



Seminário Internacional

Avaliação da Educação Superior

30 e 31
de Outubro

Royal Tulip Brasília Alvorada

MEASURING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: WHAT ROLE FOR STUDENT ASSESSMENT IN OECD COUNTRIES?

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SUMMARY

1. Why must the quality of higher education be validated?
2. Why assess learning outcomes to validate the quality of higher education?
3. What countries use learning assessments in the assurance of quality?
4. How is higher education assessment used in OECD member countries – and why are governments not using it?
5. Ten questions that OECD countries have for Brazil about its use of assessments
6. Four items of advice from the experience of quality measurement in OECD countries



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1. WHY MUST THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION BE VALIDATED?



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1. Why is there a need to validate the quality of higher education?

- The **expansion** of higher education led to provision on a scale that made old ways of upholding quality unfeasible.
- The **costliness** of higher education made assurance of quality necessary to protect growing public expenditure and ensure accountability
- The erosion of **trust** in traditional authorities made validation to external stakeholders unavoidable.



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2. WHY ASSESS LEARNING OUTCOMES AS A PART OF A SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE?



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2. Why assess learning outcomes as a part of a system of quality assurance?

- Promoting learning is a central responsibility of higher education. Judgments about quality are **incomplete** -- at best -- without measurement of learning.
- We cannot assume that the **professional judgments** of academics guarantee reliability and the consistency in the assessment of learning outcomes
- Global trends in **school-level assessment** of learning outcomes support the view that it is possible and desirable – even for higher education



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3. WHAT COUNTRIES USE LEARNING ASSESSMENTS IN THE ASSURANCE OF QUALITY?



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3. What countries use learning assessments in the assurance of quality?

- **No** OECD member countries have implemented **external, public, obligatory, and standardized** assessments of students in tertiary education.
- **Brazil**, in this respect, is a **global innovator**, along with **Colombia** (SABER PRO) and a handful of countries outside the OECD (Kazakhstan).



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4. HOW IS HIGHER EDUCATION ASSESSMENT USED IN OECD MEMBER COUNTRIES?



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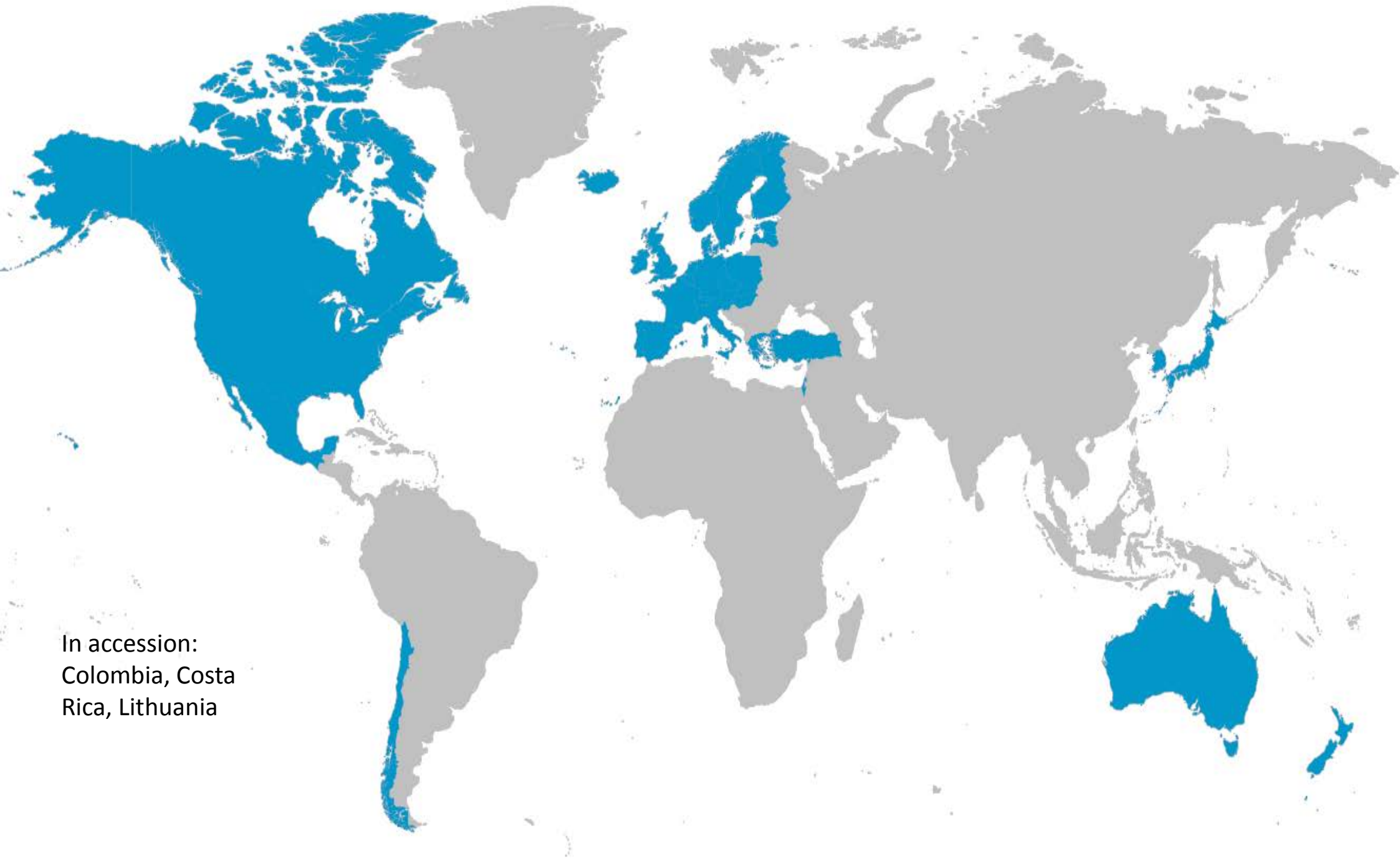


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The 35 OECD Member Countries (2017)



In accession:
Colombia, Costa
Rica, Lithuania



4. How is higher education assessment used in OECD member countries? (1)

- By **governments**, to evaluate success of **non-higher education programmes** (short-term labour market training or adult basic education) hosted by HEIs.
- By **HEIs, voluntarily**, to **monitor institutional performance** in developing “transversal” rather than disciplinary skills (e.g. critical thinking).
- By **HEIs, voluntarily**, to **evaluate student skills and place students** into coursework fitted to their abilities.



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4. How is higher education assessment used in OECD member countries? (2)

- **By professional bodies** to determine **who is fit to enter** a licensed or regulated profession, such as nursing or accounting.
- **By individuals, who acquire industry-based certifications** to demonstrate to employers their product-based or industry-defined competencies.
- **By graduate and professional schools** who use externally set examinations to select students for entry to study programmes.



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Type or purpose of assessment	Example	Does government require institutions or programmes to participate?	Does government require all students to participate?	Are scale score results publicly disclosed or privately held?	Are results an input to QA processes (e.g.: penalty or termination of programmes)?
LM training or basic skills	CASAS (California Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System)	Sometimes, yes	Yes	No	Used to evaluate government training programmes, not institution
Evaluate competencies and advise placement in courses	Accuplacer	No	No	Privately held	No
Evaluate acquisition of transversal skills	CLA+ [Collegiate Learning Assessment]	No	No	No	No
Professional licensure examination awarding permission to practice	NCLEX [National Council of State Boards of Nursing Examination]	No	No	No	No, but may lead to decision by professional body about recognition of a programme
Certification of industry or product competency	MCSE [Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert]	No	No	No	No
Select applicants for entry to advanced study	MCAT [Medical College Admission Test]	No	No	No	No

4. If assessments are so important, why are they not used by OECD governments to measure quality?

- **Small states** (e.g. Baltics) may find the cost and complexity too great.
- In some countries (e.g. Nordics) there is a **high level of trust** in the level and consistency of publicly funded, publicly managed higher education institutions.
- In some countries (e.g. Anglos) **public authorities have limited authority** vis-à-vis HEIs and lack legal authorisation to compel institutional participation in externally-set, common assessments.
- In many OECD countries the **focus is on improving information about labour market outcomes** (LMO) of graduates.



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5. WHAT OECD COUNTRIES WOULD LIKE TO ASK BRAZIL



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5. What OECD countries would like to ask Brazil (1)

Discussions about higher education assessment are underway in some OECD member countries. Ministries are interested, and if they were here they might ask these ten questions.

1. How can we **engage** our nation's disciplinary communities in creating assessments – and in so many disciplines? How can we keep assessments **current**, and avoid stifling innovation?
2. How can an assessment with a small number of items generate a **valid** assessment for the many domains of a discipline?
3. How can an assessment with a small number of items generate **reliable** scoring?
4. How does one address challenges of **participation and motivation** in a no-stakes assessment?



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5. What OECD countries would like to ask Brazil (2)

5. Can we create a **value-added score** without administering a pre-test that measures the same construct – and be confident in its validity?
6. How shall we account for the **attrition** of students from programmes – and avoid selection bias in our evaluations?
7. Do HEIs have sufficient confidence in the results in the validity and reliability of the assessment that they use it to **revise and improve** their offerings?
8. Do students and families have sufficient confidence in ENADE results -- or IDD – that they use it in **making choices**?
9. How can we assess **professional competencies** that do not easily lend themselves to standardised assessments?
10. Should we focus on **social and emotional skills** important to life beyond school, or attitude-oriented assessment, as in ENADE?



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6. WHAT ADVICE MIGHT OECD COUNTRIES SHARE?



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6. What advice might OECD countries share about the measurement of quality based upon their experience?

- Many OECD countries have wide experience with quantitative indicators of programme or institutional quality. Increasing use to make **diagnostic** judgments about quality (that authorise them to self-accredit), or **actionable** judgments about quality that lead to further review or penalties.
- **Lesson One:** Indicators are **proxies** for quality, and we should pay attention to their implicit assumptions and their unintended consequences.
 - Inputs to learning
 - Process of learning
 - Outputs
 - Graduate outcomes



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	Examples	Hypothesis (es)	Risks
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of instructors with PhD • % of instructors with full-time, permanent contract • Student/teacher ratios 	Full-time faculty with PhD have stronger incentives and greater capacity to promote advanced learning than those without	PhD instructors may be weakly motivated to engage in teaching, or have skills poorly aligned to instructional needs in professional programmes
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and frequency of instructional contract hours • Student reports of pedagogical practices 	Small group and collaborative work are more effective at promoting learning than other modes of teaching and surveys of students provide valid responses about these practices	Pedagogical practices believed to be effective are not substantiated, and many student surveys marked by low validity. Institutions may be encouraged to adopt ineffective or inefficient practices.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time (or credits) to degree • Completion rate • Cumulative borrowing 	Time (or credits) to completion provide evidence of well-managed and properly sequenced instruction	Rates of progression are heavily influenced by student social conditions rather than institutional performance. Institutions may respond to restricting entry to disadvantaged students.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour market indicators (time to employment, % employed full-time, earnings, % employed in field of study) 	Graduate earnings are a market valuation of skills acquired in higher education programmes, therefore differences in earnings across like programmes reflect differences in programme	Labour market outcomes can additionally reflect racial and gender discrimination, regional disparities.

6. What might Brazil learn from the experience of OECD member countries in their efforts to measure quality in higher education? (2)

Lesson two: Create simple, predictable targets to which institutions can manage.

If there is a lack of confidence in the capacity or willingness of HEIs to manage the quality of programmes, simple quantitative indicators of programme quality – **with clear, predictable, actionable targets** – are powerful in addressing [apparently] low quality programmes. Indices are difficult to HEIs to manage to and lack a scientific basis.

Table 1 – Minimum percentages (composition) for the academic staff (university education)

Academic staff	1 st Cycle	Integrated Master	2 nd Cycle	3 rd Cycle
Full time staff – “own teaching staff”(ECDU)	75%	75%	75%	75%
Full time PhDs (GADES and A3ES-3 rd Cycle)	37,5%	37,5%	37,5%	75%
PhDs FTE (GADES – article 57, & 2, e A3ES-3 rd Cycle)		50%	50%	100%

Note: All percentages are calculated in relation to the whole academic staff and all values are considered in FTE.

Table 4.1
Study programmes accredited, 2009-2017

Year	Universities		Polytechnics		Total
	Public	Private	Public	Private	
2009	2612	1103	1135	412	5262
2017	2191	625	1131	266	4213
Decrease	16,1%	43,3%	0,4%	35,4%	19,9%



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6. What might Brazil learn from the experience of OECD member countries in their efforts to measure quality in higher education? (3)

- United States “gainful employment” regulation. For programmes leading to “gainful employment” in a recognised occupation:
- The average annual loan payments of graduates three years after completion may not exceed 8 percent of their total earnings
- If >8% threshold is exceeded for multiple graduating classes, program removed from federal student aid system
- 10% of for-profit programmes were expected to close, and a plurality at programmes in were “at risk” had exceed for one or more years.
- Clear, predictable, and actionable rule that allowed programmes to improve (by reducing borrowing or improving employment) -- or close.

6. What might Brazil learn from the experience of OECD member countries in their efforts to measure quality in higher education? (4)

Lesson three: Diversification is important in quality measurement.
In two ways:

- 1.** Where institutions are thought to be fit to manage their quality, a **simple and clear framework of indicators can be used to permit authorisation and renewal** of self-accreditation. (the Australian model)
- 2.** A well-designed framework of indicators for QA should not use one type of institution as a reference point of quality. Where there are professionally-oriented institutions, **adapt the measurement of quality** – especially focusing on **skills in use in a professional setting**.



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6. What might Brazil learn from the experience of OECD member countries in their efforts to measure quality in higher education? (5)

Lesson four: Labour market information (LMI) is valuable.

LMI provides an important new dimension of information -- to support quality and relevance of programmes through performance-based funding, allocation of study places, consumer information.

Less often (but growing frequency) of use in QA systems.

- LMI an essential source of information to assess the quality of institutions with mission of professional education for working life.
- LMI is an important complement to existing information for all HEIs – it provides information about graduate experiences that can help HEIs improve programme design and support continuous quality improvement.



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