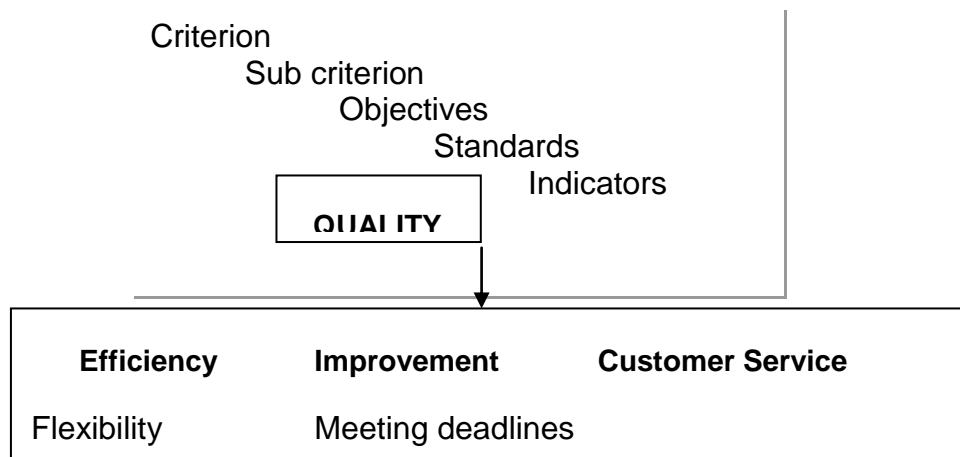
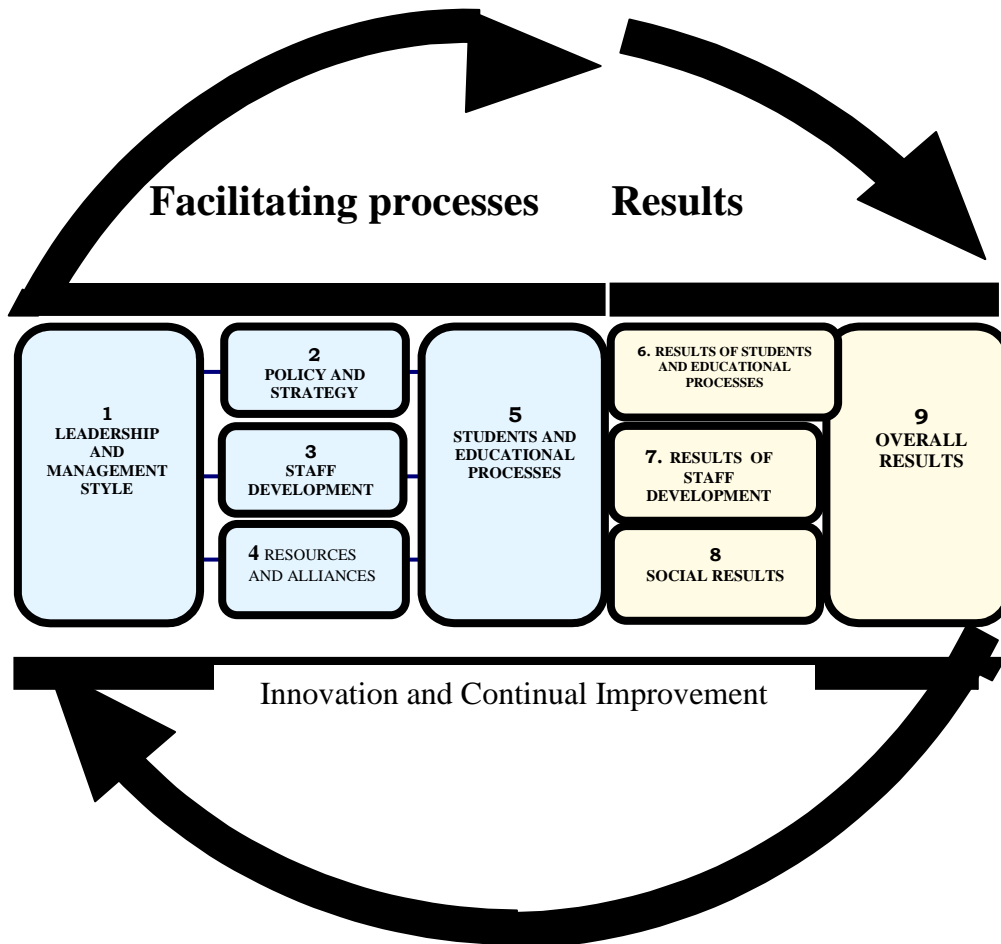
The evaluation guidelines developed in Spain by the University Management Council, which is an organization subordinate to the Education, Culture and Sports Ministry, have taken into account the above mentioned models. In fact, the document “Guía de Evaluación para Servicios” (Guide of Evaluation for Services) has been written based on the European Model for Business Excellence proposed by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). These diverse methodologies have served as a reference for the determination of the management of quality based on what is commonly called “Total Quality”. This “Total Quality” is in accordance with the characteristics of an organization.

Furthermore, the Ibero American Foundation for Quality Management (FUNDIBQ) has approved the Ibero American Model which is similar to the European one. This new model has been adapted to educational institutions so that it could be applicable in universities, elementary schools and high schools. (Consejo de Coordinación Universitaria, 2002).

If the definition of standards are included in a management system, then the European models of excellence (EFQM – European Foundation for Quality Management) and the American ones (Malcolm Baldrige) have been dismissed because their areas of influence do not include all the countries involved in this project. For this reason, the Ibero American Model for Management Excellence: Interpretation for Education has been carefully analyzed and, because of its adaptation to the educational field, the proposed model is distinct, keeping the basic structure of the previous one. The denomination of criteria/epigraphs, their definition and the content have been modified to reflect the reality of distance higher education.

The focus in a Model of Excellence, although in its early stages in distance education, is on the fact that there is sufficient information in the educational field to lead us to think about a progressive implementation, similar to one that occurred years ago, from the industrial world to the services world.

## Presentation of the Model



## **Figure 1**

### **d) Model Deployment**

Stages in its development:

Selection of criteria and sub criteria

Definition of objectives

Determination of standards

Elaboration of indicators

The selected criteria established in the Models of Excellence, grouped together in “Facilitating Processes and Results”, are as follows:

#### ***FACILITATING PROCESSES***

1. Leadership and Management Style
2. Policy and Strategy
3. Staff Development
4. Resources and Alliances
5. Students and Educational Processes

#### ***RESULTS***

6. Results of the Students and Educational Processes
7. Results of Human Resources Development
8. Social Results
9. Overall Results

The criteria called “Results” expresses WHAT is being achieved through the application of the “Facilitating Processes” criteria which indicates HOW the different activities related to management and contributing to excellence are approached. The criteria are not presented in any hierarchical order. In fact, it is common for Models of Excellence to give a different score to each criterion and, in a process of self-evaluation each institution can give a score according to the importance given to each criterion.

The subdivision between the two types of criteria: “Facilitating processes” and “Results” does not imply that an independent study is needed of each one separately because the emphasis is on the interrelationship between the two. These criteria are divided in sub-criteria, objectives, standards and indicators as shown in Figure 2:

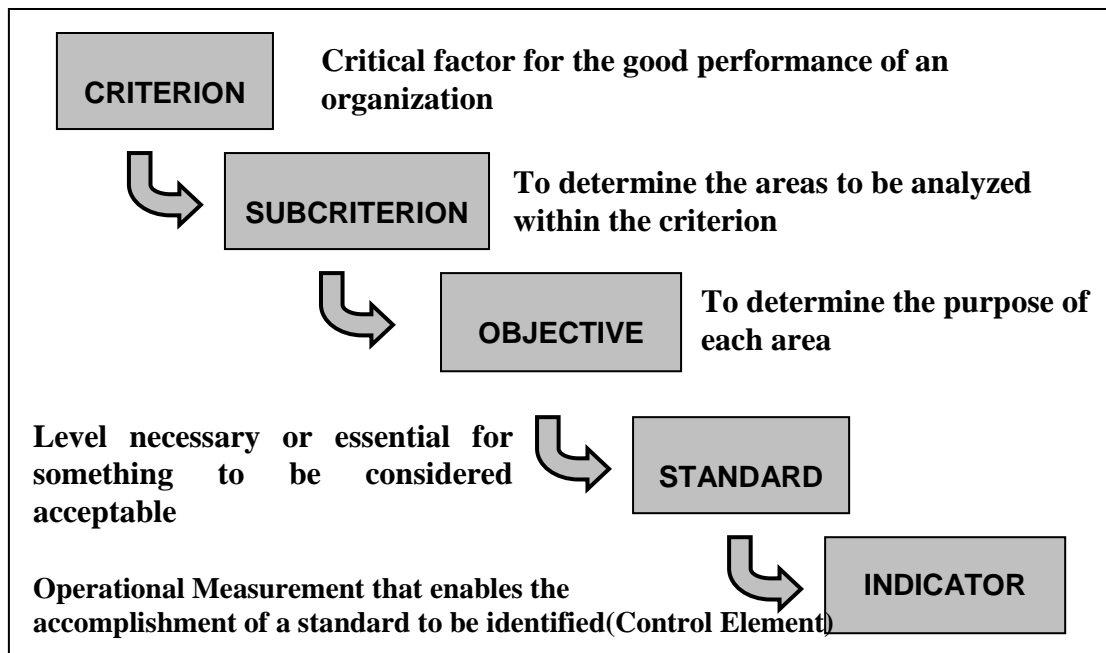


Figure 2. Criterion Deployment

While criteria determine a general framework, sub-criteria permit the areas to be analyzed within them to be demarcated. The objectives reaffirm the purpose of the study in each area. For each one of the areas and for achieving the proposed objectives, a minimum quality level (standard) is established which can be measured with the indicators. This structure is maintained throughout the nine criteria.

The “Results” criteria ( 6, 7 and 8) have been grouped in two ample sub-criteria: measures of perception and measures of performance. Criterion 9, “Overall Results”, shows quality improvements obtained and it is the essential element that provides feedback for all of the criteria.

The standards have been written using two types of prose: one in which the writer uses the active voice and the other in which the writer uses the passive voice. The active voice is used in those criteria or sub-criteria in which the people responsible for the application of the standards explicitly appear. On the other hand, the passive voice is used in those criteria or sub-criteria where the responsible parties are not explicitly identified.

The indicators have been written as study results in order to avoid the creation of a larger number of levels and to make the elaboration of data collection instruments easy.

## **PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS**

### **Sponsoring Institution:**

Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID)

### **Executing Institution:**

Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja (UTPL)

### **Steering Committee**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Country</b>
1.	Dra. Dña. Araceli Maciá Antón	President of the "Asociación Iberoamericana de Educación Superior a Distancia"	Spain
2.	Dr. D. Gustavo Luis Carrera	President of the "Consortio Red de Educación a Distancia" (CREAD)	USA
3.	Dr. C. Luis Miguel Romero	Rector-Chancellor of the "Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja"	Ecuador

### **Representatives**

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1.	Dr. D. Juan Manuel Moreno	Secretary of the AIESAD	Spain
2.	Dr. D. Armando Villarroel	Chief Executive of CREAD	USA
3.	Dra. María José Rubio Gómez	General Director of the "Modalidad Abierta y a Distancia" (UTPL)	Ecuador

### **Committee of experts**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Country</b>
1.	Alejandro Tiana Ferrer	UNED	Spain
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## Academic Group

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6.	Humberto Guerrero	Universidad Nacional y a Distancia (UNAD)	Colombia
7.	Badri Koul	University of the West Indies (UWI)	Jamaica
8.	Reynaldo Martínez	Oklahoma State University	USA
9.	Radhamés Mejía	Pontificia Universidad Madre y Maestra (PUCMM)	Dominican Republic
10.	María Beatriz Rossa	Instituto Universitario Aeronáutico (IUA)	Argentina
11.	Walter Santander	Universidad Católica del Norte (UCN)	Chile
12.	Nalve Mireya Zambrano	Universidad Nacional Abierta (UNA)	Venezuela

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No.	Name	Institution	Country
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2.	Carmen Carpio	World Bank	USA
3.	Magdalena Cruz	Universidad Abierta para Adultos (UAPA)	Dominican Republic
4.	Baudouin Duquesne	Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID)	Ecuador
5.	Patricia Gudiño	Colegio de las Américas (COLAM) Univ. Montreal	Canada
6.	Mónica Luque	Agencia Interamericana para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo (IACD/OEA)	Argentina
7.	Mauricio Olavaria	Universidad de Chile (World Bank)	Chile
8.	Martha Solano	Pontificia Universidad Javeriana	Colombia

## General Considerations

Quality standards and their associated indicators, since they are included in a model of excellence, assume not only the intrinsic characteristics of an educational program, but the other characteristics that contribute to its organization and management, and can have an effect on the perception that potential students have about the program.

For this reason, aspects of the institutions where quality standards are applied have been considered, since their reliability can directly contribute to the program. However, this document does not focus on institutional evaluation.

The moment it is applied, the developed model permits its modular application without the need to use all the criteria. The criteria chosen will depend on what each institution considers most important.<sup>3</sup> The current work is focused on an evaluation by programs. We define a program as being a major or course that can result in a degree or title.

The work acquires a higher degree of precision once the sub-criteria have been determined and each has been assigned one the corresponding specific objectives. Through these objectives, required quality levels or standards and the variables and indicators that allow its measure have been determined. Notwithstanding, it is important to mention that, in a strict sense, we have assigned a degree of quantitative accomplishment to each standard.

Also, we can see that the established indicators are abundant, even though they have attempted to be representative of the wholeness of the context. Therefore, it would be appropriate that each institution choose those most suitable for their needs and institutional culture.

The model is made up of: 9 criteria, 30 sub-criteria, 80 objectives, 227 standards and 413 indicators.

The Ibero American model has been used as a reference for the structure of the development of the standards, but the score assigned to each criterion has not been used. Instead, different models have been used with regards to score assignment. These are as follows:

No.	CRITERIA	Virtual Center/ UTPL	EFQM	IBERO AMERICAN	MALCOLM BALDRIGE
1.	Leadership and Management Style	120	100	140	125 (1)
2.	Policy and Strategy	85	80	100	85 (2)
3.	Human Resources Development	105	90	140	85 (5)
4.	Resources and Alliances	90	90	100	85 (4)
5.	Students and Educational Processes	150	140	120	85 (3) 85 (6)
6.	Results of the Students and Educational Processes	130	90	110	200 (7.1)
7.	Results of Human Resources Development	120	200	90	70 (7.4)
8.	Social Results	70	60	90	70 (7.2)
9.	Overall Results	130	150	110	70 (7.5) 40 (7.3)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1000</b>

These values are to be used as a reference when it is time to assign a score to each sub criterion and standard. Although, we include an example, we believe that each institution must assign scores as appropriate for each criterion, sub-criterion and standard.

We think it is important that the general assessment of the criterion is respected. However, the evaluation of sub criteria and standards could change according to the importance given by the institution.

#### 4. PROGRESS OF THE PROJECT

The evaluation team of the Distance Learning System of UTPL is composed of: María José Rubio, Ruth Aguilar, Judith Maldonado, Priscilla Massa and Iliana Ramírez. They are

analyzing standards and indicators and they have designed techniques and evaluation instruments which are essential for the development of the evaluation process.

### **Preparation of the evaluation process**

For the process of self-evaluation some methodological aspects proposed by the Project Alfa-Rueda<sup>4</sup> for the Evaluation of Distance Education Programs have been considered:

## **STAGE 1: PREPARATION OF THE SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS**

### **1. Policies**

The institution will have to define the macro-policies of self-evaluation, for example, how often the self-evaluation of the programs will be done.

### **2. Sensitization**

The managers of the program will organize information and sensitization meetings to explain the model and the sense of evaluation. In these meetings it is imperative to mention that the evaluation process is aimed toward improvement.

### **3. Conformation of work teams**

The managers of the program will designate a group of people who will be in charge of the coordination and execution of the self-evaluation process. In this stage, the organization strategy and execution of the process are defined with the purpose of applying the model and contributing to the documentation that reports the results.

### **4. Training**

Once the work teams are conformed, several meetings for critical and reflexive analysis of the working paper are organized with the purpose of understanding the criteria, sub-criteria, standards and indicators which are considered relevant for the evaluation of the program. Furthermore the analysis of the approach of the evaluation is done, thus, being clearer about the meaning and scope of the criteria to be evaluated.

### **5. Design of techniques and instruments**

The evaluation team, with the purpose of gathering information about the evaluation process, will design the instruments that they consider necessary such as: survey/questionnaire, interview/guide and observation/guide. Some models have been proposed in the development of each one of the **working documents** that we present.

## **STAGE 2: INFORMATION GATHERING**

### **1. Elaboration of the self-evaluation record: search for and collection of information**

The evaluation team will have to collect appropriate information for each criterion and sub criterion which will be the foundation of the evaluation. This team will organize suitable information with its corresponding record.

Every file will have an index of the information that it contains and references of the sources of information where the documents and/or backup can be identified, with their codification.

As a complement for the collected information in the application of the instrument, it is recommended that the institution consider the “proposed score” or that it assigns the values it considers appropriate for each one of the criterion, sub criterion and standard, in accord with its mission, vision and purposes.

## **2. Development of the Self-evaluation Process**

Once information is collected, the committee will have a meeting to analyze it, taking into account each criterion, sub criterion and standard.

The result by criterion, sub criterion and standard will have to be quantified according to the corresponding scale.

Since the model shows a tentative list of indicators, those which have been considered in the process will have to be specified.

As a result of the criteria analysis, a protocol that describes the process will be established followed by the committee and the result in terms of:

- Qualitative and quantitative conclusions
- Identification of strengths and weaknesses
- Improvements proposed

This protocol should be signed by the members of the committee and a descriptive document will be added. This document will show the state of development of the criterion regarding its conception, planning, execution, results and evaluation as well as the definition of some of proposed improvements.

This process will be done for each one of the criterion. Once this self-evaluation process applied to the nine criteria is finished, a final report will be elaborated.

## **7. INSTRUMENTS FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE QUALITY STANDARDS MODEL**

### **Self-Evaluation Record**

The self-evaluation record (Annex 1) is made for each one of the nine criteria and contains the following aspects:

- Standard
  - Indicator
  - Actors/informants
  - Source/data
  - Place/Departments
  - Techniques/instruments
  - Code
  - Assessment Scale
  - Suggestions and/or improvement proposals
- In the first column, **standards**, the numeration is the same as in “Memoria”, which is in the database found on the project website, “ Virtual Center for the Development of Quality Standards for Distance Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean”.
  - In the second column **indicators** have been developed for each standard. These could be increased or eliminated according to the needs of the institutions. The indicators are numbered beginning with “1” in each criterion and they are represented as follows: [1], [2], etc.
  - In the third column: **informants**, the institutions will have to decide which informants can contribute to the self-evaluation process. The commission (team, committee) of evaluation will be responsible of the Result Report.
  - The fourth column is **source/data**. It indicates the name of the document(s) which contain the necessary information.
  - The fifth column, **Place/Department**, indicates the location of the documents.
  - The sixth column, **techniques and instruments**, will be used in the self-evaluation process and is designed according to the requirements of standards and indicators. These instruments will have to be validated before their definitive application.

The techniques and instruments that can be used are the following:

<b>TECHNIQUES</b>	<b>INSTRUMENTS</b>
Observation	Observation Record
Interview	Guide for interviews
Survey	Questionnaire
Workshop (focal)	Guide-Workshop
	Result Report

Different instruments, that the UTPL has considered important to use based on their own nature, are shown in the different working documents; each institution will have to design them according to its needs.

**Evaluation instruments** and support instruments have been used in the evaluation process. The evaluation instruments are: observation-guide, survey-questionnaire and interview-guide; while the **support instruments** are those which the institution considers as essential for its management such as: strategic planning document, registers of didactic guide evaluation, etc.

- The seventh column, **code**, represents the sequential numeration of documents that provide information for self-evaluation.
- The eighth column, **Assessment Scale**, has two sub-columns. The first one will reflect the score that the institution establishes for each standard. The second one includes the score that has been obtained in the self-evaluation, expressed as a percentage. This will be automatically transformed into its value by the software in relation to the score assigned to the standard; according to the scales described as follows:

Assessment levels can be qualitative or quantitative and we consider that scales of five categories are enough.

To enable standards evaluation the following scales have been used:

**Quantitative Scale:** from 0 (nothing) to 4 (maximum). Each number has its corresponding percentage to facilitate assessment:

SCORE				
0	1	2	3	4
0	25%	50%	75%	100%

**Qualitative Scale:** To use qualitative assessment, the following scales can be used:

No.	Totally Agree	Mostly Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Totally Disagree
1.	Totally	Mostly	Partially	Disagree	None
2.	It's entirely accomplished	It's acceptably accomplished	Unsatisfactory accomplishment	Unsatisfactory accomplishment	Nothing
3.	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	slightly satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Nothing
4.	Very Good	Good	Regular	Bad	Nothing
5.	Highly suitable	Suitable	More or less	Unsuitable	Nothing
6.	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Unsatisfied	Nothing
7.	Excellent	Sufficient	Partial	Insufficient	Nothing
8.	Very efficient	Efficient	Slightly efficient	Deficient	Nothing
9.	Objective achieved	Significant improvement	Some improvement	Minimum Improvement	None
10.	Always	Many times	A few times	Very few times	Never
11.	Everything	A lot	Little	Very little	Nothing

Based on: (Guía de Autoevaluación con fines de acreditación. CONEA, p.41)

Following is an example of assessment:

If a Standard has obtained a score of 3 in the scale from 0 to 4, this value is equal to 75% (see Assessment Scale) and if the standard had a score of 7, this would represent 100%. Then, we need to know how much 75% of 7 represents. We show an example:

Score	Value on the scale	Numeric Value
7	3 = (75%)	75% de 7 = 5.25

- In the last column, **suggestions or improvement proposals**, the evaluator inputs his or her recommendations based on the information collected.

## 6. ASSESSMENT

<b>CRITERIA-SUBCRITERIA-OBJECTIVES</b>	Score	Proposed score
<b>CRITERION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT STYLE</b>	<b>120</b>	
<b><u>1.a.-The leaders or program directors demonstrate their commitment to excellence by maintaining coherence with the policy and the strategic plan of the Instructional center.</u></b>	<b><u>30</u></b>	
<i>1.a.1.- The leaders are actively involved in quality management of program</i>	15	
<i>1.a.2.- To be accessible and listen to the employees and staff working on the program.</i>	15	
<b><u>1.b.- The leaders or program directors actively work with the Instructional center and the public to promote the interests and satisfaction of all program staff.</u></b>	<b><u>30</u></b>	
<i>1.b.1.- Help identify all staff involved in program development and their needs and expectations.</i>	7	
<i>1.b.2.- Ensure that the needs and expectations of program staff are considered in the planning process</i>	10	
<i>1.b.3.- Ensure the availability of channels for program staff to express suggestions and complaints</i>	5	
<i>1.b.4.- Facilitate the establishment and maintenance of good institutional relationships for the proper organization and functioning of the program.</i>	8	
<b><u>1.c.- The program directors guarantee that the program's organizational structure supports its policy and strategic plan, and the institution's values and culture</u></b>	<b><u>36</u></b>	
<i>1.c.1.- Define and assign responsibilities, creating a coherent organizational structure</i>	22	
<i>1.c.2.- Circulate the organizational chart among the program staff.</i>	14	
<b><u>1.d.- The program directors guarantee systematic program management and improvement, in line with the processes of the instructional center.</u></b>	<b><u>24</u></b>	
<i>1.d.1.- Support improvements and involvement by giving appropriate resources and assistance</i>	16	
<i>1.d.2.- Prioritize and make decisions, evaluating results obtained and proposing improvements</i>	8	

<b>CRITERION 2: POLICIES AND STRATEGY</b>	<b>85</b>	
<b>2.a.- <u>The program objectives are based on the present and future needs and expectations of the stakeholders and aligned with the instructional center's policies and strategies</u></b>	<b>20</b>	
<i>2.a.1.- Establish the program objectives by analyzing the current and future needs and expectations of stakeholders involved with the program.</i>	10	
<i>2.a.2.- Ensure that the strategic planning of the program is adequate to attain the program objectives, and in tune with the instructional center's policies and strategies</i>	10	

<b>CRITERIA-SUBCRITERIA-OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Proposed Score</b>
<b>2.b.- <u>The program objectives are based on pertinent and complete information, that provides a frame of reference for development and review</u></b>	<b>20</b>	
<i>2.b.1.- Plan the development of program objectives considering the current and future needs and expectations of stakeholders.</i>	20	
<b>2.c.- <u>The strategic plan of the program is reviewed for its continuing relevance, and periodically updated and improved</u></b>	<b>30</b>	
<i>2.c.1.- Ensure that the strategic plan leads to a realistic action plan</i>	15	
<i>2.c.2.- Use the annual evaluation of results to ensure that the program's strategic plan remains relevant.</i>	7	
<i>2.c.3.- Foster a culture of systematic program evaluation in program staff.</i>	8	
<b>2.d.- <u>The strategic plan of the program is known and understood within the instructional center and by all stakeholders</u></b>	<b>15</b>	
<i>2.d.1.- Define an effective and efficient process to communicate the strategic plan of the program, its requirements, objectives and goals to all program staff.</i>	8	
<i>2.d.2.- Provide information to assist in program improvement and engage all stakeholders in reaching its objectives.</i>	7	

<b>CRITERION 3: HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>105</b>	
<b>3.a.- <u>The program directors plan and improve the human resource management process.</u></b>	<b>30</b>	
<i>3.a.1.- Balance the assignment of responsibilities with the needs arising in the program and with the training of the human resources</i>	30	
<b>3.b.- <u>The program directors identify, maintain and develop the experience and capacities of the human resources through their education and training.</u></b>	<b>25</b>	
<i>3.b.1.- To give information according to the needs of the development of human resources.</i>	10	
<i>3.b.2.- To give information according to the needs of the program.</i>	15	

<b><u>3.c.- The program directors promote the involvement and participation of the human resources in the improvement process.</u></b>	<b><u>13</u></b>	
<i>3.c.1.- To establish procedures for involvement of human resources in continuous improvement.</i>	10	
<i>3.c.2.- To give opportunities that encourage the involvement of human resources and promote an innovative and creative attitude.</i>	3	
<b><u>3.d.- The program directors obtain an effective ascendent, descendent and lateral communication.</u></b>	<b><u>25</u></b>	
<i>3.d.1.- To maintain information channels to ensure an effective communication</i>	25	
<b><u>3.e.- The program directors recognize, reward and take care of the personnel involved in this process</u></b>	<b><u>12</u></b>	
<i>3.e.1.- To create and maintain an effective interaction among all the agents involved in the program to achieve an environment of trust.</i>	5	
<i>3.e.2.- To acknowledge and value the work, contribution and effort of the personnel to improve.</i>	7	
<b>CRITERIA-SUBCRITERIA-OBJECTIVES</b>	Score	Proposed score
<b>CRITERION 4: RESOURCES AND ALLIANCES</b>	<b>90</b>	
<b><u>4.a.- Management of human and financial resources of the program.</u></b>	<b><u>25</u></b>	
<i>4.a.1.- To plan and control human and financial resources which are necessary to develop the strategic planning of the program and achieve its objectives.</i>	20	
<i>4.a.2.- To develop innovative financial methods to encourage and support the continuous improvement of the program.</i>	5	
<b><u>4.b.- Management of information resources</u></b>	<b><u>30</u></b>	
<i>4.b.1.- To have all the important information of the program available for all the agents involved in it.</i>	11	
<i>4.b.2.- Ensure that each type of information is available for the agents to whom it is aimed at.</i>	16	
<i>4.b.3.- To use the information to encourage innovation and continuous improvement.</i>	3	
<b><u>4.c.- Management of external resources and alliances</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>	
<i>4.c.1.- To establish relations with external organizations according to the strategic planning of the program as well as its development and improvement.</i>	5	
<b><u>4.d.- Management of facilities, equipment, materials and technology</u></b>	<b><u>30</u></b>	
<i>4.d.1.- To determine and obtain the necessary facilities, equipment, materials and technology for the development of the program, considering its strategic planning.</i>	15	
<i>4.d.2.- To put at the disposal of all the agents that are involved in the development of the program, facilities, equipment, materials and technology, taking into account their needs and expectations.</i>	5	
<i>4.d.3.- To ensure that facilities, equipment, materials and technology meet the needs of the program by developing and implementing maintenance and conservation methods.</i>	10	

<b>CRITERION 5: STUDENTS AND EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES</b>	<b>150</b>	
<b><u>5.a.- Identification of the students: characteristics, needs, expectations and requirements to participate in the program</u></b>	<b><u>20</u></b>	
<i>5.a.1.- To identify the characteristics of the students</i>	8	
<i>5.a.2.- To identify the needs of the students</i>	4	
<i>5.a.3.- To identify the expectations of the students</i>	4	
<i>5.a.4.- To identify the requirements of the students to participate in the program.</i>	4	
<b><u>5.b.-Identification of educational processes for the development of the program: how it is designed and developed..</u></b>	<b><u>100</u></b>	
<i>5.b.1.- To establish learning objectives of the program.</i>	10	
<i>5.b.2.- To design the curricula of the program according to the established learning objectives.</i>	15	
<i>5.b.3.- To improve education: Teaching methodology and Didactic Resources.</i>	35	
<i>5.b.4.- To improve education: Tutorial Assistance</i>	10	
<i>5.b.5.- To improve education: Work of the students</i>	10	
<i>5.b.6.- To improve education: Learning Assessment</i>	20	
<b><u>5.c.- Assessment and improvement of the program. Review of educational processes and improvement, follow up and control objectives.</u></b>	<b><u>30</u></b>	
<i>5.c.1.- To assess the educational processes involved in the development of the program to see if they are appropriate for achieving its learning objectives.</i>	16	
<i>5.c.2.-To update the objectives and improvement processes of the program by controlling the educational processes that are involved in its development.</i>	14	

<b>CRITERIA-SUBCRITERIA-OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Proposed score</b>
<b>CRITERION 6: RESULTS OF THE STUDENTS AND EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES</b>	<b>130</b>	
<b><u>6.a.- Measuring the Satisfaction-level of the Addressees and the Educational Processes</u></b>	<b><u>70</u></b>	
<i>6.a.1.- Measure periodically the satisfaction level of the students and other external clients regarding the program</i>	40	
<i>6.a.2.- Inform students and other external clients about the obtained results on the basis of the used satisfaction-level measurements</i>	5	
<i>6.a.3.- Systematically compare the students´ and other external clients´ satisfaction level with regards the program with the satisfaction level of other students and external clients participating in other programs of the Institution and in other similar programs of other institutions</i>	5	

<i>6.a.4.- Deal with areas in need according to the tendency demonstrated by the obtained results in the previous assessments</i>	20	
<b>6.b.- Measurements of Performance and Yield</b>	<b><u>60</u></b>	
<i>6.b.1.- Measure periodically the students 'and other external clients' performance in the program</i>	35	
<i>6.b.2.- Inform students and other external clients about the performance results</i>	5	
<i>6.b.3.- Compare the performance of the students and other external clients of the program with the performance of other students of and external clients participating in other programs of the Institution or other similar programs of other institutions</i>	5	
<i>6.b.4.- Deal with areas in need according to the tendency demonstrated by the obtained results in the previous assessments</i>	15	

<b>CRITERION 7: RESULTS OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>120</b>	
<b>7.a.- Measures of personnel's perception</b>	<b><u>50</u></b>	
<i>7.a.1.- To periodically measure personnel's perception of all of the aspects that have an effect on the development of their work in the program.</i>	20	
<i>7.a.2.- To be informed about the results obtained from the perception measures that were made.</i>	10	
<i>7.a.3.- To systematically compare the degree of satisfaction of the personnel with that of another personnel that participate in other programs of the institution and if possible in similar programs of other institutions.</i>	5	
<i>7.a.4.- To act on the areas that are required according to the value and/or the trends shown in the results that were obtained in previous assessments.</i>	15	
<b>7.b.- Measures of performance</b>	<b><u>70</u></b>	
<i>7.b.1.- To periodically measure the factors that have an effect on the satisfaction of the personnel and their motivation</i>	30	
<i>7.b.2.- To be informed about the results obtained from the performance in the participant processes.</i>	15	
<i>7.b.3.- To systematically compare the performance of the personnel of the program with that of another personnel that participate in other programs of the institution and if possible in similar programs of other institutions.</i>	5	
<i>7.b.4.- To act on the areas that are required according to the value and/or the trends shown in the results that were obtained in previous assessments.</i>	20	

<b>CRITERION 8: RESULTS OF SOCIETY</b>	<b>70</b>	
<b>8.a.- Measures of society's perception</b>	<b><u>35</u></b>	
<i>8.a.1.- To periodically measure society's perception of the</i>	15	

<i>program at all levels.</i>		
<i>8.a.2.- To be informed about the results obtained from the perception measures that were made.</i>	7	
<i>8.a.3.- To systematically compare the degree of satisfaction of the society with the program regarding satisfaction expressed by society with other programs of the institution and if possible with similar programs of other institutions.</i>	5	
<i>8.a.4.- To act on the areas that are required according to the value and/or the trends shown in the results that were obtained in previous assessments.</i>	8	
<b>8.b.- Measures of performance</b>	<b>35</b>	
<i>8.b.1.- To periodically measure the impact of the program on society in different aspects</i>	15	
<i>8.b.2.- To be informed about the results obtained from the perception measures of the impact on society.</i>	7	
<i>8.b.3.- To systematically compare the impact of the program on society with the program regarding satisfaction expressed by society with other programs of the institution and if possible with similar programs of other institutions.</i>	5	
<i>8.b.4.- To act on the areas that are required according to the value and/or the trends shown in the results that were obtained in previous assessments.</i>	8	

<b>CRITERION 9: OVERALL RESULTS</b>	<b>130</b>	
<b>9.a.- Results obtained by the institution.</b>	<b>47</b>	
<i>9.a.1.- To know the results of the management and strategic planning of the program.</i>	15	
<i>9.a.2.- To know the results of the management of economic and financial resources.</i>	22	
<i>9.a.3.- To know the results of other resources: external relations and alliances; facilities, equipment, materials and technology.</i>	10	
<b>9.b.- Results obtained by people involved in the program</b>	<b>25</b>	
<i>9.b.1.- To know the results of the perception of human resources.</i>	10	
<i>9.b.2.- To know the results of the performance of human resources</i>	15	
<b>9.c.- Results obtained by students and other external customers</b>	<b>48</b>	
<i>9.c.1.- To know the results of the perception of the students and other external customers.</i>	10	
<i>9.c.2.- To know the results of the performance of the students and other external customers.</i>	38	
<b>9.d.- Results obtained by society</b>	<b>10</b>	
<i>9.d.1.- To know the results of society's perception.</i>	5	
<i>9.d.2.- To know the results of society's performance.</i>	5	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000</b>	

## GLOSSARY

### What does criterion mean?

It is a critical factor for the good performance of an organization.

**What does sub-criterion mean?**

Division of the criteria into more specific parts.

**What does standard mean?**

Minimum quality level to achieve objectives

“Level or degree that is necessary or essential for something to be considered acceptable” (Díaz Villa, M. (2001)):

**What is an indicator?**

An unit of quality measurement used to identify the fulfillment of a standard.

**What are informants?**

Key people who provide the information necessary for the assessment process

**What is source/data?**

**Source:** Reports, documents, databases, files, records that contain required information.

**Data:** Number, quantity that permit results to be inferred.

**What is place or department?**

It is a place where reference documents can be found.

**What are techniques and instruments?**

**Technique:** Procedure to get information

**Instrument:** A means for gathering information and opinions from the informants.

**What is code?**

Identification number of the document

**What is scale?**

A tool for qualitative and quantitative assessment

**What is strategic planning?**

Long-term institutional macro planning

**What is general planning of the program?**

Initial project for carrying out the academic program

**What is action plan?**

Planning short-term activities that enable the general planning of the program

**8. ACRONYMS**

DGMA	Dirección General de Modalidad Abierta
UEA	Unidad de Evaluación y Acreditación
RRHH	Dirección de Recursos Humanos y Desarrollo Personal
DGRI	Dirección General de Relaciones Interinstitucionales
DGA	Dirección General Académica
DGF	Dirección General Financiera
UA	Unidad Académica
CITTES	Centros de Investigación y Transferencia de Tecnología, Extensión y Servicios

IPED	Instituto de Pedagogía
CU	Centros Universitarios
UV	Unidad de Virtualización
UNICAAL	Unidad de Comunicación y atención al alumno
UPSI	Unidad de Proyectos y Sistemas Informáticos
CEDIB	Centro de Distribución de Material Bibliográfico

## ANNEXES

### RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT OF CRITERION 1, DURING THE PILOT TEST

#### CRITERION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT STYLE

Standards for Quality Education	All of the experts n=28	Scores	English n=9	Spanish n=19
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**Sub-criterion 1.a.** The leaders or program directors demonstrate their commitment to excellence by maintaining coherence with the policy and the strategic plan of the Instructional Center.

<b>1.a.1.a.</b> Know the Instructional Center's policy and strategic directives	7.18		7.44	7.05
<b>1.a.1.b.</b> Apply the Instructional Center's policy and strategic directives.	7.29		7.78	7.05
<b>1.a.2.a.</b> Communicate with program staff	7.00		7.22	6.89
<b>1.a.2.b.</b> Encourage the participation of all staff	7.11		7.11	7.11

**Sub-criterion 1.b.** The leaders are actively involved in quality management of program

<b>1.b.1.a.</b> Offer resources to the program organizers for identification of all staff involved in program development	7.14		6.89	7.31
<b>1.b.2.a.</b> They ensure the satisfaction of program staff involved in program planning	6.95		6.56	7.23
<b>1.b.2.b.</b> They provide an adequate environment for the needs and expectations of staff involved in program development.	7.23		6.78	7.54
<b>1.b.3.a.</b> Ensure the availability of channels for program staff to express suggestions and complaints	6.77		6.22	7.15
<b>1.b.4.a.</b> Facilitate the establishment and maintenance of good institutional relationships for the proper organization and functioning of the program	7.09		6.22	7.69

**Sub-criterion 1.c.** The program directors guarantee that the program's organizational structure supports its policy and strategic plan, and the institution's values and culture

<b>1.c.1.a.</b> Establish an organizational structure with definition and distribution of responsibilities, using a participative managerial style	7.64		7.78	7.54
<b>1.c.1.b.</b> Circulate the organizational chart among the program staff.	7.32		7.00	7.54
<b>1.c.2.a.</b> Promote feedback and communication among program staff.	7.14		6.67	7.46
<b>1.c.2.b.</b> Consider staff performance in making decisions about promotions, distribution of responsibilities, etc.	7.05		7.00	7.08

<b>Standards for Quality Education</b>	<b>All of the experts n=28</b>	<b>Scores</b>	<b>English n=9</b>	<b>Spanish n=19</b>
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**Sub-criteria 1.d.** The program directors guarantee systematic program management and improvement, in line with the processes of the instructional center.

<b>1.d.1.a.</b> Support initiatives and activities by program administrators and improvement facilitators	7.36		7.67	7.15
<b>1.d.1.b.</b> Provide resources needed for continuous improvement	7.68		8.00	7.46
<b>1.d.2.b.</b> Formulate and/or approve improvement proposals	7.18		7.00	7.31

