Quality Assurance Model

(Document Translated for AQAS Accreditation – Literal Translation)

Quality has been part of the strategic vision of Universidad Autónoma de Chile from its beginning and it is considered a crosscutting pillar throughout the institution. In this perspective, nowadays the University must give an answer to growing demands and the needs of interest groups and key actors that interact with the university community, including regulatory authorities, socio-productive sectors, social organizations, national and international universities, employers and alumni, just to mention some of the most relevant ones. To all of them, Universidad Autónoma de Chile must propose a quality academic project that focuses on academic and institutional excellence in all its intervention areas.

To achieve this, Universidad Autónoma de Chile ensures to develop, keep and update the institutional capacities in order to reach high standards in all areas, guiding academic and administrative management towards the search of excellence and promoting a quality culture.

For these reasons, Universidad Autónoma de Chile has developed a Quality Assurance Model, which sets and deploys a mix of components and systems in an integral way and interrelated to promote and to crystalize continuous improvement and the search of institutional and academic management excellence.

The Model is thought with a self-replicating logic in its structure of functioning, understanding as a mix of centralized guidelines in the strategic apex, that are replicated at an academic base, playing an harmonious centralized planning with the autonomy that is proper of a robust and flexible organizational structure.

Having that in mind you ensure that the very same units are the ones that deploy the quality assurance procedures, starting from an institutional strategic orientation[1].

The Quality Assurance Model of Universidad Autónoma de Chile has an institutional reach and is oriented by the following strategic guidelines:

• To promote the deployment and consolidation of a culture of quality in all the tiers of the University, translated to the search of excellence results that impact the development of the institutional academic project.

• To implement procedures, mechanisms and systematic devices of quality assurance in the entire University, that favors the development of the institutional academic project.

• To create meaningful impacts in the relevant environment of the University, in its different mission areas, including teaching, research and outreach, starting from a proposal of value that is sustained by the permanent search of the highest standards of the highest standards of quality in all their influence fields.

• To promote the development of permanent evaluations, either internal or external, that contribute to the strengthening of organizational skills for the management of results and the consolidation of institutional learning instances that contribute to the development of new skills throughout the University.

At the same time, the quality assurance model of Universidad Autónoma de Chile has the objective of defining the frame of reference where the different strategies and mechanisms develop,

(1) For better references on how the Self-replicating structures operate refer to: Beer, Stafford: The Brain of The Firm, Wiley; 2 edition, 1995.

associated to the quality assurance of the procedures and the results, in a way that its deployment carries along the installation of skills at an institutional level and at all levels, being integral, systematic and that orientates work towards permanent improvement.

On the other side, the Quality Assurance Model deploys accordingly with the principles that come from the Policy of Quality Assurance that has been defined by the University, which conceives quality as an articulated mix of mechanisms and procedures, formally defined and systematically applied that allows to register, evaluate, improve and notice the skills of the institution to achieve the expected performance, in all tiers and in all the dimensions of work of the University, stablishing that, the following aspects of Institutional Management must be ensured[2].

• **Objectives of plans and Projects:** The objectives that are defined in the plans and projects of Universidad Autónoma de Chile will be considered of quality as long as they are considered meaningful, challenging, clear, measurable and manageable.

• **Procedures:** It is understood that the institution has robust quality procedures that are correctly documented, their deployment is consolidated and extended across the University, these procedures are found in permanent evaluation and improvement, and that are articulated with the strategy and activity of the organization.

• **Results***:* The accomplished results by Universidad Autónoma de Chile are understood as consolidated always, as a minimum, to have reached the established goals by the plans and that ideally have been over accomplished, and that always look like a positive and growing tendency at a medium-term. The institutional results must be analyzed and weighted, besides, in the national and international context of Universities.

• **Quality Standards***:* Universidad Autónoma de Chile will orientate their procedures of academic and administrative management accordingly to the established international and national standards, which have to be formally integrated in the design and implementation of the procedures of institutional management, undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, research, innovation, creation and outreach.

• **Impact***:* Universidad Autónoma de Chile must include within its internal quality demands, the monitoring and improvement of impacts that are produced within its procedures and results in teaching, research and outreach.

• **Key actors***:* Universidad Autónoma de Chile must integrate to its quality definitions the satisfaction of needs and expectations of the considered key actors for sustainability and institutional development, with the goal of accomplishing and maintain high standards of satisfaction.

• **Decision making based on information***:* Decision making of Universidad Autónoma de Chile, including the proposal of development and improvement plans, assignment of resources, application of correctional actions and the creation of new initiatives, must be done considering verifiable and up to date information.

• **Performance and Accountability***:* All the academic and management units of Universidad Autónoma de Chile must be

accountable periodically of the advancement of assigned actions and goals of institutional planning and in the other instruments of institutional performance management that are established.

• **Integrity and Transparency:** Universidad Autónoma de Chile shows its commitment with integrity as a constitutive part of its quality culture and therefore, it develops a management based in ethical principles and in close proximity with the institutional framework and current policies in the country at different levels.

As a frame of reference, the Policy of Quality Assurance, the Quality Assurance Model is articulated and interactive starting from 5 components and 4 systems. At a components level, it considers the following:

• **Analysis***:* It comprehends the permanent prospecting of the meaningful environment in search of opportunities and proposals of quality assurance and continuous improvement, added to the permanent review of the institutional reality, with an aim at identifying places of improvement.

• **Design***:* It considers planning and definition of objectives of development based on criteria and verifiable quality standards, properly operationalized through goals and expected results that bring the University towards academic and institutional management of excellence.

• **Execution***:* When a design is defined, it is imperative to guarantee the right implementation of main projects, therefore quality procedures must be established, accordingly monitored with the objective of following and accomplishing the outlined objectives,

for it having established the corresponding mechanisms of management control.
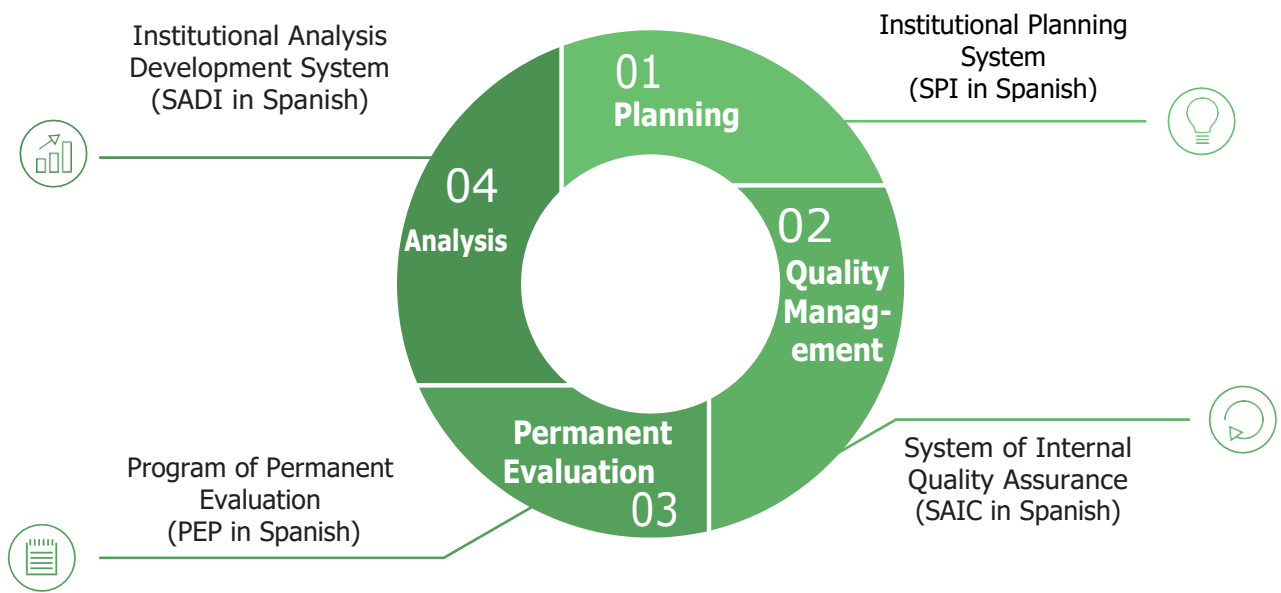
• **Evaluation***:* With the objective of quantifying the achievement of institutional goals and their deployment in different tiers of the University, it is required to establish systematic evaluation, in order to be accountable regarding the objectives of development that the institution has deemed for it. From this evaluation, the actions to improve are deployed, as well as the strategies of successful projects.

• **Improvement***:* Once the evaluation has finished, it is essential to establish the plans and mechanisms of improvement that can close the gaps found, at the same time to adjust the strategies to advance towards new institutional development stages. Improvement goes along with Analysis, thus closing a circle of quality in management.

In the other hand, the Quality Assurance Model comprehends the interaction and permanent feedback of 4 systems, that at the same time it is established in the work areas where the promotion and quality management is operationalized throughout the University, with a special emphasis of its deployment of the main academic units, under the logic of self-replicating structures that the model gives.

The following diagram shows the 4 systems, that will be analyzed in detail moving forward in the current document.

No.1 Model:
Quality Assurance Model Systems

Institutional Analysis
Development System
(SADI in Spanish)

Institutional Planning
System
(SPI in Spanish)

01
Planning

04
Analysis

02
Quality Manag-ement

Permanent Evaluation
03

Program of Permanent
Evaluation
(PEP in Spanish)

System of Internal
Quality Assurance
(SAIC in Spanish)
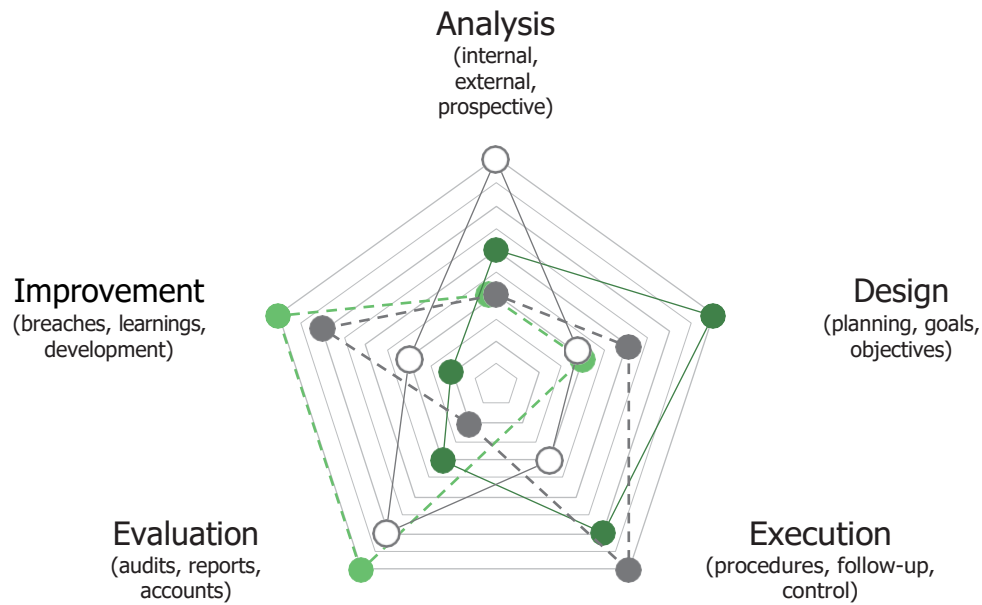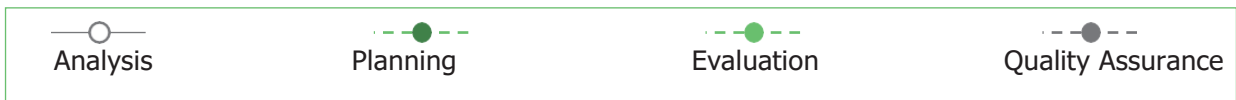
Source: Quality Assurance Department

These systems interact constantly among them, at the same time they interrelate with different degrees of intensity with components of the Quality Assurance Model. With it an integrated view of quality management is guaranteed, at the same time it allows to replicate this coordination structure at the main academic units, contributing to an effective deployment of the institutional academic project and of the goals that its after.

The following diagram shows how the different components and systems of the Quality Assurance Model interact to achieve the goals.

No.2 Model:
Interaction of Components and Systems
of the Quality Assurance Model

Components and Systems

○ Analysis   ● Planning   ● Evaluation   ● Quality Assurance

Analysis
(internal, external, prospective)

Improvement
(breaches, learnings, development)

Design
(planning, goals, objectives)

Evaluation
(audits, reports, accounts)

Execution
(procedures, follow-up, control)

Source: Quality Assurance Department

Ultimately, the Quality Assurance Model of Universidad Autónoma de Chile proposes to be articulated in an integral way in conjunction with procedures and strategic management, with the objective of accomplishing the goals of the University, at the same time to specify the base for the creation and consolidation of organizational skills that favor to be recognized by the excellence of obtained results, within the frame of deployment of the institutional academic project.

Next, a detailed deployment of the 4 systems that comprehend the Quality Assurance Model of Universidad Autónoma de Chile.

Institutional Planning System (IPS)

Universidad Autónoma de Chile will guide your decision making and resource assignments based on the previous definition of goals and mid-term to long-term objectives, safekeeping the alignment of the institutional mission and values, strategy, going towards a culture of planning and accounting, which manages the organization towards accomplishing the acquired commitments made by the different areas of the University (goals).

From this component, definition is coordinated, follow-up and control of the strategic control systems, such as review and design of the strategic definitions and goals of the organization.

• **Plan of Strategic Development:** This Plan will have the current definition of institutional strategy, based on the mission, vision, axis, objectives and goals, which will be updated at least every 5 tears to answer opportunistically the external challenges and tendencies. To create and to update the Plan of Strategic Development it is important to have in mind the external analysis and the status of the institutional performance, including the expectations and needs of: applicants, students, alumni, academics, employees, directive board, employers, companies, linked social actors, regulatory agencies and state organizations.

• **Plans of Development of Faculties:** The faculties will create Development Plans for their respective disciplinary areas and academic projects, aligning with the institutional strategy and paying attention to the conditions of its specific environment. The Development Plans of the Faculties will have the same duration that the Institutional Strategic Development Plan, it will be structured the same way and its initiatives must go along with the defined institutional strategic objectives.

• **Plans of Degree Development, Masters and PHDs:** All the academic programs that lead to degrees or postgraduates must create their own Plan of Development, in concordance with the corresponding Development Plans of the Faculty and with the institutional strategic alignments. These plans will include the definitions of the graduation profile, teaching objectives and the development of the academic plans.

• **Yearly Action Plans:** The Departments, Faculties and Campuses of the University will plan their yearly activities starting from the definitions of the Development Plans that belong to them and the action tasks that they are in charge of. The planning of initiatives and activities are detailed in the Yearly Action Plans.

• **Special Plans for Projects and emerging initiatives:** If there is a Project or an Initiative not contemplated in time in the Plans of Development or Yearly Action Plans, there must be, to be considered by the institutional authorities, a special plan that shows the reach, objectives, activities, dates, resources, results, indicators and means to verify the achievement of results, and that also specifies the way that it will be crosscutting and integral to the Current Strategic Development Plans.

• **Formal approval of the plans:** The creation and update of the plans must be approved and reviewed by the authorities of the University, according to the following scheme:

- Plan of Strategic Development: Board of Directors

- Plans of Development of Faculties: University President

- Plans of Degree Development, Masters and PHDs: Institutional Vice-Presidents, Yearly Action Plans: Institutional Vice-Presidents.
- Special Plans: University President.

In the same way, for its approval, all the plans must have a review from the Management and Finances Vice-Presidency and the Quality Assurance Vice-Presidency.

• *Compliance Control:* The authorities of each academic or administrative unit will be responsible of assuring the accomplishment of defined actions in their respective plans. The Quality Assurance Vice-Presidency, through the Department of Planning and Control, will have as responsibility the follow-up the status of the goals and actions of the plans, creating for it periodic reports.

• *Evaluation:* The evaluation of the accomplishment level of each one of the plans will be carried out considering 2 dimensions:

- Goals: advancement degree to accomplish the goal and objectives, measured through some indicators of institutional performance that are formally designed at the stage of plan creation.
- Actions: advancement degree of the execution of defined activities for the accomplishment of objectives, in agreement with the products, results and defined dates during the creation of the plan. The accomplishment of actions must be backed up with verifiable evidence.

• *Internal and External Monitoring:* The University must know the variations and external tendencies and of their internal performance, identifying beforehand problems that might impact the institutional strategy, to impact the accomplishment of objectives or to affect the normal development of the university project.

Therefore:

- There must be a permanent monitoring of the institutional performance, especially those procedures and variables considered critical for the academic and administrative operation.
- There must be a follow-up and permanent prospection of the social, political, economic, cultural, technological and regulatory environment, like tendencies and challenges of the national and international university education.

• *Adjustments and updates of plans:* Starting from the information that is created from the procedures of accomplishment control, evaluation and monitoring (internal and external), there will be adjusted or updated plans, either to ensure the accomplishment of goals, to answer accordingly to new challenges of the environment or to safe keep the correct performance of the key procedures of the institution. The entire update must be approved or reviewed by the same instances that participated in their original creation.

• *Coordination and technical support for the management of planning:* Without prejudice of the attributions and responsibilities of the academic and administrative authorities of the university, it will belong to the Vice-Presidency of Quality Assurance to coordinate and to give technical support for the correct application of the institutional planning. Therefore:

- It will define the guidelines and procedures for the planning process: creation, follow-up, update, evaluation and closure.
- It will give technical support for the creation of plans, through direct help or through creation of documents with methodological orientations.
- It will give official information of the institutional indicators, either to determine

base lines like the evaluation of accomplishment of goals.
- It will coordinate the control of accomplishment of the development and operational plans.
- It will coordinate the medium and final evaluation of plans.
- It will carry out the internal and external monitoring of the institutional strategy, developing an institutional information system and a conjunction of reports and studies.
- It will give orientation and technical support for the development of internal and external of strategies of Faculties and Institutes.
- It will manage an information system for the registry and follow-up of plans.

The policies of quality assurance orientates their performance towards a management based in procedures, which are considered of quality within their robust and correctly documented design, that their implementation is consolidated and extended to the whole institution, that is found in permanent evaluation and improvement, and that are articulated with the strategy and operation of the organization. The design of the academic and administrative procedures of the university must be inspired in the best practices in university level education and founded in concepts and technical models of management validated internationally.

Internal Quality Assurance System (SAIC)

The System of Internal Quality Assurance of Universidad Autónoma de Chile (SAIC) systematizes, evaluates and does the follow-up of relevant procedures for the institution, with the objective of giving public quality guarantees of procedures and their results, with special emphasis in the results of learning, based in the transparency and in early accountability. A tool is found to the disposal of all tiers of the University Community to improve the management of the institutional work.

The implementation of the system seeks to promote and to strengthen a culture of quality having the participation of all the collaborators that are responsible, through their performance, of the results of the institutions. The system comprehends a systematic work, structured and continuous about the quality, in terms of their design, evaluation and improvement, within the criteria and standards of the internal and external quality.

The reach of the System of Internal Quality Assurance (SAIC) considers all the levels of education by the university, undergraduate and post-graduate, like their academic body, activity of research and link with the environment, and the procedures of support that allows to guarantee the correct implementation of other areas of the system. It is applied to all the units and their collaborators, and it is designed accordingly to international standards. The used criteria is:

• **Aim on the Result:** the procedures and devices must answer and be associated to the results and expected results.

• **Critical Analysis:** the procedures and devices must be have a continuous follow-up in the implementation that would allow, through analysis, identify weaknesses and opportunities of improvement for the device.

• **Information Assurance:** the procedures and devices must guarantee pick up, systematization and registry of the relevant information for the management and their results.

• **Continuous Improvement:** the procedures and devices must consider the continuous development, seeking to correct the weaknesses or difficulties found in their implementation and that have an impact in the performance or result of these. SAIC systematizes the procedures in 3 big areas:
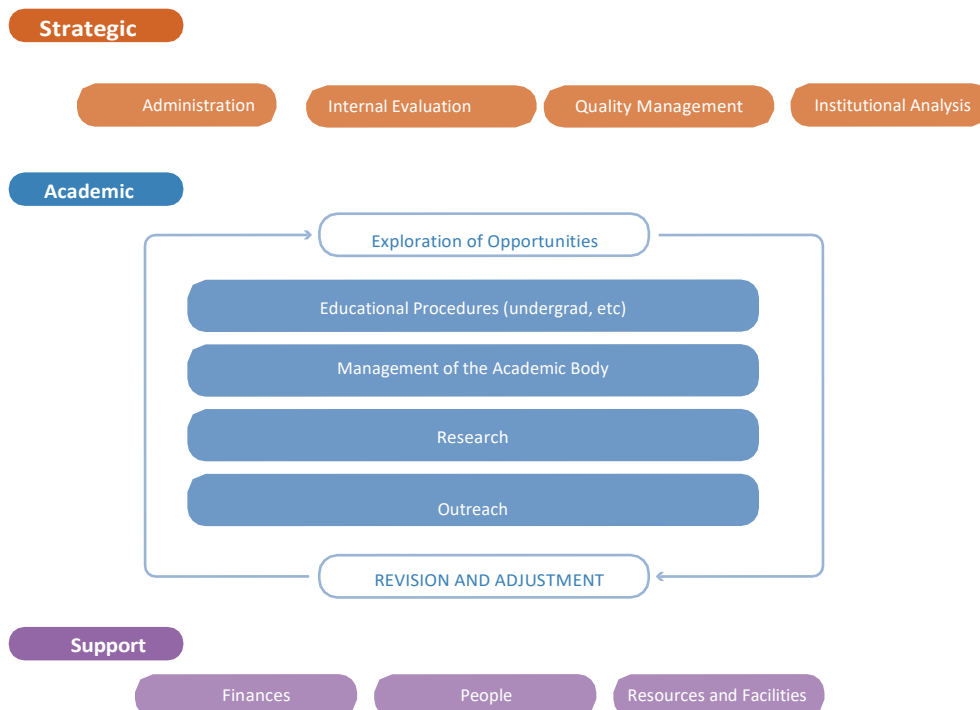
- Strategic: Those associated with the institutional strategy and that affect the institution as a whole. Their objective is related with the definition and control of goals of the organization, policies and strategies.

- Academic: related directly with the educational activities, research and extension of the University.

- Support: related to all the activities that have the objective of simplify the development of strategic procedures and academics.

Therefore, there is an inventory of the identified procedures and coded for the characterization and systematization, it is shown in a diagram that has identified procedures in the strategic, academic and support areas, as shown in the following diagram:

Map of Processes
Internal Quality Assurance System (SAIC)

Strategic

| Administration | Internal Evaluation | Quality Management | Institutional Analysis |

Academic

Exploration of Opportunities

Educational Procedures (undergrad, etc)

Management of the Academic Body

Research

Outreach

REVISION AND ADJUSTMENT

Support

| Finances | People | Resources and Facilities |

Source: Quality Assurance Vice-Presidency

The system is supported by a base of planning, execution, mediation, comparison with standards, feedback and follow-up of the procedures to reach the expected results.

The objective is to make sure that the quality objectives defined by the institution are implemented at all tiers of the organization, as well as the people responsible for these procedures to have a quality assurance system that allows them to analyze the development and results of the institutional procedures, allowing to define and develop

continuous improvement of the quality of these results.

The Quality Committees of each Faculty are responsible for the implementation of the procedures that belong to them, as well as the monitoring of the results linked to them and the increased opportunities of improvement created, in agreement with the guidelines of SAIC. The Vice-Presidency of Quality Assurance through the Department of Quality Management will coordinate the correct implementation and follow-up of the accomplishment of SAIC at different tiers.

Program of Permanent Evaluation (PEP)

The Program of Permanent Evaluation is a mix of mechanisms that allow registering, evaluating, improving and showing the institutional skills and of each unit, to achieve the expected performances at a faculty level, degrees and programs.

It is all about the interrelated mechanisms, that allow to relieve certain critical procedures, that constitute a monitoring opportunity and anticipation of deviations, with special consideration of the development of the educational model of the University and the challenges that this involves. The considered mechanisms in this program are:

• **Verification of the Evaluation Procedure of the Graduation Profile :** This verification procedure is about accomplishing the procedures defined for prospection, review, adjustment, approval and socialization of the Graduation Profile of degrees and programs that the institution offers, making sure to have evidence and backups of the participation of

different groups of interest for the discipline (employers, alumni, relevant external actors, national and foreign) and that allows to assure pertinence, viability and quality of the given education of our students.

• **Verification of Alumni Follow-up:** This verification procedure is about the correct participation of this group of interest in verification of the Graduation Profile, feedback, evaluation of expectations and satisfaction, allowing to monitor the level of achievement reached, the conditions of work insertion, satisfaction of alumni, employer and feedback from them about the current Graduation Profile.

• **System of Information Pick-up:** Systematic mix and action rules of periodic measurement and qualitative analysis, that starting from the interaction of key actors, and at all tiers of the different university tasks, it seeks to promote information about the degree of accomplishment of commitments,

quality of services, of the levels of satisfaction, representing an input and to strengthen decision making at all tiers, creating the possibility of improving procedures.

• **Yearly Report:** Procedure that allows to follow-up and improve the educational programs through the development of Yearly Reports, where the results are systematized regarding the implementation of the academic offer, with special emphasis to the related procedures with the authorization, execution and results, allowing to identify weaknesses and opportunities of improvement that impact the learning results of students.

• **Academic Audit:** Procedure that allows to verify the grade of accomplishment of the Academic Units about the criteria of external evaluation (national and international accrediting agencies) and internal (specific requirements) for undergraduate and postgraduate programs, with the objective of identifying aspects that require adjustments to improve their performance.

• **Improvement Plans:** Exercise of critical analysis that allows to propose and create actions of improvement that correspond to overcome weaknesses or detected breaches.

These are carried out at a degree level and is articulated with the process of creation, validation, implementation and evaluation of improvement plans, which stablishes criteria and critical activities for the creation, validation, implementation and evaluation of improvement plans that allows to orientate it to reach the proposed objectives regarding detected weaknesses and to implement opportunities of improvement facing gaps in the procedures, results or another quality criteria. Following-up and periodic evaluation are what allows to update, adjust and to show their accomplishment degree for the achievement of a continuous improvement.

• **Alumni Follow-up:** Verification of the correct participation of this interest group in procedures of verification of the Graduation Profile, feedback of this and evaluation of expectations and satisfaction of these, allowing to monitor the accomplished achievement, the conditions of work insertion, employer and feedback of these about the right Graduation Profile.

• **Self-evaluation for External Certification:** To coordinate and support the degrees in the development of procedures of external certification, either national or international, with the objective of public faith of the quality of offered programs.

Institutional Analysis Development System (SADI)

This system brings together the systematization, management and analysis of the management and result indicators in different areas of the University, like teaching, research, outreach, with the purpose of strengthening decision making at all organizational tiers.

Starting from the delivery of reliable information, opportunistic and pertinent that favors the institutional efficiency. In its field of action there is design and validation of indicators, as well as the analysis of context (other national and international organisms of education) for the design and proposal of quality standards.

Either planning as well as the follow-up of the achievement level, procedure level as results, must be based in an institutional analysis work, founded in constructed evidence starting from data and valid information, reliable, verifiable that orientates quality decision making.

The System of Analysis for Institutional Development is oriented to support and manage the following procedures:

• Management and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information to contribute effective decision making at all tiers of organization.

• Supply of prospective studies for the institutional development, including academic offer, campus development, financial analysis, academic requirements, infrastructure, bibliography and others.

• Support of strategic planning procedures and institutional development starting from the creation of the rising, procedure, interpretation and analysis of information relevant for decision making, according to the established framework in the System of Internal Quality Assurance.

• Report creation about critical performance indicators of the institution regarding the academic and management areas to support decision making at strategic, tactical and operational levels.

• Analysis and studies of tendency in university education and comparison of institutions starting from solid public information and self-rising.
• Systematization, validation and distribution

of corporative information such as academic and regulatory institutional organisms, national and international ranking, media, as well as internal and external audits.

• Support in the design of an architecture of institutional information management, tied to the corporative information management systems.

• Contribution to the design of mechanisms of institutional learning.

• Prospection of good international practices for the improvement of corporative indicators.

The Institutional Analysis Development System (SADI) seeks, in the end, to not only give answer to the requirements of information and analysis of data that are of the areas of institutional analysis, but also to incorporate a more holistic perspective of the procedures, where the institutional analysis fulfills an articulation role and channeling of relevant information for decision making based on evidence and not in opinions or perceptions.

Support Structure for the Implementation of the Quality Assurance Model

For a right implementation of the Quality Assurance Model of Universidad Autónoma de Chile, the responsible entity of this is the Vice-Presidency of Quality Assurance, which eases and promotes a culture of quality, at the same time it supports evaluation and the procedures of external certification. Therefore, it is their duty to register, analyze, interpret and spread opportunistically and efficiently, the information about the running of the institution, with the objective of supporting the planning, evaluation and continuous improvement procedures. From that Vice-Presidency and their depending units[3], strategies to strengthen procedure and mechanisms are developed,

that allow to watch over the proposed results for the institutional development, like the criteria of national and international standards.

The work of this unit is centralized and their structures dependent, quality committees are added and coordination of quality assurance per faculty, allowing the logic of self-replication that is found as the base if the model to have an adequate deployment to the base academic units.

Quality Assurance Model