

Foreword

Brazil has well-established systems to assess, monitor and assure the quality of learning and teaching in private and public higher education institutions in the federal higher education system. Participation in the external quality assurance system is mandatory for private and federal public higher education institutions, which together account for over 90% of undergraduate enrolment in Brazil. The procedures used to assess institutions and undergraduate programmes are wide-ranging, encompassing institutional self-evaluation, peer-review visits, programme-level quality indicators and large-scale student performance assessment. A separate, comprehensive system of external peer review is used to assure the quality of academic postgraduate education throughout the country.

At the undergraduate level, the National System of Higher Education Evaluation (SINAES) and related regulatory and supervisory systems have been operating, with some modifications, since 2004. SINAES has become a fixture of the Brazilian higher education landscape, but has, itself, never been subject to a systematic assessment of its relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The system for evaluating academic postgraduate programmes, run by the Foundation for the Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) has been operating since 1998. It is well respected in the academic community in Brazil, but as postgraduate education continues to expand, there are questions about the sustainability of its intensive peer-review processes.

Against this backdrop, the Ministry of Education (MEC), the National Commission for Evaluation of Higher Education (CONAES) and CAPES asked the OECD to undertake an independent review of federal quality assurance policies for higher education. The terms of reference for this review called on the review team, composed of international experts and OECD staff, to assess the *relevance*, *effectiveness* and *efficiency* of the procedures in place. The team was asked to consider the effectiveness of the systems in ensuring minimum quality standards, providing differentiated measurement of quality and promoting improvement of quality and quality-oriented practices in higher education institutions. The team's findings and recommendations are presented in this report.

I hope this report will support Brazil in its efforts to promote quality in its higher education system through effective systems of quality assurance. The OECD stands ready to help Brazil in these efforts.



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