Hcéres renews its cooperation agreement with the Central American Accreditation Council

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The Central American Accreditation Council is a key partner of Hcéres in Central America. Since 2017, the two agencies have been working together to carry out joint evaluations in the region. Here is a look back at this long-standing collaboration.

The Central American Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CCA) is responsible for validating accreditations carried out in the countries of Central America and the Caribbean. The CCA plays a key role in the management, harmonisation and articulation of best practices in quality assurance in higher education in the region. The CCA is located at the University of Panama in Panama City.

Cooperation between the CCA and Hcéres dates back to 2017, with three cooperation agreements signed in 2017, 2021 and 2024. This cooperation focuses in particular on the organisation of joint evaluations of higher education institutions in Central America, through the participation of CCA experts recruited locally in each of the Hcéres panels. The accreditation decisions taken by the Hcéres International Accreditation Commission will then be recognised by the CCA. Hcéres also participated in the forum "Trends and Challenges in Quality Assurance in Central America" on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of the CCA in 2022.

With around ten institutions evaluated in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Panama, Hcéres is one of
the most active international agencies in the Central American region. By involving local stakeholders such as the CCA, Hcéres is committed to carrying out international evaluations that respect the identity of the institutions and their specific territorial characteristics. While the tools used internationally are based on expertise acquired in France, taking account of the local context is a key feature of Hcéres’ methodology abroad. For the institutions evaluated, international accreditation is an important step in their continuous improvement process and in their regional and international integration. It guarantees that the institutions meet the highest quality requirements in terms of management, teaching & learning, research and links with society. As a symbol of the importance of this strategy, several institutions are now preparing for re-accreditation by Hcéres.

The latest evaluation was the National University of Costa Rica, which received the maximum accreditation for a period of five years. The panel of six experts, including two from the CCA, highlighted the dynamism of the university's policy of extension, a strong feature in Latin-America, emphasising the co-construction of knowledge with civil society. The evaluation report is available here.

Hcéres and CCA are planning a series of joint evaluations in the coming years. Hcéres' work in Central America is already being recognised by diplomatic missions as a means of promoting university cooperation. Hcéres would like to thank its counterparts at the CCA, in particular the Executive Director, Dr Luzmila Campos de Sanchez, for their renewed confidence.