



ARE THEY WORTH IT? AN ANALYSIS OF CHILEAN ACCREDITATION QUALITY REPORTS

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Brief Overview of External Quality Assurance (EQA) in Higher Education



NATIONAL AGENCY ORGANIZES EQA PROCESSES

A national agency plans and runs EQA activities.



HEIS PERFORM INTERNAL SELF-EVALUATION

Higher education institutions do a self-assessment of their programs and processes.



EXTERNAL EXAMINATION TRIANGULATES SELF- EVALUATION

External experts review the self-evaluation and compare to quality standards.



REPORT PROVIDES EVALUATION RESULTS

A report is written summarizing the findings of the evaluation.

Overview of Chilean Higher Education Sector

(2019 Data)



AROUND 150 EDUCATION PROVIDERS

- Universities (61)
- Professional institutes (42)
- Technical education centers (47)



STEADY ENROLLMENT EXPANSION SINCE 1990S

Gross tertiary enrollment ratio increasing
from 11% in 1989 to over 90% in 2017



OVER 1 MILLION STUDENTS

Currently over 1 million students are enrolled
in Chilean higher education institutions, with
most attending universities and professional
institutes



National Accreditation Commission (CNA)

1. EQA in Chile began in the late 1990s with voluntary evaluations of undergraduate and graduate programs.
2. Law 20.129 (2006) established the state's responsibility for ensuring, verifying, and promoting quality in all higher education institutions. This legislation created the legal framework for EQA and designated
3. CNA was created (2006) is an independent body in charge of evaluating and certifying the quality of higher education providers.

CNA ACCREDITATION PROCESS

(Until October 2023)



ACCREDITATION PROCESSES

CNA implements accreditation for universities, professional institutes and technical centers at institutional, undergraduate and graduate level.



ESTABLISHING ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

CNA establishes the standards and criteria for accreditation of institutions and programs.



ACCREDITATION RESULTS

CNA decides the accreditation period from 0 to 7 years based on quality levels.

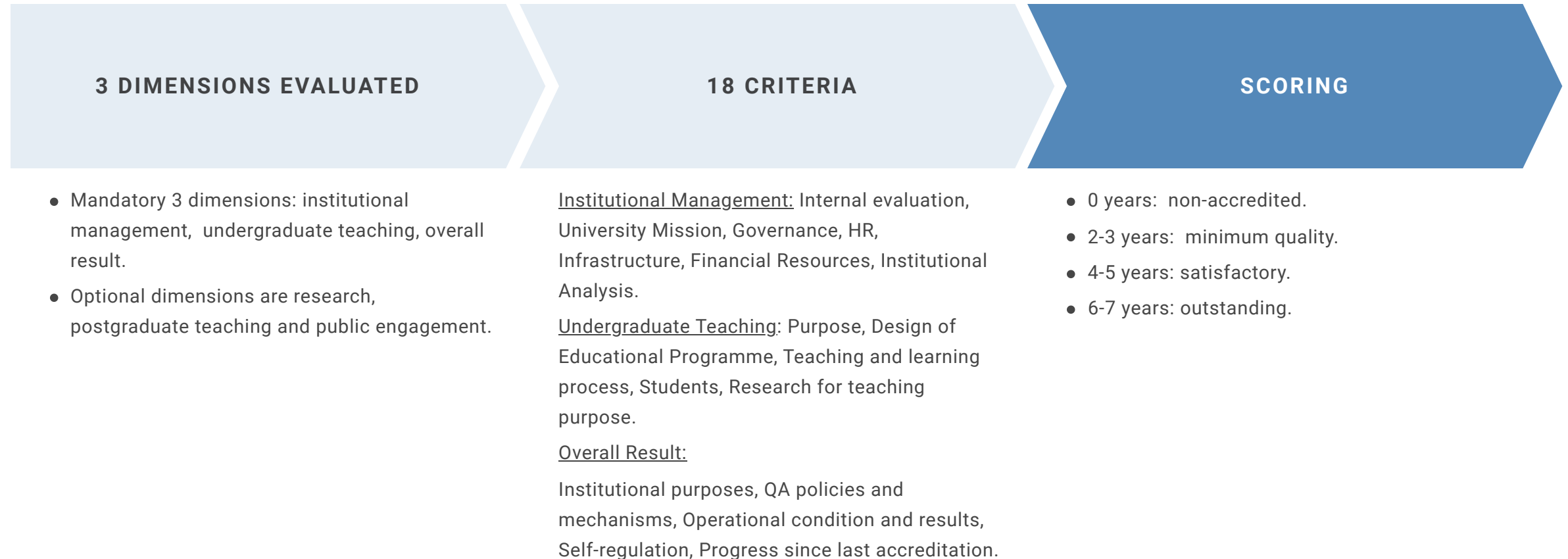


ISSUING ACCREDITATION REPORTS

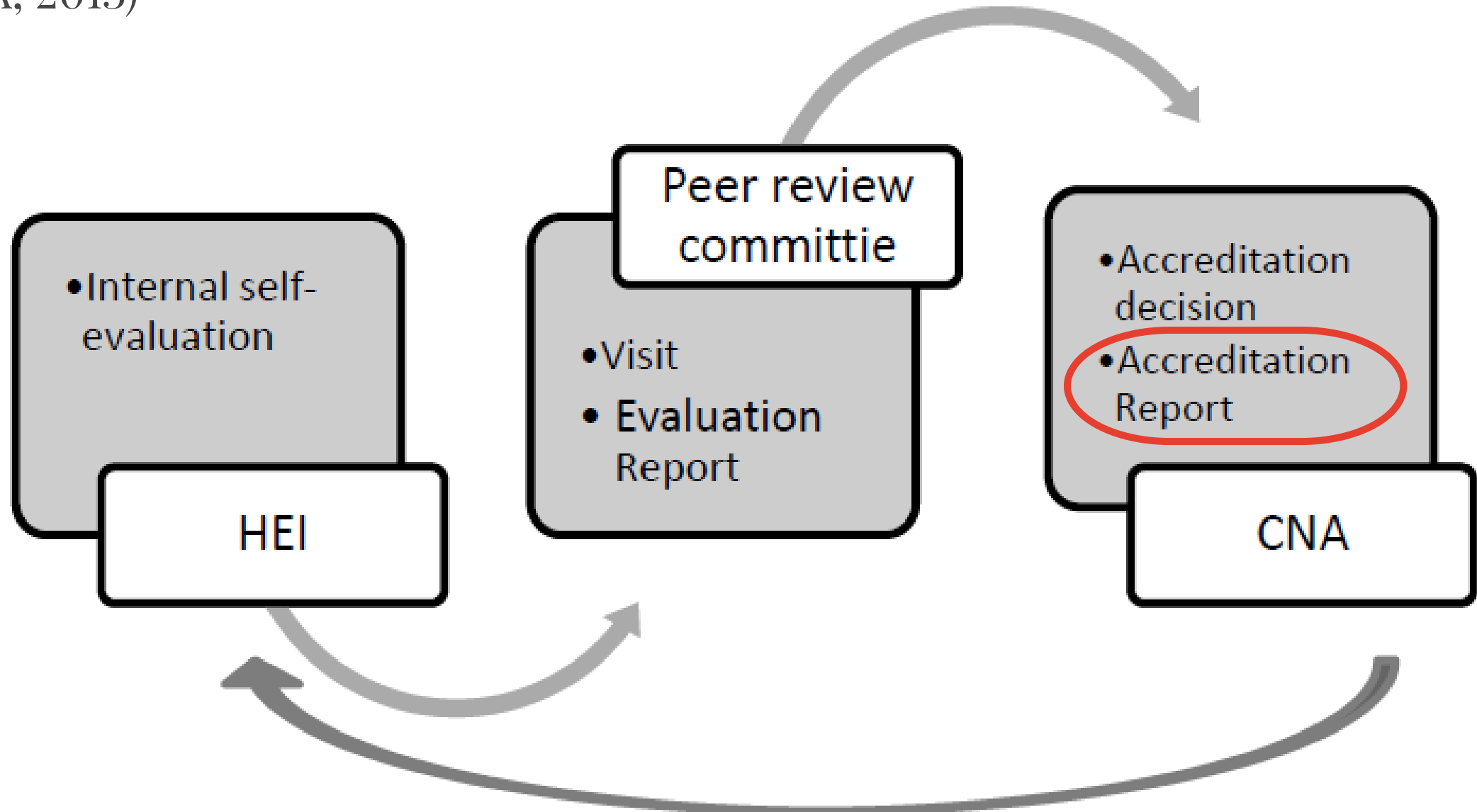
CNA issues reports summarizing strengths, weaknesses and decisions.

Institutional Accreditation Evaluation Dimensions and Criteria

(Until October 2023)



Summary of Institutional Accreditation process (CNA, 2013)



PROBLEM STATEMENT



**THERE IS A LACK OF RESEARCH ON
EFFECTIVENESS AND OUTPUTS OF EQA
(STENSAKER, 2014)**

Despite positive evidence, it is unclear if
EQA improves learning outcomes
(Beerkens, 2018)



**EQA REPORTS ARE DIFFICULT TO
UNDERSTAND (GUNNS, 2018)**

This limits their impact and public reach
(Torre & Zapata, 2015)



NEED TO EVALUATE EQA AGENCIES
To clarify their role as a source of useful
information

MORE RESEARCH NEEDED ON EQA EFFECTIVENESS AND REPORTS PRODUCED BY AGENCIES

Methodology: purpose, research question, and aims

PURPOSE

To explore and describe the suitability of ARs as a source of information for institutions and students

RESEARCH QUESTION

Can accreditation reports be suitable as a source of information for higher education institutions and students?

AIMS

- To evaluate ARs in terms of the meaningfulness of the information provided.
- To characterise their contents as descriptive or value judgments.
- To evaluate the complexity of the descriptions and statements in the reports.
- To identify trends in the descriptions and statements provided by the ARs.

Research Method

Documentary analysis examining AR from Chilean universities over a five-year period (2013-2018).

A mixed method: qualitative analysis of report content as well as descriptive statistics.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

- 17 ARs were selected
- The intended target : 25%, but increased to 34% to ensure each level had good representation. The distribution mirrored the national figure.

Group	Band by year of accreditation	Quality category ⁸	N ARs	Years of accreditation	University Name (in Spanish)	Abbreviation
Group 0	Band cero years	Inadequate	3	0	Universidad del Pacífico	UPAC
				0	Universidad Gabriela Mistral	UGM
				0	Universidad SEK	USEK
Group 2-3	Band 2 to 3 years	Sufficient	2	2	Universidad Tecnológica de Chile Inacap	UINACAP
				3	Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación	UMCE
Group 4-5	Band 4 to 5 years	Satisfactory	9	4	Universidad Adventista de Chile	UADC
				4	Universidad Arturo Prat	UPRAT
				4	Universidad Autónoma De Chile	UATONOMA
				4	Universidad de La Serena	USERENA
				4	Universidad de Magallanes	UMAG
				4	Universidad de Playa Ancha de Ciencias de la Educación	UPLA
				5	Universidad Católica del Maule	UCM
				5	Universidad de Talca	UTALCA
				5	Universidad de Atacama	UTA
Group 6-7	Band 6 to 7 years	Outstanding	3	6	Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso	PUCV
				6	Universidad de La Frontera	UFRO
				7	Universidad de Chile	UCH

Categorisation of accreditation judgment

Categorization	Description
Descriptive	The judgement did not specify any valorisation. It only indicated a description of something that a HEI has, but did not argue whether it was positive or negative. For instance: <i>"the HEI has a mission"</i> , <i>"the institutional purposes are (...)"</i> , <i>"the number of academic is (...)"</i> .
Strength	The judgement indicates a positive valorisation. For instance: <i>"the access system is adequate"</i> , <i>"the mechanisms (...) are outstanding"</i> , <i>"the CNA appreciates (...)"</i>
Weakness	The judgement indicates a negative valorisation. For instance: <i>"the performance indicators don't show adequate results, the graduation rate is very low and decreasing (...)"</i> .
Mix composition	The judgement indicates positive and negative valorisation. For instance: <i>"the efforts to address the low performance indicators are in the correct track, however, the performance indicators results are still an unresolved urgent task"</i> .

1. Categorization scheme: 4 categories (Zapata & Clasing 2016, p.67)

2. 1,104 judgements were classified

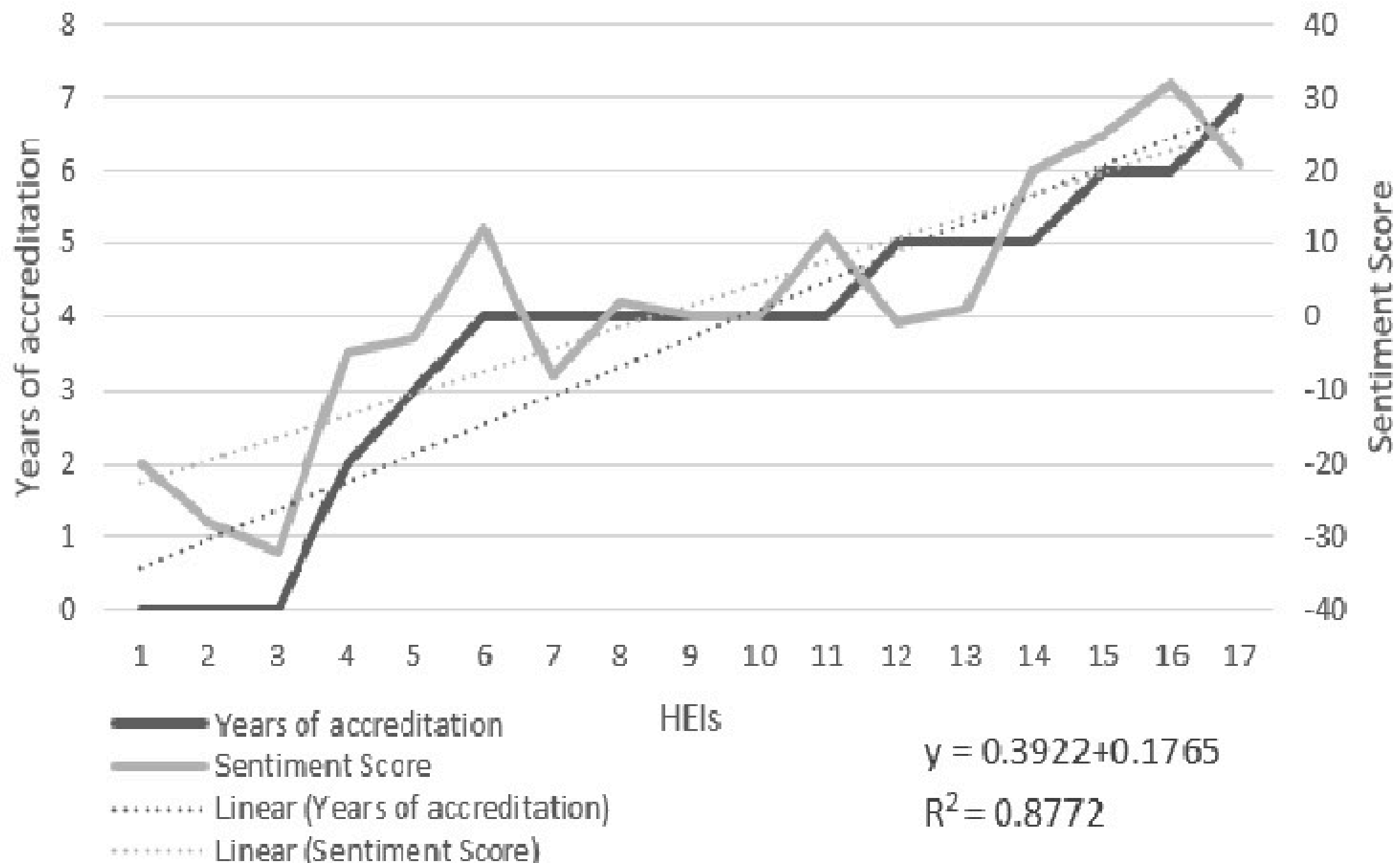
3. Descriptive statistics and correlation performed based on the content analysis

4. Thematic analysis performed

Quantitative Results

Distribution of judgment classes in % by band of accreditation

Category	Overall	Band of years accreditations			
		Band 0 - Year: Inedadequate quality	Band 2-3 years: sufficient quality	Band 4-5 years: satisfactory quality	Band 6-7 years: outstanding quality
Strengths	33%	6%	31%	33%	51%
Weaknesses	31%	63%	37%	27%	17%
Descriptive	30%	28%	29%	31%	29%
Mixed	6%	3%	3%	9%	3%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



Judgments by dimension and criteria

	Criteria	Strengths		Weaknesses		Mixed		Descriptive		Total
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Institutional	Internal self-evaluation	14	3.8	28	7	7	10.1	17	5.2	62
Management	Mission and institutional purpose	19	5.2	9	2.6	3	4.3	27	8.3	58
	Organisational structure and governance	28	7.6	15	4.4	2	2.9	18	5.5	63
	Human resources	27	7.3	14	4.1	2	2.9	22	6.7	65
	Material resources	23	6.3	16	4.7	5	7.2	17	5.2	61
	Financial resources	22	6	23	6.7	5	7.2	6	1.8	56
	Institutional analysis	17	4.6	15	4.4	4	5.8	13	4	49
Teaching at the undergraduate level	Design and provision of undergraduate programme	21	5.7	17	5	8	11.6	25	7.7	71
	Teachers and academic resources	15	4.1	26	7.6	0	0	31	9.5	72
	Students	13	3.5	10	2.9	5	7.2	33	10.1	61
	Research for teaching purposes	11	3	13	3.8	1	1.4	17	5.2	42
	Teaching and learning process	16	4.3	30	8.8	3	4.3	41	12.6	90
	Purpose	14	3.8	5	1.5	2	2.9	29	8.9	50
General evaluation	Institutional purposes	32	8.7	26	7.6	1	1.4	9	2.8	68
	QA policies and mechanisms	33	9	26	7.6	9	13	10	3.1	78
	Operational condition and results	27	7.3	40	11.7	6	8.7	6	1.8	79
	Self-regulation	27	7.3	24	7	5	7.2	5	1.5	61
	Progress since last accreditation.	9	2.4	8	2.3	1	1.4	0	0	18
Total		368	100	341	100	69	100	326	100	1,104

Qualitative Results (some)

Dimension: Institutional management

Criterion: Self-evaluation process

Summary of findings

1

8/17 reports indicated self-evaluation processes were too descriptive, unclear or lacked criticality.

2

5 ARs highlighted low participation in the process, especially from students.

3

in at least 5 ARs the proposed activities were not realistic, did not establish responsible managers, or did not have proper financial resources associated

4

In two cases the CNA indicated that the documents presented for evaluation were poorly designed

Dimension: Teaching at the undergraduate level

Criterion: Teaching- learning process

Summary of findings

Table 7: Distribution of themes in teaching and learning process criteria

Theme	Categories				Total	%
	Strengths	Weaknesses	Mixed	Descriptive		
Performance indicators (PIs)	4	22	2	14	42	46.67
Admission process	5	1	0	10	16	17.78
Formative model	2	3	1	7	13	14.44
Curriculum	1	2	0	0	3	3.33
Applicant's profile	1	1	0	1	3	3.33
PSU score	1	0	0	2	3	3.33
Accreditation	0	0	0	2	2	2.22
Other	1	0	0	1	2	2.22
Monitoring of the results	0	0	0	2	2	2.22
Teacher training	1	0	0	0	1	1.11
Academic evaluation	0	0	0	1	1	1.11
Enrolment	0	0	0	1	1	1.11
Student places available	0	1	0	0	1	1.11
Total	16	30	3	41	90	100

The majority of PIs are classified as weaknesses. This poor performance is a reflection of the decreasing graduation rate in Chile

Dimension: Teaching at the undergraduate level

Criterion: Teaching– learning process

Summary of findings

1

The information provided about PIs and its analysis varies among ARs

2

Some ARs describe a complete range of PIs, such as first-year retention rate, graduation rate, attainment rate, and average time of completion with its corresponding judgment

3

Others only include some of them, and judgments. In three cases, the ARs only describe data without any judgment, and four ARs only indicated judgments.

4

It seems that although performance indicators are a general problem for the HES, CNA does not provide consistent information or judgments for all HEIs

Conclusion

Key Findings from Analysis of Chilean HEI Accreditation Reports



ARS PROVIDE RELEVANT SETS OF DATA.

70% of the judgments are recognised as strengths or weaknesses. ARs are therefore more analytic than descriptive, as documents.



CONSISTENCY BETWEEN YEARS AND JUDGEMENTS

The correlation performed demonstrated that there is a high level of consistency between the ARs and the accreditation results given by CNA



LOW GRADUATION RATES ARE A KEY WEAKNESS

The main problem for Chilean HEIs is low student performance, for which graduation rate was the most problematic indicatorudent performance, particularly graduation rates.



INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN JUDGMENTS

There is high variability between judgments on the same topics in different reports.

ALTHOUGH STUDENTS AND FAMILIES COULD BENEFIT FROM THE INFORMATION IN ARS, IT SEEMS THAT THE PRIME TARGET AUDIENCE OF THE ARS ARE HEIS.

Thank you!

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