

13. RESPONSE TO THE PROJECT



- We believe that this project, which has generated a great deal of interest at the international level, contributes to the improvement of distance education in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Many distinguished experts and institutions in the field of distance education have contributed to this project.
- This is a large and ambitious project that will provide common reference points for universities and governments.
- This project has assembled a group of quality criteria for distance education that can be used to measure the development of Quality Standards.

The proposal includes all the following elements which are part of Systems for Assuring Quality in Higher Education (SACES) developed by Dr. Rama:¹

Autonomy: The system is currently available on the internet. Participation is voluntary, and the system is adaptable to the needs of a particular entity. The users can propose their own values for self-evaluation, or they can use the available international standards which vary according to the needs or preferences of the institutions conducting the self-analysis.

Completeness: The program contains 252 selected quality standards.

Consensus: A large number of institutions and experts were involved in the project.

Efficiency: There are three types of standards (study, comparison, and analysis) available, and interested participants can choose those which best meet their needs.

Impartiality: The program is impartial for the same reasons as discussed under “autonomy.”

Transparency: The proposed standards are objective. A publicly-accessible database containing information about the project was utilized.

¹ RAMA, CLAUDIO (2003) Los sistemas de control de la calidad de la educación superior en América Latina en la 3ª Reforma Universitaria.

The system contains Quality Standards for distance education programs, and it meets the expected objectives and expectations of the program as follows:

- To promote improvements in administration and distance education programs based on information technology.
- To contribute to government capacity to regulate, evaluate, and accredit distance education programs

It should also be noted that the participation in this project indicates significant interest in distance education in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is expected that distance education institutions will take advantage of the proposed standards to implement or improve quality evaluation efforts in their respective programs. It is also hoped that work will continue on other aspects that have evolved from the project including production of measurement documents and evaluation of standards and indicators that promote the self-evaluation of programs on an international level.