

Higher Education Management in Ecuador

Santiago Del-Castillo ¹   Leonardo Aguirre ¹   Angélica Aldaz-Hernández ¹  
Iván Cadena ¹   Demmy Mora-Silva ²   Leo Ramos ³   Leticia Criollo ¹  
Eliécer Francisco Castillo Bravo ⁴   María Dueñas-Barberán ⁵   Luis Flores-Rodríguez ⁶  
Fabricio Gómez Ortega ⁵   Fernando Ricardo Márquez Sañay ⁷   César Vásquez-Terán ¹  
Mary Beatriz Maldonado Roman ⁸   Diana Carpio Álvarez ⁹   William Pine Tobar ¹⁰  
Verónica Ramos G ¹¹   Catalina Suárez-Nicolalde ¹   Santos Manuel Vicente Soto ¹²  

¹ Instituto Superior Tecnológico Quito, Quito EC170102, Ecuador

² Research Group YASUNI-SDC, Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo, Sede Orellana, EC220001 El Coca, Ecuador

³ Yachay Tech University, School of Mathematical and Computational Sciences, Ecuador

⁴ Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, Extensión Chone, Chone EC130301, Ecuador

⁵ Universidad Laica Vicente Rocafuerte de Guayaquil, Guayaquil EC090514, Ecuador

⁶ Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Quito EC170102, Ecuador

⁷ Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo, Riobamba EC060104, Ecuador

⁸ Universidad Nacional de Loja, Loja EC110104, Ecuador

⁹ Universidad de Especialidades Turística UDET, Quito EC170102, Ecuador

¹⁰ Universidad Católica Santiago de Guayaquil, Guayaquil EC090101, Ecuador

¹¹ Universidad Técnica de Ambato, Ambato, EC180150, Ecuador

¹² Instituto Superior Tecnológico CrecerMas, Nueva Loja EC210150, Ecuador

 Correspondence: santiago.delcastillo@itg.edu.ec  + 593 99 835 9710

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Abstract: Higher education is the last phase of the academic learning process, that is, the one that comes after the secondary stage. It is provided at universities, colleges or technical training academies. The education offered by higher education is at the professional level. The objective of the study was to analyze the management of Higher Education in the country and to describe the main activities of the institutions linked to these activities. The main results indicate that three institutions are the protagonists in management. The Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (SENESCYT), the Council for Quality Assurance in Education (CACES) and the Council of Higher Education (CES). Higher education is one of the main drivers of societal evolution. Investing in education is vital to ensure a prosperous and competitive socioeconomic system. Higher education has a high responsibility to society: they are responsible for preparing the professionals of the future.

Keywords: Institutes; universities; control; audits



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Prof. Carlos Mestanza-Ramón, PhD.
Editor-in-Chief / CaMeRa Editorial
editor@greenworldjournal.com

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1. Introduction

The University is a fundamental part of this development, not only in academic training, but also in human and social training, where it is necessary to strengthen values, not only at a higher level, but at all educational levels. Social formation has an important role within the fields of education of the human being, and as in the educational field, the teaching-learning process is necessary [1–4]. Education as a process of personality development, does not only refer to the strengthening of the individual in the academic part, there must be a vision of sensitization in the teacher according to the reality of their students. The current situation we are going through, demands a greater awareness of the role that each citizen plays in society, regardless of their customs and traditions, we lack a proposal for comprehensive-inclusive social education, which allows students to generate awareness of the national reality and form in them the desire for change, propose appropriate solutions to placate the economic, political, social and cultural problems [4–7].

It is important to examine which are the possible problems facing the university educational responsibility in the face of the accumulation of uncertainties that call into question its future. Likewise, the future of universities is closely linked to the development and development of capacities to promote, encourage and, above all, consolidate conceptual changes capable of satisfying the urgent demands of society, especially of the less favored sectors, preparing people with a high spirit of self-improvement and collaboration [8–13], with the predisposition to adapt adequately to respond efficiently to a world that is changing in a precipitous and unforeseen manner, whose social and cultural implications are reflected in a reality that teaches us that it is necessary to give an "added value" to the use of knowledge for its subsequent incorporation into production and work, which if carried out in the correct and adequate manner, contributes greatly to the prosperity and welfare of a nation, always with the mentality of serving mainly those most in need [14–17].

This growing social and cultural exchange, even commercial, generates a series of internal impacts in the country, both in its productive and educational activities, which leads us to analyze the "level of quality and productivity" that we can offer, in order to be able to face economic globalization. It is clear that companies, large, medium or micro, require and in great quantity, to use scientific knowledge in their productive and administrative processes, oriented to the reduction of production costs and to increase the quality and standard of living of the people involved, but this modernization cannot be possible without an adequate scientific and technological base [12,18–21].

The challenge is even greater when it is known that globalization imposes on young people, and not only on them, new demands of knowledge, new technologies, customs, languages and languages, so it is always important that these, the future professionals must first know their own culture, for which the University [11,22], as the main generator of this knowledge, whether technological, scientific, as well as humanistic, cultural and social, has the community commitment with important activities that go beyond its own geographical environment that contribute to minimize the great imbalances that occur in society. The objective of this study was to describe the function of the main institutions linked to higher education in Ecuador. In order to respond to this objective, a bibliographic review of scientific and gray literature was carried out. The main functions and characteristics are presented in detail below.

2. The Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (SENESCYT, acronym in Spanish)

Senescyt's mission is to exercise the steering role of public policy on higher education, science, technology and ancestral knowledge and manage its implementation, with a focus on the strategic development of the country. Coordinate actions between the Executive and higher education institutions for the academic, productive and social strengthening. In the field of science, technology and ancestral knowledge, promote the training of advanced human talent and the development of research, innovation and technology transfer, through the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs and projects. On the other hand, it is the guarantor of the application of the principles that govern higher education; promoter of scientific research, technological innovation and ancestral knowledge. Its work is focused on improving the capabilities and potential of citizens and is characterized by the efficient and effective use of the resources it manages, whose results are the seed for the country's development. The main objectives of SENESCYT are focused on Increasing access and strengthening the system of university, technical and technological higher education, with criteria of quality, inclusion, relevance and democracy; and, Increasing and promoting research, science, innovation and technology transfer and its linkage with the academic and productive sector.

Its powers and responsibilities include a) Proposing and advising the Undersecretary General of Science, Technology and Innovation on policies, strategies, standards and mechanisms for innovation and technology transfer; b) Advising and accompanying the administrative units on policies, strategies, standards and mechanisms for innovation and technology transfer; c) Defining guidelines, directives and policies within the scope of its competence; d) Manage with the institutions linked to innovation and technology transfer the execution of the different programs and projects within the scope of its competence; e) Promote the generation of national and international knowledge networks for technology transfer and innovation purposes; f) Promote knowledge networks and research incubation initiatives; g) Promote public-private relations that allow for the promotion of innovation and technological development; h) Lead the execution of the different programs and projects within the scope of its competence; i) Promote the generation of national and international knowledge networks for technology transfer and innovation purposes; j) Promote knowledge networks and research incubation initiatives; k) Promote public-private relations that allow for the promotion of innovation and technological development; h) Lead the execution of commitments established in the agreements signed by the Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation within the scope of its competence; i) Follow up on scientific production, research programs and projects financed by the Secretariat; j) Coordinate innovation and technology transfer networks with the different actors related to the National System of Science, Technology, Innovation and Ancestral Knowledge; k) To direct, monitor and evaluate the implementation of public policies for innovation and technological development in the territory; l) To regulate innovation and technology transfer; m) To approve reports and technical studies required for the fulfillment of institutional objectives within the framework of its jurisdiction and competence; n) To comply with the delegations, attributions and responsibilities assigned by the Secretary of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation and the General Undersecretary of Science, Technology and Innovation.

3. Council for Quality Assurance in Education (CACES, acronym in Spanish)

The Council for Quality Assurance in Higher Education is the technical public body, with legal personality and its own assets, with administrative, financial and operational independence, which is responsible for the regulation, planning and coordination of the system of quality assurance in higher education; it will have regulatory and management powers. Its mission is to coordinate the inter-institutional system of Quality Assurance in Higher Education, leading participatory processes of monitoring, internal and external evaluation, accreditation and academic qualification to ensure the development of a culture of quality in higher education institutions, focused on the balance between teaching, research and innovation and links with society.

The vision for 2030 of the CACES is to be a public body that is a national and regional reference in innovation and promotion of the collective construction of the culture of quality in HEIs, institutionalizing quality assurance processes in Higher Education. In addition, the CACES – the national body that evaluates Ecuador's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), their degree programs and programs – participates periodically in international, regional and subregional congresses, seminars, events, conferences and workshops on quality assurance expertise, in order to consolidate different cooperation and exchange frameworks and position the Ecuadorian quality assurance process at the international level. CACES is linked internationally with networks of organizations that develop activities related to quality assurance in higher education with the objective of exchanging good practices, participating in regional accreditation systems, congresses, seminars and other activities.

4. Council of Higher Education (CES, acronym in Spanish)

The Higher Education Council (CES) has as its purpose to plan, regulate and coordinate the Higher Education System, and the relationship between its different actors with the Executive Branch and the Ecuadorian society; in order to guarantee to all citizens a quality Higher Education that contributes to the growth of the country. Its mission is to be one of the two bodies that govern the system, its mission is the planning, regulation and internal coordination of the Higher Education System of Ecuador, and the relationship between its different actors with the Executive Function and the Ecuadorian society.

Its vision is focused on being the public referent organism for the processes that consolidate the Higher Education System, exercising its constitutional and legal competencies, in such a way that it has a decisive impact on the achievement of excellence in higher education through academic and professional training, with a scientific and humanistic vision that contributes with solutions to the country's problems articulated to the development regime and the good way of living; respecting the constitutional principles that govern the Institutions and the Higher Education System. Among its strategic objectives are:

- Establish mechanisms and strategies for the implementation of processes that make it possible to have the academic offer in the technical and technological field, in accordance with the principle of relevance and social demands, which contribute to Good Living.
- Promote the development of policy proposals, norms, plans, programs and projects that support teaching management in coordination with national technical and labor management norms.

- Promote technical research processes to foster actions for the design of syllabuses and curricular grids in accordance with the national development plan and the country's productive development.
- Increase the institutional management capacity of Higher Education Institutions, through the design and implementation of organizational management systems and models with a focus on processes, permanent development of human talent and the efficient, effective and transparent administration of financial, material and technological resources.
- Promote professional training with academic diversification to train people and professionals with knowledge, skills and attitudes with the capacity to provide innovative and creative solutions to meet social demands in the political, economic, social, technological and ecological areas, where the fundamental axis is continuous personal improvement.
- Consolidate the Higher Education System, with the participation of the different actors of the educational sector, which influence the achievement of excellence in higher education through academic and professional training, with scientific and humanistic vision, contributing with solutions to the problems of the country articulated to the development regime and the good living; according to the constitutional principles that govern the institutions and the Higher Education System.

6. Conclusion

At present, it is appropriate to consider the relationship between the University and Society, being able to demonstrate that the University has a social function, which influences and modifies its environment. It is an authentic factor of transformation, and therefore, depending on the purpose it proposes, it will help to build a society with certain characteristics, through scientific interaction and social reality.

The university is challenged by society to demand with greater force and with all reason that the contribution of the knowledge matrix be more solid, that it contribute in a timely manner to the integral improvement of the productive matrix in correspondence to the evident need for economic recovery that the country needs. The university also needs to receive society's solidarity support so that our professionals, men and women of science, highly qualified and prepared to defend the country economically, politically and socially, have the possibility of employment in accordance with their graduate profile. It is necessary to implement a quality management system in Higher Education, which integrates the application of the necessary procedures for the integral improvement of this education.

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