A FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY IN INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION:
POLICY AND PRACTICE IN CHILE AS A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In a globalised environment, internationalisation has become increasingly important to the higher education sector, with varying rationales and intensities. Even though higher education has long had an international dimension, the elevation of internationalisation to one of its primary functions is evolving its character in many countries. An increased inflow of international students and greater academic collaborations, alongside intense competition, now characterise an international higher education arena where national boundaries become blurred. These blurred boundaries raise questions about protection of consumers and reputation for the quality of national systems. Like internationalisation, a focus on quality has become increasingly embedded in the higher education culture since the 1990s. Despite being contemporary processes, there are relatively few studies concerned with their convergence, particularly, the examination of the factors or variables explaining quality in international higher education.

This study explores the main elements that contribute to success in international higher education at the system level. The study adopts a national, case study approach. Qualitative data is collected through document analysis, questionnaires to international experts and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in Chile, the context of the case study. Based on an adaptive theory approach, the study constructs a framework for quality in international higher education following an iterative process that brings together the previous management theory of quality as continuous improvement and a novel theory emerging from the empirical data. This process yields an expanded and adapted framework for a bounded higher education system.

The significance of this study lies in the contribution of its empirical findings to theory as well as policy and practice. The study adds to theory by building a comprehensive understanding of quality in international higher education that identifies operational dimensions of ‘excellence’ in the area. Based on this theoretical understanding, a conceptual framework is developed which includes instruments, actors and structures that explain success or failure in international higher education. The applicability of the model is assessed using the case study of Chilean higher education. This new understanding helps to expand on the future of quality in international higher education by setting out several recommendations for policy and practice. The insights gained from this study are of particular assistance to Chilean higher education to better respond to the globalisation challenges and meet the ambition of being more competitive internationally. This study shows that the lack of a national strategic perspective towards international higher education is one of the main factors inhibiting the operation of the full quality cycle. Even though there has been major advancement at the level of individual higher education institutions, there are structural elements that are contingent on national policy. Among these are proper regulation, funding schemes and second language developments in lower educational levels.

This study enhances our understanding of quality in international higher education and sheds light on the series of factors and variables that, in a structured and organised way, help in its management. It develops a framework that contains new innovative analytical tools for predicting and managing success in international higher education at the macro (government), intermediate (agencies) and micro (higher education institution) levels. The viability of the model is assessed using the case study of Chile but its applicability can be examined in other countries. Therefore, this framework may be of interest to policymakers, practitioners and researchers in the field of international higher education for the study of other national contexts as well as cross-country analysis to identify differences between systems.
DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

i. The thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD,

ii. Due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used,

iii. The thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, bibliographies and appendices.

Signature:

Emeline Jerez

October 2018
The following publications derived from this research:


   This book chapter emerged from the literature review relating to Chilean higher education. It focuses on the national quality assurance policy since the 1990s and how it has evolved in terms of emphasis and maturity. These elements are discussed in Chapter 3.


   A section of this book chapter emanated from the literature review relating to quality in higher education. It focuses on the evolution of prevailing trends in the sector, which are discussed in Chapter 4.


   The second segment of this journal article derived from the literature review relating to instruments of quality in international higher education, and the international expert consultation. It focuses on quality assurance mechanisms that contribute to international student success, which are discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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<tr>
<td>AACSB</td>
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<td>AAQ</td>
<td>Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance</td>
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<td>ADP</td>
<td>Sistema de Alta Dirección Pública – High Public Management System</td>
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<td>AERES</td>
<td>Agence d’évaluation de la Recherche et de l’enseignement supérieur – French Evaluation Agency for Research and Higher Education</td>
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<td>Consejo Nacional de Innovación para la Competitividad - National Council on Innovation for Competitiveness</td>
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<td>CONAHEC</td>
<td>Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration</td>
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<td>CONICYT</td>
<td>Comisión Nacional de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica - National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research of Chile</td>
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<td>EI</td>
<td>Education International</td>
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<td>EIC</td>
<td>Espacio Iberoamericano del Conocimiento - Ibero-American Knowledge Space</td>
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<td>ENIC</td>
<td>European Network of Information Centres</td>
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<td>ENQA</td>
<td>European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education</td>
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<td>ENS</td>
<td>École normale supérieure, Paris</td>
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<td>EQAR</td>
<td>European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education</td>
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<td>EQF</td>
<td>European Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>EQUIS</td>
<td>EFMD Quality Improvement System</td>
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<td>ESCALA</td>
<td>Espacio Académico Común Ampliado Latinoamericano - Extended Latin American Common Academic Space</td>
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<td>ESG</td>
<td>European Standards and Guidelines</td>
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<td>EUR-ACE</td>
<td>European-Accredited Engineer</td>
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<td>FLACSO</td>
<td>Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales - Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>Free Trade Agreement</td>
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<td>GATS</td>
<td>General Agreement on Trade in Services</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>HCÉRES</td>
<td>French High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education</td>
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<td>Higher Education Funding Council for England</td>
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<td>HESA</td>
<td>Higher Education Statistics Agency</td>
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<td>HRK</td>
<td>Hochschulrektorenkonferenz - German Rectors’ Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAESTE</td>
<td>International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience</td>
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<td>IAU</td>
<td>International Association of Universities</td>
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<td>IBC</td>
<td>International Branch Campus</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<td>IDB</td>
<td>Inter-American Development Bank</td>
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<td>IDRC</td>
<td>International Development Research Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>IESALC</td>
<td>Instituto Internacional de la UNESCO para la Educación Superior en América Latina y el Caribe - UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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IGLU  INSTITUTO DE GESTIÓN Y LIDERAZGO UNIVERSITARIO - INSTITUTE FOR UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP
IHE  INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION
IHEQN  IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY NETWORK
IIE  INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
INE  INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADÍSTICAS - NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS OF CHILE
INQAHE  INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES
IOM  INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION
IP  INSTITUTO PROFESIONAL – CHILEAN PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTE
IQRP  INTERNATIONALISATION QUALITY REVIEW PROCESS
IRD  INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT - FRENCH RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT
ISO  INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION
JICA  JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY
KARVI  KANSALLINEN KOULUUTUKSEN ARVIOINTIKESKUS - THE FINNISH EDUCATION EVALUATION CENTRE
KOICA  KOREA INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY
LASPAU  LATIN AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES
MARCA  PROGRAMA DE MOVILIDAD ACADÉMICA REGIONAL - REGIONAL ACADEMIC MOBILITY PROGRAMME
MBA  MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
MECESUP  PROGRAMA DE MEJORAMIENTO DE LA CALIDAD Y LA EQUIDAD EN LA EDUCACIÓN TERCARIA – PROGRAMME FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY AND EQUITY IN CHILEAN HIGHER EDUCATION
MERCOSUR  MERCADO COMÚN DEL SUR - SOUTHERN COMMON MARKET
MINEDUC  MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF CHILE
MINREL  MINISTERIO DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF CHILE
MIT  MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
MoHE  MALAYSIAN MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
MoU  MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
MQA  THE MALAYSIAN QUALIFICATIONS AGENCY
MRA  MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENT
N/A  DATA NOT AVAILABLE
NAFSA  ASSOCIATION OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATORS
NARIC  NATIONAL ACADEMIC RECOGNITION INFORMATION CENTRE
NCAAA  THE SAUDI ARABIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION AND ASSESSMENT
NOKUT  NASJONALT ORGAN FOR KVALITET I UTDANNINGEN - THE NORWEGIAN AGENCY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION
NOQA  THE NORDIC QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORK IN HIGHER EDUCATION
NTU  NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
Nuffic  THE DUTCH ORGANISATION FOR INTERNATIONALISATION IN EDUCATION
NVAO  NEDERLANDS-VLAAMSE ACREDITATIEORGANISATIE - ACCREDITATION ORGANISATION OF THE NETHERLANDS AND FLANDERS
NZQA  NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
NZQF  NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
OAS  ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
OECD  ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
OEI  ORGANIZACIÓN DE ESTADOS IBEROAMERICANOS - ORGANISATION OF IBERO-AMERICAN STATES
OUI-IOHE  INTER-AMERICAN ORGANIZATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
PDCA  PLAN-D.O.CHECK-ACT
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>QA-ISLAMIC</td>
<td>The Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of the Islamic World</td>
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<td>QAA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education</td>
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<td>QACHE</td>
<td>Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education</td>
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<td>QB BG</td>
<td>The Quality Beyond Boundaries Group</td>
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<td>QJ</td>
<td>Quality and Qualification Ireland</td>
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<td>RANA</td>
<td>Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación – National Accreditation Agencies Network</td>
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<td>RAUI</td>
<td>Red de Administradores de Universidades Iberoamericanas - Network of Administrators of Ibero-American Universities</td>
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<td>RIACES</td>
<td>Red Iberoamericana para el Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior - Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education</td>
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<td>RL CU</td>
<td>Red Latinoamericana de Cooperación Universitaria - Latino American Network for University Cooperation</td>
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<td>SCT-Chile</td>
<td>Sistema de Créditos Transferibles - Chilean Credit Transfer System</td>
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<td>SIES</td>
<td>Sistema de Información de la Educación Superior – Chilean Higher Education Information System</td>
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<td>SSB</td>
<td>Statistisk Sentralbyrå - Statistics Norway</td>
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<td>TEQA</td>
<td>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency</td>
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<td>TQC</td>
<td>Total Quality Control</td>
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<td>TQM</td>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
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<td>U.S.</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>U21</td>
<td>Universitas 21</td>
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<td>UDP</td>
<td>Universidad Diego Portales – University Diego Portales</td>
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<td>UDUAL</td>
<td>Unión de Universidades de América Latina y el Caribe - Union of Universities of Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<td>UFM</td>
<td>Uddannelses- og Forskningsministeriet - Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>UKSCQA</td>
<td>UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment</td>
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<td>UKA</td>
<td>Universitetskanslersåmbetet - The Swedish Higher Education Authority</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNIKO</td>
<td>Österreichische Universitätenkonferenz - Universities Austria</td>
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<td>USACH</td>
<td>Universidad de Santiago de Chile – University of Santiago of Chile</td>
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<td>USM</td>
<td>Universidad Técnica Federico Santa María - Technical University Federico Santa María</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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Chapter 1: THE EMERGENT CHALLENGE OF QUALITY IN INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

1.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 outlines the elements that give support to the main argument of this investigation and explains why quality in international higher education is a topic of interest for higher education scholarship. In doing so, the first section presents the context and rationale with a particular emphasis on the challenges that globalisation has imposed to higher education systems in relation to two important processes: quality and internationalisation.

Having established the context, the second section defines the focus and aim before moving on to frame the key concepts of the study and articulate what is meant by quality in international higher education. Building on these elements, the chapter presents the research questions – overarching and subsidiary – as the core components that provide direction to this study. Then, it describes the significance to policy, practice and research and concludes by providing an overview of the thesis structure and each of its ten chapters.

1.2 Context and rationale for the study

Globalisation is a social phenomenon that has intensified over the last few decades with political, economic and cultural implications. A new global context has emerged, characterised by growing interchange and trade of tangibles and intangibles, increasing access to information and communication technologies as well as a sustained reduction in the barriers to accessing knowledge. These global trends are accompanied not only by opportunities but also challenges for every social system around the world. The higher education sector has not remained indifferent to this social transformation. It has been tested by the demands of a highly interconnected and involved environment.

Concurrent with globalisation, internationalisation has been the way in which higher education has responded to the new challenges (Cantwell & Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002). Even though, by its ethos, higher education is in itself an activity that has historically crossed territorial boundaries, increasing importance has been attached to internationalisation since the late 1980s. With an augmented intensity concerning strategies and actions for internationalisation, North America and Europe were pioneer regions in these developments, followed by Australia. Nowadays, albeit with significant variations, internationalisation is a significant area of interest to higher education institutions in every part of the world (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). Internationalisation involves risks (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Jibeen & Khan, 2015; Jones, Coelen, Beelen, & de Wit, 2016) but the positive impact on socio-cultural development, research capacity building and the national economy (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Gacel-Ávila, 2005; Knight, 2012; Teichler, 2005) has also been broadly documented.

Internationalisation is a process that operates through a wide range of activities. In this study, international higher education denotes the way in which internationalisation is made operational. Given its scale, mobility of students and academics remains as the most significant international higher education activity with increased flow and widened scope of destinations. However, insofar as internationalisation grows in relevance, its development moves towards a
more comprehensive and strategic perspective at both national and institutional level (Childress, 2009; Enders, 2004; Stensaker, Frølich, Gornitzka, & Maassen, 2008; Taylor, 2004). This is a perspective that goes beyond the movement and trade across national boundaries to also consider the series of activities undertaken at home (Knight, 2012). Among these are, to name a few, internationalisation of curricula, teaching-learning strategies, research and linkages with local communities.

Internationalisation involves widening the national scope to an international space in which new players interact in collaboration but also in competition to expand market shares (Guri-Rosenblit, 2015; Hudzik & Stohl, 2012; Marginson, 2006; Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). Competition includes, but is not limited to, attracting the most talented students, accessing available funding as well as benefitting from ‘brain gain’. In this context, the elements that explain why an actor chooses one country or higher education institution over another are multiple and may include economic, political, territorial or socio-cultural factors (OECD, 2017a).

However, there is evidence that one crucial element is the perceived reputation for quality of higher education (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Australian Government, 2017a; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; OECD, 2017a). In a higher education environment where decision making has become increasingly driven by market forces, the demonstration of compliance with quality standards is crucial to expanding enrolment (Altbach & Knight, 2007). There is evidence that quality in the international higher education market is an issue of policy concern. For instance, an international student survey in Australia revealed that the reputation of the qualifications, the status of the education system, the quality of research and the reputation of the higher education provider are among the top five factors used to select the country as the final study destination (Australian Government, 2017a).

Quality is fast becoming a fundamental concept in higher education (Amaral & Rosa, 2010; Green, 1994; Singh, 2010). Despite being difficult to define (Schindler, Puls-Elvidge, Welzant, & Crawford, 2015), quality in its highest level of abstraction is linked with the notion of excellence (Harvey & Green, 1993; Hazelkorn, Coates, & McCormick, 2018). Over the last three decades, national and institutional quality assurance arrangements have been put in place all over the world to pursue that excellence in the provision of education. National approaches appear to share certain commonalities but the contours of national frameworks are determined by contextual conditions (Billing, 2004; Brennan, 2001). Whereas in some of them the market is predominant (Dill, 2003), in others the state has a more apparent surveillance role (Coates, Weerakkody, Jerez, Wells, & Popenici, 2018).

From the above, quality and internationalisation can be seen as two ongoing processes in higher education that have become central to national and institutional agendas. There is a growing body of literature that recognises the importance of both. However, in an environment that is quickly transforming in terms of demand and provision, the study of quality in addition to internationalisation calls for new insights. For the sector, guaranteeing high-quality standards is at the heart of gaining competitive advantage in increasingly globalised markets.

The research to date has been crucial to understanding that quality in international higher education is the first of three interrelated dimensions. The second and third dimension in the interplay between quality and internationalisation are the ‘internationalisation of quality’ and the ‘quality-adding value of internationalisation’ (EAIE, 2010; van der Wende, 1999; van der Wende & Westerheijden, 2001). The ‘internationalisation of quality’ refers to the impact that internationalisation has on nationally-based, quality assurance arrangements, whereas the ‘quality-adding value of internationalisation’ portrays internationalisation as an instrument that adds value to the quality of higher education by enhancing teaching, research and services.
Literature has also been central to the understanding that, within an international higher education arena, there are more expectations in terms of mechanisms to assure quality’s suitability (Bernhard, 2012b). Moreover, in more globally active contexts, quality has the potential to build trust among the actors (Stensaker & Maassen, 2015). Therefore, it is demonstrated that there is a connecting thread from international higher education developments to quality.

The existing literature in the area has provided insights into the institutional level (EAIE, 2010; OECD, 1999). Other studies have explored national approaches to quality in cross-border higher education (ENQA, 2016a, 2016b). A few pieces of research have examined policy and practice of quality in international higher education at the macro-level in Europe and North America (Bernhard, 2012a, 2012b; British Council, 2016; van Damme, 2001; van der Wende, 1999; van der Wende & Westerheijden, 2001). The significance of this study is that it expands on and updates previous literature to contribute to a better understanding of quality in international higher education at the macro (government), intermediate (agencies) and micro (higher education institution) levels. In doing so, it develops a conceptual model to frame the dynamics and characteristics that shape this process in a system. The findings from this study make several contributions to scholarship in the area of international higher education and serve as a basis to provide recommendations for policy and practice relevant to policymakers, practitioners and scholarly groups.

1.3 Focus and aim of the study

International research is not ‘state of the art’ in explaining success or failure in international higher education. There is currently no model in place to reflect the complexity of influencing factors/variables. Therefore, this dissertation aims at closing this gap by developing a new conceptual model. To do so, the study examines the relationship between two ongoing processes in higher education, quality and internationalisation, at the system level. The emphasis is placed on gaining a comprehensive understanding of the factors/variables that emerge when the dimension of quality is connected with the international higher education activity. This is a connection that generates what this study conceives as quality in international higher education. As a first step, the study explores the theoretical foundations for quality in international higher education. Then, it constructs the conceptual model by identifying its main features before moving on to examining the implications that these features have for policy and practice in a higher education system.

The primary focus is to provide insights into the developments as well as challenges of quality in international higher education within a system. The study applies a single, national, case study design to explore dimensions, dynamics and interconnections behind this process in a bounded higher education system. Related literature looking at the national level has centred mostly on Europe, North America and Australia (Bernhard, 2012b; van Damme, 2001; van der Wende, 1999; van der Wende & Westerheijden, 2001), that is, developed countries with mature higher education systems. Seeking to widen the scope of previous research, the case study focuses on Chile, taking the opportunity to investigate another context with different cultural background and economic conditions.

Chile has an open approach to international trade and investment. It is a signatory to several free trade agreements and a member of supranational organisations such as the OECD. Nonetheless, it seems that the international dynamism of other sectors has not permeated higher education in the same way. The inclusion of an international dimension in higher education has been left behind by a concentration on more traditional tasks (Martinez-
Larrechea & Chiancone-Castro, 2009; OECD & The World Bank, 2009). As with most of the countries in the world, the Chilean higher education sector has expanded and diversified, accompanied by intense competition (Lemaitre, 2004). This expansion has brought to the fore issues of inequality and raised questions concerning the quality and relevance of the domestic provision. These are the issues that have remained at the top of the political agenda.

However, global trends, including rapid technological change and increased international involvement, challenge the way in which public policy has responded to social transformations. There is a demand for a new approach towards external opportunities but also to external threats. This approach should allow the country to achieve its ambition of becoming more competitive internationally (CNIC, 2013); an aspiration that includes transiting from an economic model based on commodities to a model that considers knowledge as the primary form of creating social and economic growth (Boisier, 2001). Higher education’s role is fundamental in establishing a basis for a globally competitive workforce by developing advanced knowledge and linkages with the community (OECD, 2013; Rama, 2006; Rodríguez-Ponce, 2009).

Recent evidence suggests that internationalisation has the potential to support Chilean higher education in its social demand. As per the IAU (International Association of Universities) Global Survey, opportunities exist to achieve graduates with increased multicultural awareness, enhanced quality of the teaching-learning process, strengthened capacity of knowledge development and increased international involvement of researchers and academic staff (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014), to name a few. It is in this context that this study aims not only widen the scope of previous research but also analyse the implications for policy and practice in Chile. Based on Chile’s goals, the study provides recommendations for the advancement of international higher education framed by processes of quality.

1.4 Framing quality in international higher education

Previous research exploring issues of quality in contexts of internationalisation has referred to the term ‘quality in international higher education’ (Marconi, 2013; O’Connell, 2013; Vauterin, Linnanen, & Marttila, 2011) but a comprehensive definition has not been provided. A few studies have addressed the related term of ‘quality assurance of internationalisation’ by suggesting examples of in-place policy and practice (van Damme, 2001; van der Wende, 1999) and associating it with the theoretical model of quality as continuous improvement (EAIE, 2010; OECD, 1999). For this study, these previous developments provide a valuable basis from which to complement and expand and, so, to arrive at a conceptualisation.

Quality in international higher education is a compound term in which two processes coexist; namely, higher education quality and higher education internationalisation. Therefore, approaching its conceptualisation requires building an understanding of both. As outlined earlier, since the late 1980s, quality and internationalisation in higher education have been given predominance in the national and institutional agendas and several studies have proposed conceptual insights into each. However, as revealed by the different perspectives, both are demonstrably complex, multilevel and evolving.

Internationalisation involves expanding the local scope to be part of an international higher education arena in which national boundaries tend to disappear or become blurred (Teichler, 2004; van Damme, 2001). In the early 1990s, academic literature linked internationalisation with activities comprising an international component such as student and academic mobility and international curricula (Rahman & LaMarr Kopp, 1992). In the 2000s,
other views emerged that gave recognition to internationalisation in its transformative value to the core functions of higher education. The focus was on internationalisation as a process that has the potential to transform the inner life of academic activity instead of being considered a series of discrete actions (de Wit, 2010; Knight, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2012; Teichler, 2004). In line with this focus, Knight (2004, p. 11; 2012, p. 29) refers to internationalisation as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education”.

This study adopts this definition but also acknowledges that it has been subjected to criticism due to its ambiguity (Sidhu, 2006), Western roots (Yang, 2005) and because it has the potential to reproduce a dominant epistemological stance over other visions (Stein, Andreotti, Bruce, & Susa, 2016). Despite criticism, Knight’s working definition has garnered widespread use by international organisations as a basis for framing comparative studies (e.g. Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; The World Bank, 2005; The World Bank & OECD, 2007) and by scholars exploring the field at the system and institutional levels (Beelen & Jones, 2015; Delgado-Márquez, Hurtado-Torres, & Bondar, 2011; Robson, 2011; Tham & Kam, 2008; Yemini & Giladi, 2015). In connection with this definition, there are different forms whereby internationalisation is made operational. These forms are generally grouped into ‘at-home’ and ‘cross-border’ strategies (Knight, 2012). Whereas ‘at-home’ refers to those initiatives undertaken domestically, ‘cross-border’ alludes to those strategies involving movement and trade across borders. Given this understanding:

**International higher education** refers to the series of strategies, activities or initiatives, at home and cross-border, whereby the internationalisation process is made operational.

Quality, on the other hand, has since ancient times involved the notion of excellence (Reeves & Bednar, 1994), an idea remaining almost the same until now. For instance, the Oxford dictionary defines quality as “the degree of excellence of something” (Stevenson, 2011). Building on from this idea, the notion of excellence might be interpreted as the achievement of the highest standards (Garvin, 1984; Harvey & Green, 1993), to the extent to which that that is excellent determines those standards. Therefore, excellence is an overarching concept for quality. However, quality as excellence is a highly abstract and subjective conceptualisation that may entail practical difficulties. For example, how can excellence be managed, assessed or measured? Consequently, it is necessary to expand on what the features of excellence are, that is, quality needs an operational interpretation to identify where the emphasis is placed, whether on inputs, processes or outputs or holistically on all of them. Constructing an understanding of quality in higher education, nonetheless, is a challenging task because it involves stakeholders with different perceptions on what quality is (Green, 1994; Knight, 2000; Schindler et al., 2015; Vlăsceanu, Grünberg, & Pârlea, 2007). This study understands quality as excellence when a continuous improvement cycle, as proposed by the management theorist W. Edwards Deming (1986), operates. Accordingly, quality is a function of continuous phases of planning, doing, checking and acting. When it is repeated, the process causes state changes so the improvement occurring between the end of one cycle and the beginning of the next leads to the achievement of high standards (excelling) and hence to a general enhancement over time. Given this:

**Quality** is excellence, made operational through a recurrent process of continuous improvement whereby higher education purposes are planned, implemented and measured, leading to enhancement over time.
The literature on quality management distinguishes three, interrelated, management functions of quality. These are quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement. Quality control involves the fulfilment of quality requirements. Quality assurance relates to the strategies that prevent quality issues, which include proper planning, quality management systems and assessment of outcomes. Quality improvement is the identification of opportunities and remedial actions to do it better (DeFeo & Juran, 2014; Oakland, 2014). A considerable amount of literature has grown up around the theme of quality assurance and different approaches have been presented. For example, it is frequently used as a synonym of accreditation (Schindler et al., 2015) and, sometimes, its emphasis overlaps with that of quality improvement (Vlăsceanu et al., 2007). There has also been a strong focus on quality assurance as an instrument to respond to greater public accountability (Harvey & Williams, 2010). Nonetheless, there appear to be tensions between the rationale for accountability and control and improvement functions which are obscured by the accountability purposes (Ewell, 1987; Harvey & Newton, 2007; Leihy & Salazar, 2017).

As outlined earlier, a few studies have integrated the notion of a wheel of improvement in combination with internationalisation (EAIE, 2010; OECD, 1999). Although previous literature has referred to ‘quality assurance’ cycles, based on what has been discussed, it is believed that the term quality in a broader sense is inclusive of each one of its functions, particularly improvement, which seems to be left behind sometimes when specifying ‘assurance’. Therefore:

**Quality in international higher education** is conceptualised as the search for excellence made operational through a cyclical process of continuous improvement. Through this process, the purposes (role and objectives) of international higher education, both at-home and cross-border, are planned, implemented and measured, leading to enhancement over time.

The above is the working definition for this study. This definition serves as a basis to guide the construction of a conceptual framework to explore the nature of this quality in a bounded higher education system.

**1.5 Research questions**

Given its aims and focus, the following overarching research question guides this study:

**Overarching question**  What is the nature of quality in international higher education in the contemporary global system?

A thorough approach to this overarching question prompts breaking it down into three subsidiary research questions, addressing different layer of complexity in the study. Whereas the first and second questions focus on the construct deployed to interpret quality in international higher education, the third centres on its practical implications:

**Subsidiary question 1**  What are the key characteristics of a policy framework for quality in international higher education?

**Subsidiary question 2**  What methods/techniques can be used by a higher education system to integrate such a framework into national policy?

**Subsidiary question 3**  What are the implications of this policy framework for the development of policy and practice in Chile?
The study provides comprehensive insights by bringing together empirical findings in response to each of these questions. These insights are theoretical and practical regarding the nature of quality in international higher education in the contemporary global system, which has been paid relatively limited attention in the extant literature.

1.6 The significance of the study

In a scenario in which quality has become embedded in the culture of higher education, this study responds to the need for quality arrangements to enhance the international higher education activity that derives from the internationalisation process. The significance of this study lies in the contribution of its empirical findings to theory as well as policy and practice in the area of international higher education.

1.6.1 Significance to theory

As articulated earlier, international research is not a consummate illuminator of success or failure in international higher education and contemporary literature offers no measure representative of the complex, influential elements involved. Consequently, this thesis’ postulation of a new conceptual model goes some way to overcome existing shortcomings. In doing so, the study contributes to the current literature by expanding on the conceptualisation of ‘quality in international higher education’. Some previous research mentions the term but with no detailed exploration of its meaning while others offer a limited approach in terms of scope and theory.

In the research process, the conceptual model is continuously expanded to include new innovative analytical tools. Following an adaptive theory approach (Layder, 1998), this study builds a model based on the literature review which is later informed by the empirical elements emerging from the research data. In the first stage, the study looks at top-performing countries in internationalisation to examine how the international dimension is included in their higher education frameworks. This exploration looks at those elements that serve the purposes of quality in international higher education. From there, a pilot model emanates. In the second and third stages, the study gathers the perceptions of policymakers and practitioners in the field. Consequently, the theory is not just fed from in-place practices but also the viewpoints of individuals who, in their daily professional activity, deal with the dynamics of the topic.

An important characteristic highlighted by the research findings is that the conceptual model has a multilevel nature. This is explained by the influence the macro-level exerts on the intermediate and micro-levels. At the same time, agency is exercised by the intermediate and micro-level at the upper levels. Accordingly, a model centred solely at the macro-level, as the pilot model suggests, involves a limited representation of what is occurring in a real scenario. Furthermore, the study adds another characteristic linked to the hard and soft structures behind the general process of quality. For instance, the autonomy of higher education institutions highlights the need to support the strategy through incentives in the form of funding schemes. Likewise, regulation is needed on an ad-hoc basis, particularly in term of quality assurance mechanisms giving the governance structures the capacity to act against failing providers. The protection of a reputation of quality, especially among international students, is also an essential element.
In this manner, the empirical findings in the study provide a new and expanded model for predicting and managing success in international higher education at the macro (government), intermediate (agencies) and micro (higher education institutions) levels. This model is firmly rooted in higher education dynamics and, in this way, contributes to theory by widening the scope of the basic model of quality with the application of continuous improvement as proposed in management theory for the business sector. It should not be left unnoticed that higher education has an ethos that is unique and possesses distinctive attributes, making it different to other service sectors: intrinsic qualities such as “the ideals of the search for truth and the pursuit of knowledge” and extrinsic qualities in “the services higher education institutions provide to society” (van Vught & Westerheijden, 1994, p. 356).

Therefore, it is essential that a model representing higher education phenomena, such as international higher education quality, reflects on the intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of the higher education sector. This study fills this gap in the literature by drawing on the model of quality as a continuous improvement cycle as one of the elements of a complex equation that also involves the dynamics, governance structures and ways of coordination that are apposite to the sector.

1.6.2 Significance to policy and practice

By its policy-oriented nature, the study responds to the demand for a new theory. It also expands on how that theory might connect with action in a higher education system. In this way, a systematic analysis of the research findings’ implications for policy and practice is provided. Within the case study context of Chilean higher education, the study concentrates on a set of recommendations to which policymakers, leaders and practitioners should pay attention to enhance higher education competitiveness in an increasingly globalised environment.

The empirical findings show that Chilean higher education accounts for international ties by their origins. There is a long history of cross-border academic collaboration, particularly with Europe and North America. However, the character and intensity of this collaboration have changed over the last thirty or so years. Nowadays, Chile has become a more active member of the international community, which comes with new challenges for the national development. Despite being a full member of the OECD since 2010 and signatory of several free trade agreements with higher education as an essential component, the country is still lagging behind many countries. The participants in this study highlighted Chile’s ambitions to achieve knowledge and innovation as main contributors to the creation of wealth and drivers to being more competitive internationally. The role that higher education plays in this respect is seen as fundamental and international higher education, when correctly approached, might be a contributing factor to these developments.

It is in this context that the study centres upon the factors/variables identified as contributing to success in international higher education. Part one provides recommendations to enhance the relationship between the supra-regional and the national-local dimensions identifying factors/variables that might have an impact on quality in international higher education. Among these recommendations are:

- The maintenance of an open approach to good international practice including quality assurance, degree recognition mechanisms and learning outcomes conventions.
- Continued efforts to make more use of benchmarking practices. It is also central that the Chilean higher education authority keeps on delivering adequate data to supranational bodies such as the OECD, UNESCO and others.

- A key policy priority of a strengthened strategic approach to the Latin America region. The privileged position of Chilean universities in the Latin America ranking of universities opens opportunities for new strategic developments.

- An improved structure of degrees in terms of study length and readability to enhance competitiveness and foster student mobility.

Part two centres on the national-local dimension. This study has assessed the applicability of the model to the case study context by identifying relevance, feasibility and current developments. Taken together, these findings support short, medium and long-term recommendations to the macro and intermediate level.

At the macro level:

- **Short-term.** It is recommended to strengthen the instruments in current operation including international agreements, engaging in higher education networks, pre-arrival information for prospective international students and data on international higher education activity.

- **Medium-term.** The challenge is to reunite the higher education stakeholders around a national strategy for higher education and innovation as the basis for a national strategy for international higher education.

- **Long-term.** Greater efforts are needed to build monitoring and improvement capacity at the macro level (government).

At the intermediate level:

- **Short term:** It is recommended to strengthen the instruments in current operation. It is essential that the intermediate agents keep on enhancing the installation of a quality culture across the sector. It should be a priority to ensure an improved articulation among government agencies, professional bodies and other groups of interest in areas of high impact for international higher education quality.

- **Medium term:** There is a need for an enhanced strategic perspective towards international higher education. The intermediate level should play an essential role in the development of the national qualification framework.

- **Long term:** Continued efforts are needed to build monitoring and improvement capacity at the intermediate-level (agencies and other intermediate agents).

Given its high heterogeneity at the higher education institution level, the findings suggest general recommendations and possible risks that ought to be considered.

- There is a need for better instances that allow the leading universities to share good practices in international higher education. This might be an opportunity to those who are lagging behind to visualise potential benefits for their institutional work.
- It is critical to conceive the institutional international strategy in alignment with the overall institutional development.

- International agreements, operational information and engaging in higher education networks are common mechanisms associated with international higher education at the institutional level. However, these instruments do not necessarily connect to the notion of quality, for example, the use of international agreements for rhetorical or marketing purposes to attract students.

- It is important to build monitoring and improvement capacity, particularly in terms of stakeholders’ feedback including international student surveys.

The research findings also have implications for the regulatory framework, funding schemes, second language development policies as well as equity and access in international higher education. Among these are:

- There are areas of regulation in need of further attention including quality assurance and greater emphasis on improvement, migration policy and international student protection.

- In terms of funding, there is a recognition to the current schemes, but efficiency can be improved through better articulation. It is recommended to encourage the development of intraregional initiatives in Latin America, both student mobility and collaboration in a broader sense.

- Greater efforts are needed to strengthen second language developments. A key priority should be to incorporate English or other languages in the curriculum. There is a need for internationalisation-oriented, at-home developments.

- Educating the human resources involved in international higher education should be an essential feature. This includes increased intercultural awareness among the staff as a contributing factor when pursuing international expansion.

- Improved content of online platforms, particularly in terms of availability of information in a second language, should be made available to foster connectivity.

The findings show the importance of a strategic perspective towards international higher education, predominantly at the national level. This perspective is a crucial starting point of the quality cycle. There are also several challenges regarding coordination across levels and types of higher education institutions. Other areas of development include outcome monitoring as a fundamental step to set the basis for improvement. This study provides a framework that can be used to assess installed capacity in quality in international higher education from which remedial actions can be taken. This framework can serve as a basis for the study of other systems as well as cross-country analysis to evaluate this area under different economic and socio-cultural conditions.

1.7 Thesis structure

The thesis is organised into ten chapters following the logical sequence of developments throughout the research process. The contribution of each chapter to the thesis is described as follows:
Introduction

Chapter 1: The emergent challenge of quality in international higher education. This introductory chapter provides background information for the rest of the thesis. It outlines the elements that give support to the main argument including the context, rationale, focus and aim. It also frames the key concepts; particularly, what is meant by quality in international higher education. The chapter presents the overarching and subsidiary research questions, the significance of the study to policy, practice and research and concludes by providing an overview of the thesis structure.

Contextual developments

The next two chapters – Chapters 2 and 3 – look at the contextual developments that demarcate the scope of this investigation. Relevant insights here are, first, those into the international higher education debate and, second, the contextual conditions for the case study:

Chapter 2: International higher education: Contextual, conceptual and historical developments. This chapter examines various aspects associated with the emergence of international higher education as the operational level of internationalisation. In particular, it looks at internationalisation as the response of the higher education sector to the globalisation challenges. It also expands on conceptual and practical developments before moving on to providing metrics that demonstrate the international higher education activity is growing fast and some countries are taking the lead in this area.

Chapter 3: Chilean higher education: Current trends and developments. This chapter looks at the main features of Chilean higher education with an emphasis on the post-1980s reforms that gave dominance to the market as the way of coordination. It provides insights into the regulatory framework including historical and current quality assurance developments. It also examines in-place, international higher education policy and practice and concludes by analysing the extent to which international higher education is connected to quality mechanisms.

Conceptual and methodological developments

The next two chapters – Chapters 4 and 5 – set out the conceptual and methodological basis to move on to the following research stage, which is the development of a conceptual framework for the study. Relevant here are, first, building an understanding of quality in international higher education and second, establishing an appropriate research design to respond the research questions:

Chapter 4: Quality in international higher education: Approaching a compound concept. This chapter provides a broad review of the literature on quality before exploring how the higher education sector has interpreted its conceptualisation. It is then followed by a discussion of some studies that have understood quality in international higher education from a continuous improvement perspective. The final section in this chapter expands on the limitations of the existing literature.

Chapter 5: Research design: A multi-stage investigation into quality in international higher education. This chapter outlines the research design for the study. In doing so, it elaborates on the rationale behind the methodological approach including the choice of the national context for the case study, participant selection and techniques for data collection and analysis. The
final section in this chapter explains the actions undertaken to guarantee the trustworthiness of the research findings and the possible limitations involved.

**Framework development and validation**

The next two chapters – Chapters 6 and 7 – build on the conceptual framework that gives direction to this research. In a first stage, a pilot model emanates from the literature review, which is further validated, in a second stage, through consultation with international experts:

**Chapter 6: The conceptual framework for quality in international higher education.** This chapter contributes to respond to the first subsidiary question: what are the key characteristics of a policy framework for quality in international higher education? In doing so, it advances the conceptual framework that is put to use in the study through three building blocks: namely, the theoretical foundations, processes and practice. In the second part of the chapter, the framework for quality in international higher education is substantiated in a review of relevant literature with emphasis on twenty, highly internationalised, higher education systems.

**Chapter 7: International experts’ perspectives on the framework for quality in international higher education.** This chapter validates Chapter 6’s findings for the first subsidiary research question. It also expands on the second subsidiary research question: what methods/techniques can be used by a higher education system to integrate such a framework into national policy? The chapter begins by analysing opinions reported by international experts regarding the pilot model to then address specific concepts emerging from the responses. By bringing together the initial model and the gathered data a revised framework for quality in international higher education is presented.

**Case study, analysis and interpretation**

The study has built a functional framework to assess quality in international higher education in an actual higher education setting. The next two chapters – Chapters 8 and 9 – move on to the Chilean case and present the empirical findings emerging from the data gathered through semi-structured interviews with higher education stakeholders. Both chapters set the basis for Chapter 10 to expand on the third subsidiary question: what are the implications of this policy framework for the development of policy and practice in Chile?

**Chapter 8: Building an understanding of international higher education and higher education quality in Chile.** This chapter identifies, firstly, the contextual conditions in which the general processes associated with higher education take place in the country. Secondly, it draws upon the conceptualisation of international higher education and its key rationales. The chapter concludes by building on the concept of higher education quality, its central mechanisms and developments.

**Chapter 9: Assessing the applicability of the framework for quality in international higher education in Chile.** This chapter evaluates the applicability of the research model developed in Chapters 6 and 7 against the realities of the Chilean higher education environment. First, the relative importance of the three building blocks of the theoretical model is analysed. Second, the level of understanding of the conceptual framework and the interplay of its components among different stakeholder groups in the Chilean higher education sector are examined. Finally, the operation of the revised conceptual framework at the macro, intermediate and micro-levels of the Chilean higher education sector is assessed.
Chapter 10: Implications for policy, practice and further research. This chapter concludes the thesis by looking ahead to the future of quality in international higher education. In the first part, it summarises the main empirical findings of the study and analyses the factors that make international higher education an area of relevance to policy and practice. In the second part, the chapter expands on the implications of the empirical findings for policy, practice and further research.
Chapter 2:

INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION: CONTEXTUAL, CONCEPTUAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 examines the context in which international higher education has emerged as the operational level of internationalisation. Based on the existing literature, the first section explores how internationalisation has become especially relevant to the tertiary education sector over the past three decades. It also examines the evolving nature of its conceptualisation. In the 1990s, it was perceived as a set of separate international initiatives but now it involves a more comprehensive perspective that includes all the higher education functions.

The second section reviews current international policy and practice as well as their dynamics and main rationales. By presenting different metrics made available by relevant public sources, the last section offers an overview of the growing international higher education activity and the countries currently leading what has turned out to be an increasingly competitive market.

2.2 International higher education: a result of the internationalisation process

2.2.1 Conceptualising internationalisation

Internationalisation has become increasingly important in the higher education sector over the last thirty or so years. Evidence of expansion in North America and Europe can be traced back to the late 1980s. In the United States, institutions and associations of tertiary education gave priority to a set of activities including study abroad programmes, faculty exchanges and international curricula (Rahman & LaMarr Kopp, 1992) to foster international higher education. Concurrently, in Europe, the 1980s’ plans for cooperation and exchange in education and research meant a step forward in the internationalisation developments (de Wit, 2010).

What does internationalisation mean in higher education? It can be argued that its meaning has evolved and enriched over time. During the first stage, the focus was on a set of discrete educational activities across national borders. The description of Arum and Van de Water (1992, p. 202) illustrates this understanding. The authors define internationalisation as the “multiple activities, programs and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange and technical cooperation”. A similar approach is taken by van Damme (2001, p. 417) who argues “the term internationalisation refers to the activities of higher education institutions, often supported or framed by multilateral agreements or programmes, to expand their reach over national borders”. The strength of van Damme’s work lies in his identification of several issues concerning quality that arise in internationalised contexts. Furthermore, he examines policy and practice to safeguard the quality of the growing international activity.

A turning point regarding the 1990s’ literature is perceived in the work of Teichler (2004). He describes internationalisation “as the totality of substantial changes in the context and inner life of higher education relative to an increasing frequency of border-crossing activities amidst a persistence of national systems” (Teichler, 2004, pp. 22-23). In accordance
with the author, there is a trade-off between the local and international contexts, which prompts an exercise of redesigning policy and practice. Teichler also remarks upon the need for discussing the implications that these dynamics have for national boundaries because, as a result of the internationalisation practice, they tend to disappear or become blurred.

So far, the relevant literature has linked internationalisation to specific components: activity across the national borders, expansion of the local scope and transformation in the core higher education dynamics. These components also emerge from Knight (2004, p. 11; 2012, p. 29) who defines internationalisation as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education”. This conceptualisation goes beyond the perception of internationalisation as a set of discrete activities that take place in different academic areas.

Therefore, internationalisation is an ongoing process driven by several political, economic, academic, cultural and social rationales that differ from one stakeholder to another but also overlap (Knight, 2008). The motivations to internationalise at the supranational, regional or national levels vary in scope, so, the same is expected among the main actors at the local level; institutions, staff, students and the private sector (Knight & de Wit, 1995). Therefore, the conclusion that arises is that building a consensus among the stakeholders is a factor that ought to be considered as an essential step to the internationalisation-oriented developments.

2.2.2 Operationalising internationalisation

When concentrating on the operational level of internationalisation, Knight’s approach provides insights into the different forms in which internationalisation is transiting from theory to practice. Based on such an approach, this study argues that international higher education refers to the several strategies whereby the internationalisation process is operationalised. The internationalisation framework divides these strategies into two types: “at home” and “cross-border” (Knight, 2012, p. 14).

At home are those strategies including an international, intercultural or global dimension in the curricular structures as well as the teaching/learning, research/academic, co and extra-curricular activities, and the initiatives with the local/cultural and ethnic groups. Table 2.1. summarises the primary forms of international higher education at home by category.

| Table 2.1: The main forms of international higher education at home by category |
|---|---|
| **Category** | **Forms** |
| Curriculum | Programmes with an international or global perspective |
|  | Foreign language programmes |
|  | Area or regional studies |
|  | Joint or double degrees |
| Teaching/learning process | Involvement of international/returned study abroad students |
|  | International scholars/local international intercultural experts |
|  | Virtual student mobility |
|  | Service-learning |
|  | Global learning outcomes/assessment |
| Research and academic activity | Area/theme centres |
|  | Joint research projects |
|  | Conference/seminars |
|  | Peer-reviewed articles |
|  | International research agreements |
|  | Exchange programmes |
|  | International research partnership |
|  | Visiting researchers and scholars |
| Co-curricular activities | International leadership development programmes |
|  | Interdisciplinary/distinguished speaker seminars |
| Extra-curricular activities | Clubs and associations |
|  | Language interchange |
|  | Campus events |
|  | Peer support |
| Links with local and ethnic groups | Involvement of students in organisations |
|  | Involvement of representatives |

Source: Based on Knight (2012)
Cross-border refers to the movement and trade across national boundaries including people, programmes, providers, projects and policies. The principal forms of cross-border education by category are presented in Table 2.2.

### Table 2.2: The main forms of cross-border education by category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>People</strong></td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Semester/year abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professors/scholars</td>
<td>Full degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Researchers</td>
<td>Field/research work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experts/consultants</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Programmes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Programmes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course, Programme</td>
<td>Twinning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-degree, Degree</td>
<td>Franchised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
<td>Articulated/Validated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Providers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Providers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>Branch Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organisations</td>
<td>Virtual University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Companies</td>
<td>Merger/Acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Projects</strong></td>
<td><strong>Projects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic projects</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Services</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Policies</strong></td>
<td><strong>Policies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Degree Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional and National</td>
<td>Credit Accumulation and Transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Mobility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Knight (2012)

The above framework serves as a basis for characterising international higher education activity at both national and institutional levels and guiding actions to improve. This conceptual understanding of internationalisation has garnered widespread use by supranational organisations such as the OECD and the World Bank to frame policy analysis in developed and developing countries (e.g. The World Bank, 2005; The World Bank & OECD, 2007) and by scholars exploring the field in different contexts and levels (e.g. Beelen & Jones, 2015; Delgado-Márquez et al., 2011; Robson, 2011; Tham & Kam, 2008; Yemini & Giladi, 2015).

### 2.2.3 Are cross-border, transnational, offshore and borderless education the same process?

Cross-border education is fast becoming the most common internationalisation strategy – predominantly in its form of student mobility –. A great deal of research has focused on this area examining developments and contributing/inhibiting factors. Cross-border education is frequently used interchangeably with other terms including transnational, offshore and borderless education (Knight, 2008; Kosmützky & Putty, 2015). The review of each that follows explores the particular scopes.

In accordance with the joint OECD and UNESCO (2005, p. 7) guidelines, cross-border education is “higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, programme, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders. Cross-border higher education may include higher education by public/private and not-for-profit/for-profit providers. It encompasses a wide range of modalities, in a continuum from face-to-face (taking various forms such as students travelling abroad and campuses abroad) to distance learning (using a range of technologies and including e-learning)”. Knight's notion of cross-border education that was presented earlier concurs with this definition.

The joint UNESCO and Council of Europe (2002, p. 1) code of good practice refers to transnational education as “all types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based”. The
code also specifies that providers may come from a foreign state or operate independently of a nation. Accordingly, it can be argued that transnational education falls within the scope of a specific form of cross-border education.

Offshore education denotes the provision of educational services abroad (IAU, 2015; Knight, 2006). Government bodies commonly use this term in the Australian context (Australian Government, 2015) interchangeably with transnational education, and “involves an arrangement whereby a course of study that leads to a regulated higher education award is provided either partly or fully outside Australia” (TEQSA, 2018, p. 1). Based on this understanding, it can be assured that offshore education also falls within the scope of a specific form of cross-border education.

Regarding borderless education, its use can be traced back to Cunningham et al. (2000) who introduced the term in the context of prospective business for Australian education. The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals in the United Kingdom (2000) also adopted this term to refer to “the blurring of conceptual, disciplinary and geographic borders traditionally inherent to higher education” (as cited in Knight, 2006, p. 212). Consequently, borderless education has a more general connotation that links to the idea of global academic arena.

2.2.4 Towards a working definition

In the light of the discussed elements, this study adopts Knight’s definition, but also acknowledges that it has been subjected to criticism by its ambiguity (Sidhu, 2006), Western roots (Yang, 2005) and because it might eventually reproduce a dominant epistemological stance on a global scale (Stein et al., 2016). Therefore, recognising limitations, internationalisation of higher education in this study refers to a process whereby an international, intercultural, or global dimension is included in the core educational practices; teaching/learning, research and other services to society for:

- Expanding local scope,
- Being part of an international higher education area, and
- Being recognised across national borders.

The internationalisation process is operationalised through international higher education strategies that are made functional at two interrelated levels: ‘at home’ and ‘cross-border’.

Even though this perspective has been chosen, it is worth noting that internationalisation policy at the regional, national and institutional levels demands a shared interpretation. Consensus efforts are central to the area’s development because, in the end, the stakeholders are who will recommend, support and implement the full range of initiatives that are defined. It is also important to emphasise that internationalisation is evolving in character, so, periodical revisions of global trends and adjustments are necessary. Given the evolving perceptions on internationalisation, the International Association of Universities (IAU) conducts periodic surveys – 2003, 2005, 2010, 2014 and the next one to be released in 2019 – to build an understanding of the main trends, at the global and regional levels, through the responses received from a wide range of higher education institutions around the world.
2.3 Global dynamics in international higher education

2.3.1 National and regional agendas

2.3.1.1 National policy: the need for a comprehensive approach

The national governments have been paying greater attention to international higher education and, in many cases, policy and strategies are formalised to guide its development. However, as rationales to internationalise may vary across regions, nations and institutions, the term ‘international’ needs to be contextualised to each case. In other words, there is no universal approach to what is meant by ‘international’ and policymakers have to adopt one that is contingent on the contextual particularities. The scope may be broader or narrower and institutional participation degree may be higher or lower depending on several factors, one of them, the relevance that international higher education has to the national stakeholders. However, there is evidence to support that a national policy for internationalisation is central to this process. The IAU 4th Global Survey shows that, at the aggregate level, government policy is the top-one external driver of the area’s development followed by business industry and national and international rankings (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014).

What are the rationales behind the interest in building a national policy for internationalisation? The literature highlights human resources development, strategic alliances, commercial trade, nation building and socio-cultural development as some of the reasons. These elements would explain why policymakers and leaders aim at an internationalisation performance that allows a high impact on these areas (Knight, 2012). However, as discussed above, rationales to internationalise do not remain stable over time, and they are perceived differently among countries and regions (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). Some states, for example, regard mobility and international linkages as vehicles to contribute to economic revenue (Altbach, 2004; Altbach & Knight, 2007). The multi-directional movement of students and also workforce – including faculty staff – is recognised as a driver of the national and local developments. In this context, seeking to recruit the ablest students and accessing to a portion of the international higher education market has become a crucial goal.

In this context, several countries have included a national strategy for international higher education in their higher education framework. For example, in the United States, the international strategy proposed by the U.S. Department of Education (2012) remarks upon a model of world-class education for a globally competent citizenry. The focus is placed on increased levels of global student’s skills, improved learning of practices from other countries and engaging in education diplomacy with priority countries. In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, the ministerial strategy presented by the British Council (2010) is more specific in scope and highlights the need for providing responses to the global trends, recommending objectives in the areas of transnational education, e-learning, improved quality of the domestic provision, international partnerships in research and English as a vehicle for teaching.

On the whole, internationalisation is a process in need for comprehensive approaches. So far, developed countries with more mature higher education systems account for more success than developing countries in the definition and implementation of long-term international higher education agendas. In developing nations, internationalisation has remained somewhat a rhetorical priority, which has left them behind.
2.3.1.2 Regional agendas: prioritising networks and collaboration

The international higher education agenda has also comprised the coordination and collaboration within regional areas. This particular trend called ‘regionalisation’ of higher education (Huang, Teichler, & Galaz-Fontes, 2014; Verger & Hermo, 2010) has had in the Bologna process its most well-known expression. This process, taking place in Europe, has worked in combination with several support structures at the regional level including programmes like Erasmus, Tempus, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Even though the official reports inform that this initiative has facilitated the inclusion of an international dimension at the intra-European level (European Commission, 2013), critical voices have also emerged from the literature (Amaral, Neave, Musselin, & Maassen, 2009; Pechar, 2012; Reichert, 2010; Wihlborg & Teelken, 2014). Specific issues, to name a few, are the tensions between the domestic and intergovernmental agendas (Martens & Wolf, 2009), the trade-off between convergence and diversity (Wihlborg & Teelken, 2014), and the institutional change resistance (Musselin, 2009).

However, regionalisation has not been limited to the European area. Other geographical regions have also sought to establish lasting ties for educational trade and academic interchange. Latin America and Australasia are examples in this regard. Given that the case study context of this study is Chilean higher education, the following segment explores some elements of international higher education that are particular to the Latin American region.

2.3.1.3 International higher education in Latin America

Higher education in Latin America is diverse. Framed by particular paradigms and social realities, the higher education systems in the region reveal some differences, for example, in the participation of the private sector, the steering structures and the public funding schemes. Nevertheless, the region also has commonalities such as the rapid expansion and the changes in the students’ profile over the last decades (Fernández & Fernández, 2007; Fernández-Lamarr, 2012; Martinez-Larrechea & Chiancone-Castro, 2009). These transformations have exerted internal pressure, particularly, on access and equity, quality and relevance as well as funding. Consequently, even though globalisation is an ongoing phenomenon, the agenda has had to deal with more traditional, internal demands, leaving international higher education behind (Gacel-Ávila, 2012). This assertion finds support in some studies, for example, the findings from the national policy reviews conducted by the OECD in countries of the region – Chile, Colombia and Brazil – demonstrate that the internationalisation process in higher education is still marginal and its level places at a very early stage of development (OECD, 2010, 2013; OECD & The World Bank, 2009).

With regards to the rationales that drive this process in Latin American, the IAU 4th Global Survey shows that the higher education institutions in the region perceive ‘increased networking of faculty and researchers’ as the most significant benefit of internationalising. Whereas, the major risk is that ‘international opportunities will be available only to students with financial resources’ (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). These results highlight that the region’s emphasis is placed on the international profile of their scholars and the international grids for collaborative research. As in other regions of the world, concern emerges from the responses regarding outbound opportunities and whether they are available just for a group of students, which might intensify the existing regional disparities.
As described by Jaramillo and Knight (2005, p. 334), there are several supranational and international bodies promoting international higher education developments at the national and institutional levels in Latin America. The authors give detailed information about these actors, categorising them by levels – “international, bilateral, interregional, regional and subregional” – and by types – “intergovernmental, government department or agency, nongovernmental or quasigovernment organisation, treaty or convention and programs”. Based on that previous information, an updated version that considers new developments over the last decade is presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Key actors in the internationalisation of higher education in Latin America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level/Types</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Bilateral</th>
<th>Interregional</th>
<th>Regional</th>
<th>Sub-regional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>Embassies</td>
<td>European</td>
<td>IESALC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OECD</td>
<td></td>
<td>Commission</td>
<td>OAS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IDB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental</td>
<td>JICA</td>
<td></td>
<td>OEI</td>
<td>Andrés Bello</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KOICA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non or quasi-governmental</td>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>British Council</td>
<td>UNIVERSIA</td>
<td>UDEAU</td>
<td>AUGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DAAD</td>
<td>CINDA</td>
<td>CLACSO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IIE</td>
<td>RIACES</td>
<td>FLACSO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IDRC</td>
<td>OUI-IoHE</td>
<td>RLCU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IDRC</td>
<td>COLUMBUS</td>
<td>AUALCPI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AUJP CONAHEC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreement or Convention</td>
<td>GATS</td>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>MERCOSUR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>IAESTE</td>
<td>Fulbright</td>
<td>ALFA</td>
<td>MARCA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AIESEC</td>
<td>LASPAU</td>
<td>CINDA</td>
<td>ESCALÁ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CYTED, IGLU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Jaramillo and Knight (2005)

On the whole, domestic demands have prevented the Latin-American higher education systems to focus on international higher education as a means of coping with the globalisation challenges. However, current initiatives are aiming at more significant developments. It would be expected that in the long-term more efforts towards regionalisation could help to improve the dynamics in the region concerning these processes.

2.3.2 Institutional trends in international higher education

2.3.2.1 Institutional planning and its guiding role towards the strategy

At the higher education institution level, leaders and policymakers are also defining internationalisation goals as a way to cope with more globally active contexts. In a similar way to the national level — where the process follows different approaches depending on the rationales behind the national agendas —, the responses to internationalisation vary among the institutions because of the diversity of missions and organisational contexts (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Knight, 2012).

However, a common aspect on the institutional commitment to internationalising has been the development of plans that contribute to delineate priorities and achieve consensus about principles, objectives and initiatives among the academic staff and the stakeholders (Knight, 2008). A study conducted by Childress (2009) in the United States, highlights the importance of the institutional international strategy to setting out the goals. It also serves to
the purposes of getting support, socialising the meaning and nature of the process, improving interdisciplinary partnership as well as fund-raising, elements highly relevant to the implementation stage.

Although more research exploring the reality of other regions is needed, Childress’s work provides useful insights into the importance of applying systematic instruments for international higher education’s planning and monitoring. Indeed, the IAU found that seventy-five per cent of the respondents to the last global survey on internationalisation indicated to have or to be preparing a policy or strategy. In this process, the heads of the higher education institutions and the directors of the international affairs offices are the principal leaders (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). These results highlight that the integration of an international dimension into the formal decision-making scheme alongside effective leadership are central elements to the institutions of higher education all over the world.

2.3.2.2 Benefits and risks

As highlighted in the literature, behind the higher education institutions’ interest in adopting a comprehensive approach to internationalisation, lies the purpose of drawing the most from the process across the institutional structures (Gacel-Ávila, 2012). However, it is necessary to acknowledge that internationalisation involves positive aspects but also has potential risks (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Jibeen & Khan, 2015; Jones et al., 2016). The most significant benefits and potential risks in accordance with the IAU 4th Global Survey are presented in Table 2.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student’s increased international awareness and engagement with global issues.</td>
<td>International opportunities only available to the students with financial resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Improved quality of teaching and learning</td>
<td>The difficulty of local regulation of the quality of foreign programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Strengthening research</td>
<td>Excessive competition among HEIs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on the IAU 4th Global Survey (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014)

‘Student’s increased international awareness and engagement with global issues’ is perceived as the most important benefit, followed by ‘improved quality of teaching and learning’ and ‘strengthening research’ (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). These findings show that the first is a student-centred benefit while the second and third, process-oriented.

‘International opportunities only available to the students with financial resources’ appears to be the major potential risk, followed by ‘the difficulty of local regulation of the quality of foreign programs’ and ‘excessive competition among HEIs’ (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). These potential risks draw attention to the fact that, eventually, the internationalisation process might widen social inequalities and disparities among students. On the other hand, the emergence of foreign providers entails challenges linked to regulation and quality issues. There is an institutional awareness of international higher education as a means of partnership and collaboration on one side, but intense competition on another, a condition remarked upon existing research (Guri-Rosenblit, 2015; Hudzik & Stohl, 2012; Marginson, 2006; Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016).
2.4 Information and international rankings

Extant literature has been crucial to understanding that both domestic and international students perceive quality and support their decision-making on higher education choices using a range of information sources that report on academic outcomes (OECD, 2017a). These sources include, but are not limited to, national information systems, international rankings and international indicators. In recent years, instruments such as the U-Multirank, the QS World University Rankings, the Scimago Institutions Rankings, the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), among others, have become a permanent source of reference for stakeholders.

In general, top-ranking universities have worldwide prestige and a leading position to attract students and recruit staff. This competitive advantage makes them a model to follow and, as a result, policy-makers and institutional leaders in the higher education sector are prioritising the academic and research outcomes involved in the international rankings (Hudzik & Stohl, 2012). Thus, international rankings have gained a place as an influential tool for comparison and benchmarking.

Table 2.5 presents an overview of the highly ranked universities’ home countries according to the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU). It can be seen from the data that a positive correlation exists between the preferences for a destination country and the ranking position. Both the United States and the United Kingdom concentrate the most substantial number of top-ranked institutions and account for one-third of the proportion of students enrolled in the tertiary level of education outside their home country (OECD, 2017a). The strong influence of the English language is made evident through the figures; sixty-seven universities in the top 100 are from English-speaking countries, and almost a half of the top universities are located in the United States (ARWU, 2018). This highlights the predominance of the U.S. in the international higher education market.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on the ranking ARWU (2018)

Some scholars have asserted that the international rankings are ‘mediators’ in the global higher education market (Marginson, 2007). Such a status might explain why they are mentioned as important drivers of the international higher education developments (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). Nonetheless, mixed opinions have been expressed concerning their
value. For example, it is argued that the metrics serving as the basis for some international rankings – research-focused performance measurements – tend to privilege universities from English-speaking countries (Cantwell & Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009). In recent years, the development of new tools reflecting on other realities has found support in many countries, as illustrated by the U-Multirank in Europe which makes possible for users to create personalised university rankings based on individual interests and needs (UMULTIRANK, 2018).

2.5 International higher education in numbers

2.5.1 Student mobility, coming predominantly from Asia

Given its volume, student mobility has been perceived as the most important international higher education activity (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). Since the 1980s, the international students’ flow has rapidly expanded. The OECD (2017) reports that the number of students enrolled in higher education outside their home country reached 4.6 million in 2015, which means a number four times larger than 1.1 million in 1980. The report shows that almost seventy per cent of international students chose an OECD member as their final destination country. As displayed in Table 2.6, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia were the principal host countries.

Table 2.6: International students in tertiary education by OECD-country of destination (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on data extracted from OECD.Stat (2018)

In 2015, the international students enrolled worldwide came predominantly from Asia, specifically from China (twenty per cent) and India (seven per cent) (OECD, 2017a). The United States and Europe led the international education market in terms of student recruitment. However, countries such as Australia and New Zealand are implementing robust international education agendas to improve market shares, so, trends might change in the coming years. These countries have sought to take advantage of the greater student mobility but also their geographical location closer to the Asian region.

The most substantial proportion of international students in relation to the total tertiary enrolment is found in Luxembourg, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Australia, and Austria. For instance, in Australia, the total higher education enrolment reached, in 2015, 1.9 million students with 15.5 per cent coming from overseas. In New Zealand that reported a total registration near a quarter of a million students, the proportion of international students represented 21.1 per cent (OECD, 2017).
2.5.2 International research collaboration

According to the 4th IAU’s survey on internationalisation, research collaboration is the second most important international higher education activity (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). The last column in Table 2.7 presents the percentage of international collaboration as co-authorship relations for the top-ten countries ranked by h-index, which can be considered a proxy of the overall scientific impact (Hirsch, 2005). These data demonstrate a particular pattern: small countries like Switzerland and Netherland proportionally carry out more research, including an international partner, than larger nations such as the United States or Japan (Gazni, Sugimoto, & Didegah, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>H-index</th>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>% World</th>
<th>Citations per document</th>
<th>% International collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>2,077</td>
<td>626,403</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>35.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1,281</td>
<td>191,830</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>54.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1,131</td>
<td>170,114</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>49.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td>100,810</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>52.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td>115,747</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>55.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>123,043</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>28.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>110,402</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>46.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>57,503</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>60.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>45,532</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>68.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>94,065</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>54.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on the SCImago Journal & Country Rank, Scopus Database (SCImago, 2018)

Regarding the overall scientific impact, the United States is at the leading position. However, the literature remarks upon new poles of development that are emerging, and how the research capacity is spreading rapidly (Hudzik & Stohl, 2012). Two examples in this respect are China and India, which have shown considerable growth in productivity over the last years. In 2017, China positioned second and India, fifth, in the number of documents with 508,654 and 147,537 published articles representing 14.38 and 4.17 per cent of the total respectively. However, these countries have not got a place at the global top-ten of scientific impact; China ranked 13th and India 21st, and the proportion of international collaboration reached 22.74 and 17.28 per cent respectively, regarded as a moderate level (SCImago, 2018).

2.5.3 International branch campuses

The establishment of international branch campuses (IBCs), which involves the location of an institution in a foreign country, is another central international higher education strategy to some universities. According to the last report on IBCs – developed by the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education – in 2015, 249 degree-awarding IBCs were in operation and 66 of them had been founded between 2011 and 2015. The total includes 33 nations providing education services in 76 host countries (Garret, Kinser, Lane, & Merola, 2016). The main home and host countries according to the number of IBCs are shown in Table 2.8. From this data, it can be seen that the majority of IBCs came from the United States, followed by the United Kingdom and France. China hosted the highest number of IBCs, followed by the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Singapore.
Table 2.8: Main home & host countries according to number of IBCs, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of IBCs</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of IBCs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on the IBCs report, 2016 (Garret et al., 2016)

The top-ten IBCs in terms of the number of degree programmes offered are summarised in Table 2.9. The figures show that universities from the United Kingdom lead the list, particularly, the University of Nottingham in Malaysia and China. However, closer inspection of the OBHE’s report shows that most IBCs (seventy-eight per cent) operated with ten or less academic programmes. Given that the enrolment numbers are not available in many cases, analysis has not expanded on this variable. Nonetheless, it has been estimated that 180,000 students were enrolled in IBCs across the world in 2015, with expected growth in numbers in the coming years (Garret et al., 2016).

Table 2.9: Top 10 IBCs ranked by number of degree programmes, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Home Country</th>
<th>Host Country</th>
<th>Number of programmes</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The University of Nottingham</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Nottingham</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limkokwing U. of Creative Technology</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heriot-Watt University</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limkokwing U. of Creative Technology</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampala International University</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool University</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York University</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Sheffield</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wollongong</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4,163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on the IBCs report, 2016 (Garret et al., 2016)

The section above has expanded on some of the numbers that describe the development of international higher education from a global perspective. It is relevant to note that, alongside with mobility, research collaboration and international branch campuses are the most visible manifestations of the internationalisation process but not the only ones. Even though the aspects that might be highlighted as indicators are much broader, the information that is available to map the international activity across countries is limited or does not exist, which has restricted this analysis just to these variables.

2.6 Summary

Chapter 2 provides a summary of the literature relating to international higher education. It explains that international higher education is the operational level of internationalisation, a concept that is not new in the sector. However, internationalisation has evolved in character and intensified in activity since the late 1980s. Nowadays, an understanding of internationalisation involves a multi-dimensional and dynamic perception of responses to the globalisation dynamics with at home and cross-border representations.
Having discussed the conceptual elements of international higher education, the chapter moves on to analysing the current trends and flows. In doing so, it examines quantitative data extracted from the UNESCO, OECD, international university rankings and other international organisations. It is interesting to note that the international higher education market is dominated by the services provided by English-speaking countries, specifically, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. In this context, Asian countries are the primary consumers. Even though other geographical regions may be placed behind, international higher education grows fast when becoming a national priority and funding is allocated for its development.
Chapter 3:
CHILEAN HIGHER EDUCATION: CURRENT TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 explores the main features that describe Chilean higher education with a particular emphasis on the post-1980s, an era that witnessed a paradigm shift concerning the market as the dominant way of coordination in the sector. By outlining the contextual conditions in which the case study takes place, the chapter contributes to this research with essential background information for analysis and final discussion.

The first section provides general insights into Chilean higher education and its regulatory framework including developments in quality assurance by thresholds of complexity. Next, it examines existing policy and practice linked to international higher education in order to interpret to what extent the international dimension has permeated the Chilean structures. The final section analyses whether the quality processes in Chile have targeted the international higher education activity and the extent to which a strategic approach has been adopted in this area.

3.2 General overview

Chile is a developing country in South America that has around 17.6 million inhabitants (INE, 2018) and a GDP per capita near US$ 23,000 (The World Bank, 2018). The Chilean higher education system consists of 151 institutions: 61 universities and 90 non-university providers (SIES, 2018a). The gross enrolment rate reaches 59.7 with 1.2 million of students enrolled across the territory; 94.3 per cent at the undergraduate level and 3.9 per cent at the graduate level; 58.8 per cent in the university sector and 41.2 per cent in the non-university sector (SIES, 2017b).

Higher education in Chile has grown and expanded over the past four decades as a result of a set of reforms introduced by the military rule in the 1980s. The next sections will explore these dynamics in more detail.

3.2.1 Institutions: expansion and growing heterogeneity

The 1980’s major higher education reforms were accompanied by the introduction of new private actors and intense competition into the system. In 1980, Chile had two state-owned and six private universities. As a result of the changes, the two state-owned universities were divided into 16 institutions – fourteen state-owned regional universities and two state-owned professional institutes – and the private sector at the university and non-university levels rapidly expanded.

As shown in Table 3.1, the most significant expansion occurred between 1981 and 1990 with the establishment of 282 new private providers: 40 private universities, 79

1 Currently, these private universities are called ‘traditional private universities’ as a means of differentiating them from the universities created in the post-reform period.
professional institutes and 161 vocational centres. Since 1990, the number of institutions declined. The universities remained relatively stable around 60 while the number of CFTs and IPs slipped back as a consequence of unsuccessful institutional projects or failed licensing processes. Currently, there are 18 state-owned universities, nine traditional private universities, 34 private universities, 43 professional institutes and 47 vocational centres (SIES, 2018a).

Table 3.1: Evolution of the number higher education institutions by type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-owned university</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private university (traditional)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private university</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-university</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional institute (IP)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>81^2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational centre (CFT)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Bernasconi and Rojas (2003) and SIES (2018a)

3.2.2 Students: upward trend, deceleration and a new profile

As presented in Table 3.2, given the institutional expansion, a surge of higher education enrolment is seen since 1980. In the scenario pre-reform, only an elite of students had access to the tertiary level of education which reflects on the low student enrolment in 1980. The entry of new providers, widening the range of higher education choices, changed the map radically; the number of students doubled the 1980’s figures by the end of that decade. During the 1990s and 2000s the student enrolment continued a rising trend and near one million students were reported enrolled in 2010.

Table 3.2: Evolution of the total enrolment by type of institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>118,978</td>
<td>131,702</td>
<td>319,089</td>
<td>634,733</td>
<td>733,603</td>
<td>457.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University (state &amp; traditional private)</td>
<td>118,978</td>
<td>112,193</td>
<td>215,284</td>
<td>310,890</td>
<td>350,593</td>
<td>212.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private university</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19,509</td>
<td>103,805</td>
<td>323,843</td>
<td>383,010</td>
<td>1863.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-university</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>117,780</td>
<td>133,236</td>
<td>352,910</td>
<td>514,143</td>
<td>336.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional institute (IP)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40,006</td>
<td>80,393</td>
<td>224,339</td>
<td>377,354</td>
<td>843.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational centre (CFT)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>77,774</td>
<td>52,643</td>
<td>128,571</td>
<td>136,789</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>118,978</td>
<td>249,482</td>
<td>452,325</td>
<td>987,643</td>
<td>1,247,746</td>
<td>400.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Bernasconi and Rojas (2003) and SIES (2017b)

In 2017, the total enrolment was 1.2 million students; 58.8 per cent in the university sector and 41.2 per cent in the non-university sector. However, the enrolment growth rate seems to be slowing down; between 2010 and 2011, the enrolment grew 8.5 per cent; in the period 2015 - 2016, only 1.1 per cent and between 2016 and 2017, 0.05 per cent (SIES, 2017b). Based on this trend, further deceleration might occur in the coming years (Blanco, Jerez, & Rolando, 2015).

As with most of the systems in the world (Teichler, 1998), Chilean higher education has passed through a massification process. The national policy aiming at improving access with higher levels of equity has made the system much more inclusive. One of the consequences links to changes in the student profile. Nowadays, the majority of students are the first

^2 This number includes two state-owned Professional Institutes (the Professional Institute of Santiago and the Professional Institute of Osorno) which became state-owned universities (the Metropolitan Technological University and the University of Los Lagos) during the 1990s.
generation of their families attending higher education, and they come from disadvantaged sectors of the Chilean society. The new student profile is mostly enrolled in vocational centres, comes from low-income groups with a weaker academic background, and has to study and work (Blanco et al., 2015), which challenges the national policy in many academic, political and economic areas.

3.3 Regulatory framework and the quest for quality

The current basis of Chilean higher education is underpinned by the regulatory changes introduced between 1981 and 1990. This new regulation implied a major reform and a paradigm shift regarding what higher education had been until then. The most substantial pieces of the reform are summarised as follows:

- A system opens to market forces under the principle of liberty of teaching
- The entry of new private providers
- The creation of the non-university sector made up of professional institutes (IP) and vocational centres (CFT)
- The establishment of a new framework for degrees, professional and technical titles
- The creation of a new student funding system based on scholarships and loans
- The development of a new institutional funding system based on two types of funds: the Direct Public Grant (AFD) and the Indirect Public Grant (AFI).

By including new types of providers and establishing a more limited public funding scheme, the map of Chilean higher education had a profound transformation. As the figures in the previous section described, a rapid expansion occurred between 1980 and 1990, which reflected on the number of universities and non-university institutions as well as the increased enrolment of students with a different profile.

3.3.1 Examination and licensing: the first threshold in quality assurance

The legislation introduced by the military dictatorship to set out the rules on universities (DFL N°1 of December 30th, 1980) established an initial quality assurance mechanism. The new private universities should pass through an examination process by an existing university with at least five years of independent operation as well as the approval by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Interior. The university acting as an examiner had the right to decide on the study programmes of the newly created institution, alongside participate in the final exams of at least five cohorts of students in those programmes (Chilean Government, 1980). However, the dramatic expansion during the 1980s meant a challenge for this precursor scheme. Questions regarding the quality and relevance of the new institutions and their curricular developments yielded the urgent need for a strengthened regulatory framework. The policy response arrived in 1990 and involved the introduction of a control-based mechanism by means of a compulsory licensing process for new private providers.

It was then that the national legislation gave to the High Council of Education (CSE), among other functions, the authority to decide on the recognition of institutional projects, assess the institutional operation in accordance with threshold standards and conduct comprehensive examinations of the institutions subjected to licensing. After a six-year supervision period, an institution that had fulfilled the requirements could be certified as autonomous by the CSE (Chilean Government, 1990). Once a provider was granted the
‘autonomous’ status, further mandatory assessment of the institutional capacity to maintain and guarantee the quality of its provision was not required.

3.3.2 Pilots on accreditation: the second threshold in quality assurance

Most private providers obtained their autonomy by the end of the 1990s. The number of institutions remained relatively stable, but the creation of new branch campuses and programmes had a significant increase with rapid effects on the enrolment rate. The more market-driven logic of the 1980’s reforms made that both the state-owned and private institutions became dependent on tuition fees to survive, operate and establish long-term plans (Espinoza & González, 2012; Lemaitre, 2004). Given this self-funding need, the competition among higher education institutions intensified, and marketing campaigns gradually became a strategy to attract students in the sector. This growing marketisation of Chilean higher education resulted in information asymmetries concerning the educational provision and its quality, especially for those that came from the most vulnerable groups of the population.

Given these new pressures, in 1998, the Ministry of Education designed a pilot project on accreditation of institutions and programmes at the undergraduate and graduate levels on a voluntary basis. The National Commission for Undergraduate Accreditation (CNAP) focused on institutions and undergraduate programmes while the Commission for the Evaluation of Postgraduate Programmes (CONAP), on the graduate programmes. These initiatives were complemented by introducing an ambitious, competitive fund, for the improvement of quality and equity in higher education that was called ‘the MECESUP Programme’.

3.3.3 The national quality assurance system: the third threshold in quality assurance

In 2006, the current national quality assurance system for higher education was installed. The experience that had been gathered through the pilots on accreditation was crucial for its development. Formalised by national legislation, the system was conceived from an integrative perspective that considers three central functions: information, licensing and accreditation (Chilean Government, 2006), which are described as follows:

- **Information.** It includes identifying, collecting and disseminating information necessary for policymakers, students, families and broader audiences. The Higher Education Information System (SIES) at the Higher Education Division of the Ministry of Education performs this function.

- **Licensing.** It is a compulsory process of approval and monitoring of the development of the institutional project for new higher education institutions through the assessment of several areas. The variables include academic staff, educational practice, teaching, curriculum, infrastructure as well as the necessary economic and financial resources to grant academic and professional degrees. The National Council for Education (CNED) – which replaced the CSE – conducts this process verifying the compliance of the institutional project during a six-year period (Chilean Government, 2009). After licensing, if autonomy is granted, an institution can voluntarily apply to accreditation.

- **Institutional accreditation.** It is a voluntary process that examines existing mechanisms within autonomous higher education institutions to assure quality. The method
considers the existence of quality schemes, their application and outcomes. The National Accreditation Commission (CNA) – which replaced the CNAP – is responsible for the institutional accreditation, granted for seven years to those institutions that fully comply with the assessment criteria. If an institution does not entirely meet the requirements but has an acceptable level of compliance, the CNA may accredit it for a shorter period.

- **Programme accreditation.** It is a voluntary process – mandatory for undergraduate degrees in teaching and medicine – of reviewing the quality of degrees or programmes awarded by autonomous higher education institutions. The assessment focuses on the stated programme’s purposes and criteria set by academic and professional communities. The accreditation of graduate programmes is the responsibility of the CNA and can be granted for a maximum ten-year period. Accreditation agencies – authorised and supervised by the CNA – conduct accreditation of professional, technical and other undergraduate programmes which can be granted for a maximum seven-year period.

As described above, the Higher Education Division of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), the National Council for Education (CNED) and the National Commission for Accreditation (CNA) are the national bodies involved in the National Quality Assurance System for Higher Education. The legislation mandates these authorities to work in coordination through a Coordination Committee that convenes in regular meetings.

### 3.3.4 The operation of the national quality assurance system

#### 3.3.4.1 Impact on the higher education institutions’ performance

Several lines of evidence suggest that quality assurance mechanisms play an essential role as drivers of transformations in higher education (Harvey, 2006; Stensaker, 2008). Changes may occur in the organisational structures and the actors involved who are influenced by a culture that seeks for more effective and efficient processes. Quality assurance mechanisms in Chile have also led to transformations. Previous research has established that the national quality assurance framework has exerted an influence on higher education practice at both national and institutional levels. For example, Lemaitre, Maturana, Zenteno, and Alvarado (2012) suggests that the introduction of a national system has impacted on the Chilean universities’ management systems. New developments, better practice and improvement include the areas of institutional mission, organisational structure, management decentralisation, policy formalisation, institutional planning, information and academic management.

Lemaitre et al. (2012) highlight that the national quality assurance system has promoted strategic and operational changes in the institutional management systems. An improved internal coherence has stimulated the institutions to transit from short-term to long-term approaches with transversal and measurable institutional purposes. This search has been increasingly supported by management instruments, technology and qualified professional staff. Although institutional transformations are important, the development of a culture based on continuous improvement has remained a pending task (Espinoza & González, 2012). This has happened because the quality assurance methods have focused on the external evaluation requirements associated with accreditation more than on innovations for improvement. This is a challenge for a ‘second-generation’ policy because, as noted in previous research (Jerez & Blanco, 2018), the new Law on Higher Education seems to have failed in covering this task.
3.3.4.2 Outcomes and figures

It is relevant to explore some of the numbers in the operation of the national quality assurance system to get a more precise picture of its impact on the institutional and programme levels. In doing so, analysis centres on the institutional participation and the coverage degree that the external method for quality assessment has reached in the sector.

Closer inspection of the Chilean providers’ licensing status, in a report by SIES, shows that the majority of institutions – that is, 132 out of 151 – have successfully obtained their autonomy. Only nineteen higher education providers remain under the CNED’s surveillance or under other equivalent schemes, and just one is a university (SIES, 2018a). Overall, the system has consolidated in terms of institutional autonomy, and only a small group of providers remain in licensing.

When observing institutional accreditation, it is important to remember that only autonomous providers are allowed to participate in this process. As shown in Table 3.3, all the state-owned and traditional private universities have the accredited status. In the post-1980s private sector, there are still eleven universities, almost half of the IPs and two-thirds of the CFTs in a non-accredited status. The institutions that have not been accredited are mainly smaller institutions that represent roughly ten per cent of the total student enrolment (SIES, 2017b).

Table 3.3: Number of autonomous institutions by accreditation status, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>Accredited</th>
<th>Non-Accredited</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-owned University</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private University (traditional)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private University</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-University</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Institute (IP)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Centre (CFT)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on (SIES, 2018a)

As described above, the national legislation establishes that institutional accreditation can be granted for a maximum of seven years if an institution is regarded as in total compliance with the evaluation criteria. If an acceptable level of compliance is found, the CNA may decide a shorter accreditation period (Chilean Government, 2006). In practice, institutional accreditation has been awarded for a minimum of one and a maximum of seven years as per the following scale: non-accredited when “insufficient”, three-year accreditation when “satisfactory”, five-year accreditation when “appropriate” and seven-year accreditation when “optimal” (OECD, 2013, p. 30). Only three Chilean universities have been certified as seven-year accredited institutions including the Pontifical Catholic University, the University of Chile and the University of Concepción; one professional institute, the IP DUOC-UC and one vocational centre, the CFT INACAP (CNA, 2018a).

The programme accreditation has followed a different dynamic (Table 3.4). In 2014, only 28.3 per cent of undergraduate programmes had accredited status, which contrasts with the percentage of doctoral programmes (67.5 per cent) that account for such a certification.

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3 Numbers do not include the state-owned universities created in 2015 (University of O’Higgins and University of Aysén)
The contrasting numbers of institutional accreditation versus programme accreditation might be explained by the incentives that public policy has put on the first. Institutional accreditation is a necessary condition to access public funding and student aids. Consequently, the providers’ efforts have concentrated on the institutional rather than the programme certification. This discussion is exclusive of the teaching education and medicine programmes because of the mandatory character of their accreditation. Likewise, the relevance of the accredited status to doctoral programmes might be explained by the policy incentives emphasis. The national authority for scientific and technological development (CONICYT) has incorporated accreditation as a requirement for accessing scholarships to pursue graduate studies in Chile at the doctoral and master levels (CONICYT, 2018).

### Table 3.4: Number of programmes by accreditation status and level, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme level</th>
<th>Accredited</th>
<th>Non-Accredited</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Accreditation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>3,401</td>
<td>8,636</td>
<td>12,037</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>1,354</td>
<td>1,843</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>1,273</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on SIES (2018b)

### 3.3.5 Evidence of weaknesses

After almost a decade of operation, the national quality assurance system made evident some weaknesses including issues of structural design exacerbated by publicly reported cases of corruption. As discussed in the previous section, a relevant feature considered in the operation of the system is the link between quality assurance outcomes and government funding schemes. This link applies to institutional funding as well as the student financial aids both the scholarships and the state-sponsored credit (Crédito con Aval del Estado - CAE) created in 2005. The CAE mechanism became an incentive for private higher education institutions to seek the accredited status and, in this way, increase the student enrolment. This cycle introduced serious inefficiencies that the national quality assurance arrangement failed to prevent, which placed the standards of excellence and trustworthiness of the system on the centre of the public debate.

In 2012, the Chilean Government, through the Ministry of Education, made a formal request to the OECD to carry out a comprehensive review of national policy and practice for quality assurance in higher education. Based on international practice, the report concluded that the national quality assurance system was not satisfying certain critical quality assurance principles (OECD, 2013). Main weaknesses were associated with the lack of the following elements: minimum standards, a continuous improvement culture, students and employers’ participation, recognition of differences in the non-university sector, transparency on the decision-making process, information and internationalisation.

This international judgement contributed to complement the evaluation nationally undertaken during 2012 (Coordination Committee, 2012). As a result, several recommendations for improvement were provided, which included areas such as the current licensing and accreditation processes, and the existing gaps between these two assessments. Moreover, the review addressed different factors to promote quality at both institutional and programme levels with a further focus on information as a tool to contribute to transparency and quality in the higher education sector.

The recommendations served as a basis for two Bills of Law presented by Piñera’s and Bachelet’s presidential administrations, in 2013 and 2016 respectively. While in 2013, the Bill
of Law was concentrated just in the creation of a new accreditation system, in 2016, the decision was to present an integrative whole with quality assurance as one of its parts. However, as suggested in previous research, both the national and international insights into the national quality assurance system were just partially covered by the governmental initiatives (Jerez & Blanco, 2018). After considerable discussion in the Chilean Parliament, the Bill of Law presented in 2016 was finally enacted in May 2018 under the title of ‘Law on Higher Education’.

3.3.6  The new Law on Higher Education: the fourth threshold in quality assurance

The main features of the new Law on Higher Education include the creation of an Under Secretariat of Higher Education, which will replace the existing Higher Education Authority but with a strengthened role and a broader scope. It also considers the establishment of the Superintendence of Higher Education. In accordance with the law, the system consists of two parts called the university and non-university subsystems. Regarding the national quality assurance scheme, the new legislation maintains the licensing and accreditation arrangements by the CNE and CNA respectively but introduces the several changes that are summarised as follows (Chilean Government, 2018):

- Coordination Committee includes the new institutions; namely, the Under Secretariat of Higher Education and the Superintendence of Higher Education.
- Mandates to elaborate on specific criteria and standards for every subsystem.
- Defines ineligibilities and includes selection mechanisms (Sistema de Alta Dirección Pública - ADP) on the appointment of members of the CNA’s board.
- Introduces the mandatory character of institutional accreditation for autonomous providers, which intends to be a comprehensive review including a purposive sample of programmes.
- Defines a new accreditation scale: accreditation of excellence (6 or 7 years), advanced accreditation (4 or 5 years), basic accreditation (3 years) and non-accredited.
- Introduces the CNED’s supervision for low performing providers in a non-accredited status.
- Includes limitations for the academic expansion of low performing providers.
- Considers voluntary programme accreditation by thematic areas defined in a Coordination Plan for the Improvement of the Higher Education Quality. Peer-reviewers, national or international agencies may conduct this accreditation process.

In conclusion, external quality assurance in Chile has passed through successive “threshold of complexity” (Jerez & Blanco, 2018, p. 508) associated with the experience and higher maturity of almost three decades of operation of both control and assurance-based mechanisms. It is expected that the next policy cycle may include a greater emphasis on improvement to continue towards higher levels of complexity in the long-term.

3.4  International higher education in Chile

3.4.1  National policy: the lack of a long-term perspective

Research shows that like most countries in Latin America, Chile is lagging behind in terms of international higher education developments. A review conducted ten years ago by the OECD and The World Bank (2009), on several aspects of the national policy in higher education, asserts that Chile lacks a detailed strategy or long-term national agenda for internationalisation. Although one could argue that this analysis remains almost the same, during the last decade
several initiatives touching upon international higher education purposes have been promoted at the government level. The main efforts are described as follows:

- **The MECESUP programme.** It is a programme for the improvement of quality in higher education that operates in the Ministry of Education of Chile since 1998 under an agreement with the World Bank. This initiative has played a significant role in promoting international higher education in the sector, for instance, through the definition and partial implementation of a Credit Transfer System (SCT-Chile) in the universities of the Council of Rectors (CRUCH). The SCT-Chile aims at promoting the legibility of the educational programmes and the transfer of academic credits from one institution to another. It also aims at stimulating the student mobility (SCT-Chile, 2018). The SCT-Chile has been designed to be compatible with the European ECTS.

  The MECESUP programme has promoted linkages between Chilean universities and institutions associated with the Bologna Process and the Tuning Project. Additionally, this initiative has fostered a debate on the need for a national qualification framework to facilitate the recognition of degrees and prior learning. Such an instrument is at a very preliminary stage of development, but the enactment of the new Law on Higher Education should lead to a further focus on this area.

- **The BECAS-CHILE programme.** It is an inter-ministerial programme, in operation since 2008, that aims at advanced human capital development. Becas-Chile provides funding for Chilean professionals and researchers who want to study in the best-ranked universities in the world through a set of scholarships. This initiative intends to increase the skilled workforce, the research capacity and competitiveness alongside the international connectivity of the country.

  Considering all instruments, the programme had awarded more than 8,600 scholarships between 2008 and 2013; 36 per cent at the master and 28 per cent at the doctoral level. Most students are enrolled in top-ranked institutions, and the high proportion is located in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Spain (Blanco et al., 2015).

- **Mutual recognition agreements.** The Chilean higher education authority has been working with Latin American and European countries on the development of bilateral agreements for degree recognition. Chile has in-force agreements with Argentina and Ecuador with ongoing negotiations with Spain, the United Kingdom, Colombia and Mexico (MINEDUC, 2018). The dialogue with other countries has based on the national quality assurance arrangements of each party, and a central component to the accords has been the convergence of the programme accreditation processes

- **The ProChile programme:** ProChile is the agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that promotes trading of Chilean services worldwide, and as such, it has been involved in the development of international higher education strategies. Since 1998, this agency has collaboratively worked with the tertiary education sector particularly at the university level. This work has concentrated on actions aiming at attracting international students and stimulating international collaboration broadly through the brand ‘LearnChile’.

  Twenty-one institutions of higher education have joined the brand LearnChile seeking to promote their courses and programmes across borders. Target markets include the United States, Europe, China, Brazil and Latin America. Furthermore, the agency has
encouraged the participation of Chilean institutions in international exhibitions such as NAFSA, EAIE, Brazilian Students’ Fair, China Education Expo, Colombia Expo-graduates as well as other activities in the Latin American markets (MINREL, 2018).

Overall, these instruments demonstrate the national effort and governmental investment in areas relating to international higher education goals. However, the initiatives appear to be separate elements in need for an integrative and long-term approach. This endeavour would require the coordination of several national authorities — Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CONICYT, among other bodies — to define a consistent vision in this area. Even though the country has followed a path that aligns with international trends, there is still a long way ahead for higher achievements.

3.4.2 Institutional strategies: strengthening competitiveness and international recognition

As discussed above, international higher education in Chile can be placed at a very early stage of development, and the national agenda lacks an integrative approach in the area. However, the findings from a review conducted a decade ago suggested that the institutional level seems to be in a better position (OECD & The World Bank, 2009). Some Chilean higher education institutions, mostly universities, have developed international strategies driven by a search for differentiation, recognition and reputation in a highly competitive domestic environment. The ‘being international’ attribute has been seen as a contributing factor to attract the preference of undergraduate and graduate students.

These ideas are consistent with Ramírez (2005) who describes that during the 1990s the number of Chilean institutions that declared internationalisation goals grew dramatically from five per cent to 72 per cent. The author remarks upon the promotion of international activities into the institutional models, which appear to be linked to academic and economic rationales. From an academic perspective, international higher education is considered in its capacity to widen horizons and strengthen research and teaching skills. From an economic perspective, international higher education is perceived as able to improve revenues by offering educational services abroad.

However, international higher education developments are heterogeneous and contingent on the type of institution. For example, progress in this regard mainly report in universities, most of them, of the Council of Rector of Chilean Universities. Institutions have formalised their international strategies by creating international affairs offices, engaging in networks and establishing international agreements with institutions or associations abroad. These formal agreements include, among other initiatives, student and academic mobility, research projects and academic partnership.

3.4.3 Trends in international higher education

3.4.3.1 Student mobility

Information extracted from the UNESCO’s statistical database (UIS.Stat) shows that the outbound mobility ratio — Chilean students studying abroad as a percentage of the overall tertiary enrolment — was 1.1 per cent in 2016 (UNESCO, 2019). The principal destination countries for the over 12,900 Chilean students enrolled overseas were Argentina (40.55%), the United States (18.48%), Spain (10.19%), the United Kingdom (6.20%) and France (5.86%). The same pieces of data indicate that the inbound mobility — the percentage of students from
abroad studying in Chile concerning the total tertiary enrolment – reached 0.4 per cent with near 4,500 students hosted in 2016.

It is worth noting here that the figures on student mobility depend on the operational definition of ‘international students’ that is used. Therefore, the numbers might reveal discrepancies from one source to another. The UNESCO (2015, p. 12) describes an internationally mobile student as “an individual who has physically crossed an international border between two countries”, which implies that international branch campuses or online programmes are excluded. On the other hand, the UNESCO’s preferred point of reference is based on the country in which the student gained his/her upper secondary qualifications. Thus, by definition, internationally mobile students are a subgroup of foreign students.

A study on foreign students by the Chilean Higher Education Information System (SIES) illustrates the differences in numbers. It considers all the foreign students into the following categories: with a previous residence in the country; with no previous residence in the country; those who do not have a residence in the country (e.g. distance learning programmes) and with no information about the previous residence status. Given this much broader definition, the findings show that, in 2016, the country recruited near 27,900 foreign students. The primary educational services provided to them comprised regular undergraduate and graduate programmes (68.83%) as well as academic interchange (31.17%), including specialised courses and medical internships. The number of foreign students by region of origin is summarised in Table 3.5. What stands out in the report is that students in regular programmes came mainly from South America; the most significant proportion is represented by Peru (41.64%), Colombia (21.72%), Ecuador (12.06%) and Bolivia (7.25%). In interchange programmes, students came mostly from Europe; the most substantial proportion, in this case, is represented by Spain (28.90%), France (26.22%), Germany (17.94%) and the United Kingdom (4.59%).

Table 3.5: Distribution of foreign students in tertiary education in Chile by region, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Regular programmes</th>
<th></th>
<th>Interchange</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>% Students</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>% Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>3,261</td>
<td>37.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>6,005</td>
<td>31.20</td>
<td>1,263</td>
<td>14.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3,440</td>
<td>39.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available data</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign with a previous residency in Chile</td>
<td>10,403</td>
<td>54.10</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19,219</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>8,703</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on SIES (2017a)

3.4.3.2 International rankings

Only two Chilean universities have a position in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU, 2018). The state-owned University of Chile ranks 301-400 and the traditional private Pontifical Catholic University of Chile places at 401-500. Within the Latin America region, both universities rank sixth and first respectively according to the QS Latin America University Rankings (QS, 2018). Therefore, the possibility of global positioning concentrates primarily upon these two universities.
However, over the years, more Chilean universities have been appearing in the Latin America rankings, which demonstrates an increased recognition to the academic quality of Chilean higher education within the region. The top-ten universities in Chile are displayed in Table 3.6.

### Table 3.6: Top-ten universities in Chile, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Rank in Latin America (2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pontifical Catholic University of Chile</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Chile</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Concepción</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Santiago of Chile</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Adolfo Ibáñez</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Diego Portales</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical University Federico Santa María</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Austral of Chile</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Talca</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on QS (2018)

#### 3.4.3.3 International research collaboration

When analysing Chilean research in the international context, several elements emerge from the data. The SCImago (2018)’s database informs that the scientific impact of Chilean articles published in 2017 – measured by h-index – was placed 45th globally and 4th at the Latin American level, after Brazil (14th), Mexico (28th) and Argentina (44th). An official report by CONICYT describes that the Chilean research capacity to generate papers per million inhabitants of the economically active population is the highest in the region (CONICYT, 2014), but it is still far from the OECD average.

The ‘document ratio whose affiliation includes more than one country address’, as an indicator of international collaboration in research, has increased over the last decade. This ratio reached 60.00 per cent in 2017 (SCImago, 2018), which overall is higher than the OECD average. Table 3.7 provides an overview of the principal countries, collaborative partners in research for Chile, during the period 2008-2012. As shown, North America and Western Europe were the main poles of partnership for researching, whereas, Brazil and Argentina were the most important collaborators in Latin America.

### Table 3.7: Top 10 Chile’s collaborators, documents and citation, 2008-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>% Documents</th>
<th>Cites</th>
<th>Cites per document</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>6,709</td>
<td>14.69</td>
<td>87,504</td>
<td>13.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>3,817</td>
<td>8.36</td>
<td>40,410</td>
<td>10.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>3,099</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>47,920</td>
<td>15.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2,889</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>39,304</td>
<td>13.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2,672</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>45,629</td>
<td>17.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>1,730</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>17,808</td>
<td>10.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>29,516</td>
<td>17.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1,699</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>30,668</td>
<td>18.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>1,664</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>18,838</td>
<td>11.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1,188</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>26,329</td>
<td>22.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on CONICYT (2014), Scientometric indicators report
3.4.3.4 International branch campuses

The participation of international providers in the Chilean higher education context is low. The rigorousness that the authorisation process to functioning autonomously involves might explain this low international engagement level. The 4th IBC report indicates that only two international universities informed operations in the country, the Heidelberg University from Germany and the University of Phoenix from the United States (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012). However, the last report, released in 2016, reveals no IBC activity in Chile (Garret et al., 2016).

Given that the Chilean system does not recognise the academic degrees awarded by international institutions automatically, a practice that has been established in the country is operating through joint degree programmes with local universities. Examples of this practice include, to name a few, the Heidelberg University’s master degree in International Law, Investment and Commerce with the University of Chile (The University of Chile, 2018) and the Leiden University’s doctoral degree in Higher Education with the University Diego Portales (UDP, 2018). Another observed practice is the entry of international consortia as controllers of local projects that have obtained their autonomy, and such is the case of the Apollo Group and Laureate Education Inc.

On the other hand, only one Chilean university accounts for activities abroad. The Technical University Federico Santa María, which has a branch campus in Ecuador. This campus, located in Guayaquil, reported 1,600 students enrolled in 2015 (Garret et al., 2016). The academic offer is concentrated on programmes in the areas of administration, information technology, international business, marketing, design and economics (USM, 2018).

3.5 Are the quality processes in Chile looking at international higher education?

There seems to be a relationship between quality and international higher education developments in Chile, but this relationship does not have a defined structure. The evidence presented in this Chapter shows that a comprehensive view of international higher education is missing. For instance, the current institutional accreditation considers five areas of assessment; two are compulsory – undergraduate teaching and institutional management – and three, optional – postgraduate teaching, research and engagement with society –. Even though the area of research involves to some extent the requirement of an international benchmark, there are no specific assessment criteria associated with monitoring internationalisation strategies (CNA, 2019). This lack of definitions has prevented the system from a greater emphasis on those elements that might contribute to success in this area. However, the question that surfaces here is what those elements are.

Although the Chilean higher education agenda has focused on traditional demands, there is some installed capacity that may be a contributing factor to a better international expansion. Nevertheless, a next question arises: is this installed capacity enough to contribute to meet the ambitions of the country? These ambitions include that Chile transits to a knowledge-based society with higher education playing a crucial role in, for example, (OECD, 2013):

- Training graduates for study and work abroad;
- Establishing a work-force base globally competitive for the new challenges of the country;
- Collaborating in international research and online learning;
- Facing the international expansion and, assuring an international delivery
Extant literature recognises that the introduction of an external quality assurance arrangement contributes to building trust among national and international actors about the system capacity to meet expectations concerning the educational provision (Stensaker & Maaßen, 2015). For the Chilean context, the situation is not different. It can be claimed that the long path of development in external quality assurance has improved the internal capacity of the system to engage internationally. Evidence to sustaining this assertion is the mutual recognition agreements established with some Latin America countries and the ongoing negotiations with other nations in the region and Europe.

On the other hand, the MECESUP programme through their different funding areas has been promoting the inclusion of an international dimension into Chilean higher education since 1999. Several projects to improving the curricular harmonisation and the legibility of the academic programmes have been developed and implemented thus far, some of them of significant relevance to international higher education and its quality. As highlighted earlier, those aiming at the implementation of a Credit Transfer System, those setting a basis for a National Qualification Framework or those concentrated on the internationalisation of PhD programmes are a means of reaching enhanced capacities to cope with the globalisation challenges.

But, this preliminary identification of initiatives enhancing international higher education raises more questions, for instance, how do these initiatives fit in an integrative approach to quality in international higher education? Of importance to approach the research question is to expand upon this issue and the complexities that surround it. For that purpose, the next chapters will explore theory and international practice as well as empirical findings emerging from the Chilean case.

### 3.6 Summary

Chapter 3 reviews the key aspects that describe Chilean higher education, before moving on to exploring the current international higher education developments. The major issue to be remarked upon is that the 1980s reforms, introduced by the military rule, led the sector to a paradigm shift. Since then, the market has been a prevalent force in higher education. As a result, and as other countries in the world have experienced, the higher education system has dramatically expanded. Such an expansion has caused increased levels of heterogeneity and public concern about quality. The policy response has included mechanisms for quality control and assurance that have allowed the country to reach better levels of maturity and experience in this area.

The chapter shows that the international higher education developments are limited. Inbound mobility is low, and most of the international students in Chile come from South America. The outbound mobility is moderate and only two Chilean universities have a position in the Academic Ranking of World Universities. Even though importance has been attached to internationalisation through a series of initiatives, there is no national plan. Progress has been achieved at the institutional level, mostly, by the universities of the Council of Rector of Chilean Universities, which have formalised their strategies by creating international affairs offices. It is concluded that there is currently no model in place connecting quality to international higher education in Chile.
“By a quality I mean that in virtue of which things are said to be qualified somehow. But quality is one of the things spoken of in a number of ways.”

Aristotle, Chapter Eight of the Categories, 350BC

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 draws on the concept of quality in international higher education as the preliminary step to move on to the next level, which is the development of a pilot model for its operationalisation. Emerging from the interplay between two ongoing processes in higher education – quality and internationalisation – the concept under inquiry has a compound nature that prompts for it to be broken down.

Therefore, in the first section, the chapter explores the notion of quality and how it has grown in importance as a management practice, in particular, after the industrial revolution. Next, it concentrates on quality in higher education, a term that has attracted the attention of policymakers, practitioners and scholars since the late 1980s when it became apparent as a policy concern. The final section focuses on quality in international higher education through a comprehensive review of relevant literature. The chapter concludes by providing some judgements on the limitations of existing research.

4.2 Quality: from a philosophical conception to a contemporary demand

The quest for quality has not been limited to the contemporary global systems (Reeves & Bednar, 1994). During ancient times, Greek philosophers intended to approach its meaning. For example, “The Categories” by Aristotle mentioned the term poiōtēs that would be later translated into Latin as qualitas, the root of quality. Aristotle divided poiōtēs into four types: “states and conditions; natural capacity or incapacity; affective qualities and affections; shape and external form of each thing” (Aristotle & Barnes, 1984, pp. 14-16). This understanding of ‘quality’ involves the sense of an inherent property of a substance, essence or being, which aligns with the current meaning. According to modern dictionaries, quality is “the degree of excellence of something; a distinctive attribute or characteristic possessed by someone or something” (Stevenson, 2011). In this sense, ‘something’ might denote, for instance, a product, a service, a model or a process.

After this brief overview of ‘quality’ in terms of its root, the next sections will expand on more recent developments.

4.2.1 Quality as a subject of distinctions

The concept of quality has become one of frequent use in social systems at the level of society, the interaction between individuals and organisations (Seidl & Becker, 2006). Relevant developments in this area are found in management and organisational theories, principally, since the first half of the twentieth-century when questions about quality and its relation to
productivity gave place to the early studies. While organisational approaches evolved from classical to postmodernist, the concept of quality started to be understood in alignment with the notion of a ‘distinction’. Spencer-Brown (1969, p. 1) uses the term ‘distinction’ to refer to a property that “is drawn by arranging a boundary with separate sides so that a point on one side cannot reach the other side without crossing the boundary”. Consequently, every observation or perception depicts a particular distinction that determines the side that wants to observe. In the context of the analysed term, this definition is useful to understand why inquiring about the quality of something entails complexity.

As Aristotle perceived in the ancient world, the concept of quality is multidimensional and highly dependent on the observer. This idea is supported by the contemporary theorist Deming (2000, p. 168) who asserts that quality “can be defined only in terms of the agent. Who is the judge of quality?” However, distinctions about quality are necessary to comparisons and judgments, which are the bases for the agreements that the operation of processes such as quality management, assessment and improvement require.

4.2.2 Quality as a multidimensional, multilevel and dynamic concept

Given that distinctions are determined by the observers’ perceptions, distinctions of ‘quality’ are diverse, so, one could claim that there is no universal approach. Distinctions can be contingent on the time, the context, particular beliefs and many other subjective elements. Some authors affirm that different notions of quality fit different circumstances. They have both strengths and weaknesses, and none of them could be deemed as the ‘best’ in every situation (Garvin, 1984).

Even though a difficult task, searching for a shared understanding of quality is central to its management (DeFeo & Juran, 2014; Reeves & Bednar, 1994). There has been little agreement on what is meant by quality, and several approaches have been proposed. The following section discusses the most popular conceptualisations. Herein, it is important to observe that of particular consideration is quality as ‘excellence’ because it belongs to a different level of abstraction regarding the other perspectives; ‘operational’ notions of quality that rather interpret how ‘excellence’ can be achieved in practical terms.

4.2.3 Excellence: an abstract dimension

In the ancient world, the ideal sense of quality was arête which means “the true excellence” (Pearson, 1962, p. 10). In the contemporary world, quality also relates to this idea. For example, Garvin (1984, p. 25) argues that quality as excellence is “both absolute and universally recognisable, a mark of uncompromising standards and high achievement”. However, quality as excellence can be a much-disputed conceptualisation because of its ambiguity and subjectivity that may result in practical difficulties, fundamentally, when defining appropriate performance measures (Garvin, 1984; Reeves & Bednar, 1994). Like values and principles, ‘excellence’ resides at a more abstract level of understanding. Therefore, this level of abstraction prompts for a more operational articulation if quality requires to be managed. Then, the challenge is to have a conceptualisation that captures the meaning of ‘excellence’ in more concrete terms.
4.2.4 Operational dimensions

- **Value for money.** In accordance with this interpretation, quality is associated with two elements: first, the extent to which individual expectations are met and, second, the monetary value that is involved. As a supporter of this view, Feigenbaum (1951) postulates that quality does not include the idea of ‘the best’ in terms that are absolute, instead, it means “best for certain customer conditions. These conditions are (a) the actual use and (b) the selling price” (as cited in Reeves & Bednar, 1994, p.421). Therefore, from a quality as ‘value for money’ perspective, a user might accept a quality differential between products or services of different monetary value (Beckford, 2002).

- **Thresholds.** In this interpretation, quality links to the following question: to what extent stated specifications or standards are met? From this perspective, Crosby (1984, p. 59) suggests that successful organisations understand quality as "conformance to requirements". A distinction as thresholds remarks upon that quality is measurable and the control of conformance or compliance implies that there is a prior identification of requirements. Therefore, this approach requests for responses regarding the requirements including what they are, how they are defined and who decides them (Beckford, 2002).

- **Continuous improvement.** Quality is a function of a process that operates as a cycle that is unceasing and pursues objectives of improvement at every stage. As one of the principal exponents of this perspective, Deming (1986) proposes the PDCA cycle for continuous improvement (Figure 4.1) claiming that “quality should be aimed at the need of the consumer, present and future” (Deming, 2000, p. 5). The sense of continuity and long-term lies behind this notion as a central element to this process. A great deal of literature has emerged on how quality management systems have widely adopted the continuous improvement’s approach in both the manufacturing and service sectors (Natcha & James, 2008; Plenert, 2013; Rampersad, 2001; Sower & Fair, 2012; Swartling & Olausson, 2009).

![Figure 4.1: The Deming’s cycle](Image)

Source: Based on Deming (1986)

- **Fitness for purpose (or use).** Quality is judged against the fulfilment of an expectation of use or purpose. As proponents of this perspective, Juran and Godfrey (1999, p. 22) argue that quality is “fitness for use”. Therefore, an organisation that understands the users' needs should be able to offer a product or service that has the right features to satisfy them. It is important to point out that this notion was revised and expanded to ‘fitness for purpose’ in an attempt to recognise the increasing attention paid to quality
in the service sector, and better reflect on its differentiated nature and mission (DeFeo & Juran, 2014).

4.3 Quality management

4.3.1 Quality: an issue of concern for management theories

Quality management theory has emerged in parallel to the study of methods to steer large organisations in the post-industrial era. It is argued that the quality issues that drew the attention of the first practitioners and researchers link to mass production and the implementation of models based on classical theories: Taylor’s scientific management; Fayol’s administrative management and Weber’s bureaucracy theory (Beckford, 2002; Flood, 1993; Juran, 1973).

As quality has fast become an issue of concern, numerous approaches have intended to provide conceptualisations and management frameworks with a strong orientation to efficacy, efficiency and effectiveness. Given the importance of manufacturing in the first half of the twentieth century, the first approaches to quality management by several American and Japanese theorists were based on this dominant sector. However, as the service sector has grown in importance since the 1980s, the concept of quality began to be explicitly explored in this sector (Reeves & Bednar, 1994), including education.

4.3.2 Quality management models: evolving towards holistic perspectives

Based on the relevant literature, Total Quality Control (TQC) appears to be one of the first quality management developments. As an exponent of this approach, Feigenbaum (1961) proposes a four-step design that concentrates on operational standards, conformance measurements, corrective actions and improvements. Crosby (1979), on the other hand, has a fourteen-step design that introduces five absolutes: i) quality as conformance to requirements; ii) there is no such thing as a quality problem; iii) do it right the first time; iv) performance as the cost of quality, and v) the zero-defects standard.

Both models were developed for companies in the manufacturing sector, so, the applicability to services is low. The TQC’s principles do not fit in the reality of the service sector where intangible factors lead the processes. Even though a later edition (1983) of Feigenbaum’s work attempts to integrate the service sector providing a broader conceptualisation of quality, the success is limited, and manufacturing remains as the primary target (Reeves & Bednar, 1994).

Deming (1986) provides a more comprehensive approach by proposing a cycle – adapted from Shewhart (1939) – that outlines a process consisting of four phases: plan, do, check and act (see Figure 4.1). Deming affirms that this model is applicable to both the manufacturing and service sectors. Inspired by the Japanese organisational philosophy, Deming understands the process as a self-sustaining programme that works continually, giving feedback in the form of performance data. The measured outcomes aim at triggering timely corrective actions as “a helix of continual improvement” (Deming, 2000, p. 181). This way of thinking is a turning point regarding the previous approach that has a discrete nature, instead of, iterative.
Other theorists have also reflected on the continuous nature of the quality management systems. For instance, Juran (1988) proposes a Quality Trilogy model that focuses on three interrelated processes: quality planning, quality control and quality improvement. Interestingly, this model identifies two levels of users: internal and external. Same as other theorists, a significant part of Juran’s work has manufacturing bases, but his later editions recognise the expansion of the service sector, which is added to his definitions (DeFeo & Juran, 2014).

After this seminal work, quality management theory has continuously expanded, but the principles of Deming, Juran and others like the Japanese Ishikawa or Taguchi are still considered as a basis for novel methods.

Since the 1990s, attention has been paid in the literature (e.g. Bhat, 2010; George & Weimerskirch, 1998; Naidu, Babu, & Rajendra, 2006; Oakland, 2014; Ross, 1993) to Total Quality Management (TQM). This model has sought to adopt a more holistic approach to the issue of quality by considering the tangible and intangibles aspects of an organisation. For example, Oakland (2014) develops a TQM model underpinned by soft structures that include commitment, communication and culture, and the management practices of performance, planning, people and process. Overall, TQM has been adapted to diverse fields including higher education, but it has also been the subject of debate within the sector. Some scholars believe that principles of TQM apply to higher education (e.g. Lewis & Smith, 1994; Murad & Rajesh Kumar, 2010; Sherr & Gregory Lozier, 1991; Sirvanci, 2004; Todorut, 2013) while others adopt a more critical stance regarding its suitability for an academic environment (e.g. Houston, 2007; Koch & Fisher, 1998).

4.3.3 The quality management functions

The previous section presented various quality management models. When concentrating on their operation, it is possible to distinguish two interrelated macro-functions of quality: quality assurance, and quality improvement (DeFeo & Juran, 2014; Oakland, 2014).

4.3.3.1 Quality assurance

Quality assurance involves the strategies that are implemented to prevent quality issues and these include:

- **Quality planning** employs planned and systematic activities, alongside processes, based on established goals, which have been defined considering specific distinctions about quality.

- An effective quality management system that uses mechanisms of **quality control** to achieve and maintain the quality of a product or service. Quality control includes continuous monitoring of inputs, outputs and processes performance measurements as well as comparisons with the specified targets and goals.

- **Quality Assessment** by means of the evaluation of the quality itself and the adequacy of the quality management system employing internal and external audits and reviews.
4.3.3.2 Quality improvement

Quality improvement is the identification of opportunities to do it better. At the first stage, this macro-function analyses the causes of quality problems, which makes it highly related to quality assessment. At the second stage, actions are taken on the basis of the results by means of remedial measures including improvement plans and projects with adequate teams and resources.

4.3.4 International standards

As the worldwide trade has expanded in volume, an essential factor is to provide a warranty of the products and services’ quality. The purpose is to reduce barriers and guide the consumer’s decision-making process on domestic and international transactions. In this scenario, importance has been attached to international certification as a manner to strengthen competitive advantage and have better opportunities to increase the market share. Given this importance, international standards and the establishment of international certification and accreditation bodies have flourished over the last three decades.

The most commonly used international standards have been those proposed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) through the ISO 9000 family. It is the ISO 9001 which establishes the parameters for quality management systems (ISO, 2018). Various organisations have employed these standards as the bases for their models to qualify as suppliers or certify that specific regulatory requirements have been met. These standards place great emphasis on quality as understanding and meeting the customer requirements. This certification involves an assessment of the processes in their capacity to add value, provide performance outcomes and define measures for improvement (Cianfrani, Tsiakals, & West, 2009). The higher education sector has also applied for the ISO certification of specific units or programmes to improve visibility and revenues (e.g. Hernández, Arcos, & Sevilla, 2013; Kasperaviciute-Cerniauskiene & Serafinas, 2018).

4.4 Quality in higher education

4.4.1 Growing interest within the sector

The quest for quality in higher education began several decades ago, but the academic debate about its significance to the sector has intensified since the 1990s (Green, 1994; Salter & Tapper, 2000; van Vught & Westerheijden, 1994). Previous literature provides examples of the quality debate’s expansion. In the 1990s, more attention was paid to approaches and instruments for quality management in the United States and Canada (van Vught & Westerheijden, 1994). Furthermore, in 1986, the UK Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals recommended the first points of reference for self-assurance aiming at safeguarding and monitoring standards in universities (Brown, 2004).

Several contextual factors explain the growing interest in the area: expansion, more institutional and student diversity coupled with an increased competition. Over the last three decades, higher education has widened access passing from a higher education concentrated on an elite of students to massification. Moreover, the entry of new providers, mainly from the private sector, has brought high levels of heterogeneity and sometimes, dubious practices that have urged to provide guarantees of quality and mechanisms for institutional differentiation in teaching and research.
Given these contextual conditions, quality has progressively turned out to be a stakeholders’ requirement. As the main consumers, students and families are exerting pressure on institutions to assure the academic programmes’ quality in return for their investments. Government and agencies face the challenge of dealing with equity but looking for efficiency and efficacy on the public funding allocation. Institutional communities seek for recognition and reputation and researchers, joining partners that certify quality in the development of collaborative initiatives. At the end of the chain, employers aim at recruiting a skilled workforce with the relevant knowledge to the demands of both the manufacturing or service sectors in more globally active contexts.

As a result, external and internal requirements for the institutional commitment to quality and public accountability have derived into the establishment of national systems for quality assurance in higher education. These mechanisms have promoted the development of institutional programmes and infrastructure to assure and assess the quality of the provision in a high proportion of the higher education institutions around the world.

4.4.2 The particular ethos of higher education

National and institutional quality assurance developments have been accompanied by the introduction and adoption of concepts and models developed in business theories. Among these are TQM, ISO9000, a product/service notion of quality, performance indicators and benchmarking practice. Nonetheless, higher education has a particular ethos and role in society. As argued by van Vught and Westerheijden (1994, p. 356), higher education has intrinsic and extrinsic qualities that are inherent to its mission: intrinsic qualities such as “the ideals of the search for truth and the pursuit of knowledge” and extrinsic qualities in “the services higher education institutions provide to society”.

Quality in higher education has to respond to a shared, social request that in specific institutional contexts might involve different nuances and emphases. The significance given to each of the quality dimensions varies among the stakeholders: societal and sectorial (Rassenfosse & Williams, 2015). However, it can be argued that these groups, at least, expect that the main higher education functions: teaching, research and engagement with society, domestically and internationally, have some properties. Higher education should play a transformative role and add value to society within a framework of relevance to the cultural needs and economic development in a shifting environment.

Therefore, the particular ethos of higher education is a determinant of the quality definition. Higher education involves issues of social responsibility but also ethical questions about the search for excellence’s focus. For example, as part of this debate, questions about whether the excellence will be centred: on institutional and faculty reputation, or, the student teaching-learning process and all its complementary services (Messick, 2013).

4.4.3 The concept of quality in higher education

The existing body of research suggests that drawing on a shared understanding of quality in higher education is something that involves complexity (Green, 1994; Knight, 2000; Schindler et al., 2015; Vlăsceanu et al., 2007). Given its multidimensional, multilevel and dynamic nature, quality is elusive and varied. Evidence of this variety is found in Harvey and Green (1993, p. 11) who divide the range of approaches to quality into five: “as exceptional, as perfection (or consistency), as fitness for purpose, as value for money and as transformative”. The exceptional
interpretation captures the distinctiveness nature of quality using three possible lenses. These
include a traditional approach to quality that does not provide a benchmark against which to
compare; quality as attaining threshold standards by a supervisory body, and quality as
excellence, which is seen as “exceeding high standards” (p. 12). Quality as perfection or
consistency, on the other hand, also interprets quality as excellence but, in this case, excellence
refers to the notion of ‘zero-defect’ (Crosby, 1979) discussed in Section 4.3.2. However, as
noted earlier, such a notion rooted in manufacturing has limited applicability in higher
education. Therefore, like the manufacturing and service sectors, the relativist idea of
excellence emerges in higher education as well. This view is supported by Hazelkorn et al. (2018)
who assert that quality in higher education is frequently aligned with excellence as a way to
highlight the core purpose of quality.

Drawing on Harvey and Green (1993), it can be argued that the line of thought on the
more functional notions of quality as fitness for purpose and value for money does not deviate
much from what is articulated in Section 4.3.2. However, in higher education, the fitness for
purpose approach pays particular attention to gauging quality in relation to the extent to which
the mission and aims that an institution has assumed as its own are met. Regarding the last
notion of quality as transformative, the authors connect it to a student-centred approach.
Transformation in higher education means changes that add value to individuals. This
understanding differs from the product/service-oriented notion of transformation used in
business.

Other approaches suggest that quality in higher education is “enhancement”
(Campbell & Rozsnyai, 2002, p. 133; Vlăsceanu et al., 2007, pp. 73-74). Enhancement involves
the sense of constant improvement/progress, which aligns with the Deming’s notion of cycles
of continuous improvement also presented in the previous sections.

Some studies argue that quality in scenarios of diversity might be conceptualised as
the capacity that an institution or academic programme has to connect the external
expectations and the internal objectives and organise the processes for the achievement of
these objectives (Salazar, 2012). It can be argued that the ‘fitness for purpose’ perspective
arises from this understanding of internal and external consistency, then, quality is not absolute
because it is always conditional to some purposes. As stressed by Westerheijden (1999) ‘fitness
for purpose’ involves making interpretations that request a further discussion with the
participating community, so, the stakeholders’ views appear to be fundamental to those
purposes. Barnett (2014, p. 157) argues that the purposes of a higher education institution are
twofold: “the purposes that any one institution might set itself” and “the purposes that attach
to all institutions of higher education”. Based on this understanding, there is a relationship
between quality and the demands emerging at two levels: first, meeting the accepted
standards for the sector; second, having processes to fulfil the institutional mission and its
objectives.

In the light of the above discussed elements, quality in the context of this study might
be conceptualised as excellence that is made functional through a process of continuous
improvement (enhancement) to meet stated purposes. In this manner, the standard definition
of ‘fitness for purpose’ is linked to the notion of an unceasing search for progressing towards
better performance, which should be one of the most important higher education goals when
executing its main processes.
4.4.4 Prevailing methods across the world

As articulated above, the debate on quality in higher education has intensified over the last three decades. A new map, characterised by massification, internationalisation and commercialisation, has fostered its development. A higher expansion and diversification have improved the student access rates. Nonetheless, a scenario characterised by increasing market forces that dominate academic prerogatives/interests raises questions about the relevance and value of higher education to society. Therefore, these dynamics have invited the sector to rethink policy priorities (Brennan, 2015).

Major policy reforms across the world have systematically sought to regulate quality in higher education (Blackmur, 2004; King, 2007). Previous research has connected regulation to a sense of social spaces and behaviours’ control (Baldwin, Cave, & Lodge, 2011). Such a control may derive in various forms, for example, “oversight” (authority monitoring), “competition” (rivalry among actors) or “mutuality” (peer-review) (Hood, James, Peters, & Scott, 2004, p. 7). As the quality methods have involved a set of standards and criteria applied by a specialised agency (Dill & Beerkens, 2013), it seems that an oversight approach has predominated over the others. State regulation has sought to respond to interested parties that are diverse but also be of impact on accountability, relevance and transparency.

Installed capacity and academic, political and socio-cultural values have determined the different approaches adopted by the educational systems across the world. However, in general, quality models have followed a trend towards quality assurance through mechanisms of control, public warranty/accountability, and quality improvement (Billing, 2004; Jeliazkova & Westerheijden, 2001; Unión Europea, Universia, & CINDA, 2012) with an increasing focus on continuous cycles of improvement in recent years (Elassy, 2015). The evidence found two decades ago by van Vught and Westerheijden (1994, pp. 365-367) demonstrated some commonalities in the early developments: the “managing agent (or agents)” steering the functions of quality at the macro level; the assessment process traditionally made up of a “self-evaluation” and “peer review”, and the “reporting” on the process to inform the government and broader audiences.

Although common features have been suggested, the convergence to a general model finds little agreement (Billing, 2004; King, 2007). The way in which the main agents of a higher education system integrate and reunite – the state, the academic oligarchy and the market (see Chapter 6) – determines the national model (Clark, 1986). A global component is exerting influence on the national and local contexts but the manner in which these influences are interpreted varies among each educational system. The seminal work of Woodhouse (1999) identifies three models of external quality assessment: accreditation, audit and assessment utilised either in a pure or hybrid manner.

The United States illustrates the market-dominated perspective (King, 2007). In this country, the quality method is accreditation. In general terms, accreditation follows a two-step process, self-study and external quality review, designed to determine whether specified threshold standards have been met and the mission or purposes achieved (Materu, 2007). Usually, accreditation is steered by a coordinating agency and involves the submission of a self-evaluation report; peer visit, and public report (Jeliazkova & Westerheijden, 2001). In the U.S. context, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) can authorise private, non-profit agencies to conduct accreditation of degree-granting institutions on a voluntary basis. The state has a limited role and appears to be “the weakest leg of the triad” (Amaral, Rosa, & Tavares, 2009, p. 30). External quality assurance has essentially become a non-governmental business (Eaton, 2012).
The United Kingdom, known by a strong academic tradition (King, 2007), has opted by an audit scheme. In the main, audit is a review of an institution or programme to determine whether the curriculum, staff, and infrastructure meet the stated objectives. This review may be self-managed or conducted by an external body. In the U.K., the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) undertakes external assessments on a mandatory basis (Alderman & Brown, 2005). Like accreditation, audit involves a self-assessment; review by peers and reporting. However, this method has a different scope and emphasis: accreditation focuses on threshold standards by an external body while audit seeks an assessment based on criteria that is specific to the institution or programme (Materu, 2007). The audit process may be complemented by benchmarking practice to help the institutions to define performance targets and lead to a stronger results ownership sense (Burquel & van Vught, 2010).

In Australia, an assessment from a risk-based perspective has implications for registration and operation. The national regulator (TEQSA) works on the basis of threshold standards set out by an independent, expert, panel. All higher education providers are expected to meet the criteria to either entering or remaining in the system. A decision on low-performing providers may include conditions for improvement or withdrawing registration (Shah & Jarzabkowski, 2013).

In Asia, due to an increased influx of transnational education from North America, the United Kingdom and Australia – for example, as explained in Chapter 2, by establishing international branch campuses –, the region has been exposed to the influence of western models (Njie, Asimiran, Basri, & Kadir, 2015). Some countries have adopted the accreditation method, but following a strong government-based approach, which entails a difference with regard to the U.S. model (Peng & Wang, 2008).

Several lines of evidence suggest that, in the traditional methods, there is a trade-off between accountability and improvement purposes. For instance, King (2007, p. 424) asserts that “some forms of regulation may be more inhibiting of innovation or quality improvement than others”. Therefore, an unsolved challenge lies in avoiding risks but promoting quality improvement. Nonetheless, this is not the only unfinished task. Many countries are facing a governance crisis by changes in the demand and provision of higher education. Some of them are commercialising quality in many respects by outsourcing to consultants and ranking agencies. This crisis has implications for policy and practice around the world. Higher education is fast evolving, and the traditional quality methods are being pushed to explore new approaches to adapt to the latest trends (Coates et al., 2018).

4.5 Quality in international higher education: two processes into one

As described in Chapter 2, international higher education is conceived as the operational level of the internationalisation process in higher education. It may be useful to clarify and remark upon this point because the relevant literature mostly refers to internationalisation, which for this study is just a higher level of abstraction. Then, the assumption is that the internationalisation-oriented developments impact with the same intensity on international higher education, which is the concept that this dissertation examines.

Over the last three decades, policy and practice for quality and internationalisation have become a priority in the agendas of higher education all over the world. Even though the amount of literature coming around both trends might suggest a broad scholarly interest, not much has been theorised about the nature of their convergence (van der Wende & Westerheijden, 2001). However, why would such a convergence be an important area of
inquiring? Existing research provides insights into the reasons. One of them is that higher education quality plays a vital role in giving warranties to the public and, additionally, is an instrument to build trust among the higher education stakeholders (Stensaker & Maassen, 2015). Quality has played this role in the local domain but also in the emerging international higher education markets (Bernhard, 2012b). Following van Damme (2001, p. 415)’s claim, as far as international activity in higher education is taking place, “quality issues” become a reality that exerts pressure on national and local structures to act accordingly.

Thereby, the tertiary sector of education deals now not only with domestic requirements but also international demands for being of excellence. In this scenario, the study of quality, in addition to, internationalisation is of particular importance. The literature review suggests that theoretical and practical contributions to the area come from scholars as well as supranational and international organisations interested in capacity building and policy research throughout different realities and contextual higher education conditions. Next sections touch upon the main elements that have arisen from existing literature.

4.5.1 The tridimensional relationship between quality and internationalisation in higher education

The emergence of research linking the trends of quality and internationalisation has been traced back to the late 1990s. An example of such insights into this field is the one provided by the OECD (1999), which along to theorise on the relationship between both processes, examines practices using some case studies. In this OECD’s report, van der Wende (1999, pp. 227, 231) suggests two dimensions in the interplay between quality and internationalisation:

- “The internationalisation of quality assurance”. This dimension relates to the impact that internationalisation has on the nationally based quality assurance arrangements. External demands and international inputs exert influence on methods and procedure that have been defined for the national context. Examples of external forces include regional initiatives such as those led by the European Commission or the work of international networks such as the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

- “The quality assurance of internationalisation”. This dimension is associated with the notion of excellence in internationalisation. In this respect, quality assurance of internationalisation considers those initiatives that promote specific criteria or standards of quality in the international higher education activity. The proposed examples include, but are not limited to, codes of practices, self-assessment instruments and certification practices on internationalisation.

As discussed in Chapters 2, internationalisation is understood as an ongoing process in higher education, so it is quality. A bi-directional understanding of the relationship between the two processes means that quality has an impact on internationalisation and vice versa. Based on this idea, Figure 4.2 represents both quality and internationalisation as dynamic and evolving cycles, and the arrows represent the influences coming from one to another.

A decade later, a publication by the EAIE (2010) on quality assurance and internationalisation acknowledges the two dimensions suggested by van der Wende (1999) and also adds a third dimension: the “quality-adding value of internationalisation” (EAIE, 2010, p. 10). This third component had been considered in a relatively implicit way before.
• **The quality-adding value of internationalisation.** In accordance with this dimension, internationalisation is a factor that adds value to the transformative higher education process. Therefore, if there is an equation that explains quality, then internationalisation is understood as being part of it (see dimension 3 in Figure 4.2).

![Diagram showing three dimensions of quality and internationalisation](image)

**Figure 4.2:** Dimensions of the relationship between quality and internationalisation

As outlined in Chapter 1, the research question of this dissertation focuses on the nature of quality in international higher education in the contemporary global system. Therefore, over the next sections, the argument will be drawing on those pieces of work that have been identified in the literature within the purview of the ‘dimension 2’, in other words, the area pictured by the right side of Figure 4.2. Thus far, research has recognised the multi-level, systemic and complex nature of the relationship between quality and internationalisation in higher education. The three proposed dimensions of this interplay are highly interrelated (EAIE, 2010). Consequently, it is necessary to be aware that touching upon the meaning and scope of only one dimension might have implications for this analysis, for example, blurred boundaries and overlaps.

### 4.5.2 Internationalisation quality as a continuous cycle of improvement

There is some evidence that internationalisation quality in higher education has been approached from the quality as continuous improvement perspective previously reported in sections 4.2 and 4.3. Almost twenty years ago, the OECD (1999) developed the Internationalisation Quality Review Process (IQRP) which included criteria relevant to the assessment and assurance of internationalisation quality at the institutional level. Although the IQRP did not explicitly declare a basis on a quality cycle, its application becomes visible when the various components of the review process are analysed.

As articulated in section 4.2.4, the model of quality as a continuous improvement cycle – the PDCA model – consists of four sequential phases: planning, doing, checking and acting. In the IQRP, the “Internationalisation policies and strategies” component (OECD, 1999, p. 247) is identified in close relation to the ‘planning’ phase. This component includes the rationales to internationalise; the goals and actions; the link with the overall institutional strategy; the sense of value amidst the institutional community, and the policy-making structure.

The ‘doing’ purposes, on the other hand, are made explicit by the following elements:
“Academic programmes and students” (OECD, 1999, p. 249) including internationalisation of the curriculum; outbound and inbound student mobility; networking, and language training.

“Research and scholarly collaboration” (OECD, 1999, p. 251) which involves collaborative agreements; research centres; international research projects; publications with international collaboration, and involvement in international conferences/seminars.

“Human resource management” (OECD, 1999, p. 251) including community involvement in international activity; visiting scholars and international staff; international recruitment, and international skills training.

“Contract and services” (OECD, 1999, p. 252) including partnership and networks agreements; transnational education activity; international assistance, and consultancy.

The ‘checking’ phase is seen closely related to the “organisational and support structures” component (OECD, 1999, p. 247) which considers the evaluation systems; the reporting structure, and the inclusion of the international dimension into the overall institutional quality assurance scheme.

Finally, the ‘acting’ phase links to the improvement proposals or recommendations for each of the evaluated aspects, which should provide feedback to the starting ‘planning’ phase. It is worth mentioning that this framework understands internationalisation quality as supported by specific structures that include strategic and operational units; communication systems; funding and resource allocation as well as services and facilities.

A decade later, a publication by the EAIE (2010) on internationalisation and quality assurance, also at the institutional level, explicitly adopts the quality as continuous improvement approach. When responding the question of how quality assurance in internationalisation is made functional, the authors argue:

“The PDCA model can be used to implement a quality assurance cycle. The first step is to determine your goals, preferably in a policy plan, and set a strategy on how to reach these goals. Secondly, execute your plan. Check whether the outcomes match your initial goals and finally, use the results of your evaluation to improve your policy plans. Since this PDCA process is a revolving wheel [as shown in section 4.2.4], it is basically a learning or change tool” (EAIE, 2010, p. 18)

The way in which the EAIE approaches to every phase of the internationalisation quality cycle, alongside the actions, content and quality concepts involved are summarised Table 4.1. Interestingly, the quality concepts are concurrent with the quality management functions discussed in section 4.3.3.
### Table 4.1: Internationalisation quality assurance phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Quality concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Compatibility between purpose and form</td>
<td>Say what you will do</td>
<td>Internationalisation goals are explicit elements in your policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do</td>
<td>Commitment of adequate resources, clear dissemination and exploitation plan</td>
<td>Do what you say</td>
<td>Key indicators have been set for these goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check</td>
<td>Evaluation, monitoring, accreditation</td>
<td>Prove that you do what you say</td>
<td>Achievement of these goals is evaluated in a structured process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>Use of feedback, improvement plans, organisational change</td>
<td>Take measures to improve your policy</td>
<td>Information gained from evaluations is fed back in a structured process to improve policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EAIE (2010, p. 19)

Emerging from this literature is the claim that an understanding of internationalisation quality can give a step further from the abstract ‘achievement of excellence’ interpretation discussed in section 4.2.3. The interpretation can transit to the level in which excellence is made functional through a cycle of continuous improvement. This dissertation accepts this claim, but more analysis needs to be done to draw on a macro-perspective that includes the institutional but also the national level.

#### 4.5.3 The national level: depicting higher complexities

A study by van Damme (2001) explores the quality challenges deriving from internationalisation for the nation-states. The author affirms that quality issues involved in the international higher education activity have been paid limited attention. These issues have for years been neglected because the universities have expanded with a focus on methods adapted to fit the national needs. Therefore, the internationalisation developments have been framed by those systems that have the nation-state as the main point of reference. Such a lack of a broader perspective is interpreted as a factor that might inhibit the internationalisation advancement. In this respect, van Damme (2001, pp. 430-436) touches upon four areas of concern:

- “Constraints and barriers to internationalisation” including inadequate funding arrangements; lack of strategies at both national and institutional level; bureaucratic limitations, and insufficient regulation.

- “The quality of internationalisation policies and practices” highlights the need for widening the quality assurance schemes to include the internationalisation assessment. However, some developments are targeting this area: the ‘codes of practice’ or ‘codes of conduct’; professional bodies monitoring, and the IQRNP instrument introduced in section 4.5.2.

- The “recognition of foreign diplomas and degrees” remarks upon the need for foreign degrees validation by the different labour markets. For example, in Europe, the European Network of Information Centres (ENIC) and the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) play a central role in this process.

- The “recognition of credits and study periods abroad” links to the need for avoiding non-recognition practices that may cause extra workload and time for the students.
Some mechanisms targeting these practices include mutual recognition agreements and in Europe, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

van Damme’s work contributes to identifying, first, specific areas relating to quality in internationalised contexts and, second, national and regional policy and practice in those areas. As this analysis is limited to the early 2000s’, further investigation into the new dynamics that have emerged from the growing international engagement is required. Much has been done in Europe, for example, after the Bologna Declaration (EHEA, 1999) and, as discussed in Chapter 2, new poles of development are found in Australia and Asia. However, it can be argued that most of the described issues are areas of concern for many developing higher education systems that have remained concentrated on the local provision.

This argument has on recent empirical research about international engagement its evidentiary basis. A study by the British Council (2016) evaluates the installed capacity across twenty-six educational systems using a ‘National Policies Framework for International Engagement’. Adopting a similar approach to van Damme (2001), the framework consists of national policy and practice that the authors identified as contributing factors to international higher education. Three main categories are defined (British Council, 2016, pp. 6-7):

- “Openness of the respective education system” is evaluated through either the existence or not of an international higher education strategy and policies on mobility for students, academics, researchers, programmes and providers.
- “A regulatory environment that aims to help the international mobility” is manifested through quality assurance and degree recognition mechanisms.
- “Equitable access and sustainable development policies” is verified through funding arrangements for mobility and collaboration, and the extent to which national policy considers potential ‘brain drain’ or lack of opportunities for specific students’ groups.

Data gathered through interviews with local experts, further complemented by literature review, reveals that Australia, Germany, United Kingdom, Malaysia and China rate “very high” in ‘openness and international mobility’; Chile, Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana and Nigeria rate “low”, and Mexico, “very low”. Australia, United Kingdom, Germany and Malaysia rate “very high” in ‘quality assurance and degree recognition policies’, which contrasts with Colombia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mexico and Chile that rate “very low”. As discussed in Chapter 3, the results on this category align with previous studies on the Chilean context (OECD, 2013; OECD & The World Bank, 2009). Finally, Chile, China, Germany, Thailand, Indonesia and Turkey are among the countries rating “very high” in the category ‘equitable access and sustainable development policies’; Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Botswana rate “low”, and Ethiopia, “very low”.

A study by Bernhard (2012b) investigates quality assurance developments in connection with internationalisation employing a case-study approach in six national contexts: Austria, Germany, Finland, United Kingdom, United States and Canada. Data gathered from the OECD country reports, and expert interviews demonstrate consistency with van Damme (2001) and the British Council (2016) in one central aspect: a quality challenge emerges from internationalised contexts. Based on the empirical evidence, this study concludes:

“All countries are facing the challenge of linking internationalisation processes with their quality assurance system. With the help of a functioning quality assurance system student mobility, transparency, co-operations, comparability, etc., can be increased . . . Quality assurance is an essential asset
to operate at international level, especially because of the growing market orientation and entrepreneurial attitude of higher education” (Bernhard, 2012b, pp. 165-166).

This claim that the quality assurance systems are facing new demands in internationalisation is mirrored in other research papers. A number of studies have remarked upon the initiatives undertaken by international organisations, regional networks and agencies to introduce new quality assurance methods in scenarios of growing international activity (Blanco-Ramírez & Berger, 2014; Job & Sriraman, 2013; Knight, 2000).

Given the expansion of the cross-border market, there has been some interest in higher education circles about the quality assurance of transnational education. For example, the Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education (QACHE) project (ENQA, 2016a) has looked at the different ways in which higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies deal with quality assurance of programmes delivered in a host country. From the experiences of Spain (ANECA, 2014), France (AERES, 2014), Germany (Mayer-Lantermann, 2014), the United Kingdom (QAA, 2014) and Australia (TEQSA, 2014) the project’s report identifies three areas of future development (ENQA, 2015; 2016b, p. 38):

- “Information sharing” on particular quality assurance systems and cross-border providers to seek mutual trust and understanding.
- “Cooperation in quality assurance” through joint reviews to avoid duplications as well as regulatory gaps.
- “Networks of agencies” to enhance cooperation and good practices sharing.

The QACHE project is by no means isolated but has built on and complemented existing initiatives such as the Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education by the OECD and UNESCO (2005) that provides a set of orientations to promote mutual trust and cooperation between providers and receivers. Additionally, the Guidelines of Good Practice in Quality Assurance by the INQAAHE (2007), which makes a specific reference to the capacity building, mutual understanding and collaboration among the bodies responsible for external quality assurance in contexts of cross-border higher education.

4.5.4 Limitations of previous literature

The state of research offers valuable insights into practice and policymaking in international higher education as well as a substantive basis for further investigation. There is a direct connecting thread from quality to international higher education developments, which highlights the importance of the research topic. However, it is necessary to remember that the concern of this thesis emerges from questions about globalisation impacts, the search for international competitiveness as well as policy learning and capacity building in an emerging country as Chile. In this regard, one could assert that there is a lack of qualitative research connecting, theoretically and practically, quality to internationalisation in such a particular context.

In general, literature looking at internationalisation quality from a national perspective centres mostly on the European region with a few mentions to Australasian and North American countries (Bernhard, 2012b; van Damme, 2001; van der Wende, 1999; van der Wende & Westerheijden, 2001), which may not be transposable to Chilean conditions. Some analysis offers a thorough approach to the studied dimension, empirically underpinned by
several case studies, albeit they instead remain at the institutional level (EAIE, 2010; OECD, 1999). Studies have also emphasised one of the edges of international higher education: the cross-border provision (ENQA, 2016b). While lessons can be drawn from these initiatives, the ‘at home’ side of internationalisation is also a central part of this research.

One of the most comprehensive studies investigating both developed and developing contexts, including Chile, is the one conducted by the British Council (2016). As described in the preceding section, the authors provide an account for the national capacities to create propitious scenarios for international collaboration and engagement. For that purpose, they present a framework comprising some elements for assessment, but given the executive nature of the report, it does not discuss its theoretical basis. Additionally, the analysis of empirical data and findings implications for the analysed countries shows limited scope. Further, there are international reviews conducted in Chile (OECD, 2013; OECD & The World Bank, 2009) but these look at the practices that would widen the current national quality assurance arrangement to promote international engagement and mobility. As previous research has demonstrated, a holistic approach to internationalisation quality does not just include the ‘quality assurance component’ but involves several other dimensions.

### 4.6 Summary

Chapter 4 explores the compound nature of quality in international higher education. It first examines ‘quality’ in a broad sense. In the light of this examination, quality is perceived at two levels of abstraction: as ‘excellence’ and as an ‘operational’ property. As discussed, in order to manage quality, an operational interpretation of it is required. Quality is a dynamic, multidimensional and evolving term that has been interpreted in diverse manners by different scholars and theorists. Nevertheless, quality as a cycle of continuous improvement appears to be a suitable approach for several contexts and needs.

In the second part, the chapter closely looks at ‘quality in higher education’. It touches on contemporary trends and how, in recent years, increasing attention has been paid to continuous cycles of improvement or enhancement. Several lines of evidence suggest that the contemporary methods involve a trade-off between accountability and improvement purposes. Therefore, a current challenge is avoiding risks but promoting innovation. However, this is not the only unfinished task. Many countries are facing a governance crisis by changes in the demand and provision of higher education, so some of them are commercialising quality in many respects by outsourcing to consultants and ranking agencies. This crisis has implications for policy and practice around the world. Higher education is fast evolving, and the systems are being pushed to explore new approaches to adapt to the latest trends.

Finally, the chapter provides a summary of the literature relating to quality in international higher education. Even though some scholars have deepened the knowledge about the relationship between both processes, a systematic understanding of how quality contributes to internationalisation is still lacking. While research has mostly focused on the North American and European policy and practice, it still provides useful insights into the models that may make this process functional. This evidence serves as a basis for the following stages of the study.
Chapter 5:
RESEARCH DESIGN: A MULTI-STAGE INVESTIGATION INTO QUALITY IN INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 outlines the research design for the study. As stated in previous chapters, internationalisation is a complex and dynamic process expressed through a series of cross-border and at-home activities. Even though practices of quality have been seen as contributing factors to international higher education developments, relatively little has been said about the convergence between quality and internationalisation.

Therefore, the study explores this under-theorised area and this chapter moves from the general to the specific methods used to conduct this exploration. In doing so, it elaborates on the rationale behind the research design, including the choice of the national setting for the case study, participant selection and techniques for data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes by explaining the actions undertaken to guarantee the trustworthiness of the research findings and the possible limitations involved.

5.2 Research approach

Relevance has been attached to the internationalisation of higher education in an increasingly globalised world (see Chapter 2). Concurrently, processes of quality have become progressively embedded in the culture of the sector over the last four decades (see Chapter 4). Although internationalisation and quality are contemporary processes in higher education, the convergence between both has been given limited attention (van der Wende, 1999). Given the paucity of research in this area, this study focused on what is the nature of quality in international higher education in the contemporary global system?

Coupled with this overarching research question, several challenges have arisen. First and foremost, the study had to develop a construct that framed the complexities surrounding the ‘nature’ at the centre of the inquiry. Then, it needed to illustrate that ‘nature’ in a bounded, higher education setting. As articulated in Chapter 4, quality in international higher education has been conceived as a sub-product of quality in higher education. Therefore, both share inherent characteristics. Thus, quality in international higher education is not just a compound concept but also abstract, multi-layered and evolving. At the same time, it is determined by external and internal dynamics that are apposite to a higher education environment. As such, quality in international higher education is not universal but contingent upon contextual conditions.

Thus, the study opted for a qualitative, case study approach. The reasons behind this decision are varied (Creswell, 2007). Building a detailed understanding of quality in international higher education is best supported by qualitative enquiry. This understanding would be gained from the experiences shared by individuals, among whom are international experts and stakeholders interacting with the dynamics and complexities of these processes in their daily professional activity. Also, as contextual specificities matter, a qualitative approach is best placed to help develop a thorough understanding of the key particularities in a national setting. Since the study had to construct a preliminary framework, qualitative research can assist in providing a detailed understanding of relevant components and interactions and what
they might mean for theory and practice. By informing theory, a qualitative approach facilitates the iterative process of building new knowledge, contributing to previous research in the higher education field.

5.3 Assumptions

Given its purpose of analysing the nature of an abstract and complex concept that accounts for several linkages, the study adopted a pragmatic stance towards the research process. Such a stance concentrates attention on the outcomes and what worked, in terms of data collection techniques and procedures, to answer the research question (Creswell, 2007; Punch, 2013). In doing so, the policy-oriented nature of the study was acknowledged which called for meaningful and practical findings. First, to inform the theory and, second, in accord with the final subsidiary question, to put that theory in practice by means of policy and practical recommendations for improving the relevance and competitiveness of a tertiary education system.

Although several authors have found themselves taking this approach (Badley, 2003; Cherryholmes, 1994; Morgan, 2014), criticisms have been expressed about its value and whether it provides a lens that mirrors the truth. For example, Given (2008) writes that a pragmatic stance is perceived by the purists to be incompatible with either objectivity or subjectivity in its attempt to connect both. However, the complexities of this debate do not detract from its quality of being appropriate to this study. A study that aims to be “gauged not by its ability to render a truth but by its ability to assist in revealing the nature of reality” (Given, 2008, p. 673); that is, the nature of quality in international higher education in the contemporary global system.

Why would it not render a truth? Because international higher education is evolving (see Chapter 2), likewise, it is engaging in the process of pursuing quality (see Chapter 4). Therefore, quality in international higher education is not seen as absolute. Based on this perspective, the intention is to provide a possible line of action (Badley, 2003) that works in the contemporary conditions (Given, 2008). A pragmatic stance believes simultaneously in an external world that does not depend on the mind and in the world that resides in the mind (Creswell, 2007). It is with such a belief that this study engaged a purposeful, multi-stage design (see Figure 5.1) comprising different data collection procedures. At stage 1, the study observed practices occurring in real, higher education settings to build on a conceptual framework for quality in international higher education. At stage 2, it validated the framework through expert consultation. At stage 3, the study evaluated the framework by exploring individual meanings contrasted with political, social and historical patterns in a bounded system.

By bringing together elements emerging from real, higher education contexts and the perceptions of individuals who deal with the phenomenon under inquiry, this research drew on both objective and subjective components. In other words, there is an external world in which policy and practice are currently in operation, which can be considered the outside elements. On the other hand, there are perceptions of individuals regarding how that policy and practice connect with their social experience, comprising the personal elements of this research. Subjective elements are, nonetheless, continuously contrasted against the literature and perceptions of others to gain a picture of the reality of the topic to the highest possible extent. In this respect, adopting this stance throughout the research process helped reunite these two conflicting sides.
5.4 Methodological approach

Behind the multi-stage design, depicted in Figure 5.1, lies the purpose of the study of deriving new knowledge by following the adaptive theory approach of Layder (1998). This approach is regarded as appropriate to the study since it “focuses on the construction of novel theory in the context of ongoing research by utilising elements of prior theory (both general and substantive) in conjunction with the theory that emerges from data collection and analysis” (Layder, 1998, p. 26). As highlighted in Chapter 4, a starting point can be found in prior knowledge about quality in international higher education that involves the theory of quality as continuous improvement (Deming, 1986). However, the literature making such a connection has been limited to the higher education institution level (EAIE, 2010; OECD, 1999). Some studies are exploring the national level but they lack a theoretical framework (British Council, 2016; van Damme, 2001; van der Wende, 1999). It is in this context, in which there is a basis of prior knowledge, that adaptive theory provides a way to follow an iterative process towards a novel, theoretical construct. This construct would be built through an interchange between
prior models (the cycle of continuous improvement), concepts and conceptual clusters, and theory grounded in research data (Layder, 1998).

Adaptive theory appears to meet the methodological demand of this study, however, it is important to acknowledge the criticism that has surfaced concerning this approach. For example, it has been noted that there are blurred boundaries between empirical and theoretical research components when linking both prior and emergent knowledge. Furthermore, as adaptive theory is an amalgam of inductive and deductive approaches, there is an unclear inter-relationship between them (Proctor, 2016). However, since adaptive theory builds on multiple sources, by means of existing literature and data collected from the field, it seems to be fluid enough to allow identification of specific contributions and clear boundaries (Proctor, 2016). On the other hand, it has been claimed that adaptive theory adopts a well-adjusted stance to inductive and deductive procedures, avoiding extreme bias towards one over the other (Hewege & Perera, 2013).

One of the central assumptions of adaptive theory is that “there is an existing theoretical scaffold which has a relatively durable form since it adapts reflexively rather than automatically in relation to empirical data” (Layder, 1998, p. 150). Therefore, by bringing together extant theoretical elements and an analysis across high-performing countries in internationalisation, the study constructed such a scaffold at the first stage. Next, considering that the “scaffold should never be regarded as immutable since it is capable of accommodating new information and interpretations by reconfiguring itself” (Layder, 1998, p. 150), the study included validation by international experts at the second stage. Then, the study moved on to inform the theoretical construct by exploring a specific social setting. This exploration concentrated on the dynamics of social interaction, mediating between subjective and objective elements around the topic (Layder, 2006).

A single, national, case study approach was designed to illustrate the complexities and particularities of quality in international higher education within a real-world scenario (Simons, 2009; Stake, 2008; Yin, 2014). Using a national system to illustrate the issue under inquiry appears to be a suitable choice for a study aiming to explore the nature of an ongoing issue in higher education. As pointed out by Yin (2014), a case study is a well-suited design when the variables of a phenomenon cannot be detached from their context. Based on the literature review, quality in international higher education conforms with that phenomenological condition. In addition to being abstract, multi-layered and evolving, it also depends on the contextual specificities that lie behind the superstructure of a tertiary education system. This superstructure comprises a network of interactions, frameworks and regulatory arrangements beyond the higher education institution level. It also incorporates diversity from the different sectors and institutional types (Amaral, Jones, & Karseth, 2002).

However, a focus on the specificities of a context comes together with concerns about the generalisability of a case study approach (Gomm, Hammersley, & Foster, 2000). Nevertheless, issues of generalisability do not diminish the value of this methodological approach for the study. It is expected that an in-depth understanding of quality in international higher education in a particular national system contributes to and draws on policy and practical implications for that specific setting. Furthermore, since the study adopted an adaptive theory approach, it was predicted that such understanding fed the theoretical framework. Therefore, there were theoretical and practical expectations. Moreover, a framework deployed to interpret quality in international higher education may provide a basis for exploring other national contexts, in terms of commonalities as well as unique factors. Then, the findings emerging from the case study would open opportunities to investigate other contexts with different cultural backgrounds and economic conditions.
5.5 Case study identification

Given the varied nature of higher education across national systems, it may be valuable to explore quality in international higher education in different national realities. As outlined in Chapter 4, in the literature, the topic under investigation has been given limited consideration. It is not to say that quality in international higher education has been entirely overlooked but approaches are limited in scope. For example, extant literature in the area from a national perspective has concentrated mostly on Europe with a few mentions of Australia and North America (Bernhard, 2012b; van Damme, 2001; van der Wende, 1999; van der Wende & Westerheijden, 2001). Consequently, countries located in the North with highly developed economic systems are given a prominent place.

Based on that limitation, Chile, a developing country situated in South America, was chosen for the study. Thus, through comprehensive, in-depth data collection involving interviews with relevant stakeholders, quality in international higher education was explored in the national context of Chile. Chapter 3 presents preliminary background information for this selected case study. Some contemporary conditions explain the particular importance of Chile. Among these is the need for an improved focus on internationalisation. The Chilean higher education agenda has tended to concentrate on traditional tasks; nonetheless, the ambition is to build capacity to transit to a knowledge-based society. It is in this context that the study aims to contribute to the future through recommendations for policy and practice that place greater attention on the challenges posed by an increasingly globalised scenario.

5.6 First stage: establishing the conceptual framework

5.6.1 High-performing countries in international higher education

Considering the paucity of theories applied to studies of quality in international higher education, the first research stage of this project aimed to build on a conceptual framework. It applied concepts that surfaced from both prior research and literature associated with in-place mechanisms across leading countries in international higher education. The premise was that there is a link between quality and internationalisation (see Chapter 4). The high-performing countries in internationalisation should also have a high maturity level in international higher education quality. Maturity levels, here, are layers created by learning processes that serve as foundations for a continuous improvement cycle.

However, which countries are leading in international higher education? The study developed an internationalisation index to respond to this question. This index was developed by adapting the methodology of the U21 Ranking of National Higher Education Systems, specifically, the connectivity module (de Rassenfosse & Williams, 2015; Williams, Leahy, de Rassenfosse, & Jensen, 2015). Based on the methodological adaptation and previous contextual analysis in Chapter 2, the study identified a set of numerical variables appropriate to explaining performance in internationalisation. Criteria to select the final variables in the index included data source reliability, public availability and consistency. Appendix A provides further detail of the variables and the index results. Further on, the study looked at the twenty highest-performing countries in international higher education.
5.6.2 Data collection technique

Document analysis was used to collect data about the mechanisms by means of which quality in international higher education is made operational across the twenty selected countries. This procedure involved a systematic review of written materials, printed and electronic (Bowen, 2009) concerning the identified mechanism. This review included relevant research papers, official websites, policy documents, national legislation and reports from government and non-governmental organisations. The central purpose, at this stage, was to elicit meaning and understanding from the examination and interpretation of the data contained in that material. The conceptual framework was constructed by organising the data into categories based on prior theory of quality as a cycle of continuous improvement.

5.7 Second stage: validating the dimensions of the framework

5.7.1 Participant selection

This second research stage intended to validate and feed the initial conceptual framework, constructed by looking at policy and practice across highly internationalised systems of higher education. For this purpose, the study opted for a non-probability, purposeful sampling (Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2003) of international experts who were asked about this initial framework. Following the adaptive theory approach indicated earlier, the study sought, at this stage, to shed light on the original dimensions but also on new components. It was expected that both surfaced from the experiences shared by the participants. Given the complexities involved in the exploration of an issue such as quality in international higher education, it was necessary to carefully choose a sample of international experts wherefrom the most could be drawn (Merriam, 2002).

As acknowledged by research literature, those who can offer relevant insights into an experience are predominantly individuals who have interacted or are interacting with the social issue (Polkinghorne, 2005). Accordingly, the study delineated a profile for participants based on knowledge and experience. This profile included individuals with past and current experience in international higher education quality with emphasis on those coming from the countries in the internationalisation index. In alignment with this description, the study looked for prospective participants among individuals working for entities that according to the literature review have been involved in the area under inquiry. Among these:

- Supranational organisations
- Non-governmental organisations including think tanks, institutes, observatories
- International quality assurance networks
- National bodies including higher education authorities, quality assurance agencies, national qualification frameworks
- Research community including individual scholars and research centres.

After generating an expanded list of forty-nine prospective experts, an email invitation to participate in the study was sent to each of them. Attached to this email to potential participants were the Plain Language Statement, the Consent Form and the questionnaire (attached at Appendix B) specially designed to gather their opinions on the initial conceptual framework. If they agreed to participate, they were asked to attach the completed questionnaire to a return email together with the signed Consent Form. In total, from May 2016 to April 2017, eight experts provided their insights into the proposed model. Even though
the response rate reached only sixteen per cent, the participants who replied came from all institutional areas identified as playing a role in the area under inquiry. This variety of participants thus provided an account of experiences from different institutional contexts. Furthermore, their experiences brought refinement and coherence to the initial framework. Table 5.1 shows the number of respondents by type of institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supranational organisations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International quality assurance network</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education authority</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality assurance agency</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National qualification framework</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research community</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to respect the principle of confidentiality and protect the anonymity of the participants, they were referred to as E1 through to E8. This form of ‘anonymisation’ (Wiles, Crow, Heath, & Charles, 2008) tries to ensure that identity is not disclosed while presenting the research findings in Chapter 7. Thus, codes were used when drawing direct excerpts from the raw data to exemplify the analysis.

5.7.2 Data collection techniques

A questionnaire was utilised to collect data from international experts. The primary purpose of this instrument was to gather as much information as possible from experts in the field to refine the initial conceptual framework. Given this purpose, the instrument design had to find a balance between complexity and usability. On one side, it had to consider the complex and multi-layered nature of the framework. On the other, the practical purpose of drawing useful data in the limited, twenty-minute period specified in the Plain Language Statement supplied to the participants. Therefore, the challenge was to collect rich data while avoiding ‘fuzzy’ elements that could distract the participants from the central components.

Based on these constraints, the design considered a short questionnaire (Appendix B) that attempted to depict complexities but with an instrumental emphasis on levels, actors and mechanisms. Open-ended questions concerning the relevance of each of these provided the opportunity to capture a depth of experience to the extent determined by each of the participants. Open-ended questions regarding suggestions for improvement also provided the opportunity for the participants to expand on this crucial refinement component.

Document analysis was used at this stage to complement the perspectives provided by the experts. While some participants touched upon concepts unexplored in the study thus far, others illustrated their perceptions by referring to real-life examples, which demanded further investigation. Documents collected for analysis comprised extant research literature but also other publicly available material such as policy documents, national strategies, national legislation and official websites.
5.8 Third stage: analysing the framework in a national context

5.8.1 Participant selection

This third research stage sought to assess the framework deployed to interpret quality in international higher education in the context of the case study. The study opted for a non-probability, purposeful sampling (Hernández et al., 2003) of Chilean stakeholders. At this stage, the study sought to explore, under the particular conditions of the Chilean context, different layers of the topic. These layers include meanings, relationships and influences as well as a more functional layer revealed by perceptions on the relevance and feasibility of the framework to Chile. Underpinned by an adaptive theory approach, it was expected that the empirical data emerging at this stage would inform the iterative theorising process. Then, to draw the most from the experiences investigated, the study aimed to recruit stakeholders actively involved in higher education, with experience or knowledge about the field of international higher education and quality, acting either as policymakers, practitioners or researchers.

Higher education stakeholders represent a group with interests or responsibilities arising from their involvement in the politics of higher education or assigned roles in the sector (Knight, 1997). As an interest group, stakeholders seek to exercise influence into the public policy domain by raising particular concerns and emphases (Castro, Rosa, & Pinho, 2015; Cho & Palmer, 2013). In higher education, three primary interest groups are recognised: the education sector, including staff and students, the government sector and the private sector (Knight, 1997). Based on this understanding, the study identified several entities within these interest groups that play a role in the areas of international higher education and quality in Chile. This identification drew on the contextual review presented in Chapter 3 which expands on the initiatives and actors involved in these areas. With this information, the final classification of institutions from which to recruit participants was set as follows:

Education sector:
- University: state-owned university, traditional private university, private university
- Non-university provider
- Research community
- Student unions
- University association

Government sector:
- Ministry: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy
- The national system for quality assurance

Private sector:
- Industry and business association
- Private quality assurance agency

Based on the list of interest groups, potential participants from the relevant entities were identified to gain a maximum variation (Seidman, 2006). Given the policy-oriented nature of the study, the search for participants focused on their executive profile. In this manner, the targeted group included heads of department, rectors, directors, presidents and senior researchers. Consequently, the selection of participants followed a fit for purpose approach considering the representativeness of different groups and subgroups within the targeted population (May, 2011).
Contact details were obtained from public sources of information, predominantly from official websites. With an expanded list of potential participants, initial contact was made by email and telephone to invite them to take part in the study. In this initial contact, prospective participants received information about the nature of the study as well as what was expected of them. If the invitation was accepted, a time and venue for a face-to-face interview were set up. Prior to the interview, the participants received the Plain Language Statement and the Consent Form for further information. Given the case study is in a non-English speaking country, these documents were translated and supplied in Spanish (Appendix D). Additionally, the study followed the recruitment strategy known as snowball sampling (Heckathorn, 2011) so, in a number of cases, one participant led to another.

As the literature suggests, the final sample size was determined by two criteria: sufficiency and saturation (Seidman, 2006). The first criterion refers to a “sufficient number” (Seidman, 2006, p. 55) that accounts for the diversity existing in a population in such a way that external audiences can connect with the social interactions of those in it. The second criterion refers to “a point in a study at which researcher begins to hear the same information reported” (Seidman, 2006, p. 55), so the contribution of a new participant becomes marginal. Therefore, the sample size for the interviews is less conditional on the number of respondents recruited than on the richness of the picture that emerges. Some literature, however, notes that the sample size in interview studies commonly gravitates to the range fifteen plus/minus ten participants (Kvale, 2007, p. 44).

In total, twenty interviews were conducted from June to September 2016, eighteen face-to-face and two on Skype. Interviews lasted between thirty and seventy minutes. Table 5.2 presents the number of participants by sector and type of institution. In compliance with sufficiency, the final sample included a broad range of stakeholders involved in the areas of internationalisation and quality from different institutions, geographical areas and contextual conditions. With this institutional variety, the study ceased the data collection process when the same ideas and conceptualisations started to be heard, indicating that the saturation point had been reached.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Ministry</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The national system for quality assurance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>State-owned university</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional private university</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private university</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-university provider</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research community</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student union</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University association</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Industry and business representative</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private quality assurance agency</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with the second stage, to respect the principle of confidentiality and protect the anonymity of the Chilean stakeholders, participants in this stage were denoted as P1 to P20. This form of anonymisation sought to minimise their potential identification from the research findings analysis. Therefore, Chapters 8 and 9 use these codes when extracting direct quotes from the data for illustration.
5.8.2 Data collection techniques

Stage three used semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the Chilean stakeholders. Even though various techniques can assist in exploring an educational phenomenon, when aiming to understand the meaning that people make of the experience of dealing with that phenomenon, in-depth interviews become an essential data collection technique (Seidman, 2006). As the central question of the study asks ‘what is the nature of a phenomenon’, the emphasis on individual experience became relevant. Given this focus, the study aimed to draw an understanding of an issue that involves complex social interactions. It is necessary, then, to make abstractions from the meaning that people made of their experience with the higher education processes under investigation. Interviewing individuals who are impacted by or carrying out these processes appeared to be the most appropriate way to approach that experience. The use of this technique supports the gaining of insights into the nature of quality in international higher education in the contemporary particularities of Chile.

The in-depth interviews were semi-structured to help organise the interviewing process around specific themes but allow enough freedom for ideas to surface. The study designed a protocol to give direction to the interviews in a standardised manner (Appendix C). It contained a set of instructions to follow, as well as open-ended questions, to help frame the interviews and thus gather consistent and comparable data across respondents. This consistency contributes to the trustworthiness of the research findings. By adopting an open-ended approach, the study sought to provide an opportunity for participants to adequately reflect on their experience yielding more profound insights into the explored topic (Creswell, 2012). Given that the study adopted an adaptive theory approach, the open-research questions were based on knowledge of the topic gained from the preceding stages. Based on this understanding, the interviews endeavoured to elicit contextual and conceptual data about the processes of internationalisation, quality and the interplay between the two in Chilean higher education.

Additionally, the interviews sought to explore perceptions of the appropriateness of a framework for quality in international higher education to the Chilean context by applying two criteria regarding each of its instruments: relevance and feasibility. To do so, the study complemented the open-ended questions with a brief questionnaire (Appendix C). The questionnaire outlines every phase of the framework with its instruments, of which some emerged from the expert consultation. Participants indicated their perception of the instrument’s relevance using a five-point scale, where one meant ‘not relevant’ and five, ‘very relevant’. Participants also indicated their perception of the instrument’s feasibility using a five-point scale where one meant ‘not at all feasible’ and five, ‘highly feasible’.

By signing the Consent Form (Appendix C), all participants agreed the interview would be audio recorded to later transform it as a verbatim transcript to facilitate analysis. Even though taking notes on the responses was an option, the strategy of audio recording permitted the researcher to focus their attention on the interviewing process. Also, it was essential to maintain a smooth dialogue. Taking notes could risk deterring from the necessary rapport between the researcher and the interviewee that contributes to the flow of thoughts and meanings. Notwithstanding that it is time-consuming, a verbatim transcript of the interviews allows a more reliable analysis based not on interpretation but the primary data gathered. Besides, a transcript facilitated illustrating the analysis with direct quotes from the participants.

As this qualitative research draws on multiple sources of data, document analysis was also used to complement the Chilean stakeholders’ perspectives. While some referred to ongoing policy discussions, others illustrated their perceptions by highlighting historical and
contemporary issues, which invited further investigation. Sources collected for analysis comprised research literature, policy documents, national legislation, national performance indicators, international rankings and official websites among others.

5.9 Data analysis

In alignment with the adoption of the adaptive theory approach, the study used both deductive and inductive procedures (Layder, 1998) to derive knowledge about quality in international higher education from the data. At the first stage, the study employed mostly deductive reasoning by means of the general assumption that success in high-performing countries in internationalisation can, to some extent, be explained by the inclusion of the quality dimension into their international higher education framework. Looking at those experiences can provide insights into what the nature of quality in international higher education is. The study deduced, from these developments, an initial framework using document analysis. A theoretical model of quality as continuous improvement, previously identified, served as the basis for the themes to which analysis paid attention. This framework, hypothetical in nature, had to be validated in the next stage through consultation with international experts in the field.

As described above, the second stage involved the use of a questionnaire to gather the perspectives of the international experts. Given the structured nature of the questionnaire, a qualitative analysis was carried out in line with the themes that framed the open-ended questions of the consultation. Analysis, at this stage, employed both deductive and inductive procedures. Following a deductive approach, the themes were organised as per the phases, instruments and actors proposed in the initial framework. Data concerning each of the themes was combined and interpreted according to the insights provided by the experts. New levels of analysis, instruments and actors arose out of this data. These new elements were contrasted with the existing literature as a form of triangulation. This triangulation was crucial to judge whether to include novel elements in the initial framework, as part of the adaptive theorising process of the study, then transit to the following stage.

After the expert consultation, the study concentrated on the selected case study. This stage employed semi-structured interviews to collect data from a wide range of Chilean stakeholders. Once the interviewing process had concluded, a verbatim transcript was obtained from every audio file. Based on these transcripts, the study used thematic analysis to inductively explore the conceptual and contextual elements linked to quality in international higher education in Chile (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Ezzy, 2013; Gomm, 2008). Based on the thematic analysis, the transcripts were carefully read to reveal the essence of the responses. Then, analysis centred on ‘open coding’ the raw data. As acknowledged in the literature, an open coding strategy may assist in the beginning to examine all the possibilities involved in the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Open coding yielded an initial list of codes that served as a basis to code the interview data assisted by the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo. Data coding put conceptual tags on the interview data. As the analysis revealed concepts that belonged to different levels of abstraction, Nvivo helped to group “lower-level” concepts into “higher-level” categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 160). The central categories included context and processes: internationalisation, quality and quality in international higher education. In consonance with the adaptive theory approach, the codes selection closely looked at the research question as well as the contextual and conceptual developments outlined in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. The participants also provided some conceptualisations, which were double-checked with existing
literature. In this manner, prior knowledge came together with the theory arising from the empirical data.

5.10 Trustworthiness

The study attempted to enhance the quality and trustworthiness of the research process at each of its stages. Trustworthiness, for this study, is the way in which the researcher can persuade the scholarly community that the findings of the investigation are “worth paying attention to, worth taking account for” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). One of the central tenets in this search for trustworthiness is credibility. As noted by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 290), that means “establishing confidence in the truth of the findings”, for the participants as well as the context in which the study is conducted. To address issues of credibility, the study sought wide diversity by recruiting participants from a range of institutional settings and geographical locations. This contextual diversity contributed to approaching the nature of quality in international higher education through different lenses. Different experiences allowed the findings to be compared and contrasted.

Studies that rely on just one data collection technique can become susceptible to the weaknesses of that specific research technique (Patton, 1999). Therefore, to enhance the credibility of the research findings, the study used a triangulation of sources “to provide cross-data validity checks” (Patton, 1999, p. 1192). In doing so, the study compared and contrasted data emerging from every research stage with the previous one in a recursive manner. Furthermore, the study verified data against extant literature as well as information provided by official websites including government, intermediate agencies, higher education institutions, and supranational and regional organisations. In this way, the study aimed to move beyond a single view. Moreover, member checking (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was undertaken by providing the interviewees with a copy of the verbatim transcripts. In this way, it was giving them the opportunity not just to check on the accuracy of the raw data but also to respond to the shared experience if they wished. The presentation of various research findings from the study at research conferences and seminars exposed the researcher to peer scrutiny (Shento, 2004) and provided useful insights to feed the overall research process.

The possibility to produce credible findings may diminish if familiarity with the context is lacking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shento, 2004). In this study, contextual engagement was somewhat guaranteed as the researcher previously held executive positions at the government and institutional level in the Chilean higher education sector. Nevertheless, it is relevant to recognise that such a background could also lead to researcher bias if personal viewpoints and perceptions are allowed to impact on the data interpretation (Johnson, 1997; Maxwell, 2013). This potential risk may raise concerns about trustworthiness. However, identifying and reflecting on such a risk helped make it possible to ensure the findings were based on the experiences of the participants, rather than the preferences of the researcher. The measures to assure this included triangulation, as outlined above, as well as drawing the analysis exclusively on insights provided by the participants. Direct excerpts extracted from the raw data to illustrate the analysis enhance the reliability that findings were the result of the empirical exploration.

Furthermore, before beginning the data collection, the study passed through the human ethics approval process set out by the University of Melbourne for conducting a research project. This confirmed the study was underpinned by principles of ethical practice, which, together with a competent practice, are crucial for the rigour and trustworthiness of qualitative research (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Rallis & Rossman, 2009). This process involved
preparing two versions of a Plain Language Statement and a Consent Form, for both types of participants, international experts (Appendix B) and interviewees (Appendix C). The Consent Form was central to the ethical conduct of this research because it is a formal agreement between the researcher and the participant. By signing this form, respondents agree to voluntarily participate in the study acknowledging that they understand what is required of them and the potential risks involved. It also establishes the guarantees made to the participant of how they will be protected from disclosure. Therefore, it is a pivotal instrument for building trust and, consequently, a contributor to the establishment of rapport, which is relevant to the quality of the data collection process (Seidman, 2006). On the other hand, ethical practice implies that the study is subject to accountability, so is open to examination of compliance with the research integrity requirements.

5.11 Methodological limitations

Research findings drew on a small sample of international experts and Chilean stakeholders. Even though the study achieved the purpose of institutional variety, due to economic and time constraints, only a single or, in some cases, a few participants from a specific institutional domain could be recruited. As the final research sample depended on participants’ availability at specific dates and times, replicability of experimental conditions is very difficult.

On the other hand, the case study focuses on a non-English speaking country with particular economic, political, historical and socio-cultural conditions. It is not feasible for the study to, additionally, touch upon other national realities. However, a focus on a single national case may involve limitations concerning the generalisation of the research findings. Despite this limitation, the study contributes to theory by developing a framework for quality in international higher education that can be adapted or expanded to investigate the area further and in different contexts.

The interviewees participating in the third stage were mostly from the university sector because it is this sector that has built capacities in the areas under investigation. Therefore, as the non-university sector was, to some extent, underrepresented, there might be a potential bias towards policy and practice for the university sector. As the non-university sector has a different focus and scope, the analysis might not have fully captured its experience in dealing with the processes of internationalisation and quality.

Given the previous professional experience of the researcher in the Chilean higher education sector, there might be a potential bias in the interpretation of data according to acquired knowledge and beliefs. However, the study focused exclusively on the data drawn from the perceptions of participants. Moreover, excerpts extracted directly from the raw data support the analysis. Also, data was compared and contrasted, recursively, with previous stages, extant literature, policy documents and websites using triangulation of sources.

5.12 Summary

Chapter 5 delineates the research design for the study, including its rationale, assumptions, methodological approach as well as the data collection techniques and strategies to undertake the analysis. The study uses a qualitative case study approach and a fit for purpose, multi-stage design that employs various data collection techniques. In line with this multi-stage design, the study follows an adaptive theory approach, which conceives the theorising process as an
iteration of prior knowledge and data emerging from the study. At every stage, the study expands and refines the conceptual model.

Given the limitations of this dissertation as to resources and time, a single nation case study approach is used to illustrate the complexities and particularities of quality in international higher education within a real-world scenario. As extant literature focuses primarily on North America and Europe, the study examines the case of Chile. Based on the research design outlined in this chapter, the next sections expand on the framework development, its validation by international experts and its assessment under the contextual conditions of Chilean higher education.
Chapter 6:
THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY IN INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 builds the conceptual arrangement to frame and give direction to the study using the contextual and theoretical knowledge articulated so far. It systematically organises this knowledge and centres on the limitations of previous literature to propose a new perspective from which to respond the first subsidiary research question:

*What are the key characteristics of a policy framework for quality in international higher education?*

In doing so, the chapter advances the conceptual framework through three building blocks. The first block sets out the theoretical foundations which are made up of notions of the underlying features of higher education as well as its interaction with the external environment. The second block brings together developments of the conceptualisation of quality in international higher education. The third block focuses on that conceptualisation to propose a model that serves as the basis for the framework. In the second part of the chapter, the model is substantiated in a review of highly internationalised higher education systems. Finally, the chapter depicts the framework for quality in international higher education, based on contemporary practices and relevant literature, that will be put to use in the study.

6.2 Developing a new approach

Constructing a conceptual framework involves searching for a group of interconnected concepts that systematically organise and interact to explain the intrinsic characteristics of the relationship between the variables under analysis (Fain, 2013). Therefore, investigating elements to scaffold a new approach to quality in international higher education in the contemporary global system entails immersion in pertinent theories and concepts. Both variables – quality and international higher education – have been broken down and analysed in previous chapters. Now, that knowledge is brought to the fore and complemented with other theories to develop a comprehensive model that captures not only the elements interacting in the process of quality in international higher education but also those operating at its edges. These peripheral elements are particularly relevant because they feed the whole process and its outcomes.

It is crucial to bear in mind that the variables belong to a dynamic context. This highlights the challenge of capturing reality. At the highest abstraction level, higher education can be seen as interacting with, and for, society. In that sense, it is representative of a social system. Given its social character then, a human phenomenon such as globalisation becomes an active agent of transformation. On the other hand, at the systemic level, several forms of organisation and governance determine the perceptions of processes such as quality and internationalisation. Consequently, these forms will have implications for any sub-process, including international higher education quality. Figure 6.1 schematically shows the bases of a conceptual construct, showing three building blocks, namely, the theoretical foundations given by macro phenomena and general theories, the processes that give place to the area under
enquiry and the practices, which delineate the operational level. Each of these will be explained in the following sections.

**Figure 6.1:** Basis for a conceptual framework

### 6.2.1 Theoretical foundations

As shown in Figure 6.1, the first building block depicts the conceptual foundations. These can be summarised as follows:

#### 6.2.1.1 Higher education: a social system

Understanding higher education as a social system prompts to explore, first, what a system is. In accordance with the seminal work of Bertalanffy (1968, p. 42), a system is “a complex of interacting elements”. In this sense, a system consists of parts and relationships between them to constitute a coherent and bounded whole that interacts with an environment (Checkland, 2012). Based on this understanding, to a system the following are the essential components (Dekkers, 2015):

- **Elements** are the several parts into which a system is organised.
- **Relationships** describe the interaction between the external and internal elements, which may have a mono or bi-directional character.
- **The environment** is made up of the elements outside the system, which exert influence on it.
- **Boundaries** are the limits separating the system from its environment

Then, a system is a combination of elements reunited by a certain relationship and interdependence. There are different types of systems including natural or constructed, material or conceptual, open or closed, inactive or dynamic (Tien & Berg, 2003). An ‘open’ system is the one that has exchanges with its environment (Scott, 2015), which lead to internal transformations. Checkland (2012, p. 2) describes ‘an open system able to change’ as an adaptive system that “can survive as its environment may change and deliver shocks to it”. The relevant literature identifies several mechanisms used by a system to adapt to its environment. Among these are self-regulation and autopoiesis. Self-regulation is an adaptive mechanism whereby the system maintains its balance based on its structural capacity and the information
exchanged with the environment. Autopoiesis is an adaptive mechanism that aligns the system’s complexity to the complexities found in the environment (Maturana & Varela, 1980).

Following this line of reasoning, this study argues that higher education is an open and dynamic system that is composed of interacting elements in continuous adaptation to shifting environments. The interacting elements include, but are not limited to, higher education institutions, government, student unions, academic profession and industry. The continuous adaptation involves policymaking on the basis of new challenges and needs, for example, improvement plans or regulatory changes. Whereas, the shifting environments are given by internal constraints but also global trends such as massification, commercialisation, internationalisation and privatisation.

The higher education system has to be understood as one of a social nature because it exists and adapt to achieve specific purposes for society (Seidl & Becker, 2006). Such purposes set out its boundaries. It has been suggested that a social system “consists in a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect”, and “culturally structured and shared symbols” (Parsons, 1951, pp. 5-6). This conceptualisation highlights that individuals are at the core of a social system, so, language and communication networks, alongside a shared culture, are relevant features to their interaction (Luhmann, 1986; Parsons, 1951).

Having established the basis of a systemic perspective on higher education, the next two sections will expand on the relationship between the actors. First, the internal major forces in a system are explored before moving on to exploring the relationship of the actors with what has turned out to be an increasingly globalised environment.

6.2.1.2 Higher education: a social system with three dominant agents

There is a growing body of literature that recognises Clark (1986, 2004)’s work on organisation and governance of higher education systems (e.g. Altbach, Gumport, & Berdahl, 2011; Enders, 2004; Harvey & Knight, 1996; Kogan & Hanney, 2000; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; van der Wende, 1997). Particular attention has been paid to the so-called ‘triangle of coordination’ (Figure 6.2) which depicts a multi-dimensional space wherein the state authority, the academic oligarchy and the market interrelate as the agents that dominate coordination of higher education systems.

![Figure 6.2: The triangle of coordination](source: Clark (1986, p. 143))

Each of the three agents is placed in one of the triangle’s vertices to represent a potential dominant higher education system form. Then, the multi-dimensional space
represents the numerous ways in which these agents may interact and reunite with each other. As discussed in section 6.2, capturing reality challenges any conceptual model. The triangle seeks to capture the complexities of a higher education system by expanding previous views focused solely on academic and bureaucratic authorities. The model claims the influence of the market by recognising that much of the order observed within a system is the result of unplanned market-driven interactions. In accordance with Clark, the state and the academic oligarchy have purposes and plans, but the market is “mindless and purposeless” (Clark, 2004, p. 179).

There is a continuous trade-off between the state and the academic oligarchy regarding how they approach the market. For instance, for the higher education institutions, “the main commodity of exchange” in the market is reputation. This is an element that “turns universities into prestige-maximising institutions” (Clark, 2004, p. 180). Reputation plays a role in attracting and retaining students, academic and administrative staff as well as resources. This importance implies for this study that, although its primary purpose is linking quality to international higher education, reputation is a highly correlated concept by its effects in the higher education market.

On the whole, the form in which the state authority, the academic oligarchy and the market are integrated into higher education varies among systems, giving rise to a plurality of combinations. The variations between educational systems provides support for the idea that the form in which these agents coordinate sets out one of the foundations of the conceptual model. This is because this coordination shapes a particular scenario for the model to operate. Therefore, the applicability of the pilot framework in a government-dominated system should be different of the outcomes of a system led by market forces.

6.2.1.3 Higher education: a social system subjected to globalisation

The Clark’s framework, presented above, centres mostly upon the national dynamics of a higher education system. Nonetheless, in view of global trends, the national contexts are increasingly adopting an open approach to external influences. It is crucial that the conceptual model of this study acknowledges the existence of global trends and their potential implications for the national-local domain.

A number of authors have recognised the effects of ‘global’ dynamics in the national higher education systems (e.g. Teichler, 1996; van der Wende, 1997). For example, almost two decades ago, Teichler (1996) asserted that the growing impact of international trends, transnational activity and supranational integration was inviting the rethinking of conceptual approaches to higher education. As globalisation has intensified since then, this rethinking becomes more critical to the sector. Some social theorists has focused on the relevance of going beyond the national scale in the light of globalisation. Robertson (1995, p. 28) and others (Lingard, 2000; Luke & Luke, 2000, p. 291; Swyngedouw, 1997, p. 140) refer to the way in which the local, national, and global relate and influence each other rather than see them as irreconcilable opposites.

Marginson and Rhoades (2002) also discuss these elements becoming an inspiration for further research exploring national higher education systems in more globally active environments (e.g. Enders, 2004; Hazelkorn, 2009; King, 2010; Marginson, 2010; Vaira, 2004; Vidovich, 2007). This approach builds on an understanding of global, national and local forces in combination with the concept of ‘agency’ at supranational, collective and individual levels. This perspective elicits six essential components framing a model that depicts a hexagonal
space: “global agencies, global human agency, national agencies, national human agency, local agencies, and local human agency” (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002, pp. 290-291). According to the authors, movement beyond the state, market and academic oligarchy passes through different layers of analysis in the hexagonal space, which creates new and more specific spaces of complexity.

This study will not explore the layers of complexity proposed by Marginson and Rhoades, but some elements are central to both the conceptual model and the future analysis. Among them are, first, the awareness of emerging forces in higher education, such as globalisation, demanding suitable adaptations. Second, the need to be attentive not just to the nation-state but also the connection of it to what is meant by ‘the global’. In the context of this research, the global involves the external forces permeating the national boundaries in terms of quality in international higher education. These may include supranational and regional plans or decisions as well as the effect of international rankings, to name a few. Finally, it draws attention to the agency exercised by the local structures at the national level as a factor that has an impact on the relationship between the actors of a higher education system.

6.2.2 Two processes into one: quality in international higher education

The next building block pictured in Figure 6.1 links the theoretical foundations to the conceptual model and refers to the processes under investigation. The first aspect to consider here is that exploring the conceptualisation of quality in international higher education invites breaking the term down into its two central components. Chapter 4 focuses on the primary component – the concept of quality. There, a comprehensive analysis of the term is elaborated, together with a discussion about its various forms of operationalisation, with explicit consideration to higher education. Based on section 4.4.3:

**Quality** is seen as excellence, made operational through a recurrent process of continuous improvement whereby higher education purposes are planned, implemented and measured, leading to enhancement over time.

The second component, international higher education, is widely documented in Chapter 2, which offers insights into the main developments. Generally speaking, this component is conceived as a sub-product of the much broader process of internationalisation in higher education. In conformity with section 2.2:

**Internationalisation of higher education** refers to a process whereby an international, intercultural, or global dimension is included in the core educational practices, namely, teaching/learning, research and other services to society, for:

- Expanding local scope,
- Being part of an international higher education area, and
- Being recognised across national borders
This process is operationalised through international higher education strategies, therefore:

**International higher education** refers to the several strategies, activities or initiatives whereby the internationalisation process is made operational. There has been a dominant trend to understand these strategies as belonging to two interrelated levels:

International higher education ‘at home’ involves the integration of an international, intercultural or global dimension into curricular and programmatic structures, teaching/learning processes, research/academic activity, co and extra-curricular initiatives and also links with the local/cultural and ethnic groups (Knight, 2012).

International higher education ‘cross-border’ focuses on the movement and trade across national boundaries, which comprises: people, programmes, providers, projects and policies (Knight, 2012).

Chapter 2 summarises the principal forms of international higher education both at home and cross-border. Hence, in the light of the concepts mentioned above, this study contends that:

**Quality in international higher education** might be conceptualised as the search for excellence made operational through a cyclical process of continuous improvement. Through this process, the purposes (role and objectives) of international higher education, both at home and cross-border, are planned, implemented and measured, leading to enhancement over time.

As discussed in Chapter 4 and previous literature (EAIE, 2010; OECD, 1999), such a process, if comprehensively understood, shall include policies, instruments and procedures aiming at different purposes. These include the purpose of planning, the purpose of control, the purpose of assessment and the purpose of enhancement.

### 6.2.3 A conceptual model of quality in international higher education

The last building block presented in Figure 6.1 centres upon the practice territory. At this level, the question that arises concerns how quality in international higher education works in a real, higher education setting. Approaching this question, the study proposes a model based on the Shewhart’s cycle or PDCA cycle as per Deming’s theory on quality as continuous improvement (see Chapter 4). As noted earlier, such a model has been widely adopted to depict the quality processes in higher education (e.g. Asif & Raouf, 2013; Chen, 2012; Dill, 1995; Doherty, 2008; Redmond, Curtis, Noone, & Keenan, 2008; Westerheijden, Stensaker, & Rosa, 2007) and a few studies integrate the notion of a wheel of improvement in combination with internationalisation (EAIE, 2010; OECD, 1999).
Along the same lines, this research claims that Deming’s theory applies to ‘quality in international higher education’. Although previous literature has mainly referred to ‘quality assurance’ cycles, it is believed that the term ‘quality’, in a broader sense, is inclusive of each of its purposes, particularly improvement, which seems to be left behind sometimes when specifying ‘assurance’. As shown in Figure 6.3, quality in international higher education works through consecutive phases of planning (P), doing (D), checking (C) and acting (A). When it is repeated over time, the process causes state changes. This means the situation at time $t_2$ shall be different to the situation at time $t_1$. The improvement occurring between the end of one cycle ($A_2$) and the beginning of the next ($P_2$) explains the gap which, by its repetitive nature, is leading to a general enhancement.

By concentrating on each of the phases of the continuous improvement cycle, the possible features of a functional model of quality in international higher education are identified. Unlike previous institutional-based literature (EAIE, 2010; OECD, 1999), the perspective here is system-based and considers international higher education as being shaped by internal but also external dynamics (Marginson, 2010). As shown in Figure 6.4, there is a trade-off between what is called the supra-regional component, that includes actors and actions occurring beyond the national boundaries, and the national-local component, that includes actors and actions of a government, academic or market-led nature occurring within the national space.

As depicted below, the cycle takes place at the national-local level through a series of instruments involving various actors. Moreover, the cycle interacts with what is called the global-regional space. Next section works, on the basis of this model, to construct the conceptual framework that will underpin the theoretical and empirical development of this research.
6.3 A practice-based framework for quality in international higher education

The framework for quality in international higher education draws on the model presented in section 6.2. It features knowledge about social systems and insights into the bi-dimensional interplay between national and global. Furthermore, it is comprised of higher education governance and organisation, along with an understanding of quality as a process of continuous improvement. To strengthen the model, the study follows a practice-based approach. In doing so, it identifies in-place practices of quality in international higher education. Based on the internationalisation index presented in Chapter 5 (see Appendix A for a detailed explanation), the top twenty countries (see Table 6.1) are selected to conduct a thorough analysis. The analysis includes relevant literature, policy documents, regulation, along with official websites deemed related to the area under inquiry. The next segment expands upon the key findings.

Table 6.1: Top 20 countries leading in internationalisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RK</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>RK</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hong Kong SAR</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Internationalisation Index (Appendix A)
6.3.1 The supra-regional component

Analysis of the selected countries reveals that instruments from supranational agencies, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), The World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), guide regional, national and local developments in international higher education quality. For example, the Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education by the OECD and UNESCO (2005) has set principles widely adopted in the area of cross-border higher education quality (ENQA, ANECA, et al., 2015; UNESCO & APQN, 2006). These agencies also provide comparative data on areas such as, ‘foreign/international students enrolled’ (OECD, 2017a) and ‘international student mobility in tertiary education’ (UNESCO, 2019).

Another type of influence comes from international rankings such as the QS World University Ranking or the Academic Ranking of World Universities and associations like the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). These associations draw on regional, national and local structures to articulate instruments such as the Guidelines of Good Practices in Quality Assurance (INQAAHE, 2007) that, in return, frame the development in particular contexts. This comes as no surprise as the top-down form of agency exercised by these same bodies is well recognised in the literature (e.g. Blanco-Ramírez & Berger, 2014; Marginson, 2010; Smith, 2010; Stella, 2006).

What is occurring at the regional level is as crucial as the transnational dynamics. One of the more illustrative examples of this is the Bologna Process in Europe which started in the late-1990s. By promotion of “European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies” (EHEA, 1999, p. 4), this process has yielded shared standards and guidelines to support actions within the region (ENQA, ESU, et al., 2015). Another relevant element that has come up with this analysis is the work done by regional blocks, trade agreements negotiations and networks. Especially representative, at this point, are the local networks for quality assurance that seek to facilitate experience-sharing and promote mutual understanding. Such networks identified in the explored countries include:

- The Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE)
- The Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)
- The Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA)
- The CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG)
- The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
- The Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education (NOQA)
- The Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of The Islamic World (QA-Islamic)
- The Quality Beyond Boundaries Group (QBBG)
6.3.2 The national-local component

6.3.2.1 First phase: Policy and strategy (plan)

i. Instrument I.1: National strategy for international higher education

Almost half of the ‘Top 20’ countries have drawn on a national strategy to internationalise higher education (see Table 6.2). It is suggested that the instrument utilised plays a steering role in this area (British Council, 2016; van Damme, 2001). Generally, a national body, represented by the Ministry or Department of Education, leads and coordinates the process. The process commonly involves a final document that integrates visions of related agencies and local authorities. In some countries, the strategy closely connects with purposes of innovation as well as international competitiveness (Australian Government, 2016; HM Government, 2013; Swiss Confederation, 2010).

Table 6.2: National strategy for international higher education by country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Main Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>International education strategy: global growth and prosperity (HM Government, 2013)</td>
<td>Department for Business, Innovation &amp; Skills and Department for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>National strategy for international education 2025 (Australian Government, 2016)</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Switzerland’s international strategy for education, research and innovation (Swiss Confederation, 2010)</td>
<td>State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>An international education strategy for Ireland, 2016-2020 (Department of Education and Skills, 2016)</td>
<td>Department of Education and Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Canada’s International Education Strategy (Government of Canada, 2014)</td>
<td>Ministry of International Trade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ii. Instrument I.2: National policy for quality assurance in higher education

As articulated in Chapter 4, section 4.5 when a higher education system participates in international spaces, quality gain among stakeholders the status of “trust-building mechanism” (Stensaker & Maassen, 2015, p. 30). Thereby, as acknowledged by previous studies (British Council, 2016; van Damme, 2001), national arrangements focused on this aspect become a relevant instrument to this purpose.

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4 Tables 6.2 to 6.9 are based on official websites and literature review of the sampled, twenty, most internationalised, higher education systems
Currently, all analysed countries have a quality assurance arrangement in place. The vast majority of systems have installed a formal structure managed by an umbrella agency, as illustrated by the examples in Table 6.3. The quality functions across these developments vary but some of the most-used include recognition, accreditation, audit and thematic evaluation at the programme and institutional level, as explained in section 4.4.4. Generally, the external quality assessment involves periodical cycles whose length depends on the particular context and its legal framework.

Table 6.3: Examples of national policy for quality assurance in higher education by country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Main Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Accreditation (Swiss Confederation, 2011)</td>
<td>Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Registration (QQI, 2012b)</td>
<td>Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium - Netherlands</td>
<td>Accreditation (NVAO, 2003)</td>
<td>Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Accreditation (NCAAA, 2017)</td>
<td>The National Commission on Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Accreditation (NOKUT, 2014)</td>
<td>The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Evaluation (UKA, 2016)</td>
<td>The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Accreditation (AKKR, 2013)</td>
<td>The Danish Accreditation Institution (AKKR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Audit, thematic evaluation (KARVI, 2017)</td>
<td>The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (KARVI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Accreditation, audit (MQA, 2017a)</td>
<td>The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii. Instrument I.3: International strategy at the quality assurance agency level

A number of national agencies that guarantee higher education provision in the countries under investigation have set objectives of quality in international higher education (see Table 6.4). Using a strategic statement that may include, but is not limited to, principles, goals and actions, they develop networking and collaboration including work on comparability criteria and quality across borders.

Table 6.4: International strategy at the quality assurance agency level by country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Main Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium - Netherlands</td>
<td>NVAO Strategy 2017-2020 (NVAO, 2017b)</td>
<td>Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Internationalisation strategy of AQ Austria (AQ, 2013)</td>
<td>The Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (AQ)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
iv. **Instrument I.4: International strategy at the higher education institution level**

Strategic definitions of international higher education at the institutional level are relevant to internationalisation enhancement purposes, not only at the local but also national level (see Chapter 2). Not all the higher education institutions pursue international objectives but all face the challenges of internationalisation trends. To this end, institutions are increasingly defining actions in this area and mechanisms to support them within their particular organisational and cultural context. Table 6.5 presents examples of universities that openly declare international goals. Before the name of the university, there is a number related to its QS World University Ranking position (QS, 2017): each ranks as leading national university and among the top 100 in the world.

**Table 6.5: Examples of international strategies at the higher education institution level by country and QS World University Ranking (QS, 2017)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Main Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Global Cambridge (University of Cambridge, 2017)</td>
<td>4 - University of Cambridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>International Strategy &amp; Partnerships (ANU, 2017)</td>
<td>22 - The Australian National University (ANU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Strategic orientation 2017–2020 (ETH Zurich, 2016)</td>
<td>8 - ETH Zurich - Swiss Federal Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Strategic Plan 2014-2019 (Trinity College Dublin, 2014)</td>
<td>98 - Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>A Global Strategy for MIT (MIT, 2017)</td>
<td>1 - Massachusetts Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Strategic Plan 2013 – 2020 (The University of Auckland, 2012)</td>
<td>81 - The University of Auckland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>NTU 2020 (NTU, 2017)</td>
<td>13 - Nanyang Technological University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Asia’s Global University (The University of Hong Kong, 2016)</td>
<td>27 - The University of Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Internationalisation at KU Leuven (KU Leuven, 2013)</td>
<td>79 - KU Leuven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.3.2.2 Second phase: Operation (do)

i. **Instrument II.1: Recognition framework**

All countries investigated recognise and compare foreign qualifications and skills arrangements. As argued by the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment in Saudi Arabia, “internationalisation has increased the need for common understanding of what is expected from different levels of qualifications” (NCAAA, 2009, p. 2). Accordingly, most of the systems have built national qualifications frameworks.

Framework developments have centred upon readability and transparency of qualifications to promote international validity and portability. As can be seen in Table 6.6 below, national qualification frameworks based on transfer credit systems have been broadly adopted to coordinate with the national quality assurance body. This development is exemplified in Europe where measures taken to support recognition across the region include the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), National Qualifications Frameworks, Europass, Credit Systems (ECTS) and quality assurance arrangements (European Commission, 2017).
### Table 6.6: Recognition framework by country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Main Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK, Switzerland, Ireland, France, Belgium, Austria, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands</td>
<td>European Qualifications Framework (EQF), National Qualifications Frameworks (European Commission, 2017)</td>
<td>National Authority in Higher Education Nation Recognition Information Centre (ENIC/NARIC) Higher Education Providers Professional bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (GovHK, 2017)</td>
<td>National Authority in Higher Education Higher Education Providers Professional bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework (CMEC, 2007)</td>
<td>National Authorities in Higher Education Higher Education Providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQA, 2017b)</td>
<td>National Authority in Higher Education Higher Education Providers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ii. Instrument II.2: Standards and criteria to assess internationalisation

There have been initiatives that align with the first procedures suggested by the ‘Guidelines for the Internationalisation Quality Review Process (IQRP) for Institutions of Higher Education’ (OECD, 1999). These initiatives define specific standards and criteria to assess the quality of international higher education at the institutional and programme level. Examples include:

- The CeQuInt project carried out by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) in partnership with fourteen quality assurance agencies and international organisations from eleven European countries. The project developed a methodology to assess internationalisation either at the programme or institution level. The framework currently in place lead to the award of a ‘European Certificate for Internationalisation’ (ECA, 2015).

- Before the development above, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) had designed a ‘Framework for the Assessment of Internationalisation’ at the programme and institution level (Aerden, 2014). However, the ECAHE’s framework has been fully adopted by NVAO today (NVAO, 2017a).

- The German project ‘Audit Internationalisation of Universities was launched in 2009 by the German Rectors’ Conference to advise universities in their internationalisation strategy and the implementation of international goals (HRK, 2017)

### iii. Instrument II.3: Guidelines for cross-border provision

In some cases, strategies to assure the quality of educational provision across borders have been delineated. Depending on the magnitude of transnational activity, these guidelines may range from international branch campuses’ procedures to awarding joint degrees processes. Table 6.7 displays some examples:

Various countries have guidelines to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of international students and to protect them from malpractices. By given warranties, the nation-states seek to enhance their attractiveness as a potential destination for talented international students. Relevant literature has highlighted the importance of this instrument for the pastoral care of students (van Damme, 2001; van der Wende, 1999). Table 6.8 presents examples of countries in which this tool is in operation. In specific contexts, such as Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Germany or the Netherlands, higher education providers must adhere to the national code of practice to enrol international students.

### Table 6.7: Examples of guidelines for cross-border provision by country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Main Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Transnational Education Review (QAA, 2017a)</td>
<td>The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing Higher Education Provision with Others (QAA, 2017b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Approach to regulating the offshore provision of regulated higher education awards (TEQSA, 2018)</td>
<td>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Policy for Collaborative Programmes, Transnational Programmes and Joint Awards (QQI, 2012a)</td>
<td>Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision (IHEQN, 2013)</td>
<td>Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Offshore Programme Delivery Rules (NZQA, 2012)</td>
<td>New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6.8: Code of practice/guidelines for providers by country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Main Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Supporting and Enhancing the Experience of International Students in the UK (QAA, 2015)</td>
<td>The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>The Australian National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (Australian Government, 2017f)</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners (QQI, 2015)</td>
<td>Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice (NZ Government, 2016)</td>
<td>Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Guidelines for Academic Studies of International Students at Austrian Universities (UNIKO, 2012)</td>
<td>Universities Austria (UNIKO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>National Code of Conduct for German Universities Regarding International Students (GATE Germany, 2010)</td>
<td>German Rectors’ Conference (HRK) German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Code of Conduct international student higher education (Government of the Netherlands, 2017)</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Culture and Science National Commission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
v. **Instrument II.5: International providers register**

Several countries officially distinguish those providers that comply with their country’s code for the provision of educational services to international students and meet other quality assurance conditions. Examples include official lists or distinctive seals as follows:

- The Australian Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) that lists all education providers and the courses offered to people studying in Australia on student visas (Australian Government, 2017c).
- The Irish International Education Mark (IEM) (QQI, 2017) authorised by the agency Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).
- The New Zealand list of Signatories to the Code of Practice (NZQA, 2017) compiled by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

vi. **Instrument II.6: Mutual recognition agreement**

Most countries under analysis are signatories to a number of mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) concerning higher education quality and professional qualifications. In general terms, an MRA is an accord by which two or more entities agree to recognise decisions and judgements taken by each of the involved parties. As van Damme (2002) suggests, the relevance of this instrument increases in scenarios in which processes are no longer ‘monopolised’ by nation-states but are, increasingly, operating under international arrangements.

Some examples of mutual recognition agreements are:

- The Washington Accord, an international agreement between bodies responsible for accrediting engineering degree programmes.
- The Sydney Accord, an international treaty that complements the Washington Accord to recognise the equivalency of degrees for engineering technologists.
- EUR-ACE (EUropean-ACcredited Engineer) Accord, an international agreement between thirteen quality assurance agencies whereby they accept each other’s accreditation decisions in respect of Bachelor and Master degree programmes.

vii. **Instrument II.7: Memorandum of understanding and/or cooperation**

Within the analysed contexts, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is a conventional instrument that involves a joint commitment to enhancing understanding of higher education quality and critical matters relating to criteria and standards. It may encompass the terms of collaboration in projects and activities, for instance, quality assurance of transnational higher education.

viii. **Instrument II.8: Operational information**

All the countries of interest utilise online sources to attract and inform prospective students. These often take the form of a ‘study-in’ website incorporating the country’s name, as in
studyinaustralia.gov.au, studyinswitzerland.ch, studyinhongkong.edu.hk, studyinbelgium.be, and others. These platforms contain information about immigration policies, an overview of the higher education system, statistics of interest, student aid opportunities, links to registered providers, the higher education authority and other related national bodies. Some countries also operate through agencies to promote educational services, international exchange and cooperation. The British Council in the United Kingdom and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) are just two instances of such agencies.

ix. Instrument II.9: Networks

As articulated in section 6.3.1, each of the countries participates in international forums that promote dialogue and exchange on topics that touch upon international higher education quality, for example, the INQAAHE that groups together national quality bodies and agencies across the world. Other examples include quality networks founded at the regional level, such as the ENQA in Europe, the APQN in Asia-Pacific, the QA-Islamic in the Islamic world, the ANQAHE in the Arab area or the CIQG in North America. In addition, there are local networks such as Councils of Rectors and Vice-Chancellors. As highlighted by van Damme (2002) and others (Blanco-Ramírez & Berger, 2014; Stella, 2006; van der Wende, 1999), these networks play a vital role in the discussion and dissemination of good practices among their members.

6.3.2.3 Third phase: Monitoring (check)

i. Instrument III.1: Review of national policies and practices

Periodically, countries may review their implemented policies and practices of international higher education quality through self-assessment or external evaluations carried out by supranational or regional bodies. For example, the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) evaluates the compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) of those agencies that intend to participate in the register (EQAR, 2017).

Another initiative at this level is the Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education (QACHE) project which has evaluated the role of national, quality assurance agencies in assessing/accrediting transnational education. The project included the preparation of country reports and the identification of case examples and good practice in the European and Asia-Pacific area (ENQA, 2016b) to develop general guidelines and make them openly available.

ii. Instrument III.2: Institutional assessment

In some countries, the quality of international higher education developments is an aspect to be assessed by regular, external, quality assurance mechanisms. Additionally, many institutions and programmes have taken part in the review processes exclusively oriented to internationalisation outcomes such as the CeQuInt project in Europe. The assessment results are generally documented in assessment reports which become a source for decision-making and improvement.

iii. Instrument III.3: Monitoring information

Statistics on international higher education delivered by national and international sources, periodic reports on internationalisation and ranking outcomes may provide feedback for
decision-making at the system level. While section 6.3.1 mentions examples of the information supplied at the supra-regional level, Table 6.9 below presents examples of monitoring information delivered at the national level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Main Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>International study (HESA, 2017)</td>
<td>Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>International student data (Australian Government, 2017e)</td>
<td>Department of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Key Facts and Figures (HEA, 2016)</td>
<td>Higher Education Authority (HEA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Universities, studies (Statistics Austria, 2017)</td>
<td>Statistics Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Students in higher education (SSB, 2017)</td>
<td>Statistics Norway (SSB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Higher education international mobility in higher education from a Swedish perspective (Statistics Sweden, 2017)</td>
<td>Statistics Sweden Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>International Students (Statistics Denmark, 2017)</td>
<td>Statistics Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Statistics on internationalisation</td>
<td>Finish National Agency for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Mobility statistics (Nuffic, 2018)</td>
<td>The Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education (Nuffic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.3.2.4 Fourth phase: Improvement (act)

**i. Instrument IV.1: National plan**

The national plan is a statement about actions based on desired assessment outcomes. It is reviewed and debated by the leading actors in the higher education sector and the community in general. The case of Australia illustrates this process well. A draft of the national strategy for international higher education, built on the report and recommendations of an international advisory group, was released for open consultation in 2015 to gather the community’s opinion and, thus, ensure “a shared national vision” (Australian Government, 2015, p. 3). As a result, extensive feedback was received (Australian Government, 2017d) and considered in the final version of the document launched in 2016 (Australian Government, 2016) to become the starting point of a new international higher education cycle for this country.

**ii. Instrument IV.2: National legislation**

Various countries have introduced changes in their national quality assurance schemes as a response to new challenges and trends. Transformations may occur via legislation following debate at the parliamentary level, as in the United Kingdom, where the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (HM Government, 1992) gave the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) a lead, regulatory role and the responsibility for assessing and ensuring quality in higher education, a task developed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) since 1997. The UK higher education system faces further developments in the operation of the quality assurance scheme under legislative changes introduced by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HM Government, 2017).
6.3.3 Summarising the key elements

For each of the twenty countries performing highly in internationalisation, the attention concentrated on identifying mechanisms in place at the time of the review that concur with the conceptual understanding summarised in the model in Figure 6.1. Based on its nature, every mechanism was coupled with one of the phases of the international higher education quality process. The data gathered across these higher education systems yielded valuable findings. Given that instruments and terminologies vary across countries and the actors take different forms, Figure 6.5 depicts a general representation of the main elements found:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPRA-REGIONAL</th>
<th>NATIONAL-LOCAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instruments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Actors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines and procedures; statistics; rankings</td>
<td>Supra-regional organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. I. I: National strategy for international higher education</td>
<td>I. A. 1: National higher education authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. I. 2: National policy for quality assurance in higher education</td>
<td>I. A. 2: National quality assurance agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. I. 3: International strategy at the quality assurance agency level</td>
<td>I. A. 3: Higher education institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. I. 4: International strategy at the higher education institution level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. I. 1: Recognition framework</td>
<td>II. A. 1: National higher education authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. I. 2: Standards</td>
<td>II. A. 2: National qualification framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. I. 3: Guidelines for the cross-border provision</td>
<td>II. A. 3: National quality assurance agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. I. 4: Code of practice</td>
<td>II. A. 4: National body for cooperation and exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. I. 5: International provider register</td>
<td>II. A. 5: National body for statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. I. 6: Mutual recognition agreement</td>
<td>II. A. 6: Higher education institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. I. 7: Memorandum of understanding and/or cooperation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. I. 8: Operational information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. I. 9: Networks (internationals, regionals and locals)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. I. 1: Review of national policies and practices</td>
<td>III. A. 1: National higher education authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. I. 2: Institutional assessment</td>
<td>III. A. 2: International organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. I. 3: Monitoring information</td>
<td>III. A. 3: Higher education institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. I. 1: National plan</td>
<td>IV. A. 1: National higher education authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.5: Framework for quality in international higher education

Therefore, a framework for quality in international higher education is a complex whole that involves coordinated action between national authorities, agencies and local levels. As operators and agents of transformation, these actors have a significant responsibility in the process. Through this coordinated effort, several instruments and mechanisms are put in place to build international trust and reputation among the national and international consumers demanding services in the tertiary sector.
6.4 Summary

Chapter 6 models the complexities surrounding the exploration of quality in addition to internationalisation and outlines the conceptual framework. As the study has been challenged by the lack of specific theories around international higher education quality, a new theoretical approach is presented. A detailed analysis allows building a model that reflects on the dynamics that have an impact on higher education and the complex nature of the framing terms. By bringing the contributions of existing literature to the analysis of policy and practice across twenty countries identified as highly internationalised, the chapter achieves its central purpose of building a conceptual model to frame and give direction to the study.

The conceptual model includes two components: the supra-regional and national-local. It is in the national-local component that quality in international higher education operates as a cycle of continuous improvement. At the first phase (policy and strategy) the role and objectives of international higher education are planned. At the second phase (operation), the strategic actions are implemented. At the third phase (monitoring), the performed actions are monitored. At the fourth phase (improvement), decisions are made on the basis of monitoring results.

The conceptual model identifies instruments and actors in every phase shedding light onto the first subsidiary research question: what are the key characteristics of a policy framework for quality in international higher education? Empirical validation of the conceptual framework, conducted through consultation with international experts, the framework’s connection to the second subsidiary research question and the findings thereof will be expanded upon in the next chapter.
Chapter 7: INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS’ PERSPECTIVES ON THE FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY IN INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 validates Chapter 6’s findings for the first subsidiary research question: what are the key characteristics of a policy framework for quality in international higher education? It also expands on the second subsidiary research question: what methods/techniques can be used by a higher education system to integrate such a framework into national policy? The previous chapter built a theoretical understanding of quality in international higher education to later elaborate on a framework based on real practices across highly internationalised higher education systems. Herein, the study moves on to its empirical validation by consulting international experts in the field. As indicated in the research design, a questionnaire was specifically designed for that purpose.

This chapter begins by analysing opinions reported by eight respondents including representatives from supranational organisations, academic recognition bodies, higher education authorities, quality assurance bodies, non-governmental organisations for international higher education and scholars. Then, it expands upon specific concepts emerging from the responses. In doing so, the experts’ perspectives are complemented by desk research. Finally, by bringing together the initial model and the gathered data, the chapter presents a revised framework for international higher education quality.

7.2 Perceiving the relevance of the proposed instruments for international higher education quality

The first segment of the questionnaire inquired about the experts’ thoughts on the instruments that were theoretically associated, in Chapter 6, with a framework for international higher education quality. The question had two parts: first, the instruments’ relevance in general/theory and, second, the relevance to a developing higher education system. The purpose of the latter was to get preliminary insights into the context the study would be focusing on during the next empirical stage. The following sections present the most significant findings by phase.

7.2.1 First phase: Policy and strategy (plan)

As discussed in the previous chapter, an analysis of twenty countries that are high performing in internationalisation identified four instruments in close relation to the ‘planning’ phase purposes. Table 7.1 consolidates the expert opinions and shows that the instruments’ relevance was perceived mostly between moderate and high. The review of each that follows will shed light on the arguments behind such perceptions.
Table 7.1: Expert opinions on the relevance of the first phase instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Relevance in general/theory</th>
<th>Relevance to a developing higher education system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.11</td>
<td>National strategy for international higher education</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.12</td>
<td>National policy for quality assurance in higher education</td>
<td>Low to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.13</td>
<td>International strategy at the quality assurance agency level</td>
<td>Low to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.14</td>
<td>International strategy at the higher education institution level</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.1.1 Instrument I.1: National strategy for international higher education

The relevance in general/theory of this instrument was seen as ranging from moderate to high. One expert from a higher education system where this is a “recent mechanism”, commenting on its implementation, thought that a “cohesive policy is good”. However, at this early stage, the participant was “not sure of [the] overall value of national international strategies” and believed that “time will tell” (E5). This comment indicates the significance of the quality cycle checking phase and the need for assessing outcomes over time as a permanent practice.

For another respondent, the relevance of the instrument was:

*High, but as part of a broader national strategy for higher education and innovation.* (E2)

From this observation, one might infer that strategies for international higher education become feasible when they are part of macro definitions but those definitions have to integrate the nation-state’s needs.

When concentrating on the instrument’s relevance to a developing higher education system, the majority again considered it moderate to high. As mentioned earlier, this type of instrument was seen as valuable to set out the nation-state’s international higher education goals and the relationship with the national economy, competitiveness and cooperation. This tool “would focus effort and resources [on] areas of economic interest” (E5). Particularly crucial to these purposes was the area of research and innovation. In this respect, one expert went on to say:

*High relevance [to a developing higher education system], in particular, to ensure recognition, encourage international cooperation and competitiveness. High relevance to targeted areas as research and innovation.* (E4)

7.2.1.2 Instrument I.2: National policy for quality assurance in higher education

A variety of opinions emerged regarding the theoretical relevance of a national policy for quality assurance in higher education. While some experts felt that it was low, others situated it in intermediate or high levels. This lack of agreement among the respondents may be because importance levels are frequently linked to the instrument’s capacity to elicit higher education enhancement. For instance, commenting on the conditions necessary for the mechanism to contribute to the model, one respondent argued:

*Needs to be relevant and efficient and enable quality assurance and continuous improvement.* (E5)
Conversely, when referring to a developing higher education system, experts tended to perceive the instrument’s relevance from moderate to “high . . . to match quality standards necessary for a developing higher education system” (E4). This perception might denote an association between capacity building in quality assurance and the maturity of a higher education system. In other words, quality assurance is a significant starting point for a developing system to have international conversations. Indeed, talking about this issue, an expert alluded to the instrument as the “foundation” for a developing system “if you get the policy levers right” (E5).

7.2.1.3 Instrument I.3: International strategy at the quality assurance agency level

In one case, the expert thought that the relevance in general/theory of this instrument was low but the majority considered it moderate to high. Commenting on why the instrument is highly relevant, one respondent argued that this might serve “as [an] interface with international students” (E5). This is a clear remark on the importance of quality assurance in building trust; giving warranties against poor higher education providers, on the one hand, and guaranteeing attention to students’ needs, on the other. As the same participant added, an international strategy is a mechanism “nice to have but needs to have [the] capacity to act” (E5).

When asked about the instrument’s relevance to a developing higher education system, almost all respondents regarded it highly relevant that quality assurance agencies, in such a context, could delineate their international strategy. As one expert put it, an international dimension in the quality assurance goals of an emerging higher education system may “ensure that quality standards stay in line with international standards at least” (E4). Therefore, an agency in tune with international quality assurance practice counts as an element that contributes to the international higher education purposes of a developing system.

7.2.1.4 Instrument I.4: International strategy at the higher education institution level

As one expert pointed out, higher education institutions “are the players recruiting the students” (E5). Predictably, recognition is given to the theoretical and practical relevance of international institutional strategies. For example, special attention was paid to the potential use of the instrument “to set international mission and context and to educate staff” (E5). However, internationalisation activities, illustrated by recruiting international students, “are not necessarily a priority for all institutions” (E2). The issue is that this mechanism is predominantly “institution dependent” (E2) and, consequently, contingent on the overall institutional strategy.

Reinforcing the above, one respondent referred to the case of a European system where:

International strategy at institutional level lies in the responsibility of each higher education institution [which makes it contingent to] strong contextual factors [such as] international policy, flagship areas, etc. (E4).

One might argue that the same applies to the majority of systems where higher education institutions are autonomous entities. As discussed earlier in the dissertation, not all higher education institutions have the vision to become international but all are facing and dealing with globalisation forces. Moreover, “a global outlook is an essential part of many programmes” (E2). In this scenario and certainly “depending on the institutional context, higher education institution type, [the] field of study, study programmes” (E4), the instrument helps “articulate what the institution is trying to achieve” (E5) in the area.
7.2.2 Second phase: Operation (do)

In the second phase, the focus concentrates on the nine instruments identified in Chapter 6 as linked to ‘doing’ purposes. As before, Table 7.2 consolidates the expert opinions of the instruments’ relevance. Then, an analysis expands upon the provided views on each one of the instruments.

### Table 7.2: Expert opinions on the relevance of the second phase instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Relevance in general/theory</th>
<th>Relevance to a developing higher education system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II.I1 Recognition framework</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.I2 Standards and criteria to assess internationalisation</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.I3 Guidelines for cross-border provision</td>
<td>Low to high</td>
<td>Low to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.I4 Code of practice/Guidelines</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.I5 International providers register</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.I6 Mutual recognition agreement</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
<td>Low to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.I7 Memorandum of understanding and/or cooperation</td>
<td>Low to high</td>
<td>Low to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.I8 Operational information</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.I9 Networks</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7.2.2.1 Instrument II.1: Recognition framework

The experts considered the recognition framework’s theoretical relevance fell within a range from moderate to high. It is worth noting that the instrument involves integration with different levels and actors. This condition emerged from a comment of one respondent who drew attention to the fact that:

> If a NQF [national qualification framework] is in place it is important that it is aligned with the recognition framework. (E3)

The prevailing view among experts was that the relevance of this instrument to a developing higher education system is high. It was highlighted, however, that the involvement of professional bodies in prior qualification recognition might be stronger in particular fields, such as medicine or teacher education (E4).

#### 7.2.2.2 Instrument II.2: Standards and criteria to assess internationalisation

Participants mostly saw the relevance of this instrument as moderate in theory. They argued that it “depends on [the] nature of HE [higher education] in [the] country”, at the same time acknowledging that standard-based instruments “are now used in many countries” (E5).

Regarding standards and criteria to assess internationalisation in a developing higher education system, the relevance ranged from moderate to high. For example, one expert indicated that these entail “an evidence-based approach which may assist a developing HE system” (E5). Another thought that “each HE institution has autonomy to set threshold definitions or standards depending on its own strategy” (E4). Therefore, what made sense to this participant was a “high relevance of quality standards when performance-based (public) funding is at stake” (E4).
7.2.2.3 Instrument II.3: Guidelines for cross-border provision

Opinions differed as to whether guidelines for cross-border provision were theoretically relevant or not. For some experts, their importance was low while, for others, high. As articulated in Chapter 6, both regional and local approaches to quality of cross-border provision considered guidelines developed by transnational organisations, for example, those jointly proposed by the OECD and UNESCO. Thus, it was unsurprising that one of the participants touched upon the “use [of] international guidelines” (E2) to steer local developments but, as it was further pointed out, in the end such an instrument “depends on in-country and institution approaches to QA” (E5).

In term of the relevance of the instrument to a developing higher education system, there were contrasting opinions here as well. Two discrete reasons emerged from this. First, the guidelines are not enough by themselves hence they have to be conceived as part of a more complex construct that, as one expert said, “needs to have [the] capacity to act and to quality assure” (E5). Second, relevance is seen as institutionally dependent, as seen in this comment:

[It is] the responsibility of HE institutions and their responsible bodies for more specific relevance. (E4)

Concern was also expressed regarding the necessary integration of the model’s mechanisms. For example, one expert suggested seeing “guidelines harmonised with recognition framework” (E4).

7.2.2.4 Instrument II.4: Code of practice/Guidelines

Regarding the theoretical importance of this instrument, the prevailing view among respondents was that it is high. As this instrument aims to set the basis to protect international students from malpractices, there was a sense, as one expert commented, that it is something “good to have” (E5). Issues related to the need for formalisation through proper regulation also arose. Talking about this, a participant said:

A Code of Practice would be most effective if supported by legislation as it is intended to protect students. (E3)

Opinions regarding importance to a developing higher education system did not deviate much from the abovementioned responses. In general, the experts adopted a student-centred stance towards the instrument with sentiments that resonated with the following quote:

Highly relevant to look after students and welfare, important to protect international students. (E5)

Emphasis was placed on the role of higher education institutions and related bodies:

Moderate relevance to developing a HE system. In this matter, HE institutions are more directly involved and can provide tailor-made solutions to their international students; harmonisation of the procedures through the joint bodies that represents HE institutions and the national body for cooperation and exchange. (E4)
7.2.2.5 Instrument II.5: International providers register

In both cases, relevance to theory and when explicitly touching upon a developing higher education system, the experts felt that an international provider register could be an instrument moderately to highly relevant. Indeed, having an official list of the higher education providers that adhere to certain principles, such as looking after international students and their wellbeing, is seen, as one participant put it, as “desirable” (E3). Additionally, according to another expert, this mechanism may “assist in monitoring” (E5) because it sheds light on where to concentrate attention, that is, the higher education institutions that have declared international goals. However, as they further added, “it would be a large endeavour to develop and very challenging to maintain” (E3).

This comment suggests that the development of a register is a second-generation endeavour which requires a high level of maturity and capacity building in international higher education.

7.2.2.6 Instrument II.6: Mutual recognition agreement

Experts distinguished this instrument as relevant in a range from moderate to high but, as pointed out by one of the experts, its importance also “depends on [the] quality of [the] agreement” (E5). Moreover, this instrument might involve some challenges linked to contextual factors. For example, one respondent said:

*Mutual recognition has been attempted in regions, among small groups of countries or on a bilateral level. Given that recognition of qualifications, e.g. for credit, rests with institutions, and recognition at the national level is often embedded in national legislation, it has proved challenging to implement mutual recognition. Pursuing other means such as [the] use of NQFs to facilitate recognition may be more efficient.* (E3)

When asked about the relevance to a developing higher education system, divergent opinions emerged. In one case, the expert thought it was “low” (E1) and another alluded to the complexities that an emerging system might face while attempting to negotiate this kind of instruments with third parties:

*This is very difficult and would take a while to establish as based on trust relationships.* (E5)

Other respondents estimated that the relevance of this mechanism was high regardless of the contextual conditions involved.

7.2.2.7 Instrument II.7: Memorandum of understanding/cooperation

For an instrument of as broad use as the memorandum of understanding/cooperation, opinions on its theoretical relevance did not considerably vary that of mutual recognition agreements. This type of mechanism was presumed to be:

*Important but need to be ‘active’ or used otherwise they have limited relevance.*

(E5)
This comment might explain the contrasting opinion from another informant who saw the instrument’s relevance as “low” (E2). Another suggested integrating the current and previous instruments since they were seen in association:

Mutual recognition agreement and memorandum of understanding/cooperation are co-dependent mechanisms, and that is something in need of consideration in the model. (E6)

In their account of the relevance to a developing higher education system, the expert opinions aligned with those previously declared re theory. In one case, the participant felt that the mechanism relevance was “low” (E2), while others indicated that it was moderate to high. For example, one expert said:

High relevance. Clears roads to facilitate cooperation in HE, research and innovation. (E4)

As before, the “need to be used” (E5) was remarked as a condition of relevance. Here, again, it was recommended to understand the mutual recognition agreement in association with the memorandum of understanding/cooperation (E6).

7.2.2.8 Instrument II.8: Operational information

When asked about operational information, participants saw its relevance ranging from moderate to high regarding both theory and practice in a developing higher education system. The comments below illustrate this perception:

Sufficient and adequate information would be necessary to support the implementation of the strategy. (E3)

Data is always good as long as it is validated. (E5)

A strong information base is important for international students. (E5)

It is essential to acknowledge that the higher education institutions provide important pieces of international education information. This fact entails, as one expert pointed out, “strong contextual factors – [a] responsibility of each HE institution” (E4) so incentives or regulation for the delivering of such information might be necessary.

7.2.2.9 Instrument II.9: Networks

Participation in networks is relevant to a moderate to high extent to both theory and an emerging higher education setting. In one case, the expert thought that:

The usefulness of participation in networks would primarily relate to getting inspiration of good practice and having the opportunity to discuss initiatives in the field. (E3)

This view was echoed by another participant who postulated that it is:

Important to engage in discussions and thinking and best practice activity in QA. (E5)
When referring, in particular, to a developing higher education system, policy and best practice learning are favourable processes in the capacity building efforts. Commenting on this, the same expert reassured that it is “important to learn from others’ experiences and good practices” (E5). However, getting involved in networks is something contingent upon each one of the institutions and the various strategic views. Hence, as commented by another participant, there are “strong contextual factors – [a] responsibility of each HE institution/body” (E4).

7.2.3 Third phase: Monitoring (check)

Turning now to the third phase of the quality cycle, three instruments are closely related to the purposes of monitoring. Following the same structure as the previous section, Table 7.3 summarises the expert opinions on their relevance, before moving forward to an analysis centred on insights into each one of the instruments.

Table 7.3: Expert opinions on the relevance of the third phase mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Relevance in general/theory</th>
<th>Relevance to a developing higher education system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III.1 Review of national policies and practices</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.2 Institutional assessment</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.3 Monitoring information</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.3.1 Instrument III.1: Review of national policies and practices

One participant perceived the instrument’s relevance to the general theory as moderate but the majority saw it as high. One expert, wondering whether a tool of this type might be considered relevant, concluded that “yes, to ensure that the strategy is generating the desired outcomes” (E3). This view was by no means isolated; another stated that a review, at every administrative layer, “is good quality assurance practice” (E5). However, this is a mechanism that has to work “on a regular basis” (E2) which, to some extent, could be guaranteed by a cyclical perspective.

Concerning the instrument’s relevance to a developing higher education system, again, it was mostly considered to be high. In such a context, it “should be standard good practice” (E5) carried out, as pointed out before, “on [a] regular basis” (E2). Interestingly, one expert illustrated how this instrument operates in a real higher education setting in Europe as follows:

... a report [is provided] on (among others) the effectiveness of public expenditure; the competitiveness of higher education institutions; the employability and activities of graduates after completion of their higher education... the performance of the education system is systematically monitored and evaluated every four years. The report . . . is an important instrument that shows the results of this monitoring process. (E4)

7.2.3.2 Instrument III.2: Institutional assessment

As articulated earlier, experts perceived the providers of services as the major players in concerns of international higher education quality. Predictably, most considered institutional assessment as a highly relevant mechanism in general/theory. For example, in commenting on this relevance, one participant said:
Assessments are nice to have, [they] are usually at [a] more sophisticated level of HE [like] AACSB\textsuperscript{5}, EQUIS\textsuperscript{6}. (ES)

Similar thoughts emerged when referring to a developing higher education system. By analysing the expert responses along every section of the questionnaire, it is evident that capacity building in key areas was considered a priority to an emerging system. Here, again, one participant reflected on that by stating that this mechanism “could assist in [the] capacity building down the track” (ES).

7.2.3.3 Instrument III.3: Monitoring information

Generally, the experts’ perception regarding the relevance of this instrument was that it ranges from moderate to high. For example, when touching upon why this is important, a participant went on to say:

This links to the quality of the international student experience. (ES)

The same opinions were voiced when alluding to a developing higher education system. In accordance with one of the experts, there is a relationship between monitoring and further improvement (ES) so the mechanism is important. However, as another participant stressed, it is necessary to bear in mind that there are “strong contextual factors” and implementation of monitoring processes is the “responsibility of each HE institution/body” (E4).

7.2.4 Fourth phase: Improvement (act)

For the last phase of the quality cycle described in Chapter 6, two instruments appeared connected with its purposes. The expert opinions on these instruments’ relevance are summarised in Table 7.4, following which an analysis focused on the expert insights is presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Relevance in general/theory</th>
<th>Relevance to a developing higher education system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV.1 National plan</td>
<td>Low to moderate</td>
<td>Low to moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.2 National legislation</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.4.1 Instrument IV.1: National plan

There were diverse opinions regarding a national plan drawn on the ‘checking’ phase outcomes. While, for some experts, the relevance in general/theory was low, for others it was moderate. As mentioned earlier, there are countries in which certain instruments are only recently implemented hence evidence to justify their importance is lacking. The following comment

\textsuperscript{5} AACSB refers to the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. AACSB provides accreditation for business and accounting programs at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral level (AACSB, 2018)

\textsuperscript{6} EQUIS refers to the EFMD Quality Improvement System, which is a school accreditation system specialised in management and business administration, directed by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD, 2018)
gave a sense of that uncertainty: “not sure it is necessary, time will tell in [this country’s] experience” (E5).

Similar views surfaced when referring to a developing higher education system. One of the experts who advocated for a high relevance of the mechanism in such context, touched upon the experience of a European country, describing the process occurring there:

Based on the results of the education report, the relevant bodies have made a joint declaration on common objectives regarding education and training policy encompassing the whole system: at tertiary level, the profile of the various programmes should be sharpened, the drop-out quota at University should be reduced and vertical and horizontal mobility and reintegration to the labour market enhanced, to name a few. (E4)

7.2.4.2 Instrument IV.2: National legislation

In both cases, theoretically speaking and when explicitly thinking about a developing higher education system, respondents considered that supporting a framework of quality in international higher education through national legislation was moderately relevant. For example, one saw this instrument as a signal to the international higher education market and the consumers in the sense that:

[It is] good to have a mechanism to get rid of poor providers . . . does give you [the] power to act against them. (E5)

7.2.5 Identifying gaps in the instruments for international higher education quality

When asked about suggestions for improving the instruments displayed in the questionnaire, experts identified the following two main elements to include:

7.2.5.1 International higher education as part of a broader strategy:

Attention was placed on the starting point of the quality cycle. The question here was whether the national strategy for international higher education is the departure point of the process or not. There were some suggestions that the model had to embrace a broader perspective as international higher education should respond to a nation-state strategic vision. This viewpoint came out, for example, from the following comment:

Vision on international higher education is an important point of departure that should not be left unnoticed in this research. (E1)

Other participants echoed this view when discussing the relevance of the first mechanism in the planning phase. As discussed in section 7.2.1, the national strategy for international higher education was seen as a relevant mechanism but conditioned by the extent to which it integrates with the nation-state priorities and a broader strategy for higher education, research and innovation.
7.2.5.2 Instruments that were left unnoticed

Experts concentrated on new instruments that, according to their understanding, might improve the framework presented to them. Table 7.5 below summarises the proposed instruments by phase, including a brief explanation of the rationale behind the suggestion in the last column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. POLICY AND STRATEGY</td>
<td>Broader national strategy for higher education and innovation</td>
<td>Point of departure. Input for an articulated vision on international higher education according to national needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programme learning outcomes of international components of higher education</td>
<td>Component of internationalisation at home/internationalisation of the curriculum that seems to be missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Memorandum of understanding and other international agreements</td>
<td>Some mechanisms are co-dependent, so it is necessary to integrate them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional networks</td>
<td>Higher education institutions are the main players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. OPERATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plan/provisions at provincial/state/district level</td>
<td>Lower level of government may be involved such as provinces/states, regions or cities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revised strategy at the institutional level or detailed faculty level plans</td>
<td>The faculty or even the programme levels are of great importance in implementing internationalisation in higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. MONITORING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student/client/feedback</td>
<td>It is recommended to include demand side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. IMPROVEMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3 Perceiving relevance of actors involved in the international higher education quality cycle

The next section of the questionnaire sought to gather expert insights into the relevance of the actors that the conceptual framework suggested as involved in the quality cycle phases. Findings are reported below, from the first phase to the fourth. For this analysis, the actors have been ordered by perceived relevance.

7.3.1 First phase: Policy and strategy (plan)

As described in Chapter 6, analysis across twenty, highly internationalised, higher education systems yielded the conclusion that three actors were playing a pivotal role in the ‘planning’ phase. When asked about the relevance of each one of them, experts expressed different opinions, particularly regarding I.A1 and I.A2, as summarised in Table 7.6. On the whole, all the actors have at least a moderate relevance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.A3 Higher Education institutions</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.A1 National higher education authority</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.A2 National quality assurance agency</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated by the table, participants were unanimous in the view that higher education institutions were highly relevant actors. When referring to the relevance of others, there is more diversity of opinions. Even though respondents saw them as relevant, the level had some distinctions. Some respondents thought that national bodies like the higher education authority and the quality assurance agency were highly significant, but others estimated their level of importance was somewhat moderate.

7.3.2 Second phase: Operation (do)

When focusing on the second phase of the international higher education quality cycle identified in Chapter 6, there were six major players. When asked about them, as Table 7.7 indicates, informants agreed on the relevance of II.A6 and II.A4 but expressed divergent opinions about the others.

Table 7.7: Second phase actors ordered by relevance following expert opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II.A6 Higher Education institutions</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.A4 National body for cooperation and exchange</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.A1 National higher education authority</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.A3 National quality assurance agency</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.A2 National qualification framework</td>
<td>Low to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.A5 National body for statistics</td>
<td>Low to high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Experts were in full agreement that higher education institutions are highly relevant actors, however, as one respondent noted:

_The buy-in from institutions will be critical for the implementation of an internationalisation strategy as they will have to allocate the necessary resources and prepare their own strategies._ (E3)

Concerning the national body for cooperation and exchange, the majority of participants categorised it as a highly relevant actor. One highlighted that such an organisation plays a key role, particularly in terms of student mobility, but must be guided by the fact that the “approach for student exchange has to support [the] implementation of strategy” (E3). A second participant expanded on its functions, claiming that this body “also should be a source of information and support to potential students, researchers, partners” (E2). Another suggested that the duties of a national organisation “could be done by institutions, depending on [the] level of governmental support or if established by institutions” (E5).

When considering the national higher education authority, its relevance was perceived mostly as moderate. Although, some experts believed that the national body responsible at the tertiary education level, in the role of “a leader in ensuring implementation” (E3) of the strategy, was something highly valuable in the model.

Experts’ opinions about the national quality assurance agency placed its relevance in a range from moderate to high. One respondent noted that the “quality assurance approach has to support the implementation of strategy” (E3), setting a direct convergence between quality assurance practices and international higher education goals. A second expert claimed that the national quality assurance agency “needs to have [the] capacity to act” (E5), leaving the relevance of the actor conditional to having certain faculties to act when necessary. Another
respondent alluded to the notion of “quality assurance of transnational higher education” (E7). They draw attention to the role of this actor in the collaborative efforts across countries in matters related to recognition of accreditation decisions, joint and double degree programmes accreditation, outgoing and incoming franchise, international branch campuses and virtual provision, among others involving bilateral or multilateral cooperation.

Perceptions about the relevance of a national qualification framework were varied. One of the participants considered this actor “desirable but not necessary” (E2), a view echoed by another respondent who added “not necessarily, but [the] alignment of NQF with international strategy has to be assured” (E3). For others, the actor’s relevance ranged from moderate to high. Expanding upon its features and how they contribute to the international higher education quality model, one expert described:

In general, [it] translates the general policies and strategies regarding [the] definition of learning outcomes and positioning of education levels. (E4)

Likewise, when alluding to the relevance of the national body for statistics, there was no agreement about the steering role of this actor at the ‘doing’ phase of the cycle, which adds complexity to the general picture. While, for some, the importance was low, others saw it as moderate or high. Interestingly, high relevance was associated with the use of information that is provided by this actor, such as “when statistical instruments determine, for example, public funding” (E4).

### 7.3.3 Third phase: Monitoring (check)

In the third phase of the quality cycle, three actors were recognised as actively involved in the implementation of the mechanisms at this level. When asked about the relevance of these actors, experts perceived that the national higher education authority and the higher education institutions played a moderate to highly influential role in monitoring, as seen in Table 7.8. However, on the relevance of the international organisations, contrasting opinions were made explicit, that ranged from low and high.

**Table 7.8: Third phase actors ordered by relevance following expert opinions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III.A1 National higher education authority</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.A3 Higher Education institutions</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.A2 International organisation</td>
<td>Low to high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instruments on this phase “should be regularly monitoring and assessing activity” (E5), which stresses their recurrent nature and, secondly, they should focus on the “area of responsibility for all three actors” (E4). In other words, they have to centre upon their own strategic definitions. Along these lines, wondering whether the proposed actors might be considered relevant for the monitoring purposes, a respondent said:

Yes, from the point of view of all listed institutions. However, the monitoring would have to relate to the particularities of the strategies defined by these organisations respectively. (E3)
7.3.4 Fourth phase: Improvement (act)

As previously, for the last phase, the relevance of the two actors presented in Chapter 6 was considered by the experts. Most thought that both the national higher education authority and the national parliament were moderately relevant (see Table 7.9). In the case of the national parliament, there were some who situated the actor at a low level of significance. However, as claimed by one of the respondents, the “legal” (E7) framework in which international higher education develops ought to support the model and, in that sense, the political level should play a role in guaranteeing that.

Table 7.9: Fourth phase actors ordered by relevance following expert opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV.A1 National higher education authority</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.A2 National parliament</td>
<td>Low to moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about other actors that should be considered by the model, participants suggested higher education institutions are relevant actors operating at this level as, for example, “institution level [involvement] is important for improvement” (E2). In general, there has been consistency in perceiving institutions as significant players throughout every phase of the quality process. Their direct role and responsibility as service providers were widely remarked in terms of the broad international higher education services spectrum and, most of all, the educational services offered to international students. Other suggested actors included the intermediate governmental structures responsible for higher education institutions and joint bodies in their respective area of responsibility. The next section expands upon these elements.

7.3.5 Identifying gaps in the actors involved in the international higher education quality cycle

When asked about suggestions for improving the actors displayed in the questionnaire, experts highlighted two main points:

7.3.5.1 The actors’ names have to correspond with a general model

Given that the purpose, at this stage of the study, is to represent a general framework for quality in international higher education, it was suggested to check on the labels of every actor to arrive at more generic denominations. Examples of changes proposed by (E8) included:

- “Government” in place of the national higher education authority,
- “Quality agency” in place of the national quality assurance agency,
- “Qualification authority” in place of the national qualification framework,
- “International cooperation and exchange body” in place of the national body for cooperation and exchange and,
- “Statistics body” in place of the national body for statistics
7.3.5.2 Actors that were left unnoticed

Experts concentrated on some actors that, accordingly to their experience, should be included in the framework they reviewed. Table 7.10 below consolidates the suggested actors, data categories by phase and, in the last column, a brief explanation of the rationale for their inclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Other actors</th>
<th>Note</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Intermediate governmental structures responsible for HE institutions, and joint bodies, in their respective area of responsibility</td>
<td>May fall into the category of government</td>
<td>In some countries, lower levels of government may be involved as well such as provinces/states, regions or cities and higher levels (e.g. European Commission) might be added.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International qualification recognition bodies</td>
<td>May fall into the category of international organisation</td>
<td>Importance of stakeholders’ shared responsibility and involvement, to facilitate consensus on policy and strategy goals, and for international higher education i.e., allow them to take measures in direct contact with their flagship areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-governmental organisations</td>
<td>New category</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Association if any involved in promoting international education</td>
<td>May fall into the category of non-governmental organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic profession</td>
<td>New category</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student unions</td>
<td>New category</td>
<td>Include demand side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Intermediate governmental structures responsible for HE institutions, and joint bodies, in their respective area of responsibility</td>
<td>May fall into the category of government</td>
<td>Same as first actor phase I. Especially relevant in the implementation of policies and strategies, which are carried out mainly by them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic profession</td>
<td>New category</td>
<td>The faculty are of great importance in implementing internationalisation in higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Intermediate governmental structures responsible for HE institutions, and joint bodies, in their respective area of responsibility</td>
<td>May fall into the category of government</td>
<td>Same as first actor phase I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality agency</td>
<td>Existing category, original model did not include it in this phase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International cooperation and exchange body</td>
<td>Existing category, original model did not include it in this phase</td>
<td>The monitoring would have to relate to the particularities of the strategies defined by these organisations respectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
<td>Existing category, original model did not include it in this phase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Higher education institutions</td>
<td>Existing category, original model did not include it in this phase</td>
<td>Institution level is important for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediate governmental structures responsible for HE institutions, and joint bodies, in their respective area of responsibility</td>
<td>May fall into the category of government</td>
<td>Same as first actor phase I.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.4 Identifying gaps in the phases of the framework

The reviewers saw the proposed framework as limited in its scope in its original form. There was a sense of it depicting just a macro-level interpretation of international higher education quality. For example, when asked about the actors involved in improving, one respondent argued, “as this is something for the future, it is necessary to know, firstly, in which decision level this is occurring” (E6). Furthermore, another participant commenting on the actors participating in monitoring went on to say, “the monitoring would have to relate to the particularities of the strategies defined by these organisations respectively” (E3). What came across here is that, in the experts’ views, policy and practice on quality build on different logics across levels. This is pointed out in the following quote:

In some countries, lower level of government may be involved as well, such as provinces/states, regions or cities and higher level (e.g. European Commission) might be added. The faculty or even programme levels are of great importance in implementing internationalisation in higher education, they could be added to make this framework stronger. (E1)

When touching upon the need for other layers, one of the experts referred to the concept of “Institutional logics” (E6) by Friedland and Alford (1991) to highlight that social systems are structures wherein multiple levels, with their power and interactions with what is called the “institutions” (Friedland & Alford, 1991, p. 212) operate. In alignment with that understanding are those who perceive power not as centralised but dispersed through the various forms of force that are inherent to a specific domain (e.g. Foucault, 1978).

However, what do ‘institutions’ mean? Also, how does that meaning connect to the need for including more levels of analysis? Following Friedland and Alford (1991, p. 212), institutions are both “supraorganizational patterns of activity” that guide the individual life and “symbolic systems” by which individuals interpret and give sense to those patterns. Every institution links to a “central logic” which “constitutes its organizing principles and which is available to organizations and individuals to elaborate” (Friedland & Alford, 1991, p. 248). Institutions in the context of this research, as articulated in Chapter 6, are the Friedland and Alford’s “capitalist market” and “bureaucratic state” (Friedland & Alford, 1991, p. 212), which in addition to the academic oligarchy (Clark, 1986) and globalisation (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002), have framed the theoretical construct.

Institutional logic acts in diverse levels of analysis, from microsystems to transnational or world systems (Scott, 2008). In this scenario, different approaches exist in the literature touching upon institutional logic and levels of analysis (Alford & Friedland, 1985; Besharov & Smith, 2014; Greenwood, Magán-Díaz, Xiao-Li, & Céspedes-Lorente, 2010; Lamont, 2012; Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012). But, regardless of the stance that is adopted, the potential convenience of combining multiple levels of analysis is associated with picturing a more precise representation as observing across levels allows researchers to “see the workings of mechanisms and — according to the institutional logics perspective — the contradictory nature of institutional logics” (Thornton et al., 2012, p. 14). Given this understanding and considering that one of the conceptual framework’s foundations draws on the nature of higher education as a social system, the model articulated in Chapter 6 has to be broken down into more levels of analysis.

This line of analysis has attracted attention in the higher education field before. For example, Maassen et al. (2012) observe change dynamics and higher education reforms at macro, intermediate and micro-level. Along the same lines, Vidovich (2007) combines
modernist and postmodernist perspectives to propose a hybrid framework for policy analysis based on the policy cycle concept. Likewise, special consideration is given to globalisation and its influence on the nation-state. The author claims a state-centred but not state-controlled basis; in other words, governments are acknowledged as playing a central role but this does not exclude other influence levels. Also, it identifies a bi-directional relationship between levels, reflecting coordination and integration efforts.

Vidovich’s comprehensive approach to “macro, intermediate and micro” levels (Vidovich, 2007, p. 291) offers a possible way of framing the ‘logic’ that operates across different contexts within the quality in international higher education cycle in terms of, for example, influence, policy and practice, strategies and outcomes as well as networks (Vidovich, 2013). Such an attempt at analysis by levels in this area is by no means alone: previous studies account for the use of such theoretical understanding in the areas of quality policy and accountability (e.g. Maniku, 2008; Vidovich, 2013; Vidovich & Porter, 1999).

In the light of the abovementioned elements, the conceptual model articulated in Chapter 6 (see Figure 6.4) is expanded as shown in Figure 7.1. One of the central premises of this model is that strong, top-down and bottom-up dynamics concur. Macro-level constraints at the intermediate and micro-levels coincide with dynamics linked to the agency exercised by intermediate and micro-level agents at the upper levels.

**Figure 7.1**: An expanded conceptual model of international higher education quality
7.5 Identifying gaps in the overall framework for international higher education quality

When asked for their suggestions for improving the overall framework, the experts identified three main issues:

7.5.1 The at-home dimension

Under the rational judgement of one respondent:

[It] seems to be missing references to internationalisation at home/internationalisation of the curriculum. (E1)

As internationalisation at-home’s instruments mostly operate at micro-levels, this quote supports the argument of the previous section in the sense that the original model has not sufficiently pictured the importance of lower levels. Given the model depicted in Figure 7.1, the suggested, at-home mechanisms – like those linked to the international content of the curriculum – can be made visible at the micro-level ‘doing’ phase.

7.5.2 Interaction between elements

In the view of another participant, it should be relevant to “look at interactions between elements” (E2). It is worth noting here that this research does not conceive its elements as separate entities. Far from that. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the framework takes a systemic perspective with the central assumption that higher education processes have to be understood in the context of a complex of interacting elements. On the other hand, as the preceding section has discussed, by introducing new levels, it is expected that the model offers a better representation of different types of interests and logic across layers. For example, those that government, intermediate agents or higher education institutions, as well as a better interpretation of top-down and bottom-up influences that are indeed operating in this systemic structure.

7.5.3 Support structures

Some experts noted it is difficult to understand a cycle of international higher education quality without structures that give support to its operation. For example, one participant observed that “money, [is] very important” stressing that the model ought to be “backed up by money” (E6), as echoed in this comment pointing out the:

Importance of supporting incentives, funding and autonomy of the different actors – as well as cooperation between [the] academy, official bodies, economy and society, accompanied by adequate funding instruments. (E4)

Another respondent highlighted the need to think about the “legal” (E7) framework, as a diversity of approaches can be found among countries. Even though international higher education has several dimensions, as described in Chapter 2, the activity associated with international students has remained the primary focus. Then, it was unsurprising that concern was expressed regarding the existence of structures supporting international students’ success.
as well as their welfare: this group can be exposed not only to cultural and language issues but also to poor-performing providers. The comment below illustrates this:

No mention of international student welfare. No mention of language issues, e.g., Chile is Spanish so are students recruited and taught in what language and how are they protected.” [Moreover,] issues of Academic Integrity and Academic student support not included. Issues of student equity and cultural issues not included, as these are all part of the international student experience. (ES)

These valuable opinions indicate it would be pertinent to make the support structures a visible part of the framework, despite the fact that an instrument such as the code of practices, which aims to protect international students, has already been included as a relevant practice. It is in this context that the work of Porter (1998, p. 36) into the idea of ‘support activities’ predominantly applied in the business industry provides helpful insights. Bringing together business and higher education might be controversial but what is interesting is the usefulness of the ‘value chain’ model. This model understands ‘value’ as something created by primary activities that are assisted by support activities like physical infrastructure or human resource management.

Along these lines, the international higher education quality cycle’s primary process, which is made operational by support structures that, according to the experts and further complemented by literature, might include the elements presented in Table 7.11:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Critical areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory framework</td>
<td>Quality assurance, recognition of qualifications, protection of international students, immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding scheme</td>
<td>Incentives, projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare services</td>
<td>Language support, social interaction support, counselling and health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>Quality culture, intercultural awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and communication technology</td>
<td>On-line platforms and technological development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.5.3.1 Regulatory framework

As discussed in previous sections, the experts’ consultations highlighted quality assurance and recognition as areas of regulation coming together with the international higher education activity. This view can be found in Altbach and Knight (2007) who stress the challenges that internationalisation imposes on national regulatory frameworks, such as quality assurance or accreditation and the “need for mechanisms that recognize the academic and professional qualifications gained through domestic or international delivery of education for purposes of employment and further study” (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 301).

A third theme that emerged from the respondents relates to the international students’ pastoral care, in which regulation can provide the capacity to act. As per existing literature, systems have approached this theme from a quality assurance perspective, for example, by elaborating on codes of practice to be adopted by higher education providers as well as quality and accreditation bodies (OECD, 2004).

A fourth theme, not mentioned by participants but that came to light in previous research, is that “national policies regarding student immigration, graduates, and academics
are increasingly seen to be important” (Teichler, 2004, p. 21). This research acknowledges that international higher education quality has to be supported by an immigration policy appropriate to the process but, due to the breadth and complexity of immigration policies, this thesis will not be expanding upon such particularities.

7.5.3.2 Funding

One element the experts considered of great importance for the model was the provision of funding to enable the process to operate. This belief is by no means novel: Hénard, Diamond, and Roseveare (2012, p. 11) note, “funding is crucial to the internationalisation of higher education and needs to be aligned with the national strategy”. Indeed, as reported by the last IAU global survey on internationalisation, participants in all regions saw the lack of funding as the most critical obstacle to international higher education developments (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). Other researchers have also expanded on funding initiatives that have helped to advance in this field (e.g. Gacel-Ávila, 2012; Teichler, 2009; van Damme, 2001).

7.5.3.3 Welfare services

Another element that respondents considered worthy of attention was the international students’ welfare. This theme related to the quality assurance practices earlier mentioned in the regulatory framework but, by its marked importance, it will be presented as a support structure by itself. As the experts observed, care of international students involves not only protection against potential malpractices and low performing providers but also the providers’ commitment to their wellbeing. The areas that research has connected to the international students’ academic success and wellbeing include, but are not limited to, language support, social inclusion, counselling and health services (Mark, Peter, & Wing Hong, 2010; Rosenthal, Russell, & Thomson, 2008; Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, & Ramia, 2008; Weerakkody & Jerez, 2018; Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping, & Todman, 2008).

7.5.3.4 Human resources

A process of quality in international higher education also requires that people involved at every level be knowledgeable of the internationalisation landscape and the factors it entails. This issue arose when, for example, one of the experts commented on the need to “educate staff” (E5). A similar factor pointed out by research is the multicultural awareness of both academic staff, particularly in their interaction with international students (Kim, 2009; Kingston & Forland, 2008; Sawir, 2011) and administrative staff (Llurda, Cots, & Armengol, 2014). Another factor, not mentioned by experts but that has arisen in existing research, relates to the concept of quality culture in which not just the quality leader but everyone in the institutional community adopts a commitment to the purpose of quality (Harvey & Green, 1993; Yorke, 2000). In that sense, the quality culture that has been increasingly installed in higher education (Brennan & Shah, 2000) over the last three decades should also permeate its international components (Callan, 2000).

7.5.3.5 Communication and Information Technologies

As highlighted in the literature, technological developments have become increasingly crucial to support strategic processes in every sector (Porter, 1998). By its nature, a process of international higher education quality ought to be supported, at every level, through communication and information technologies. These tools may include technology to gather and manage data on international higher education and systems to facilitate both in-country communication across levels and international communication with other partners and bodies.
Additionally, technology resources to provide information and communicate with targeted audiences such as students, researchers, higher education institution leaders and policymakers involved in international higher education are required.

7.6 A revised framework for quality in international higher education

The following figure presents a revised version of the framework developed in Chapter 6 (see Figure 6.5). This new version includes the experts’ perspectives and the elements discussed in the previous sections of this chapter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPRA-REGIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines and procedures; statistics; rankings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATIONAL-LOCAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National strategy for higher education and innovation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>INSTRUMENTS</th>
<th>MAIN ACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macro</td>
<td>I.</td>
<td>National strategy for international higher education</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Code of practice</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>International provider register</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>International agreements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Operational information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Networks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Review of national policies</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring information</td>
<td>Statistics body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Improvement plan</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Interm ediate | I. | International strategy | |
|               | II. | International higher education standards | Intermediate bodies: |
|               |   | Guidelines for cross-border provision | Quality agency |
|               |   | Qualification framework | Recognition body |
|               |   | International agreements | Professional body |
|               |   | Operational information | International cooperation and exchange body |
|               |   | Networks | |
|               | III. | Assessment | Other non-governmental bodies |
|               |   | Monitoring information | |
|               | IV. | Improvement plan | |

| Micro | I. | International strategy at the higher education institution level | Higher education providers |
|       | II. | International agreements | Higher education providers |
|       |   | Operational information | Academic profession |
|       |   | Programme learning outcomes of international components | |
|       |   | Networks | |
|       | III. | Student feedback | Higher education providers |
|       |   | Institutional assessment | Student union |
|       |   | Monitoring information | Academic profession |
|       | IV. | Improvement plan | Higher education providers |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORT STRUCTURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory framework: Quality assurance; recognition of qualifications; protection of international students; immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding scheme: Incentives; projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare services: Language support; social interaction support; counselling and health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources: Quality culture; intercultural awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and communication technology: On-line platforms and technological development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.2: Revised framework for quality in international higher education
7.7 Summary

Chapter 7 provides a critical and empirical review of every section of the conceptual model outlined in the preceding chapter. It undertakes an analysis based on the insights provided by the experts into the elements earlier conceived as explaining a framework for quality in international higher education. Among the main findings are that the majority of the proposed features were considered moderate to highly relevant, which might be explained by the practice-based nature of the framework.

However, the initial model was perceived narrow in focus dealing only with the macro-level. The findings suggest that dynamics are occurring at intermediate and micro-levels including strong top-down and bottom-up influences that concur. Macro-level constraints to the intermediate and micro-levels and, at the same time, intermediate and micro-level agents exercise agency at the upper levels. The evidence reviewed also suggests a relevant role in the framework of essential support structures such as regulation, funding schemes and others. By bringing together strengths and weaknesses reported by the respondents, the chapter concludes by presenting a revised and expanded conceptual model.

This development is crucial for the study because it responds to the first and second subsidiary research questions. It also leads to the next empirical stage that approaches the third subsidiary research question exploring the operation of the model in an actual higher education setting.
Chapter 8:
BUILDING AN UNDERSTANDING OF INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY IN CHILE

8.1 Introduction

Chapter 8 presents the research findings emerging from the data collected by interviewing Chilean stakeholders. It contributes to an in-depth understanding of international higher education and higher education quality in the contemporary context of Chile. This analysis is the first step to open up and expand upon the conceptual and practical components of international higher education quality in Chapter 9. It also sets the basis to examine the implications for policy and practice in Chapter 10 and, thus, to provide a comprehensive response to the third subsidiary research question:

*What are the implications of this policy framework for the development of policy and practice in Chile?*

As shown in Figure 8.1, this chapter identifies, firstly, the contextual conditions of the general processes associated with higher education in Chile. Secondly, it draws upon the conceptualisation of international higher education, its key rationales and main forms. Finally, the chapter builds on the concept of higher education quality, its central mechanisms and developments.

![Figure 8.1: Presentation of findings in Chapter 8](image)

8.2 Contextual conditions

When inquired about their thoughts on ongoing processes in higher education such as internationalisation and quality, the Chilean stakeholders, participants in this study, mentioned several structural elements that delineate the contextual particularities of the sector. These
8.2.1 General background: Economic and socio-cultural conditions

One of the highlighted elements was the open approach of the Chilean model which has had implications for the national economic growth over the last three decades. As one participant indicated, "Chile is one of the most open countries in Latin America, and this is the result of an economic model established in the 70s, which aimed at a total economic openness." (P3). This model sought a strengthened orientation to trade and investment with the rest of the world.

The Chilean international engagement includes, among other initiatives, free trade agreements, membership in supranational organisations, participation in regional blocs and networks. In 2010, Chile became the first South American member of the OECD. The entry to this organisation might be seen as evidence of stability and improvement efforts, but for a developing nation with a GDP per capita that reaches only a half of the OECD average (OECD, 2017a) this has turned out to be a challenging endeavour. When compared with other OECD countries, the general indicators perform below the average.

The areas that demand the policymakers' attention are varied, but importance is attached to those targeting the existing inequalities. Chile is in the group of the highest income inequality nations in the world with a Gini coefficient of 0.465 (OECD, 2017b). As acknowledged by previous research, a disadvantaged socio-economic background may determine future educational and working opportunities in Chile (Nunez & Miranda, 2010). One interviewee remarked upon the social disparities commenting on the following:

Some people say that we are close to reaching an OECD level . . . However, that is because the GDP per capita is an average . . . There is a peculiar thing in this country: there is a gap. Here, you can see people selling on the streets but, at the same time, a renowned scientist who belongs to the most important circles. (P11)

Even though an open approach was installed four decades ago, one participant perceived that due to "geographical and cultural" (P10) factors, Chile is an isolated country. This view was echoed by another respondent who mentioned the Chilean "remoteness with regards to the rest of the world" (P1). For this participant, this is an element to consider upon the higher education debate. The comment below illustrates how such an isolation may have implications for the national discussion:

We look at ourselves having no enough insights into the global processes and how things are happening beyond the national boundaries. Then, we conduct our debates looking at ourselves as the centre of the world. When we acknowledge that, [then], we can enter into global conversations. (P10)

The low English proficiency level of the Chilean population also emerged from the data. Although the national policy has paid attention to this area over the last two decades (British Council, 2015), Chile is described as a "monolingual" (P18) country. As one international affairs officer at a university commented, this is a structural problem that neither primary nor secondary education, public or private, has successfully resolved. The same participant further added:
One could say there are differences between public and private schools. Yes, in public schools, the problem is even deeper. However, if someone attends a British school, for example, it does not mean that she or he will become highly proficient in English, at least, not at the level that it is expected.” (P3)

8.2.2 The 1980’s reform: shaping a new scenario for higher education

A general perception among the interviewees was that the major reform introduced by the military rule in the 1980s is the major factor, historically and politically speaking, that determine the higher education development and prevailing culture. What stood out in the interviews was the market-oriented approach of the Chilean model that resulted from this reform:

Some resources and a project in mind were enough to open a university. There was a kind of expansion with no control over the projects’ quality. Higher education ended up as being seen from a commercial perspective, with no regulation, quality control or assessment of compliance with the aimed plans . . . There was no substantial difference between a university, from an economic point of view, and other types of business endeavours. (P3)

Previous research has discussed how massification, diversification and commercialisation have been worldwide trends in higher education (Bernhard, 2012b). However, some Chilean stakeholders felt that these processes have had an unusual manifestation in the Chilean context. This perception was linked to the neoliberal currents that have permeated the educational sector. As one respondent put it “when we talk about neoliberal educational models, Chile is the most paradigmatic case.” (P5). Additionally, another participant pointed out:

We have an extreme issue of commercialisation and, finally, universities are turned out to be mechanisms to extract resources from society. It is not a coincidence that our system has the highest tuition fees in the region and one of the highest in the world. (P13)

In accordance with Chapter 3, the post-reform dynamics dramatically changed the institutional and academic landscape of Chilean higher education. These dynamics were mentioned by the participants as the elements that have generated most of the current inefficiencies in the system. For instance, the intense competition and heterogeneity that this respondent described:

Since the 80s, institutions flourished with an increased educational offer. Since the 90s ahead, the demand systematically grew; we massified like no other countries in Latin America. (P10)

Another participant associated massification with decreased strength in the academic doing. There appears to be an inclination towards teaching at the expense of the other central higher education functions:

For these rather market-driven conditions that have steered higher education all this time, we have moved, in some way, to a reduction of the universities’ complexity level. Less collaboration, competition among institutions and, moreover, this visible institutional heterogeneity that had led to many, the vast majority of students to attend private institutions. Even though they are called
'universities’, they do not aim at, and of course, do not achieve being relevant actors in research and engagement with the community. (P6)

As articulated in Chapter 4, given its social role, higher education has an ethos that is unique. In accordance with one respondent, the 1980s’ reform was followed by changes with implications for the Chilean higher education’s mission and the academic values, particularly at the university level:

After 35 years of continued expansion . . . higher education has lost much of its meaning and the values that articulate the operation of academic and student identity and the university function. Therefore, I have a severe problem; the values articulating this institution called 'university', here and across Chile, have indeed weakened a bit. (P13)

Then, the interviewee touched upon the existing tension between academic values and expansion, especially for the largest, most traditional, and prestigious universities that:

Have managed to maintain their values, but to some degree, resigning to expansion. The system grows, grows and grows and the most prestigious universities . . . as you know, this idea of ‘competition for status’, precisely, makes that those that are larger, leaders, do not want to expand because the way in which they concentrate, at the system level, is maintaining prestige and, at the same time, keeping their values. (P13)

As discussed in Chapter 3, Chile has a diversified system with mixed, private and state-owned provision at the non-university and a university levels and has developed with high heterogeneity. Although an explosive growth has allowed an improved enrolment rate (Blanco et al., 2015), for one respondent, the number of institutions might not be apposite to the country’s needs:

According to the Ministry, there are 150 institutions. It’s too many . . . A large coverage, it is true, still below the OECD average but great coverage anyway. However, . . . there is no money, no infrastructure, no job market for everyone. (P4)

The high value of higher education for Chilean society (OECD & The World Bank, 2009) explains the successful expansion of the sector. As the following quotes illustrate, university education, in particular, is a highly regarded asset:

In contrast with other countries, here in Chile, the issue of holding a university degree is overestimated. Then, people, especially those from a low-income or more vulnerable background, believe that by studying at a university, whatever it is, they will access to opportunities for themselves and their families. (P9)

Therefore,

We have a problem, we have maximised the university and higher education as the social mobility lift — as described by Weber and Durkheim — but, we have done it in a way that we have modified its nature. Therefore, the university is very deinstitutionalised today. It is subjected to capture by different power groups, by economic and interest groups, so, we are under a critical condition. (P13)
8.2.3 Regulation: quality assurance as a response to a deregulated expansion

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the post-reform expansion was followed by a demand for a strengthened regulation in the sector. Therefore, it was unsurprising that one of the participants touched upon the deregulated conditions under which Chilean higher education developed over the past 30 or so years:

Probably the way in which our educational system grew was not the optimal one because it grew with no control. This growth gave, as a result, what we all know, all the problem that we are facing now; many universities with many programmes that the students decide to study, they became indebted graduates and, later, they do not get a job . . . That has played, a bit, against us. (P19)

Nonetheless, these deregulated conditions have been reported in Chile but also in other Latin American countries (Fernández-Lamarra, 2008; Zenteno, 2014). As one participant, from the higher education research community, pointed out:

Some issues relate to the region, to all these dictatorship regimes that did not promote regulation. There are historical issues here. It was not until the 1990s when quality assurance systems began to be implemented, at least in Latin America. (P5)

Chapter 3 describes the mechanisms that have been introduced in Chilean higher education to regulate the expansion. In the 1980s, new private universities had to pass through a process of examination by an existing university, scheme that would be later replaced by a licensing process early in the 1990s. Given that this tool did not deal with autonomous providers, it would be further complemented by a pilot project on accreditation. Existing research recognises the dynamics that gave place to the policy responses at that time (Espinoza & González, 2012; Jerez & Blanco, 2018; Lemaitre, 2004). Talking about these dynamics and the measures that were undertaken by the government, a participant went on to say:

There was a problem with the institutional licensing carried out a long time ago. Many new private institutions that received the license [to operate] with certain characteristics became autonomous, and they multiplied throughout the Chilean territory . . . That was very bad for the system, and for that reason, in reaction to that trend, the experimental phase took place, to regulate the academic offer expansion in the country after the 90s. (P9)

The learning process involved in the pilot project on accreditation was central to the establishment of the national quality assurance system in 2006 (Lemaitre, 2004). The participants in this study highlighted the progress made in quality control and assurance mechanisms, but with the sentiments that resonated with the following comment:

In Chile . . . there is a philosophy, a vision of education in which the state should not participate, should not regulate, and I believe that it is a dictatorship legacy: a minimised state that does not regulate or promote accountability. (P5)

From the above, there was a sense that quality assurance developments have been underpinned by the vision or legacy of the 1980s’ paradigm.
8.2.4 Funding: higher expenditure from families and focus on ‘first-generation’ policies

In commenting on the higher education public funding policy, one of the interviewees pointed out that the national development level is a clear determinant of the social priorities and therefore, public funding allocation:

Today, the higher investment [on higher education] still come from [the Chilean] families, which means more private than public expenditure on higher education. Why is this? Because there has been an imbalance and the state has not been able to find more money to spend on higher education when we still have problems in pre and primary education, but above all, health, social security, etc. (P15)

Data from the OECD (2017c) shows that nearly two-thirds of the total tertiary expenditure comes from private sources. In this scenario, the family income level is a decisive factor for the young people that face the decision of what and where to study. In commenting on the disparities that this contextual element might entail, one participant argued:

The elite of students has a good education, but this is a small group. The most part has a more mass-oriented one, towards the average level of an emerging country. (P1)

The empirical findings reveal that the Chilean stakeholders acknowledge the public effort made over the last decade. In accordance with the OECD, the public expenditure on higher education has grown from 0.5 per cent of GDP in 2003 to 1.2 per cent in 2013 (OECD, 2017d). Moreover, as one participant explained:

Our expenditure per student is still relatively low, 7000 USD\(^7\) purchasing power parity, against an OECD average of 14 000 USD\(^8\), which means just a half. However, if you look at the country’s effort – expenditure in higher education as a percentage of GDP – this is the second highest in the world. The United States ranks first, Chile and Canada\(^9\) second, and all the richest countries are behind. So, the effort that Chile makes is more significant than Australia, Switzerland and others. (P15)

As discussed in section 8.2.1, Chile is one of the highest income inequality nations in the world, so, higher education policy has concentrated on targeting inequalities. Therefore, as one participant explained, the agenda has focused its strategies on “first-generation” (P6) or more traditional areas such as access, equity and quality of the local provision. As this interviewee described, such an emphasis has overshadowed the development of other ‘second-generation’ policies such as international higher education:

Some problems of a contingent nature or first-generation policies . . . obscure the progress in others type of processes that require more funding, a cultural change. [Those are] more complex and they do not necessarily have this institutional priority . . . because . . . first-generation policies such as access, equity, relevance . . . end up dominating the debate, are part of the agenda [because] there are also unsolved issues. (P6)

\(^7\) 7880 US dollars/student in 2013 (OECD, 2017e)  
\(^8\) 15 598 US dollars/student in 2013 (OECD, 2017e)  
\(^9\) In 2013, Chile ranks second and Korea third (OECD, 2017e)
Another participant from a regional higher education institution referred to the public expenditure on higher education as “unequal” (P17). This respondent thought that the current, centralised, policy-making model presents competitive disadvantages for the universities located in regional areas:

*The largest universities in Santiago, those that receive high public funding, can invest in better quality conditions: laboratories, academic staff . . . The further the distance from Santiago . . . the quality weakens, and people [can] perceive this through the accreditation levels. In general, there is a relationship [between accreditation and] resources availability . . . [so], you are competing under different terms with larger universities. For example, we have a hard time keeping academics with a doctoral degree, we train them, but a university in Santiago hired two from us last year.* (P17)

The empirical findings also reveal that the current funding scheme neither promotes networks nor engages institutions in grids for collaborative initiatives because the principle that lies behind is competition-based. Along these lines, an element that hinders higher education developments is that:

*All universities are required to enter to a competition, and the processes are not collaborative, in networks or articulation . . . the logic is more like: here, we have a fund, then, you better compete alone. If you are going to involve others, do not do it because it is complicated. Therefore, this idea has been installed in the areas of research, teaching, in everything, every university competes by its own. This viewpoint does not allow the country to use its best-articulated talents for greater achievements.* (P11)

### 8.2.5 National agenda: lacking a long-term and shared vision

Existing research recognises the critical role played by a national agenda for higher education in stimulating a collaborative work between government structures and stakeholders (Amaral et al., 2002; Harvey & Knight, 1996). However, as one respondent put it, “all [Chilean higher education institutions] are like ‘silos’, there is no communication” (P11). The Chilean stakeholders, participants in this study, thought that the sector has been unsuccessful in drawing on an organised and purposeful structure that visualises common goals. From one respondent’s perspective:

*The problem is that historically higher education has not been a system, and, by a system, I mean some articulated and coordinated structure sharing a specific long-term strategic vision. Neither the state agencies nor the institutions themselves have been able to generate this, nor collectively both, nor with society.* (P10)

The belief of one student, who participated in this study, was that “most of the educational issues in Chile depend heavily on individual initiatives rather than on common definitions” (P20). It is in this context that the following two questions arise: Is the sector playing the role of being reflective about the contemporary society’s problems? Are there particular interests undermining the distinctive ethos of higher education, particularly at the university level? Another participant noted:
In higher education, it has been difficult to open a broad, long-term debate without touching particular interests that stain of dispute the conversation. The institutions that have ‘in theory’ the responsibility – as in the Humboldtian model – of reflecting and searching for truth; being the reflective communities per excellence; thinking the society critically, turns out to be focused on their own business. (P10)

For a senior researcher, such a lack of dialogue has prevented the higher education sector from a more significant consensus about the higher education meaning, its core principles and purposes:

It is not a coincidence that there is an abysmal dialogue on higher education, regarding its history, development and what should happen next. Universities are many times co-opted by economic groups. There is a lot of ideological operation as well, hence this idea of a system that expands, which was the great success raised by the governments, also involves many questions and some have not been responded . . . there are so many critical problems associated with what does ‘multiplying enrolment by five in two decades’ mean? What impact does this have on the universities’ operation? But overall, on the university constitution, on its social legitimacy, on its unique status. (P13)

In the view of the participants, a strategic, long-term, higher education planning is limited. “Chile is not a country that makes plans for the next thirty years or forty years” (P4). “Probably, as we are sometimes focused on the day-to-day, the urgent, the important is neglected, let say, the long-term” (P19). “We still have the perception that the measures come from a government, we do not have a state vision, so, when there is a change in the governing political coalition, there are changes in priorities as well. The central elements to the agenda of a specific government become irrelevant to the next one” (P12)

How stronger has become the student unions’ voice over the last decade is another theme that emanated from the data. Starting in 2006, at the secondary education level, the so-called ‘Revolución Pingüina’ – Penguin Revolution – movement provided the students with a negotiation power that had not been seen before since the return of the democracy to the country. In 2011, the movement became visible at the tertiary education level with massive protests throughout the national territory. The comment below illustrates this:

Even though sometimes we look them down, Chilean students have grown a lot . . . They are not only, as is often thought, ‘the fight for free tuition fees’ but Chilean students are more than that. Today, they exert pressure. (P18)

This section examines the various contextual elements that play a role in Chilean higher education, providing empirical support to the factors discussed in Chapter 3. The next segment expands upon the different approaches to international higher education, its main motivations/rationales and the activities that stakeholders saw as related to this process.

8.3 International higher education in Chile

One segment of the interviews inquired about the participants’ thoughts on international higher education in Chile, which overall tended to be perceived as an internationalisation
outcome. As discussed in Chapter 2, higher education has always developed activities that involve international collaboration. Thus, it was unsurprising that some participants mentioned that internationalisation has a long history of developments in Chilean higher education:

Higher education and sciences have always been international . . . Since its beginnings . . . it is an activity involving permanent collaboration, exchange and work across national borders. (P18)

The internationalisation’s aspirations are very old in Chile . . . In the late nineteenth century, and the early twentieth century the Laws’ graduates at the University of Chile had some training in Europe. In the 1920s, the Pontifical Catholic University had renowned visiting scholars . . . In the 1960s, Chilean economists studied at the Chicago School and also, at the MIT by the end of the 1970s. (P04)

The Chilean universities were established in cooperation with foreign universities. For instance, in this university, different areas have been supported by academics from different parts of the world . . . in the USM, by German engineers. Then, there has always been international cooperation. (P03)

Chapter 2 mentions that the internationalisation-oriented responses may differ from one higher education systems to another in the rationales behind and the intensity of the activity. However, as reported by the last IAU global survey on internationalisation, a general trend is that greater importance has been attached to this process in every region of the world (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). “In Chile, this [importance] has not been very different from that in other countries” (P03). Faced with the challenges of globalisation and the ambition of a knowledge-based society, international higher education in Chile has shifted in character and intensity in comparison to former years.

A more structured approach to internationalisation was adopted “in Chile, no more than twenty years ago” (P03). There is a growing body of literature that recognises globalisation as a central driver to this process (Knight, 2008). Then, it was interesting to note that the majority of stakeholders saw globalisation as a determinant influence on the internationalisation of Chilean higher education with sentiments that resonated with the following quotes:

[Internationalisation] is a necessary instrument of the economic globalisation process, not only economic but also the growing cultural, socio-political interaction between the nation-states . . . on the other hand, it is a globalisation product emerging from the need for human capital mobility, skilled workforce, professional or technical. (P04)

It has a series of elements, global trends, that have an impact on the higher education systems . . . that make universities nowadays not equal, but [as actors that] share many characteristics that meet certain international standards imposed by a more global system. (P05)

In a globalised world, like we live today, a university that is not connected with the rest of the world no longer exists, has no presence. (P17)
However, some participants expressed particular concern with regard to the way in which internationalisation has been understood and operationalised in the national context. This issue emerged from a comment of one respondent who drew attention to the fact that:

*This is something ‘in fashion’ as other developments in higher education have been [in former years] . . . then, we have now a new concept to spend time with . . . this [concept] is taken by the states for policymaking decisions aiming at what they understand by internationalisation.* (P18)

When reflecting on international higher education, the stakeholders provided a multidimensional and multilevel (P06, P10) interpretation. As one of them anticipated, some interviewees adopted “a more global, theoretical, intellectual” approach (P05) whereas others remarked upon “the level of more operational and concrete practices that are supposedly aiming at the internationalisation purposes” (P05). By putting these elements into perspective, the structure of the narrative below navigates from higher levels of abstraction – global trends – to the practice level.

### 8.3.1 Response to global trends

Some participants approached internationalisation in Chilean higher education by linking the process to specific global trends that are exerting pressure on the local context. The findings of this study reveal that these trends are pervasive and unavoidable forces demanding the higher education sector to act (P10, P16). Among these are: more emphasis on knowledge-based models; increased mobility; blurred boundaries of the nation-states; international cooperation and competition, and a growing delocalisation.

#### 8.3.1.1 Knowledge-based economies and societies

A recurrent theme in the interviews was the sense among respondents that as the importance of knowledge to economies and societies is increasing, the value of international collaboration and articulation is something in need for consideration:

*Factors such as how knowledge moves nowadays; how it is a key element for the countries’ development; how this is occurring so fast, exert pressure to act in a much more articulated and coordinated way.* (P10)

This increased flow of knowledge across borders has significant effects on every higher education field because:

*Knowledge is not something that starts and ends in a particular country. Therefore, cutting-edge knowledge in every area can only be received if an international conversation is occurring.* (P01)

Therefore, the rapid movement has implications for the academic units and the curricular development of the disciplines as:

*The development of an academic unit is not understandable if it does not analyse the status of the discipline in the world. What is the latest state of the art in the field? So according to that outlining the plans and curricular innovations. It needs an antenna out, towards the international space to see*
8.3.1.2 Population mobility

The growing interchange and movement of people from one country to another have come accompanied by numerous requests for the educational system. For instance, as observed by this respondent, innovation in policy and practice for prior learning recognition:

[Internationalisation] relates to possible population mobility, in different realities and contexts, the recognition of this population’s skills, what they know and what they can do in the different scenarios. (P10)

8.3.1.3 Emerging dialogue in a borderless space

International partnership and collaboration, among academics and researchers, are occurring in a new arena in which the territorial and political scope of the nation-states become blurred:

There is a convergence in terms of a unique university’s notion that moves away from the nation-state domain to operate in a more or less independent way. Therefore, internationalisation concurs with a certain mobilisation of efforts for the universities to leave the nation-state’s custody to enter into this dialogue among them, in a space that is outside of the regulation and the state control. (P13)

8.3.1.4 Expansion of the local scope

Additionally, there is an ongoing delocalisation process that broadens the traditional institutional-academic range or scope. As one respondent described, the new information and communication technologies offer innovative tools to change the conventional modalities, which have strengthened the expansion across national borders:

[Internationalisation] also means academic delocalisation and the impact of new technologies on the learning process, how this education service can be accessed, the ways to validate and recognise it . . . this process might involve testing the various traditional concepts relating to: what do we understand by higher education institutions? What is a university? What is a polytechnic? All of these conceptions are subjected to discussion. (P10)

8.3.1.5 International rankings and benchmarks

The international arena creates a more competitive environment for higher education institutions. Many of them are striving for higher parameters and standards related to international rankings and to what is meant by the concept of world-class universities (P06, P13):

Universities place themselves, to some extent, in a framework of legitimacy that makes them very different in a new logic. That means expanding operations across national borders or innovating concerning original methods,
trying, at the same time, that academic staff and their productivity – teaching and research – places at a level to access to this world-class universities club, wherein rankings, consequently, play a highly significant role. (P13)

On the other hand, the sector has increasingly adopted benchmarking practice by contrasting methods, processes and performance outcomes against international parameters. The purpose of this procedure involves improvements in alignment with international conventions and best practice:

[Internationalisation] means to some extent accountability for universities, from a positive viewpoint, through which the institution and its academic staff can carry out a self-assessment, to collaborate and interact with academic communities at the international level. (P03)

The parameters under which our development as higher education, as a model, is analyse have to adjust, first, to an international parameter given by other entities across the world. This adjustment is because in a globalised world it is important that education has a relationship with the external world. (P01)

8.3.2 Depicting the main local rationales

As articulated in Chapter 2, internationalisation is a process driven by different socio-cultural, political, economic and academic rationales that although vary among actors, overlap in some respects. The question that arises is what are the internationalisation drivers in Chilean higher education sector? The participants highlighted diverse motivations, which for this analysis have been classified in the six themes that follow:

8.3.2.1 Student experience enhancement

The participants remarked upon the relationship between internationalisation and graduate skills developments that the contemporary labour market is requiring. The inclusion of an international dimension in the teaching-learning process was seen in its capacity to enhance intercultural awareness (P07, P08, P12), improve global citizenship (P16, P18) and contribute to international networking (P08, P12), which overall enrich the students’ skill set:

Institutions need to develop their activity in a bi-directional mode. First, by recruiting international students, which help to create a multicultural teaching-learning environment. On the other hand, by allowing our students and faculty to share other realities, cultures, of different nature and development levels. Either those that have highly developed systems, economic, political, cultural and social systems, such as industrialised powers or those developing countries to work in complementary networks. (P12)

8.3.2.2 Labour market demands

The stakeholders drew attention to an industry-related external rationale closely connected to the preceding element. This rationale links to a fundamental question: what are the expectations of a more and more internationalised labour market on the graduates’ skills? Even though this question applies to every academic programme, for some disciplines, it becomes a central element to the future. For example, as one participant noted that “an MBA programme,
no matter how excellent an institution may be, would be performing very poor if a graduate does not know the planet because he/she will be a citizen of the planet by 2030, 2040” (P16).

8.3.2.3 Academic development

Some participants saw rationales relating to the faculty staff development, and the notion of 'academic capitalism' (P05, P13), which has become stronger over the last three decades for two reasons: first, because of the influence of global trends on higher education and second, the growing commercialisation. International activity was perceived as central to academic productivity and the aspirations of those who want to have a highly regarded global scholar profile. The comments below illustrate this perception:

Academic capitalism has been a key factor for [promoting among] academic staff to engage in networks and improve academic productivity. (P13)

Behind this idea of academic capitalism, we as academic staff are to a high degree compelled, inclined, to work with people from other countries. Our horizon – this is not for everyone though – is not necessarily in Latin America, but in the North, in English speaking countries. Here, international collaboration materialises a lot, by both writing papers and applying to international funds projects. (P05)

The opportunities of living in other countries, working with other people, provide another perspective, one of a global scholar. (P05)

8.3.2.4 Reputation and strategic positioning (national and international rankings)

There is another motivation that links to the potential of internationalisation to enhance the institutional reputation and strategic positioning in an increasingly competitive environment. One respondent, for example, noted that “international higher education is used as a marketing resource. In Chile, you can see this by the end of the year when student recruitment starts” (P08). However, this participant expressed concern about that, in some cases, such an advertised activity might not be formally active.

On the other hand, international rankings have become increasingly relevant to Chilean higher education. As described in Chapter 3, as per the QS Latin American University Rankings, fifteen Chilean universities have risen to the top-100, with two of them placed first and sixth respectively (QS, 2016). The academic reputation given by the international rankings becomes a central factor to this group of institutions. In accordance with one respondent, this is a basis to aim at better positions and consequently, to work on the improvement of the ranking’s indicators:

The universities that usually appear in some of the rankings, lately in the Times and QS, ask themselves: well, what will be our outcome? How are we going to improve? The largest universities are concerned, instead, whether they are well-placed in SCOPUS or Shanghai regarding research. (P15)
8.3.2.5 Accreditation process

Another external rationale relates to the accreditation process at both the institutional and programme level. Although there are no formal standards or criteria for internationalisation, this component is assessed by the peer reviewers when institution declares internationalisation purposes, particularly in the research domain. As one stakeholder described:

*More recently, peer-reviewers are asking about internationalisation activities, and that is encouraging rectors to say: we have to be worried about; we have to have something when they come back next time, in the next four years. Then, there is a certain capacity built around that.* (P15)

8.3.2.6 National policy

Data show that the national policy on internationalisation is a central external motivation to internationalise (P04, P07, P11, P12). However, some Chilean stakeholders thought that this tool does not exist or does exist but at a very early development stage. The comments made by these respondents provide evidence of a negative perception in that direction:

*We do not have a national policy on internationalisation, there is not, so, there is no coverage, no regulation, no institutions for these processes. It is voluntarism of every institution.* (P04)

*The universities’ effort has supported internationalisation of Chilean higher education . . . Where is the policy? What I miss here is a national policy on internationalisation. Some countries have one. What is the reality here? A sectorial brand called LearnChile, which invite us to participate in two or three international fairs every year. That is all [that we have].* (P11)

8.3.3 Internationalisation activity

This analysis has portrayed internationalisation in Chilean higher education as the response to various global trends that the sector has dealt with. Next, the main internal and external rationales that lie behind the local strategies are identified. However, what do these general elements mean in term of practice? The Chilean stakeholders, participants in this study, connected internationalisation with a range of activities that the different contexts have implemented, Table 8.1 below classifies and ranks them from the more to the less cited in the interviews’ data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Internationalisation activity</th>
<th>% Cited</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student mobility</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Academic mobility</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>International research collaboration</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>International agreements</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Becas-Chile Programme</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Visiting scholars</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Capacity building projects</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Internationalising the curriculum</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Marketing and international promotion</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Engaging in networks</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Recruiting international staff</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Joint double/dual degree</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>International accreditation (institutional and programme level)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.3.3.1 Priority internationalisation activity

“Internationalisation is a comprehensive concept, and goes through several components, one of them is mobility, which is the most evident” (P19). It is apparent from Table 8.1 that there is a strong link between international higher education and mobility: student mobility, and academic mobility to a lesser extent. Talking about this link, these interviewees said:

Internationalisation refers to this dimension that is better known, more traditional, that connect to academic and student mobility, that is one of the fundamental ideas with which I faced this topic. (P06)

Internationalisation is approached in Chile mainly from a classical perspective, that is, student exchange considering both inbound and outbound mobility. Moreover, academic mobility by visiting or spending a sabbatical leave in another country. (P14)

Some respondents saw research as an area that by its nature is intrinsically associated with internationalisation and its component of joint and collaborative work across national borders. As this comment described:

The research community is the main driver of this, and it includes all of those that are working in research seriously. They have a disciplinary community that is strictly international and not local. In a country with a community as small as us, there are more colleagues in an ultra-specialised field outside of Chile than inside. (P15)

It worth noting that the respondents perceived ‘international collaboration’ as an activity that occurs in research – where perhaps the results become more apparent – but also in a broader sense that involves other higher education functions:

[Those] are only one dimension of internationalisation, which is part of a much broader setting related to the universities’ transformation into actors that integrate to an international higher education context, both regional and global. (P06)

[Those] are one of its parts, but [internationalisation] is the possibility of sharing knowledge with institutions located in other countries. (P20)

However, the vision of a broad international collaboration appears to be at the system level in Chile “at the moment, a desire, rhetoric, something that is in vogue but it is not helping to transform the system or the set of universities in a proper way” (P15). As one participant put it:

The exchange has not reached yet the level of ‘international collaboration’, which is also within the concept of what I would call internationalisation. In Chile, we are a bit far away. Probably, some institutions that have a more international approach and a more distinguished reputation are the exceptions. (P14)

Overall, these results are in alignment with the regional findings reported by the IAU 4th Global Survey (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). According to this work, the highest priority internationalisation activity among Latin American respondents was outgoing mobility
opportunities for students followed by international collaboration and mobility opportunities for faculty/staff respectively. On the other hand, these results are consistent with the central rationales discussed in the preceding section.

8.3.3.2 Other internationalisation activities

In addition to the activities discussed above, the participants saw internationalisation in association with other at home and cross-border initiatives. It is important to remember that Chapter 2 expands on the theoretical elements of internationalisation before moving on to present the main operationalisation forms in section 2.2.2. The data shown in Table 8.1 is in close alignment with section 2.2.2 which demonstrates their empirical relevance to this study. Selected examples of comments are provided as follows for each additional form identified:

- **International agreements.** It appears to be a controversial way of operationalising internationalisation because of the comments’ tone. Some participants believed that there are institutions that adopt a narrow vision towards international higher education connecting it just with the subscription of international agreements. However, “when institutions are asked about how many of them are in operation” (P15), in practice, many of them may not be. On the other hand, institutions may account for this activity for the single purpose of utilising it as a “marketing resource” (P08) to attract students, but in the end, the impact on their academic experience is limited.

- **The Becas-Chile Programme.** As discussed in Chapter 3, this government programme is an initiative that allows Chilean professionals and researchers to pursue master and doctoral degrees in top-ranked universities across the world. Predictably, some of the participants linked this programme to the national efforts placed in international higher education. Even though there was concern regarding the future insertion of advanced human capital in the job market, the initiative “is categorised as positive.” (P18)

- **Visiting scholars.** The stakeholders described the initiatives “to invite academics as visiting scholars” (P11), as a matter upon which in general “all the research universities have programmes and policies” (P11). There are also some efforts in this respect at the government agency level. Such is the case of ProChile or the Chilean Higher Education Authority that periodically organise international conferences, workshops and seminars of open attendance.

- **Capacity building projects.** There were a few comments on those projects aiming at learning and capacity building from the international practice, particularly at the government level. For example, “through permanent visits to countries like Germany, Finland, England, Australia, New Zealand, among others. The United States is a permanent point of reference for Chilean education that has considerably grown in coverage but framed by this international learning” (P12).

- **Internationalising the curriculum.** Some respondents referred to harmonising the curriculum by incorporating the best international practices in the discipline to improve programme recognition. For instance, “aligning the curriculum with what is studied, how is studied, not only in content but also in teaching methods, in other parts of the world that can be comparable to us, with our characteristic” (P19).
Marketing and international promotion. As highlighted in Chapter 3, recognition was given to the role that ProChile plays in making visible the Chilean educational services abroad through the brand LearnChile. According to one of the respondents: “ProChile encourages institutions to participate in the NAFSA fair and develop international actions” (P08). Another added: “to promote the academic programmes of universities and then attract international students to come to Chile.” (P07).

Engaging in networks. As described in Chapter 2, given its nature, international higher education is associated with working collaboratively and in networks. One participant addressed this intrinsic characteristic by explaining that “it is important to take part in institutional networks that may be diverse, for example, networks in higher education policy, networks for exchanging perspectives on social responsibility and others” (P15).

Recruiting international staff. The inclusion of an international dimension into the core functions of higher education relates to “internationalise staff, which means having employees and academics from other parts of the world collaborating” (P19). Another participant echoed this idea by asserting that international higher education might also involve “an open approach to international staff recruitment, announcing the available positions to attract talented foreign people who have completed doctoral studies abroad, for example” (P15).

Joint double/dual degree. Chapter 3 presents some examples of this type of international higher education activity in Chilean universities. However, as this interviewee noted, these mechanisms are placed “at a more sophisticated level in which universities aspire to have, and a big part has arranged, dual operation programmes at undergraduate, master or doctoral level” (P15).

International accreditation (institutional and programme level). There were a few comments on international accreditation, which “in general, is complementary to the national accreditation at both the institutional level, with only a few examples, and the programme level, with many examples over the years” (P15).

8.4 Higher education quality in Chile

The next set of questions in the interviews inquired about the stakeholders’ thoughts on quality in the Chilean higher education context. When referring to this concept, some of them agreed in the view that as the term encompasses “several dimensions or factors” (P05, P11), it is “complex and broad” (P01, P5, P14, P19). The following comments drawn by participants give a flavour of the kind of aspects that make ‘quality’ a highly contested term:

I have no exact answer; a concept of what quality means. [However,] I do not believe in the concept that we have in Chile which is ‘fit for purpose’. (P18)

I have a serious issue with the notion of quality . . . much has been said. The problem is that there are so many different objects that it is a word that involves confusion. It seems that we talk about the same when we do not. The quality of outcomes is different from the quality of processes or management, and they are not related. (P13)

Reinforcing the above, one respondent pointed out:
The concept of quality is so varied, and one uses it for different circumstances and things. If I am doing public policy or a study; I am referring to graduate or research; I am talking about undergraduate . . . or, I am asking what the PIAC outcomes mean . . . The idea that one can have a certain meta-concept of quality that covers all of this, perhaps it is of interest for specific purposes . . . For me, it is rather minor. You end up in such generic definitions like ‘fit for purpose’, which is so general that covers everything. It means evolutionary; allows you to adapt; to survive; and it is also, allegedly, quality, but also has to do with efficacy, efficiency and suddenly ‘fit for purpose’ has to be pertinent as well. (P15)

As mentioned in Chapter 4, there are different responses to the question of what quality in higher education means. Diverse perceptions also emanated from the interviews with Chilean stakeholders. The respondents expressed varied opinions on the key elements that might explain ‘quality’ in higher education and, for this analysis, these have been grouped according to two quality-related properties presented in the existing literature: excellence and transformation. The review of each that follows will shed light on the arguments behind such perceptions.

8.4.1 Quality as excellence

English dictionary defines excellence as ‘the state or fact of excelling, the possession chiefly of good qualities in an eminent or unusual degree’ (Stevenson, 2011). Chapter 4 demonstrates that such an idea has surrounded an understanding of quality not only in higher education but also in other services and manufacturing industries. Predictably, recognition is given by the interviewees to this connection. For example, one participant saw quality as excellence in the following way:

[Quality] relates to excellence, with the possibility of a good education. However, it does not only involve an institution that, for instance, responds to international standards or rankings, but instead delivers a comprehensive education that goes beyond the classroom, which also means students and employees wellbeing. (P20)

This view was echoed by another respondent who postulated that the notion of excellence might be broken down into several parts to build on an understanding. In this case, the several parts are the main higher education functions: teaching, research and service to society; these functions can be observed in their intrinsic qualities:

I would understand quality in higher education – from a research university perspective – as the achievement of institutional objectives regarding these three major functions: teaching, research and service to society. In terms that these objectives are verifiable; where excellence can effectively be observed through some specific qualities or, at least, provide feedback. (P14)

As articulated in Chapter 4, given that the idea of ‘excellence’ is highly abstract, an operational understanding is necessary for quality management purposes. Some participants recognised this limitation suggesting the need for a further interpretation, which is discussed in the section parameters and standards.
8.4.2 Quality as transformation

English dictionary offers the following definition of transformation: ‘the act of changing’ (Stevenson, 2011). By transforming learners, higher education regards as playing a significant ‘transformative role’ in a society where knowledge is imperative for future developments. In accordance with some Chilean stakeholders, quality in higher education links to the transformation of a student population, with different profiles and interests, into valuable human resource able to adapt to increasingly demanding environments. For instance, one participant said:

[Quality] is fundamentally a willingness to generate skills, on the one hand, and knowledge, on the other, in an increasingly demanding context. (P01)

Another referred to an integrative transformation process by knowledge transfer and interpersonal skills development:

[Quality] means firstly that the student obtains the required knowledge to perform in a professional environment properly, but it also means acquiring personal tools, sometimes called ‘soft skills’. This involves learning a second and a third language; [developing] interpersonal skills; being able to communicate appropriately; expressing ideas; convincing people about viewpoints and so on. That is, . . . a model that allows an integral development of individuals. (P19)

From the above, quality in higher education appears to be understood by the participants as a search for excellence, but ascribable to the higher education role. This role involves providing users with transformative experiences through adding-value processes that have a social impact. Overall, the notion of ‘excellence’ prompts to embark upon an exercise in which excellence is contextualised to comprehend the individualities of its meaning for a particular object, function or process.

8.4.3 The need for an operational interpretation

‘Excellence’ is a highly abstract concept that requires an additional interpretation when aiming at its management in a given context. Therefore, the mere idea of quality as ‘excellence in higher education’ has limitations. Talking about this issue, one interviewee said:

Quality is the achievement of excellence in the main higher education functions. However, I know that this is not adequate definition because, subsequently, I need to describe what excellence in each one is. (P14)

This view was echoed by other participants who saw quality as closely linked to specific assessable parameters:

[Quality] is to have the highest possible institutional standards concerning all the management areas, and this implies a constant assessment. (P03)

Quality relates to certain performance standards that account for the quality of the different activities and products that you have in an organisation. (P18)
By referring to ‘performance standards’, the participant above put the idea of excellence on an operational label. The contribution of this label to an understanding of quality in higher education is that observable measures may explain, in a tangible way, how quality operates and, additionally, the outcomes of those measures may be used for thresholds definitions explaining a specific performance categorisation. Therefore, quality assessment based on clear standards may have implications for overcoming the subjectivity that lies behind the concept of quality itself.

8.4.4 Quality as a process

Based on the previous section, parameters and standards become tangible goals to which aspire in a particular context over a specified period. Then, between the initial situation and the expected outcomes, a sequential series of actions ought to be undertaken. Along these lines, some participants alluded to quality as framed by a process-based approach:

Quality is a process . . . quality is not a fixed standard to which we aspire, but instead, it is a continuously updating horizon . . . As we move forward, sailing in the higher education ocean, moving towards quality, the quality horizon moves further and issues that had not appeared to be important elements for quality become unavoidable . . . So, in that sense quality is a process. (P06)

Therefore, goals are continuously evolving which makes the actions associated with those goals to be ‘cyclical’ in nature. Thereby, quality becomes a continuous and evolving process. Some key stages in this process surfaced from one comment that remarked upon the actions of planning, carrying out (doing), control and evaluation:

Quality refers to how the different processes in the several areas are carried out in the best way; with the best possible planning, and with the best possible control and evaluation. When we talk about quality, in some way, we are thinking, again, about everything that the university does. (P03)

Interestingly, these insights into quality as a process concur with the Deming’s notion of quality as a cycle (Deming, 2000): a logical arrangement of four successive steps (plan, do, check and act) for recurrent improvement and learning, which leads to enhancement (see Chapter 4). This conceptual understanding of quality as a continuous improvement process has formed the basis of the conceptual framework presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

8.4.5 Assessment of higher education quality: policy and practice in Chile

Different theories exist in the literature regarding organisational and sectorial culture linked to the industry of which a sector is a part. As belonging to the educational sector, higher education has its own culture which, in accordance with some authors, represents the philosophical beliefs, and policy and practice that lead the way in which individuals behave individually or collectively. Culture sets up a reference model within which the collective may interpret occurring events (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). In this respect, higher education quality is not an independent concept but, instead, it has to be a construct in agreement with the system level, its mechanisms, institutions and the community involved.

This perspective emerged when a respondent argued that quality is a process in which core articulated components participate: “people, the system and its mechanisms including equipment, infrastructure, regulations, among others, and institutions” (P04). As highlighted in
Chapter 3 and section 8.2.3, since the 1990s, Chile has followed its path of development in terms of policy and practice in the area of higher education quality as a response to the expanded and deregulated post-reform scenario. In 2006, the national legislation established a national quality assurance system alongside its institutional arrangement. After more than a decade of operation much has been debated on the system’s weaknesses, especially the lack of thresholds definitions as this participant pointed out:

In higher education, you do not have a scale, a pattern that defines: this is the basic quality requirement when it refers to the academic field. What can we do? Looking at the institutions in their purposes, how they are, what the mechanisms are. (P10)

There appear to be difficulties with this practice when it comes to external peer-review and accreditation as one respondent went on to say:

In the country, we do not have well defined what the quality standards are, so they are of discretion of a commission . . . Then, of course, the reviewer assesses according to the concept that he/she has of quality, what he/she has in mind. (P17)

Talking about the same issue another participant added:

In these countries, the problems for public policy are to determine how a minimum of quality is defined and, in my opinion, that is a super interesting question. (P15)

As mentioned in Chapter 4, higher education quality has various macro-functions: the principal across the educational systems are control, assurance and improvement. As the National System for Quality Assurance in Chile has been built on existing international practice, these macro-functions are also identified. One respondent provided detailed insights into each of them:

There is one of control, which is how to regulate – Australians call it risk-based approach –; assure sustainability over time; the projects’ viability . . . to safeguard public faith; provide a warranty that education meets essential requirements.

The second, the typical accreditation, peer judgments, which occurs in almost every country in the world. It is an external evaluation that looks at the institutions in their processes. The significant challenge is how to introduce the outcomes because it is the weakest factor of this whole equation.

The last has to do with quality promotion, which is the development of endogenous capabilities within the institutions to promote continuous improvement . . . If this is lacking, nothing will work, at all. Then we have to blend and combine all these factors, and there is an institutional arrangement that has to operate for this to happen.

So, quality should have this balance, and probably Chile has two unsolved tasks: first, how to consider more the outcomes; look more at the students that are being educated and, secondly, this, that we are discussing, how to develop endogenous capabilities for continuous improvement. Those are issues that should be addressed by policy. (P10).
8.4.6  The quality level of Chilean higher education

When inquired about their opinions on the current quality level of Chilean higher education, the majority of participants concentrated on the high heterogeneity of the system, which made extremely difficult to arrive at an average level. For others, the question required further contextualisation: first, it was necessary to specify the other systems with which Chilean higher education was being compared (P06, P07, P19) and, second, it was important to indicate the ‘object of attention’, in other words, quality in what? (P13, P15). Therefore, the stakeholders set out several boundaries for their responses.

Based on these different approaches to the quality level of Chilean higher education, five broad themes emerged which are categorised as follows:

- National focus, current quality level under the existing conditions,
- National focus, current quality level compared with the 1990s’ scenario,
- International focus, current quality level compared with the Latin America region,
- International focus, current quality level compared with other OECD countries, and
- International focus, current quality level compared with the notion of ‘world-class university’.

8.4.6.1 National focus, current quality level under the existing conditions

A recurrent theme in the responses was the sense among interviewees that Chilean higher education is highly diverse and heterogeneous. Therefore, as one respondent said, quality developments are highly dissimilar across the sector:

[The quality level] depends on the university. Some universities have a quality approach that reflects on accreditation at both the institutional and the programme levels, undergraduate or postgraduate. (P03)

Given both the lack of homogeneity and the high institutional diversity, it is difficult to perceive the average level of quality in the Chilean system. As the same participant further added:

It is complex to make an average, because our system is very diverse, for example, [if we compare with] the German system where the difference between one university and another is quite low regarding institutional quality. (P03)

Based on the system’s institutional diversity, the interviewees’ opinions about the quality of Chilean higher education placed its level in a range from low to moderate. These viewpoints came out, for example, from the following comments:

In some cases, it is moderate whereas, in others, it is low. Quality is deficient, but not all the institutions are placed under the same umbrella. Some institutions are at a better level, but looking at the country’s generality, it is moderate. (P02)

We are in the middle, a bit higher. However, although that is the average, it significantly varies among the universities that are doing this well and, the others, that are not. (P03)
It is [placed] at the moderate-high level. The international perception of the Chilean processes is positive. (P12)

I have some evidence that the universities in Chile, at least the traditional, have a moderate level of quality . . . However, when adding those that are not research universities, and are only focused on teaching, then, the average becomes lower. (P11)

Even though a minority, there were also respondents that thought that Chilean higher education quality was placed at a lower level. The comment below illustrates this perception:

As it is very heterogeneous, some institutions have better conditions and approach to this idea of excellence, are integral . . . nevertheless, they are a minority. The vast majority of institutions do not comply with these criteria. On average, the levels are deficient. (P20)

Some respondents approached the question about the quality level of Chilean higher education quality by breaking ‘quality’ down in various ‘objects of attention’ through which interpret such a level. For example, this participant centred upon the tripartite higher education mission:

This is complex because of the institutional diversity; the system heterogeneity . . . quality in teaching is good, but the quality in research and service to society is rather moderate-low. (P14)

Upon research and service to society, another informant reflected:

I do not see denser scholars’ communities or interesting research development in both directions taking care of the Chilean society problems and building on a more meaningful community of dialogue. (P13)

The main higher education functions were also considered worthy of attention by other participants who further added:

If we look at quality from different perspectives, for example, the impact that our higher education has on young people education, the impact of our research, and the impact that the university has on the preservation and dissemination of culture and knowledge, we will find heterogeneity again. (P06)

If we consider research, generation, application, development and knowledge generation impact, we have four Chilean universities that today I could answer they have good quality. If I look at others, they are at a moderate level, and others, have not even started to think about how to develop their research . . . In teaching, I have a different opinion, Chilean undergraduate has outstanding quality compared with many countries in the world. (P16)

A view echoed by another respondent who asserted that Chilean higher education is “able to train technicians, professionals, with essential technical knowledge” (P18). However, concern was expressed regarding the system’s capacity to train graduates with interpersonal skills and “citizen and cultural knowledge” (P18).
8.4.6.2 National focus, current quality level compared with the 1990s’ scenario

The quality level of Chilean higher education was also approached from a historical perspective. Special attention was paid to the quality management capacity that has been built over the last four decades at both the national and higher education institution levels. Commenting on these strengthened capacities, these respondents argued:

> If we compare with ourselves in the past . . . over the last 40 years, since somehow the market was opened, released, became heterogeneous and multiple actors both public and private entered to participate in this much more complex higher education system . . . Our situation is much better than the precarious quality systems we used to have. (P06)

> Universities have made substantial progress in management and, in that sense, you may see elements in that area that are important. (P13)

8.4.6.3 International focus, current quality level compared with the Latin America region

Some stakeholders looked at Chilean higher education quality by comparing the situation with other Latin American countries. The participants who provided these insights felt that Chile is at a good level in terms of regional academic reputation. The comments below illustrate this perception:

> Compared with Latin America, it is between moderate and high, but it is lower than some countries such as Uruguay, Costa Rica, I do not know Ecuador, Peru that is progressing by ‘leaps and bounds’ or some of the best universities in Brazil. (P04)

> In the Latin American ranking, Chile is well positioned to succeed in the region. Last year, the Catholic University ranked first, and the University of Chile, fifth. (P08)

> As I directly know a good part of the systems, at least in Latin America, I would say that this is a system that for its higher education expenditure, for its school system precariousness and inequality levels, is quite reasonable. (P15)

8.4.6.4 International focus, current quality level compared with other OECD countries

As articulated earlier in this chapter, Chile became a full member of the OECD in 2010, but its educational indicators are far from reaching the average level of the OECD countries. In general, the participants argued that a supranational organisation such as the OECD is made up of the wealthiest nations in the world, so, the lower GDP per capita of Chile does not allow higher developments. Therefore, the perception was that “compared with the OECD, [the quality level] is low in every sense of the word” (P04).

8.4.6.5 International focus, current quality level compared with the notion of ‘world-class university’

The quality level of Chilean higher education was further linked to the concept of ‘world-class university’. Talking about this concept, one stakeholder reflected upon the internal capacity
building challenge in Chile, and raised several questions about the current situation and the future:

The issue is: has Chile ever had a world-class higher education institution? None of our research universities ranks within the top-100. However, were there any differences in the past? On average, our quality is not far from what it was or what it has been.

How do we qualify in the big leagues? We should not be at the top . . . Now, do we aspire to be world-class? In some subjects probably [the answer is] yes, the size of the country is a factor. We do have institutions of excellence, [but] the historical fact is that we have a diversified system on academic offer, with different qualities and the question is, how do we move the whole system to improve? (P10)

The comments on this section have been an indication that the question about the quality level of Chilean higher education can be approached from different angles. Given the complex and multilevel nature of quality, this variety was unsurprising. This rich diversity of insights provided by the respondents into Chilean higher education and the quality of its provision has contributed to a more in-depth analysis of contextual and conceptual factors, of value in responding the third subsidiary research question: what are the implications of this policy framework for the development of policy and practice in Chile?

8.5 Summary

Chapter 8 builds an understanding of quality and international higher education in Chile. To set the contextual conditions in which these processes have emerged, it identifies several socio-cultural, economic and political factors delineating a path that is unique for the country. The insights given by the interviewees provide evidence that internationalisation and quality have been progressively embedded in the heart of Chilean higher education. It is equally important to note that international higher education in Chile has primarily concentrated on the traditional activities of student and academic mobility. Important aspects such as international accreditation, recruiting international staff and the like have never played an important role in the national education agenda or educational practice.

The notion of quality in the Chilean higher education sector has focused primarily on the local student population and not to a sufficient degree on international elements. It has become apparent that the level of quality is very heterogeneous depending on the level of education, discipline, type of provider and so forth. The findings of this study show that the challenge remains to reach a certain desirable minimum of quality for the entire Chilean education system in line with international benchmarks. This analysis contributes to answering the third subsidiary research question by providing an empirical basis to expand upon international higher education quality in the next chapter.
Chapter 9: ASSESSING THE APPLICABILITY OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY IN INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION IN CHILE

9.1 Introduction

Chapter 9 is the second of the two chapters presenting the research findings that emerge from the data collected in Chile. It assesses the applicability of the research model, developed in Chapter 6 and validated in Chapter 7, against the realities of the Chilean higher education environment.

As shown in Figure 9.1, the chapter first analyses the relative importance of the three foundations of the theoretical model. Secondly, it examines the level of understanding of the processes and the interplay of its components among different stakeholder groups in the Chilean higher education sector. As the previous chapter expanded on the processes of quality and internationalisation, the chapter focuses on quality in international higher education. Thirdly, the operation of the revised conceptual framework at the supra-regional and national-local scale is assessed. Particular attention is given to the framework’s relevance and feasibility to the macro (government), intermediate (agencies) and micro (institutions) levels of the Chilean higher education sector.

![Figure 9.1: Presentation of the findings in Chapter 9](image-url)
9.2 Foundations of the model and evidence found in Chile

The research to date has been crucial to understanding that quality in international higher education is one of three interrelated dimensions emerging from the relationship between quality and internationalisation (see Chapter 4). An analysis of this dimension involves a recognition of the various macro-complexities that relate to the social and systemic character of higher education. Chapter 6 describes that a systemic nature assumes the existence of essential components: parts, relationships, an environment and boundaries, and the capacity to adapt to changing environments. This capacity provides an educational system with the ability to respond to the challenges that arise from global trends including the changes on the traditional boundaries that separate the global and the local, which are fast becoming blurred.

During the face-to-face semi-structured interviews, Chilean stakeholders reflected on the concepts of internationalisation, quality and, in the end, international higher education quality. In doing so, some respondents touched upon the ‘theoretical foundations’ mentioned in Chapter 6, section 6.2.1: higher education as a social system; higher education as a social system with three dominant agents, and higher education as a social system subjected to globalisation. The empirical data validates both the theoretical relevance of these foundations to a specific higher education context and the presumption that the way in which these become manifest is a determinant influence on national decision making. This means that these foundations have implications for policy and practice at the different layers: from the local to the national as one participant observed:

*International higher education quality is a process that deals with observing comprehensively, to progress in [implementing] criteria and standards for continuous updating. [This process aims] to improve the . . . integration of universities and countries because it also involves the level of public policies.*

(P06)

The first theoretical foundation involves the social and systemic nature of higher education. In the case study context, although respondents referred to Chilean higher education as a system, concerns regarding the lack of a shared purpose were widespread. Chapter 8, section 8.2.5 discusses this issue in detail but, generally speaking, stakeholders perceived the convening of all actors, as well as, the capacity to draw on a long-term sectorial agenda as challenging tasks for the macro-level. A similar perception was expressed concerning both integrating each part into a whole and undertaking conversations amidst the high heterogeneity in quality.

The second theoretical foundation refers to the manner in which the state, the academic oligarchy and the market interrelate with each other to depict a coordination mode that is unique for a given educational system. As described in Chapter 8, section 8.2.2, since the major 1980s' reform, Chilean higher education has been dominated by the market forces. Some participants made critical comments on the dominant position of the market in the coordination of the sector with sentiments that resonated with the following quote:

*A matter that was very bad calibrated and very much debated – this that Clark looks at: the coordination of higher education –; the extreme ideological bias to the market has inhibited more serious discussions on that it has boundaries. I do not deny that there will be market coordination and you will not be able to eliminate it from the system. I cannot take seriously to those who say the market is not going to participate in education.*
What is the market? It is a specific mode of coordination where there is competition: for resources, for a price, for whatever you want, and that is a way of coordination. That [agent] was over-dimensioned . . . and this yielded extreme situations, having damaging consequences for students, families, and the discrediting of a way of coordination. (P10)

The findings show that the dominant position of the market has caused the serious inefficiencies that take part in the debate concerning higher education nowadays. These unsolved issues, and the current weaknesses in existing regulatory structures, discussed in detail in Chapter 8, section 8.2.3, have resulted in a higher education agenda with a domestically-focused and contingency-oriented scope. In this respect, a senior researcher who has examined the Chilean higher education dynamics argued:

The types of problem that our system deals with are strictly national . . . What are the future scenarios? For the next fifty years in Latin America: ninety-eight per cent of its universities will remain strictly nationally and locally focused; concentrated on the national framework; trying to identify themselves with the nation-state. (P15)

The last theoretical foundation recognises the importance of globalisation forces, which are increasingly impacting on the nation-state and the local boundaries. In this scenario, Chile has to deal with the domestic constraints but also with the challenges that arise from global trends. Participants saw these new external forces as something unavoidable, but at the same time, of high relevance to a society that is making efforts to create a new knowledge-based economic model as the following comment illustrated:

If we are a society where knowledge and its manipulation and the creation of innovation are the main factors of wealth, then, it is necessary a certain radar that pays particular attention to what is happening . . . in the different fields in which is possible to participate in conversations to develop own capacities. (P10)

This perception was echoed by another participant who postulated that:

The world will be just one reality. There is no chance of imagining – from a sociological, economic and academic perspective –, that . . . the development of higher education is a national, or even, a regional issue. It is a global issue. No ‘communicating vessels’ among different countries and regions mean no future for teaching, research, the substantive higher education tasks, in the coming years. (P16)

It is with such a belief that this participant described internationalisation as:

. . . a fact. Unless unforeseen circumstances happen, it is an ongoing process, increasingly dynamic, increasingly intense, increasingly massive. A country that is not involved in this process, I do not know what it can do. It is difficult. Some nations have taken the lead [in this process], and they are turning it into an opportunity. (P10)

However, internationalisation might entail a certain search for harmonisation of external and internal dynamics, as the same participant further added:

There is a delicate balance in what is yours, your identity, the local and what is the outside wave, that is a new ‘cleavage’ that occurs in reality, and it involves
a tension to solve. It is very threatening for all those who feel like a unit . . . because you finally lose your specificity, your identity and the ‘universal’ can come from somewhere and maybe it is not making sense to you . . . However, it is necessary to stay in tune . . . (P10)

Overall, the case study provides empirical evidence that the so-called theoretical foundations of the conceptual framework for quality in international higher education are found in the Chilean system. First, data shows the complexities that Chilean higher education face as a social and systemic structure. Second, some lines of evidence suggest that the sector has been exposed to the rise of market forces. Finally, data reveals that the Chilean higher education system is subjected to globalisation demands that have compelled the actors to adopt an approach. The three components outline a particular scenario, so, a particular understanding of quality in international higher education, and the ways of operationalising it, which the next section will examine.

9.3 Processes: understanding international higher education quality in Chile

The previous section describes the macro-elements that shape quality in international higher education in the case study context. This section concentrates on the processes level (Figure 6.1). As Chapter 8 builds an understanding of quality and internationalisation in Chile, herein, attention is paid to their interplay: quality in international higher education. Data extracted from the interviews have shown that quality and internationalisation in Chilean higher education align with the general conceptualisations provided in subsection 6.2.2 but behind them lies a complex, multilevel and multidimensional space. These complexities are also found in the sub-process of quality in international higher education as suggested by the comment below:

When I proposed a complex, multilevel and multidimensional concept of internationalisation, I understand that this would also apply to an international higher education quality process. (P06)

Thereby, when reflecting on quality in international higher education, the interviewees mentioned various features that relate to this complex, multidimensional and multilevel understanding.

9.3.1 Excellence in international higher education

Chapter 8, section 8.4.1 describes how the idea of ‘excellence’ surrounds the Chilean stakeholders’ notion of quality in higher education. The concept under inquiry in this chapter is a sub-product of the general process of quality, so, it was unsurprising that one of the participants touched upon the search for excellence in internationalisation to refer to quality in international higher education:

I think of excellence in internationalisation. What does it mean in concrete terms? It would relate [the concept] to an institution that can integrate the international scope into its work, from a strategic development perspective and also from a perspective of an element that is essential for the teaching function. (P14)
9.3.2 Transformation through a significative experience

Quality is also gauged by the providers’ capacity to play a transformative role throughout the core higher education functions (Chapter 8, section 8.4.2). This theme was mentioned by a respondent when discussing international higher education quality in the sense of 'significative experiences' for students and staff:

. . . International higher education quality? I would say significant experiences for students and faculty regarding ascribing to the values and practices of the modern university. In that sense, as far as it happens, this relationship is of quality. (P13)

9.3.3 An integral process overall

The same opinions regarding higher education quality (Chapter 8, sections 8.4.3 and 8.4.4), were voiced when participants alluded to quality in international higher education: it is necessary to draw on an operational interpretation of excellence. Talking about this need, one respondent paid attention to the internationalisation process, and to what extent an institution is able to deal with this process from a transversal and strategic perspective:

Internationalisation should be a transversal axis in a strategic sense, quality might be assessed by the ability to develop a characteristic of excellence at every level. Perhaps a limited development at the first stage, for example, by establishing that at the undergraduate level the emphasis will be placed only on mobility, but there are certain standards on student support, language courses and other areas.

In research, the focus could be only on publications, but there are also certain standards concerning what a proper joint publication is: will it look just for a specific or permanent collaboration? In the area of linkages with society . . . it would be tremendously valuable to observe excellence regarding the presence that an international element can have within the context in which the university moves. (P14)

Based on this perception, one might infer that quality in international higher education involves each of the higher education functions, and internationalisation purposes may be defined for each of them.

Another element that emerged from the respondents relates to the property of quality in international higher education of being measurable by certain parameters. This property arose when, for example, one of the stakeholders commented on the need to take internationalisation “seriously” (P16), and the form of assessing this importance might be by defining certain "quality standards or criteria" (P16) such as:

How many and what credentials do the international faculty have? Second, the number of students who have completed formal academic training of at least one semester somewhere else in the world, and how many have come to the own university. Third, how much joint research with research teams from other countries the institution develops? The fourth indicator would be the freedom of entry and brain circulation from one place to another and without those restrictions that we have today. (P16)
The majority of the proposed parameters concur with those used to build the internationalisation index (see Appendix A for a detailed explanation), which serves as a basis to select twenty countries that are high performing in internationalisation.

Other responses to the question about quality in international higher education included the reference to the external accreditation process (P02, P03, P15). For example, one interviewee said:

*The bridges, in my opinion, are quality assurance and accreditation because it has become increasingly internationalised and then, it is the mechanism that, in an internationalised way and with international criteria, is looking at higher education at the national level.* (P15)

The critical role that the management structures play in the strategic development of internationalisation was another theme that emerged from the data. The stages of planning, implementing, monitoring and improving require professional experience and capacity building in this area. Talking about this issue, a participant went on to say:

*If internationalisation considers and progresses towards an organic and balanced way in all those indicators . . . in all those processes that are implemented at the institutional management level to enable institutions to be capable of integrating into global, regional, continental international higher education networks . . . that would be my concept of international higher education quality.* (P6)

On the whole, as a sub-product of quality in higher education, all the properties of this general concept were also attributed to quality in international higher education. In other words, the properties of quality in higher education permeate the subordinate process. Therefore, this provides an empirical basis for the theoretical assumption made in Chapter 6 that quality in international higher education is a compound concept which combines two primary processes: quality and internationalisation.

### 9.4 Practices: a framework for quality in international higher education in Chile

#### 9.4.1 Supra-regional scale

The stakeholders, participants in this study, saw Chile as an open country, a signatory of various trade agreements with higher education as an essential component, and a full member of large supranational organisations (Chapter 8, section 8.2.1). The OECD was widely mentioned in terms of its influence on benchmarking and policy direction in Chilean higher education. As articulated in Chapter 3, the Chilean government has requested for the OECD and the World Bank to conduct reviews and provide recommendations on several areas of higher education policy. However, the respondents tended to perceive that the current GDP per capita detracts from the national efforts to perform at an OECD average level, so, the sentiment that resonated was that there is a long path ahead to arrive at higher performance level in the field.

While the OECD has an impact on national policy, the international network INQAAHE exerts an influence on the quality assurance agencies. Two institutions of the National System for Quality Assurance are on the list of those that comply with the INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice (INQAAHE, 2018): the National Accreditation Commission (CNA), and the National Council for Education (CNED). On the other hand, some private accreditation agencies
in Chile are full members of INQAAHE. Likewise, the Inter-University Centre for Development (CINDA), a non-governmental agency that promotes the quality assurance debate in Chile and Latin America broadly.

At the South American level, Chile participates in the trade bloc MERCOSUR as an associated country. It is in operation in MERCOSUR, the Regional Accreditation System for University Programmes (ARCUSUR System), system in which the national accreditation bodies from Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Chile organise as a network (RANA) that adopts decisions on regional accreditation of programmes in specific fields (MERCOSUR, 2018). In accordance with information displayed by the CNA, accredited undergraduate programmes in nursing, engineering, medicine, dentistry and veterinary science can express their interest in this regional accreditation (CNA, 2018c).

Based on official data from the MERCOSUR’s website, the number of Chilean universities that have decided to participate in the ARCUSUR system with a few programmes is very low11. Five Chilean programmes account for the accredited status (ARCUSUR, 2018). As part of the ARCUSUR system, the MARCA programme supports regional academic mobility among the certified programmes (MARCA, 2018). One respondent (P12) further added another initiative that fosters mobility: the Pablo Neruda programme, which concentrates on graduate programmes in some areas as part of the Ibero-American Knowledge Space (EIC).

There appear to be a number of academic factors inhibiting the international aspirations of Chilean higher education, as this participant pointed out:

> Regarding the programmes' duration, our situation is not very competitive. It is necessary to study a six-year [programme] to become an engineer in circumstances that, for example, in Europe or the United States [the expected length of study] is three or four [years]. We are updating our teaching practices, moving from a passive approach to a more active student-centred. We are catching up on that. (P19)

The interviewees saw another influential factor in the various world and regional university rankings. As discussed in Chapter 3, only two Chilean universities rank within the top-500 in the world (ARWU, 2018). However, when concentrating on Latin America, there are at least fifteen Chilean Universities among the top-100, including the Pontifical Catholic University that ranks first in the region (QS, 2018). There was a perception that these universities are “worried about the internationalisation phenomenon on a more consistent basis” (P15), so, one may see them working on improving their ranking position.

Although some Chilean universities have a high academic reputation in the region, the participant thought that:

> Although of course there is university participation, a certain movement, Chile has been, somewhat, disconnected from Latin America in terms of university collaboration. In recent years, what we have observed is that Chile is a higher education destination for students from neighbouring countries. However, regional international cooperation is a neglected area . . . there has not been a

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11 Eight universities including one state-owned (University of Chile), six traditional private (University Austral of Chile, University of Concepción, Catholic University of Temuco, Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaiso, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile and Catholic University of Santísima Concepción), and one private (University Mayor).
strong tendency, a rather consistent link to other [neighbouring] countries. (P06)

Conversely,

This approach exits to North America, Europe, some universities are even looking at Asia. Towards Latin America, there is a 'utilitarian' approach more than a strategic perspective, for example, to the research topics that are specific to our territory. (P14)

Recognition was given to the influence on the national higher education agenda of external forces. For one participant, these constraints prompt every level to look at international practice and parameters:

By those global trends, if we want to be more international, we have to work with more international standards and, Chile, at the moment, is not doing that. If a higher education institution wants to have a position, a status that makes it feel validated. If we do not do that, if we do not work on issues of quality and accreditation, we are lost. (P05)

Overall, international and regional movements have an impact on the process of quality in international higher education in Chile. However, the responses to these movements are varied and contingent upon the strategic views of the different governance levels. The question that arises, then, is how are the sector’s levels dealing with external dynamics? The next sections will address this question by analysing the different responses at the macro (government), intermediate (agencies) and micro (higher education institutions) levels.

9.4.2 National-local scale

9.4.2.1 Macro-level

In accordance with the framework for quality in international higher education (revised version in Chapter 7), the starting point of the quality cycle – planning phase (policy and strategy) – is the definition of the national strategy for higher education and innovation at the national level. Since July 2016 to early 2018, the public debate in Chile was concentrated on the new Law on Higher Education, which aimed at profound changes in the sector. However, as some participants pointed out, the reform’s emphasis was placed on the inefficiencies that emerged from the post-1980s’ deregulated expansion. The comments below illustrate this perception regarding the legislation:

The definition of quality has to be as exhaustive as possible regarding all those aspects that should be involved in the reform on higher education. I would not forget about internationalisation that often remains relegated to second place. (P06)

However,

The higher education reform has not drawn on a conceptualisation of quality but rather on other factors, such as, improved coverage, higher education that expands and gives more opportunities . . . (P03)
Furthermore,

*In the reform, which is enormous, internationalisation does not appear. It is not even in the headlines. There have been comments on this issue, that this is a topic that is coming and how we are not going to have it. If we manage to do something, this will last thirty years. It is because we are in these fights that prevent a long-term vision.* (P10)

Given the reform’s focus, a national strategy for international higher education remains to be done. Although interest and effort have been placed on this instrument by past government administrations, and previous studies have suggested delineating this statement, "it has not been taken as state policy" (P12). When asked about the relevance of this type of instruments to the different levels, the majority of respondents saw it within a range from relevant to highly relevant. However, just some of them thought that its development was feasible or highly feasible under the existing contextual conditions.

The lack of coordination among the governmental agencies operating at the macro-level was another element that emerged from the data. This issue was seen as a factor that detracts from the efforts towards convergence of views and synergic actions for international higher education. Talking about this condition, a representative of a government body indicated:

*More importance is given to internationalisation by the institutions rather than the Ministry, because of the Ministry's priorities at the moment in higher education.* (P08)

This view was echoed by another participant who postulated that:

*It was difficult for us to understand this... There was a period in which we often went to the Ministry to meet someone, to present in what we were working, and we saw that the approach was a little different.* (P07)

When concentrating on the doing phase (operation) at the macro-level, developments are found in instruments such as international agreements, operational information and engaging in networks. For example, in stating its international higher education’s purposes, the Chilean higher education authority declares:

*The Division of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education has set as a priority area of its international work to move towards greater flexibility of degree recognition considering that the evaluation and accreditation have contributed to the quality improvement and assurance of programmes in Latin American higher education* (MINEDUC, 2018)

In alignment with these purposes, the higher education authority reports mutual recognition agreements already in force with Argentina and Ecuador. Furthermore, negotiations are taking place concerning recognition with Spain, the United Kingdom, Colombia and Mexico (MINEDUC, 2018).

Engaging in networks involves active participation in regional initiatives that include, but are not limited to, the MERCOSUR and the Ibero-American Knowledge Space (EIC). Regarding operational information, the Chilean government, together with a group of twenty-one higher education institutions have put into operation a website called ‘LearnChile.cl’, which provide information on the academic offer to prospective international students.
considering Chile as the destination country for their studies (MINREL, 2018). Nonetheless, it can be argued that as just a little more than ten per cent of the Chilean higher education institutions has joined the system, LeanChile offers a limited overview. There is no information about the overall sector, the higher education authority or the Chilean quality assurance system, which is central to the decision-making process of the students.

The framework for quality in international higher education consists of other operational instruments such as the code of practice and the international providers’ register, but the Chilean stakeholders, participants in this study, were not familiar with this type of mechanisms, and their mode of operation. This might explain that less than half of participants considered these instruments within a range from relevant to highly relevant. The same was observed regarding their feasibility, which the majority perceived as moderate.

Concerning the checking phase (monitoring) at the macro-level, the Chilean Higher Education Information System (SIES) accounts for some pieces of information on the situation of the international students in Chile (SIES, 2017a). On the other hand, there is a ‘state of the art’ repository on the higher education’s improvement needs: national commissions, international reviews and previous research. Almost all respondents regarded monitoring information relevant or highly relevant to the quality process while the feasibility of having that information fell within a range from moderate to high.

Although much information on the current situation exists, there was a profound sense of:

*Chile lacks some arrangement that allows it a long-term strategic design, where the actors converge, where they can fully represent the spirit of higher education and look ahead. Chile does not have that, which makes very difficult to progress looking at the trends, opportunities and threats that come from outside, and we are full of that.* (P10)

This condition has implications for the improvement plans: they do not look at a desirable long-term horizon. Therefore, even though the majority of participant considered the improvement plan relevant to highly relevant, less than half thought that outlining and implementing it, at the macro-level, was feasible in the current capacity of the country.

### 9.4.2.2 Intermediate level

When assessing the applicability of the framework for quality in international higher education at the intermediate level, the data is relatively vague and imprecise regarding the identification of central bodies to the quality process, and the extent of the cycle. The bodies that the participant saw as playing a role in this level are the following:

- The Accreditation National Commission (CNA) in its role of assuring quality in higher education,
- ProChile in its role of promoting the Chilean education services abroad,
- The National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT) in its role of supporting innovation and research,
- The Council of Rectors (CRUCH), which groups together the most traditional universities and,
Other intermediate agencies to a less degree.

In evaluating the extent to which the mentioned bodies report international higher education activity in their work, the data collected from the interviews is complemented by desk research. The results show that there is no evidence of long-term strategies, monitoring information or improvement plans at this level. Consequently, compared with the model that serves as the basis for this evaluation (Chapter 7): some developments are found for the second phase; the first, third and fourth phases of the quality cycle, at the intermediate level, are not performing.

In a similar way to the macro level, the instruments that reveal more development are international agreements, operational information and networks. When inquired about them, the majority of stakeholders agreed in the view that operational information was the most relevant to the quality process, followed by international agreements and networks. Participants thought that international agreements “might be important but that depends on how the agreement is made” (P10), which “must be associated with quality” (P01). This perception concurs with the experts’ opinion reported in Chapter 7. Regarding engaging in networks, the respondents considered that these have to be a real contribution to quality, going beyond “the group of friends” (P01). The prevailing view among the stakeholders was that the feasibility of these instruments ranged from feasible to highly feasible.

The work of the CNA provides an example of these developments. The following quote extracted from the official website of this national body remarks upon the 2017’s internationalisation priorities:

*Concerning international relations, the CNA has consolidated its work at three levels: international quality networks, bilateral level, and support to the Ministry of Education and other public agencies . . . In the development of bilateral work, primarily active during 2017, substantial work was carried out with similar agencies, in which the CNA shared its experience through internships and joint work visits.* (CNA, 2018d)

The CNA’s official website also remarks upon the participation in international networks (CNA, 2018b). Among these are the Network of National Accreditation Agencies (RANA) in the MERCOSUR, and the system ARCUSUR; the Latin American Network of Higher Education Accreditation Agencies (RIACES); the Network of Administrators of Ibero-American Universities (RAUI), and the international network INQAAHE.

Another interesting example is provided by the Council of Rectors, which reports relevant activity through its international working area:

*At the international level, the Council of Rectors promotes strengthened links with universities or international organisations, coordination with public bodies related to foreign affairs and the insertion of the Council in international higher education networks.*

*This area seeks to strengthen and develop the links that lead to a growing academic collaboration with peers at the highest level, in the areas of higher education, undergraduate, research, postgraduate and innovation policy, among others.* (CRUCH, 2018)
In this context, the CRUCH reports international links with thirteen countries in Europe, North, Latin America and Australia. This council has become an active agent in the promotion of international higher education among its twenty-seven members and, also, more broadly. Additionally, this body contributes to the internationalisation debate and sharing best practice by organising an annual conference on developments in this topic in Chile.

With regard to other operational instruments proposed by the framework for quality in international higher education like the international higher education standards, the guidelines for cross-border provision and the qualification framework, it can be assured that there is no a Chilean version of them, but much has been debated about the introduction of a national qualification framework. When inquiring Chilean stakeholders about it, a significant majority considered them as relevant or highly relevant. However, when they referred to their feasibility just the guidelines for cross-border provision were seen as viable or highly viable while both the international higher education standards and the qualification framework perceived roughly as moderately viable. The next quotes provide a sense of the difficulties that surround this last tool:

The problem is that the qualification framework understood as an instrument of regulation, without the previous work of installing it, of socialising it among the actors, will imply to declare something that anyone will be able to meet... Then, at the beginning it can be basic, that is, an instrument for legibility and transparency of degrees, but here there is an idea of transforming it into the 'vade mecum' that the institutions will have to receive. Then, it is complicated, but it is vital. (P10)

There is a major issue in Chile. There are two cultural traditions in the degree system, which are not compatible. It is not possible to have a 'licenciatura', master and a doctoral degree, because the master’s degree makes sense when there is a bachelor. Bachelor and master's degree work well. 'licenciatura' and master's degree work bad, are overlapped everywhere. Therefore, as long as it remains unclear whether we are going to have bachelor or 'licenciatura' with a professional title, the degree system will not solve the fundamental problem. (P13)

Overall, one might argue that the lack of international higher education policy at the macro-level has inhibited coordinated plans at the intermediate level. From the abovementioned elements, it is asserted that each intermediate actor has built upon international higher education based on the particular meaning given to the process. Data also highlights the intermediate agencies' aspirations of improved coordination to guarantee better outcomes, for instance, those accounted for the joint work CRUCH-ProChile (P7, P8), but achieving this is contingent upon voluntarism of each part. The higher education reform has considered some changes in the institutions at the macro-level, so, it is expected that the new Under-Secretariat of Higher Education may cover the missing coordinating role.

9.4.2.3 Micro-level

When assessing the applicability of the framework for quality in international higher education at the micro-level, an important factor that emerged from the interviews is the high heterogeneity of quality in Chilean higher education. Having explored this perception, another segment of the interviews inquired about the stakeholders’ opinions on the development level of international higher education. The issue that surfaced from the responses was the
coexistence of “different levels and degrees between institutions” which makes the process development “very heterogeneous” (P02). Reinforcing this view, another respondent said:

It is fundamentally heterogeneous, that means the institutional heterogeneity that we see in the Chilean higher education system reflects on the development level of internal and external internationalisation policies. (P06)

Then, international higher education in Chile “is an area wherein there is a continuous activity, in which institutions participate with very different degrees and intensities” (P15). “Some institutions have a vision and a strategy quite high or very high, and there are others that are lagging behind” (P03). In the light of the interviews’ data, the differences are predominantly associated with the type of institution: university or non-university sector; the focus: teaching or research, and the location: metropolitan or regional area. Based on these categories, the differences describe as follows:

- **The university versus non-university sector.** Most internationalisation developments are found in the university sector, in the metropolitan region. "The internationalisation experience of the higher education institutions in Chile is very different. On the one hand, the Pontifical Catholic University, undoubtedly, is far the most internationalised university of the system, and on the other hand, there are regional universities, even in Santiago, private, professional Institutes, vocational centres that have nothing." (P04). Therefore, “the truth is that it is quite irregular, it is not very similar in various instances.” (P19), that is, universities in all their types and the non-university providers.

- **A focus on research versus teaching.** Given the nature of their activity, internationalisation is frequently associated with the research universities, or as they are usually called in Chile: ‘complex’ universities. “When comparing research universities with teaching universities in the Chilean context, there is an abyss” (P05). This difference might be explained because "some of the more complex universities that have higher research levels, probably, have more incentives and more need for getting involved in these more international networks and transform their internal management” (P06). Therefore, as this participant further added: “this is important for the research universities . . . alternatively, for those that want to enter into the ‘more complex' club” (P15).

- **The metropolitan versus regional area:** As highlighted above under the category ‘university versus non-university sector’, there are differences between both groups of providers, but also, between those institutions located in the metropolitan and regional area. “If one leaves the metropolitan region and goes to regions the truth is that [internationalisation] is low” (P14). The regional “universities receive mainly local students from their region, from their province. Therefore, the incentives and need for internationalisation may be less important to them, which does not mean that a university can ignore the internationalisation mission” (P06).

The participants, additionally, described differences within a higher education institution concerning levels, areas and disciplines:

- **Graduate versus undergraduate programmes:** This category links to the second category mentioned above: ‘focus on research versus teaching’. “Fundamentally, the doctoral programmes in Chile have a certain internationalisation level that is far superior from the rest of the universities, and the rest of the university as well. In that sense, there is a concentration, so to speak, in doctoral programmes, which do have a
high level. The exchange that is generated by them, joint research, the introduction of complex equipment, all of that has generated a certain movement in these programmes” (P01).

Areas and disciplines. Some areas have a more international approach, so, “it is starting to happen at the faculty level rather than centrally organised” (P15). “Some areas see more opportunities, have more collaboration, interact much more, and that reflects on higher academic mobility, that, in the end, is one of the consequences, but not the important . . . some faculties have a clearer idea than others that are some steps behind” (P03).

Hence, as heterogeneity in higher education reproduces vertically and horizontally, it is complex to talk about a general development level. This difficulty might explain why the participants placed the internationalisation level of Chilean higher education within a wide range from very low to moderate. In commenting on the varied scenarios, one participant said:

The Catholic University, the University of Chile are at a moderate level. The second quality line of our universities is moderate-low. This second line includes the University of Concepcion, the Catholic University of Valparaiso, the University Austral, probably the USACH, one or two more. The generality of Chilean universities is that they are lacking. (P16)

Another participant mentioned the budget constraints, which may have implications for the internationalisation developments:

It places at a very early stage of development, so, it is not high. It must range from low to moderate. Of course, it has occurred for several years, and it is increasing, but I study at a university which is one of the best, and the level is just low. The links that exists with institutions in other countries are limited, and sometimes there is a link, but there are not enough resources to support, for example, student mobility or to the researchers to go abroad. Then, we have also that difficulty and it cannot be so high, because it has limitations. (P20)

Although some research universities stand out in internationalisation from the rest of providers in the local context, it is also true that comparatively with “foreign universities, in Europe or even in Australia, the level is moderate or even low” (P05), but in any case, “higher than many other Latin American countries” (P04). In this scenario, assessing the process of quality in international higher education at the micro level from a cyclical perspective entails substantial complexity and would require a case-by-case review. One could expect that the phases of the international higher education quality cycle and the instruments operating in each of them become visible in institutions such as the Catholic University of Chile or the University of Chile as this comment described:

If you ask me for the Catholic University and others, I would say [each of the framework’s instruments] is highly feasible, but if you ask me for other universities, all could be unfeasible. (P03)

However, the majority of institutions account for developments in the ‘doing’ phase through instruments such as international agreements and engaging in networks.
9.4.3 Support structures

Quality in international higher education is seen as a process that can predict and manage success in internationalisation by integrating several components: supra-regional and national local scale; governance levels; phases; instruments and actors. As discussed in previous sections, the stakeholders’ interviews remarked upon the high heterogeneity of Chilean higher education, which seems to be an inhibiting factor of systemic developments as the following quote illustrates:

When the country promotes academic programmes, the programme alone is not enough. An integral academic offer that considers all the associated services promotes the national quality. [However,] a more refined [academic] offer is lacking in comparison with Australia, France or other countries where it does occur. They prepare a complete plan: from the academic to the associated services. You arrive at the country, and you are provided with insurances; options for accommodation; a complete programme prepared for you.

The service is not just going to the classroom and, in that sense, we are lacking, because the universities, in general, act in an autonomous way and, at the same time, there are many differences. Some are offering an academic programme, and that is all, but others, are more aware of the need for offering [support] and solving problems, because when the student comes and has a good programme, but there is no pastoral care, the academic offer ceases to be of quality. (P07)

In the light of the above, importance is attached to those structures that provide support for the international students’ transition to a new environment and help to balance the different realities with which the users of international higher education have to deal when choosing Chile as a destination country. These different realities become more visible when students, academics and others arrive at the country for the purpose of studying, researching, collaborating, among others activities and may be a potential source of stress for them. In Chapter 7, some experts noted it is difficult to understand a cycle of international higher education quality without structures that give support to its operation. The findings at this stage also report a strong relationship between quality and support structures and provides insights into their operationalisation in the Chilean context. The review of each that follows sheds light upon these elements.

9.4.3.1 Regulatory framework

The findings in section 9.4.2 show that proper recognition has not been given to international higher education in the new Law on Higher Education. However, the law touches upon some elements that link to the features of a framework for quality in international higher education discussed in chapters 6 and 7. The new legislation introduces changes to the existing quality assurance arrangement and the higher education’s governance structure. It creates a strengthened higher education body, which will work on the definition and implementation of a national qualification framework.

Although criticisms were expressed about the impacts of the new law on the system’s quality and also regarding the feasibility of a national qualification framework, it is expected that these transformations may contribute, to some extent, to enhancing the existing situation. As the reform addresses a number of aspects leading to inefficiencies in the current
mechanism, further analysis should shed light on the implications for quality in international higher education.

9.4.3.2 Funding schemes

Three broad themes emerged from the interviews regarding the funding schemes. First, some higher education institutions have a limited capacity to cope with the funding requirements for the implementation of international higher education:

The cost of sending a student abroad or sending an academic to do an internship is very high. Therefore, the resources that we have as higher education institutions, even if public funds complement them, are still limited. (P13)

Second, government programmes such as Becas-Chile, CONICYT, MECESUP, Learn-Chile and others are seen as a contribution to international higher education development, as the following quotes illustrate:

Becas-Chile has not been less important . . . Many grantees come back with an international network, and one can notice it . . . Some activities are developed from there: the researcher who was the supervisor comes to visit, they begin to appear and do things. (P11)

CONICYT has had a role in this . . . scholarships allow international students to study doctoral programmes in Chile. Moreover, that generates in the medium and long-term an important link, an openness, because the student who is usually from the Latin American region, finally returns to his/her country and inserts in universities and keeps on touch. (P14)

When thinking at the institutional level, the MECESUP programme has promoted international experts’ visits; . . . [academic] exchanges in that sense, so, in some way, it has encouraged . . . the academics and the universities, as structures, to generate international linkages (P14)

Finally, the undergraduate level needs for further financial support, and the existing programmes require for a strengthen approach, as this interviewee described:

There is a need for funding schemes: we do have Becas-Chile that allows pursuing postgraduate studies, but at the earlier levels, there is no support. There is no Erasmus in Chile or Latin America that supports a funding line for student mobility . . . Moreover, the public budget concentrated on science and technology in Chile, that comes primarily from CONICYT, . . . It is not a significant fund, as one can see in Europe which allows undertaking projects that are truly international. It has to do with the reality of every continent, of every country, but without a doubt, this is an index, an issue that delays us. (P19)

9.4.3.3 Language support

The findings discussed in Chapter 8, section 8.2.1 remarks upon the limited capacity of the Chilean higher education community to communicate in a second language. This is perceived
as an inhibiting factor in the internationalisation efforts at both at home and cross-border levels. One respondent provided interesting insights into this weakness:

There is a factor that is very important and highly influential, which is the quality of foreign languages knowledge that, in general, the academic community has: the faculty, the university government, the students. One can make the best of the internationalisation efforts, but if the academic body, the academic units or faculties’ authorities, the managers or the students do not speak English, for example, it will be quite difficult to have that freedom of linking to different instances worldwide, if you cannot yield that basic communication. (P03)

9.4.3.4 Human resources

Another element that emerged from the data was the need for professionalising the academic and administrative staff involved in the internationalisation landscape. For example, one respondent saw in the “lack of professionalism” (P15) a potential inhibiting factor. However,

There is already a group of people who are specialising in management. You can see people in all the universities. You begin to discover people who are specialising and who are engaging in international networks, becoming managers in this matter. (P15)

As articulated in Chapter 7, section 7.5.3, educating the staff involves raising awareness of multicultural factors: socio-political, educational, personal, and installing a quality culture through shared purposes. Talking about this element, an interviewee went on to say:

[Quality] is not just an academy matter but institutional, of everybody: if I work in remuneration and I do not do my work, I will affect the whole; if I work doing the cleaning, I will affect the whole. People are becoming aware of this issue of doing things well. Some people say: ‘doing things of quality’, no, you have to do your work, you have to meet certain standards, that is what this is about . . . (P17)

Therefore, a quality culture among the human resource involved in international higher education help to support its installation.

9.4.3.5 Information and communication technology

The participants expressed a favourable view on the development of information and communication technology in Chile. Recognition was given to the existing installed capacity in this area, which facilitates online interactions with the rest of the world. As one participant put it:

In Chile, the connectivity is extraordinary, compared to other countries, in which you try to connect to the Internet, or you have to pay to connect at a decent speed and, here, you do it at a coffee shop. I think it has contributed to a more global, more international approach, especially among youth people. Young people live, now, in a global world, more than us. (P11)
Overall, the themes of priorities, language and limited resources recurred throughout the data from the interviews as significant factors hindering the international higher education quality process. The findings remark upon the fact that policy priorities have been concentrated on regulating for-profit practices in higher education alongside implementing initiatives to improve equity and access. Free tuition for students in the lowest income quintiles is an example of this policy emphasis. The findings also show that, as the higher education agenda has been focused on these local demands, the inclusion of an international dimension in the core higher education functions remains instead as a discursive resource or future desire.

Based on the interviewees’ perceptions, capacity building in international higher education quality requests the allocation of resources, both human capital and public funds, that are found limited in an emerging country such as Chile. Nevertheless, many initiatives are currently in place, so adopting a more strategic and coordinated approach on the internationalisation landscape might enhance their efficiency and impact.

9.5 Summary

Chapter 9 assesses the applicability of the framework for quality in international higher education using the case study of Chile. With regards to the first building block of the research model, the so-called foundations, it is demonstrated that in Chile there is no coherent system following a unified purpose. In addition, the market forces dominate academic prerogatives/interests and government policies. Finally, there is evidence to assert that external global trends do not have the expected impact on the national system.

Concerning the level of understanding of the conceptual framework, it is shown that, in Chile, there is at least a basic understanding of quality in international higher education as a process and, therefore, it can be planned and managed. This understanding, however, is not to be found in all stakeholder groups alike, yet it is especially prevalent among staff working in international offices.

Regarding the level of operation of the model, the findings reveal existing and potential developments at the macro, intermediate and micro levels alongside the support structures. At the macro level, international agreements, engagement in international networks (e.g. Mercosur) and some operational information (e.g. statistics regarding mobility schemes) can be found. However, policy and strategy, monitoring and improvement levels are found to a limited extent. At the intermediate level, the same level of development is revealed. At the micro level, international agreements, engagement in international networks and operational information are common mechanisms associated with internationalisation. Nonetheless, these instruments do not necessarily connect to a purpose of quality (e.g. international agreements used for rhetorical or marketing purposes to attract students).

Concerning the support structures, quality assurance developments, some funding schemes, professional staff training, a culture of quality, technological platforms and connectivity are found. However, the findings of this research demonstrate that much needs to be done in terms of quality improvement, migration policy, international student protection, coordination between agencies, second language developments, intercultural awareness and others.

Even though some capacity has been installed, the insights into quality in international higher education reveal a very early stage of maturity with just one of the phases partially functioning. The findings also highlight a lack of connection between significance given to the
process under inquiry across and within the analysed levels. Therefore, much needs to be done to progress to a higher performance level in quality in international higher education, particularly concerning policy at the macro-level and coordination of actions among the actors involved. The assessment undertaken in this chapter contributes to approach the third subsidiary research question by providing an empirical basis for the analysis of implications for policy and practice in the next chapter.
Chapter 10: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE AND FURTHER RESEARCH

10.1 Introduction

Chapter 10 concentrates on the future of quality in international higher education by analysing the implication of the research findings for policy, practice and further research. The empirical results presented in Chapter 7 through to 9 are fundamental to this exploration. In Chapter 7, the factors that contribute to explaining success in international higher education are validated and expanded. In Chapters 8 and 9, the applicability of these factors in the context of the case study is assessed. These results are brought together to identify gaps in the area’s development.

This chapter begins by recalling the study’s focus and rationale before summarising the main contributions made to the knowledge of quality in international higher education. In the second segment, the chapter expands on the major implications. In doing so, it argues that the new challenges that come with globalisation exert pressure to act but also offer opportunities to lead a nation to meet its ambitions. These new dynamics call for policy and practice in accordance with the new challenges but also framed by processes of quality.

Based on the framework provided in this study, the chapter suggests recommendations elaborating on each of the dimensions and levels. The insights gained from the research process are complemented by an analysis of the ongoing processes in Chilean higher education. These include, mainly, the regulatory changes, recently introduced, as a contributing variable for the advancement in the field. To conclude, the chapter provides several recommendations for further research work.

10.2 Overview

Emerging to deal with global dynamics, internationalisation has become a significant process in higher education (Cantwell & Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009; van der Wende, 2001). National governments and institutions are progressively investing interest and resources to include specific policy and practice into their frameworks. The aim is to benefit from the opportunities in a contemporary world in which higher education is facing rapid transformation. The changes respond, particularly, to the demand for serving a knowledge-based society in which human capital mobility and interchange are prevalent trends.

Although internationalisation has grown in relevance, its intensity is highly varied across countries. The reasons for the differences are complex and multifactorial and range from territorial to socio-cultural, economic, historical or political. For example, countries such as Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore are developing ambitious plans to become regional education hubs led by territorial rationales. Whereas, for the United Kingdom and Australia, the contribution of international education to the national economy is an important driver (Weerakkody & Jerez, 2018).

Amidst these multiple factors, however, the literature highlights the perceived national and institutional reputation for quality as a driver of the actors’ decision-making (Mazzarol &
Soutar, 2002; Stensaker & Maassen, 2015). This study recognises the importance attached to quality in internationalised contexts. Considering that this area challenges contemporary higher education scholarship, it seeks to gain an understanding of the nature of quality in international higher education in the contemporary global system. With this primary focus, the study suggests three subsidiary research questions and adopts a qualitative, national, case study approach to provide a better analysis of the complexities surrounding such a nature. The analysis constructed so far offers key insights into the research questions, contributing to the knowledge of quality in international higher education. From this basis, the chapter moves on to the implications for policy, practice and future research.

10.3 Contributions of the study to the knowledge of quality in international higher education

The present research examines the nature of quality in international higher education to further propose a framework for its management, based on critical elements drawn from relevant literature and empirical evidence. As a result, this investigation confirms findings of previous studies but, first and foremost, it contributes to research by expanding on several areas that have been paid relatively little attention in existing literature. The main findings of the study are summarised as follows.

10.3.1 A theoretical understanding of quality in international higher education

This study provides a deeper insight into the concept of quality in international higher education. It demonstrates that such a conceptualisation can be built by approaching, in a systematic way, the two elements that come together: quality and internationalisation. Concerning the level of understanding of quality, it is shown that there is a perception of two levels of abstraction wherein quality as ‘excellence’ appears to be the first. However, as an operational interpretation of ‘excellence’ is needed when aiming to manage quality, the second level of abstraction emerges. Another significant finding is that quality is not intuitive hence something has to occur for its development. ‘Something’ means, first of all, perceiving quality in its operational dimension of excellence. An operational understanding makes it more feasible to elaborate on a quality management system through which the abstract aspect of excellence can adopt a functional character. Quality, in the view of the participants in this study, can be planned, operationalised, monitored and can lead to changes if necessary. This conforms with the assertion of theorists in the field of quality management (e.g. Crosby, 1984; Deming, 1986). Therefore, in a second step, quality should be seen as a process that is continuously evolving and improving from its initial state.

As regards internationalisation, the study reveals that, given its intrinsic nature, the higher education sector accounts for international ties according to their origins. There is a long history of higher education activity across borders. However, the intensity of this activity has changed over the last three decades. What might explain the change is the greater dynamism that comes with globalisation. The findings show that international higher education is understood as the operational level of internationalisation. The study also confirms that international higher education is expressed in different forms and emphases are contingent on particular rationales and contexts (Knight, 2012; Yang, 2002). The participants in this study acknowledged that, even though the internationalisation agenda is often concentrated on mobility, particularly student mobility, the forms in which this process manifests are much
broader. However, the extent of internationalisation depends on the state’s and providers’ perspectives on this area.

Having explored the two multidimensional and evolving processes of quality and internationalisation, the study focuses on quality in international higher education. In doing so, it sheds light on the concept by identifying operational dimensions of excellence in international higher education. These include two components: the supra-regional and national-local. In the national-local, quality in international higher education works as a process of continuous improvement at the macro (government), intermediate (agency) and micro (higher education institution) levels. This process has four phases. In the first phase (policy and strategy), the role and objectives of international higher education are planned. In the second phase (operation), strategic actions are implemented. In the third phase (monitoring), the performed actions are monitored. In the fourth phase (improvement), decisions are made on the basis of the monitoring results. Instruments and actors are identified for every phase. This view expands other approaches focused predominantly on just one layer (EAIE, 2010; OECD, 1999; van Damme, 2001). This new thinking also shows that there are macro-dynamics shaping the notion of quality in international higher education. Such an analysis, mostly restricted in previous research, is crucial to understanding the context-based nature of the conceptualisation of quality in international higher education.

10.3.2 A framework deployed to interpret quality in international higher education

This study builds an understanding of the key characteristics of a framework for quality in international higher education, giving a response to its first subsidiary question. The empirical findings demonstrate that a basic model of quality as continuous improvement could be regarded as just one of the inputs of a much more complex equation. The complexities that surround quality in international higher education demand an understanding contextualised to higher education and its dynamics. Therefore, the model needs to be expanded and contextualised accordingly.

For the international expert participants in this study, a relevant characteristic of the framework is its multilevel nature. This means, first, that the macro level exerts a top-down influence on the intermediate and micro levels. Second, the intermediate and micro levels exert agency to influence the upper levels. Consequently, a model centred solely at the macro level offers a limited representation compared to the adoption of a model consisting of more levels of analysis. The study adds another characteristic linked to the hard and soft structures that back up the general process of quality. The autonomy of higher education institutions highlights, for example, the need to support the strategy through incentives in the form of funding schemes. Likewise, ad-hoc regulation is needed, particularly in term of quality assurance mechanisms, giving the governance structures the capacity to act against failing providers. The protection of the reputation for quality is an essential element here.

Furthermore, this study provides insights into the methods/techniques that can be used by a higher education system to implement a framework for quality responding to its second subsidiary question. The empirical findings in this respect indicate that each phase of a functional framework involves several instruments and actors that work in close coordination as part of an extended process of continuous improvement. For the international experts, the theoretical relevance of the instruments and actors ranged from moderate to high. However, when they referred to the relevance to a developing country, some contended that it might change over time as per the levels of maturity reached, allocated resources and strategic needs. This perception is further validated by Chilean stakeholders who saw an association between
the perceived operational feasibility of an instrument and the development stage of the country.

In the view of participants, the international higher education strategy of a nation is one of the essential methods. It belongs to the planning phase of the macro-level, but it should not be considered as the starting point of the quality cycle. It assumes that international higher education is the result of a broader vision for the sector. That means one that considers international higher education in its value for the society and the socio-cultural and economic development of a country. This finding suggests that internationalisation has to consider policy not as an end in itself but as a means of contributing to achieving the national and institutional goals, which concurs with previous literature (Knight, 2014; Luijten-Lub, Van der Wende, & Huisman, 2005). Also, the vision on which the strategy is devised requires articulation efforts within higher education as well as the involvement of other related stakeholders. For some participants, given the lack of a systemic structure with a common purpose, the need for articulation represents a factor inhibiting international higher education developments.

### 10.3.3 A comprehensive understanding of quality in international higher education in a bounded higher education system

The empirical findings reveal that the methods used in Chilean higher education are found mostly at the operational stage of the cycle. In this context, many participants expressed concerns about the strategic perspectives, both national and institutional, of internationalisation and the consequences thereof on the future objectives of the country. Among these are the ability to deal with: the challenges of transitioning to a knowledge-based society; increased mobility of individuals; blurred boundaries of the nation-state; cooperation but also competition; and a growing delocalisation. Higher education is seen as a significant player, serving society to meet these challenges. However, neo-liberal currents, more markets and competition confront the idea of a ‘social’ character, as is occurring in other contexts (Lynch, 2006; Marginson, 2011). These conditions may explain why a strategic approach to internationalisation, as a response to the challenges of the country, is missing. These challenges have given rise to inefficiencies and issues that remain unsolved, a reflection of the domestic focus of the agenda.

When considering a framework for quality in international higher education, with the central characteristics shown in this study in addition to the methods/techniques that make it operational, the empirical findings, with an emphasis on traditional tasks, show there is a gap between the ideal scenario and the installed capacity in Chilean higher education. This gap, coupled with the ongoing challenges of the sector, has implications for how bodies at the different levels of governance outline their policy and practice concerning this area. Should Chilean policymakers encourage international higher education framed by processes of quality? While the next section elaborates on this, it can be stated in advance that developments in this regard are fundamental to meet the country’s ambition of being inserted into a globalised world. So, what are the recommendations for policymakers and practitioners to progress on these developments? Section 10.5 answers this question in detail. In doing so, the study responds to the third subsidiary question, having thus explored the nature of quality in international higher education in its multiple dimensions.
10.4 Why international higher education quality matters for policy and practice in Chile

For the participants in this study, Chilean higher education refers back to its history of academic linkages as explaining the fundamental basis of its international connections. However, the character and strength of these connections have changed more recently. Nowadays, Chile is inserted into the dynamism of globalisation that comes with new challenges for the national development. As outlined in Chapter 8, section 8.2.1, the country is still far from the OECD average performance in several ways. Nevertheless, the national ambitions are for knowledge and innovation as the main factors that will lead to the creation of wealth in society. The role that higher education plays here is significant.

This substantial role prompts the sector to enter into international conversations. However, for this to occur, new capacities have to be built. Among these is the strengthening of the reputation for quality which, first and foremost, involves meeting the expectations of society. Such expectations include human capital training, research, and service according to the national needs. For the Chilean stakeholders, when viewed strategically, internationalisation can be instrumental to these challenges. The majority of the participants agreed that internationalisation adds value to the central functions of higher education and, most importantly, helps to enhance graduate skills. Consequently, it is recommended that both the university and non-university sector broaden local perspectives. In other words, there is a demand for universities, professional institutes and vocational centres to take the future work of the student and, above all, the knowledge field beyond the borders of the country.

Why quality in international higher education matters in Chile is a question that gives rise to two central themes. First, international higher education has the potential to assist institutional work. If correctly approached, international higher education may have a positive impact on the students, the institutional community and the society in a broader sense. Second, globalisation has become a ubiquitous phenomenon. The interconnectedness that now exists among individuals is challenging, to some extent, the notions of the global and the local (Robertson, 1995). Thus, the unavoidable impact on local contexts demands strategic actions at every layer of the social structures. In sections 10.4.1 and 10.4.2 to follow, the chapter expands on these elements.

10.4.1 The potential benefits of international higher education

10.4.1.1 Enhanced quality of higher education

In Chapter 4, section 4.5.1, one of the dimensions in the convergence between quality and internationalisation was the quality-adding value of internationalisation. The assumption is that internationalisation can be an instrument that adds value to the quality of higher education by enhancing teaching, research and service (Blight, Davis, & Olsen, 1999; EAIE, 2010; Scott, 1998). Concurrent with this view, for the Chilean stakeholders, the international dimension in higher education correlates with processes of quality enhancement. Some of them saw a positive impact on the quality of everything an institution does, including the primary functions but also governance and management.

When seeking enhanced quality, there is also a search for comparison against international benchmarks of interest for the institutional development. Chapter 8’s section 8.3.1 shows international benchmarking has become a global trend in higher education. Its
widespread use appears associated with its ability to set out differentiated standards in the
critical areas of teaching as well as research and innovation. Thus, the utilisation of
benchmarking tools and the comparison with ‘the best’ can strengthen the quality of particular
areas. So, a higher education institution assessing its performance against an international
parameter is a practice regarded as helpful. An international parameter can give a reference
about what the institution is doing, how it is doing it and how it should do it.

Relevant literature suggests that internationalisation may have a valuable impact on the
transformation of higher education concerning, among others, curricular design and
innovation. Along these lines, participants provided further meaningful insights into the
potential benefits for the educational model in Chile. Some of them thought that, in
educational models embedded in a national reality, there is no proper parameter to learn, to
grow and to expand. Others reflected on the necessary international perspective that the
development of a discipline requires, mainly when seeking a curricular design in tune with the
latest trends and advancements. As explained in section 8.3.1, this is particularly pertinent
when knowledge becomes a relevant factor for the economy and society.

The possibility that internationalisation offers to generate improved links with the
more developed world is regarded as valuable for institutional performance assessment and
improvement. These links can help an institution to progress much faster than if it were
alone. Internationalisation opens the space, then, for a bi-directional process of learning and
transfer. Such a process is particularly relevant for Chilean higher education because what
happens in other contexts also affects it directly. International higher education involves
competition on the one hand, but partnership and collaboration on the other (see Chapter 2,
section 2.3.2). For instance, this collaboration might help the Chilean academic community be
more open to other theories, ways and cultures. It might also help awareness of
conceptualisations that give, in some way, a universal language when Chilean academics share
with academia from other countries.

10.4.1.2 Increased global student awareness

Higher education faces several challenges in a global knowledge economy. Among these is how
to train graduates in the importance of life-long learning, that is, the pursuit of knowledge
throughout life (Yusuf & Evenett, 2003). Furthermore, to train graduates to perform in
multicultural environments (Green, 2012; Robson, 2011). Chapter 2, section 2.3.1 illustrates
how these developments become an area of concern in international higher education by
centring attention on the United States. The U.S. international education strategy (U.S.
Department of Education, 2012) sets out, as one of its primary purposes, training globally
competent students. Along the same lines, the Australian international education strategy aims
at programmes pursuing students’ global awareness (Australian Government, 2016).

This need for professionals with a global profile and international awareness capability
also emerges in the empirical findings. For Chilean stakeholders, international higher education
can provide competitive advantages in this area. Therefore, as indicated in Chapter 8, section
8.3.2, increased global student awareness becomes a rationale to internationalise. For example,
inbound mobility fosters multiculturalism in the classroom. Others perceived positive peer
effects on both domestic and international students. For the local group, this is an opportunity
to recognise and appreciate international diversity and is primarily for those who have no
chance to study abroad. For the students participating in outbound mobility, it allows them to
know other experiences as well as expand disciplinary knowledge. Therefore, from a student-
centred perspective, internationalisation might have a direct impact on his/her transformation
in becoming more harmonised with the requirements of a modern labour market and knowledge-based society.

10.4.1.3 Strengthened national capacity

According to Chapter 2, section 2.3.1, behind the investment in internationalisation, there are multiple rationales. For instance, mobility and international linkages might be vehicles to strengthen competitiveness as well as contribute to economies (Altbach, 2004; Altbach & Knight, 2007). As per the empirical findings, this rationale was also perceived in the Chilean context. Internationalisation might be a means of improving the country’s image. When back in their countries of origin, international students can make known the way of life in Chile which can attract more people in the future. They become 'referees', which reinforces the importance of the reputation for quality. On the other hand, internationalisation might be a means to increase revenue for the country. International students who choose Chile as their destination generate income via the large service chain associated with accommodation, transportation and other facets of sojourning life.

The empirical findings presented above are by no means isolated. Teichler (2005) and others (e.g. Delgado-Márquez, Escudero-Torres, & Hurtado-Torres, 2013; Jibeen & Khan, 2015; Knight, 1997; Oyewole, 2009) have touched upon the internationalisation benefits for a vast range of processes in higher education. However, as in the literature (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Jibeen & Khan, 2015; Jones et al., 2016), some respondents were emphatic in remarking that it provides benefits but also may have pitfalls. The latter will be discussed in the upcoming sections of this chapter.

10.4.2 Globalisation: a pervasive phenomenon prompting to act

Following Chapter 9 section 9.2, in addition to the domestic demands, higher education in Chile, as in the rest of the world, has to deal with the dynamics of globalisation. As these dynamics have spread widely, impacting every nation and local structure, some scholars refer to globalisation as a pervasive phenomenon (Brennan & Teichler, 2008; Egron-Polak, 2015; Knight, 2008). The participants in this study expressed a similar perception. For them, these dynamics are increasingly intensive, massive and ubiquitous. Thus, acting in response is unavoidable and necessary when seeking to become a knowledge-based society. As outlined in Chapter 2, the way in which higher education has responded involves the development of internationalisation strategies. This course of action raises a serious question for the Chilean context: is higher education responding to these dynamics?

The empirical findings reveal that responding to the global dynamics is an ongoing challenge for Chile. A national strategy is needed to inform education areas from international experience. These areas include human resource training and knowledge development. Furthermore, it includes the involvement of academics and students in discussions about the disciplines in the world. Some participants thought that, if such actions do not happen, Chile might lag behind world standards. In other words, given the existing challenges, the respondents feared that if the country does not develop the capacity to enter into these global conversations, its future development might be at risk.

For these Chilean stakeholders, there is an unresolved debate at the national level which is related to the issue that internationalisation must be comprehensively addressed. This means paying attention to the need for international higher education developments framed
by processes of quality. However, as remarked, quality is not something intuitive but must be managed. Thus, this dissertation contends that the search for quality in international higher education prompts the operationalisation of a specific arrangement. This arrangement has to make feasible what is understood by quality. Additionally, it has to allow the coordination of the players involved in the different administrative levels that participate in the process. The next sections will expand on the recommendations for policy and practice that, in this regard, have surfaced from the empirical data.

10.5 Policy and practice: recommendations for the applicability of a framework for quality in international higher education

10.5.1 Basis for the recommendations

The recommendations are based on the empirical findings of this study, particularly those analysed in Chapter 9. They are centred on the installed capacity in Chile for the applicability of a framework for quality in international higher education. The participants in this study provided insights into the relevance and feasibility of every dimension and level of the framework. As per the data, the relevance ranged from moderate to high. While some instruments were perceived feasible, others were considered feasible to a lesser extent. Some instruments revealed current development, particularly those in the doing phase. Bringing all these findings together, which include relevance, feasibility and current development, a fourth element is added, future development (see Figure 10.1). With this new element, the recommendations at the macro and intermediate level of the national-local scale follow a time-based logic.

Given this logic, for the macro and intermediate level, recommendations are divided into short, medium and long-term. The short-term comprises those instruments that exhibit some development and have been perceived as feasible to implement. This categorisation assumes that the capacity built provides a basis for immediate improvement and advancement. On the other hand, the medium-term considers those relevant instruments that Chilean stakeholders saw as moderate feasibility in the scenario pre-reform. It is worth noting that, when conducting the interviews, the Chilean Parliament had recently initiated a discussion about the new Law on Higher Education. In the scenario post-reform and given that those instruments touch upon areas of the law, one could assume that the feasibility may improve. Finally, the long-term includes the instruments that depend either on short and medium-term developments or the international higher education intensity.

For the micro-level, the logic is different. Given the full range of institutional realities, a short, medium and long-term analysis would require a case-by-case exploration. Such analysis, however, falls beyond the scope of this research effort. For some institutions, the instruments of the framework for quality in international higher education are highly feasible but, for others, without appropriate political and economic incentives, any seem possible in the short or even medium and long-term. Therefore, the recommendations remain general in scope. Likewise for the supra-regional scale and support structures. More details regarding the relevance and feasibility of every instrument are provided in Appendix E.
10.5.2 Supra-regional scale

As shown in Figure 7.2, the interaction between the supra-regional and the national-local has bi-directional effects. Forces come from the supra-regional to the national-local and vice versa. To the participants in this study, Chile’s remoteness and small size detracts from its capability to transfer across borders. Such transfer capacity is seen as even more limited in terms of internationalisation which, according to the respondents, places it at a very early stage of development. Among the weaknesses, however, strengths are also identified. The openness of the country to the rest of the world is perceived as positive. Thus, it is essential to stay on that path, being receptive to new ideas and practices. Nevertheless, when responding to global dynamics, contextual particularities matter. Some stakeholders thought that it is important to increase awareness of the limitations that imported knowledge, especially North-South knowledge flows (Blanco-Ramírez & Berger, 2014), have in the local context. What works in other countries does not necessarily meet the Chilean needs.
In alignment with this openness, participants remarked the importance of international benchmarks. For them, relevant and reliable information, allowing cross-country and institutional comparisons, is fundamental for enhancement. It is therefore central that the Chilean Higher Education Authority keeps on delivering adequate data to supranational bodies such as the OECD, UNESCO and others. These organisations have made some advancement in gathering data to explore the influx of international higher education, particularly concerning international students (OECD, 2017a; UNESCO, 2019). Working on a number of critical indicators and international benchmarks can provide a platform to assess the country’s performance in the international/regional scenario and set out the basis for improvement.

Furthermore, international rankings have become increasingly relevant to the national-local context. As explained in Chapter 8, section 8.3.1, they are part of the trends arising with the advent of globalisation and the tendency to follow international rankings has expanded worldwide. Even though there are expressions of criticism, several countries have decided to set up certain universities of excellence, fundamentally ranking-oriented. Excellence here means a ‘world-class university’, a concept that has been used to refer to a highly-ranked, research university able to compete globally with the ‘best of the best’ (Salmi, 2009). In the Chilean context, however, the research universities are far from having the most privileged positions in the international rankings. As suggested in Chapter 8, section 8.4.6, territorial, historical and socio-cultural conditions might explain this situation.

However, in Latin America, several Chilean universities are ranked in the highest positions. Specifically, the Pontifical Catholic University and the University of Chile are positioned first and sixth respectively (QS, 2018). What might be recommended is for policymakers to provide a strategic interpretation of the regional rankings. This would involve critically analysing the rankings indicators, looking for weaknesses and strengths that allow translating them into opportunities for interchange, innovation and creation of knowledge. For some participants, for example, a strategic perspective might be based on research topics specific to Latin America, such as in the field of social sciences, anthropology, public policies and others that link to a shared ecology.

On the other hand, data shows that student mobility is the most relevant international higher education activity followed by academic exchange and research collaboration (see Chapter 8). Considering the low-level of foreign language proficiency in Chile, it is recommended for the country to persevere with aspirations of integration with Latin America. There are some experiences in this regard, for example, the process that led the country to be part of the Mercosur bloc in the 1990s. Chapter 9, section 9.4.1, describes the regional efforts put into the creation of a mechanism to recognise academic quality among participating nations. However, the perception is that Chile has not established ties with Latin America in the sense of academic collaboration. The number of Chilean universities that have participated in the regional initiative is low with, currently, just five programmes giving accredited status.

As outlined in Chapter 2, there are forms of internationalisation associated with setting out frameworks and agreements for a geographical area. For example, internationalisation that includes quality assurance convergence, the homogenisation of different countries’ accreditation systems and the establishment of qualification frameworks for one area. Therefore, it might be important for policymakers to have a closer look at the Latin America experience thus far. Additionally, lessons can be drawn from other regional experiences. By its magnitude, the case of Europe seems to be the most paradigmatic but it is necessary to acknowledge that several lines of evidence suggest that this experience has questionable aspects (Amaral, Neave, et al., 2009; Pechar, 2012; Reichert, 2010; Wihlborg & Teelken, 2014). Specific issues include, but are not limited to, the tensions between domestic and
intergovernmental agendas (Martens & Wolf, 2009), the trade-off between convergence and diversity (Wihlborg & Teelken, 2014) and institutional change resistance (Musselin, 2009).

Thereby, when perceiving the interaction between the Chilean context and the supra-regional level, some elements can be remarked upon. First, there is an absence of a strategic perspective in Chile towards Latin America. Closer scrutiny reveals the potential benefits of an improved approach, in particular for student mobility as the principal international higher education activity. Chilean stakeholders consider more initiatives in this respect might contribute to the global profile of future graduates. However, as noted in Chapter 9, section 9.4.1, the structure of degrees in Chile is not competitive in terms of study length and readability. Therefore, more transparency and adjusted structures are a step to facilitate that interchange. In this context, what has been done so far as well as other experiences with its benefits and unintended outcomes become valuable to develop new and strengthened initiatives to promote readability between regional systems and, in this way, have an impact on the outbound mobility opportunities available for Chilean students.

10.5.3 National-local scale

10.5.3.1 Macro-level

i. Short-term developments

Short-term developments link to the instruments for quality in international higher education that exhibit more progress. As per Chapter 9, section 9.4.2, these are the instruments in the phase of operation (see Appendix E). They include international agreements, operational information and international networks. A shared idea among the respondents was that even though there is not a strategic vision towards internationalisation, it is vital for policymakers to continue supporting and strengthening the progress achieved thus far. Upon the definition of a strategy, however, the operational instruments should align with its priorities and actions.

Following the data, three instruments reveal strengths and weaknesses that ought to be considered. The negotiation of international agreements undertaken by the Higher Education Authority with countries in Latin America and Europe suggests trust in the reliability of the Chilean sector. There is recognition of the quality assurance arrangement operating in Chile, which has become the support structure for the agreements. On the other hand, there is recognition of the quality of the academic programmes participating in the negotiations.

With regard to operational information, the official website of the brand LearnChile provides relevant pre-arrival advice to international students. However, it is essential to improve the systemic approach to that information. Such an approach would involve, for example, a comprehensive overview of the higher education sector, its national quality assurance scheme and the accreditation scale and its meaning. International evidence suggests that pre-arrival information is a crucial factor in the international student experience since it has an impact on expectations (Bartram, 2008; Brown & Holloway, 2008; Pérez-Encinas & Rodríguez-Pomeda, 2018; Sam, 2001).

In the matter of networks, it is relevant that Chile continues in the direction of openness but with an improved focus on Latin America, as the previous section discusses. The stakeholders noted there are regional disparities within each country but also similarities that open opportunities for research and mobility. But, the general perception is that the country has to invest effort and interest in taking part in the international conversation with Latin
America and beyond. This is central to everything articulated at the macro-level to enter into the current of global conversations. This includes conversations about issues that can be strategic for the institutions themselves and the aspirations of the country for the future.

**ii. Medium-term developments**

There are two, expected, medium-term developments at the macro-level. The first involves the national strategy for higher education and innovation. The second refers to the national strategy for international higher education that, in an ideal scenario, is dependent on the first. For Chilean stakeholders, both instruments were relevant but moderately feasible. As outlined in Chapter 8, section 8.2.5, this limited feasibility connects to the respondents’ ideas that building an organised and purposeful structure that visualises shared goals in higher education remains a challenge for the national policy. The expansion and diversification that followed the 1980’s reform seem to stand in the way of a shared vision aligned with the country’s needs.

Other difficulties occur when higher education policy has to deal with the autonomous character of providers. A shared vision requires, for example, mapping the institutional contributions, as well as assessing to what extent those contributions align with the country’s ambitions. Such an assessment should lead to decisions about the current institutional status. Even more complicated is that a strategic perspective involves a broader dialogue within the sector but also with others, including representatives of the Chilean society. This dialogue requires mechanisms that outline specific margins or common objectives. A strategy involves convergence towards certain directions related to the specificities of the territory, the country’s needs and how the institutions cover them. Importantly, this convergence raises complex questions, such as how to generate synergy and cooperation modes among the institutions? How should the institutions be arranged and classified? How much state, market, network coordination and articulation with the scientific communities should exist? Those are central elements for moving from where the sector is at the moment towards a system that aims at continuous improvement.

As described in Chapter 3, a new Law on Higher Education has recently been enacted. Albeit regarded as advancement, the participants did not see that it addresses the most fundamental concerns. Nevertheless, some factors are deemed as contributing to a strategic perspective. The most important is that the law strengthens the executive level by creating the Under Secretariat of Higher Education in the Ministry of Education. This new government entity will “propose higher education policies and coordinate the State’s bodies that make up the system” (Chilean Government, 2018, p. 14). Given its mission, one could expect that the Under Secretariat will be able to coordinate all the actors around a shared, long-term vision of higher education. Then, that vision can be formalised through a national strategy for higher education and innovation.

Importance has been attached to the national strategy not only by the international experts and Chilean stakeholder participants in this study but also in previous reviews (OECD, 2017b). This strategy sets out the umbrella for higher education development in several areas. Specifically, to international higher education and the suggested framework for quality, it means the point at which the process starts. As indicated above, Chilean stakeholders perceived its feasibility of occurrence as just moderate. Such perception will not change unless coordinated action is undertaken at the government level. Given the analysed factors, any action in this regard is more likely to occur in the medium or, even, long-term if the discussion remains on other, unresolved, traditional tasks (Martinez-Larrechea & Chiancone-Castro, 2009). The assumption is that the new Higher Education Authority will be able to deal with ‘second-generation’ demands including those arising from increasingly globalised environments.
In a second phase, it is essential to work on a national strategy for international higher education. This strategy should contain those definitions that contribute to cross-border and at home internationalisation. Also, it should include the model on which the policy document will declare its basis. As discussed in Chapter 9, quality in international higher education depends on that model. A theoretical background allows an understanding of the conditions that give to particular dimensions of quality more or less importance. Furthermore, it is necessary to define the priority areas in which internationalisation will be playing a pivotal role. For example, a model that emphasises regionalisation, degree structures, transparency and quality assurance convergence will be different from a more ranking-oriented one that pursues a world-class university.

### iii. Long-term developments

The long-term developments involve the instruments that, according to the empirical findings, were relevant but moderately feasible. The limited feasibility, in this case, links to the low maturity in internationalisation which contrasts with the medium-term, where low feasibility correlated with the lack of a systemic approach. As per the earlier discussion, the internationalisation level is placed at a very early stage of development with high heterogeneity. It is likely that this condition, in addition to a focus on the implementation of the reform, will deviate the attention from more sophisticated instruments, at least in the short and medium-term. Such is the case of instruments like codes of practice and international provider registers. The Chilean context is familiar neither with these instruments nor their purposes and operation mode.

However, as the international higher education activity grows, it is important for policymakers to consider specific quality assurance instruments. There is a central element, for example, in protecting international students against underperforming providers. These protection measures are essential to safeguard the national reputation for quality in an increasingly competitive market. Concerning the international provider register, one can observe some developments in the list of institutions that join the brand LearnChile. It is crucial that, in the future, such a list connects to quality parameters specifically relevant for international higher education. There are some non-English speaking countries’ experiences from which Chile might draw lessons. For instance, Malaysia (Knight & Morshidi, 2011), Hong Kong and Singapore (Chan & Ng, 2008) that have deployed ambitious plans to become educational hubs in their region. Malaysia, in particular, has reinforced its overall international higher education framework, launched a one-stop platform for international student services (MoHE, 2018) and included guidelines to higher education providers for assuring welfare and protection of international student (MoHE, 2013).

The long-term involves those instruments contingent on the strategy and its implementation including those operating in the monitoring and improvement phase. The empirical findings reveal that gathering and delivering monitoring information was seen as predominantly feasible. Thus, it will be important that the Higher Education Information System (SIES) works with providers and other agencies in defining key performance indicators that may help to check the situation at the institutional and the aggregate level. For instance, the inbound and outbound mobility of students and faculty staff (OECD & The World Bank, 2009). As noted, the current emphasis on benchmarks and indicators has witnessed increased importance in the field of international higher education. In this scenario, responding to the international demand for data along with building internal monitoring capacity will require professionalisation and high-level teams.
From a continuous improvement perspective, what might be needed for the long-term is a review of any existing strategies and the outcomes of the implementation phase. More research to build an understanding of international higher education in the Chilean context and the mechanisms and models that better adapt to its particularities are desirable. Also, it is essential to explore whether there has been a shift in stakeholders’ perception of the feasibility of policy development in this area at the macro-level.

10.5.3.2 Intermediate level

i. Short-term developments

Like the macro-level, short-term developments at the intermediate level involve the instruments for quality in international higher education that reveal more advancement. According to Chapter 9, section 9.4.2, the research findings indicate that some progress can be found in the second phase of the framework. This progress comprises international agreements, operational information and collaborative work in networks. So, it is important to report on the outcomes and impacts of the instruments in operation and define improvement strategies. Reviewing and reporting is important to continue building capacity through the existing components.

Another development at the intermediate level is the quality culture that has been progressively installed over the last three decades (see Chapter 3). Consequently, quality purposes have become increasingly embedded not only in the work of the leaders but the whole institutional community (Harvey & Green, 1993; Yorke, 2000). The intermediate level has played a vital role in its promotion at the agency and higher education institution level. As highlighted in Chapter 8, section 8.4.6, as a result, the higher education sector stands in a better position than before. The external bodies established in these years for quality control, assurance and accountability have exerted pressure in favour of quality and regulation. The National Council for Education focused on quality control of new educational projects. The National Accreditation Commission centred on quality assurance of autonomous providers. These two, in addition to the SIES with its emphasis on information, have facilitated capacity building that is highly valuable for the expansion of international higher education and the protection of the reputation in this market. Given this contribution, it is vital that these intermediate agents keep on strengthening the installation of a quality culture across the sector.

An additional short-term development at this level is the one that links to the implementation of the new law. Given this new regulation, one might expect strong influences from the macro-level down to the other layers. As described in the preceding section, the Under Secretariat of Higher Education will have to deal with the challenge of bringing together the actors involved in higher education around a purposeful structure and shared goals. It is therefore essential that practitioners at the intermediate level contribute to this task. This will require improved inclusion and efforts of coordination. Also, it will require a new strategic design and the adoption of new practices. It is very likely that, in the short-term, the government convenes agencies, professional bodies and other groups of interest for consultation and articulation of actions in the priority areas, some of them of high impact on international higher education quality.

The last development relates to the coordination efforts that can be done in the short-term. For Chilean stakeholders, coordination involves the government agencies but also the multiple higher education associations. For example, Chapter 9, section 9.4.2, highlights the international higher education activity that the Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities...
reports. Even though this entity represents the most traditional and prestigious universities in the country, there is a group of institutions that might also profit from the strengths of these achievements, particularly regarding opportunities for their graduates. How to fill in the gaps and be inclusive amidst heterogeneity is a macro, but at an intermediate level challenge, that demands further attention.

ii. Medium-term developments

There are two expected medium-term developments at the intermediate level. The first considers the strategic definitions of the agents that work at this level. The second involves an operational instrument, the national qualification framework, regarded as relevant but highly difficult to implement.

It can be concluded that, at the intermediate level, a strategic stance towards international higher education does not exhibit a consistent development. There is, however, empirical evidence to assert that this level has more capabilities than the former one to adopt such a stance. In an ideal scenario, a national strategy for international higher education should set out the course of action for the following layers. If it does not occur, it is necessary that the agencies define long-term goals in this respect, improving the coordination with other entities operating at the same level. For example, entities like ProChile and the Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities have joined in the work of strengthening the promotion of educational services abroad. However, it is important that other university and non-university associations and quality assurance bodies might collaborate more actively upon these efforts as well.

The adoption of a national qualification framework, on the other hand, has particular relevance for the country. A review of the structure of titles and academic degrees together with a transparent organisation is something of a high priority. However, as discussed in Chapter 9, several issues challenge its development and implementation. Even though such complexities might situate its development in the long-term, the fact is that it is an area of action in the new law. According to the law, within a year of its enactment, the Ministry of Education will implement a pilot of a qualification framework for the vocational sector. Furthermore, within a three-year period, the Under Secretariat of Higher Education will present a proposal for a qualification framework for the whole system (Chilean Government, 2018).

Given the complexities that this instrument entails for its development in the medium-term and its implementation in the long-term, it will be a demanding task. Predictably, it will have an impact on the whole sector and the academic programmes. The task requires articulation, not just between higher education levels (vocational-professional), but also between sectors (education-labour market). So, in what is of concern at the intermediate level, it will be important for practitioners to reflect on the implications of this instrument upon their operation. Representative bodies acting on behalf of higher education providers, disciplines, professions and so on may play a crucial role in bringing the perspectives of the micro-level into the relevant conversations and decisions.

iii. Long-term developments

Similar to the macro-level, the long-term developments involve instruments perceived in a range from moderately relevant to relevant. But, doubts arose regarding their feasibility in the short and medium-term. That is because feasibility is affected by the low maturity of higher education in internationalisation. Two operational instruments reflect on this condition - the international higher education standards and the guidelines for cross-border provision.
Regarding the international higher education standards, since the internationalisation component is new, its integration with quality appears to be particularly problematic. The heterogeneity in the development of the higher education institutions is high, so to homogenise this topic results in a more complicated endeavour than if there was similar development in internationalisation among the different providers. In the latter situation, it is possible to work on specific quality standards. In contrast with this idea of standards, some participants proposed to talk about a ‘baseline’ instead, meaning the minimum desirable. Since the experience is so diverse, it is practically impossible to talk about international higher education standards so a baseline may provide threshold standards in the long-term.

The second instrument, the guidelines for cross-border provision, might be necessary for the long-term if international higher education activity becomes increasingly important in this particular form. Chapter 2 expands on the several practices of cross-border provision and Chapter 3 describes the Chilean advancements in this regard. Although developments are notably limited, it might be important for policymakers to draw lessons from those experiences, for example, the quality assurance arrangements of institutions such as the University Federico Santa María as well as of those reporting joint programmes, double degrees and others. Experience could thus serve as a basis for building a mechanism providing guidelines to manage future practices that safeguard the academic reputation of the Chilean system wherever it is collaboratively operating.

Moreover, the long-term involves those instruments contingent on the strategy and its implementation including those operating in the monitoring and improvement phase. The empirical findings suggest that there is not much advancement in monitoring practices so, upon the definition of the strategy, its implementation should be monitored through the several mechanisms proposed for this purpose.

### 10.5.3.3 Micro-level

As emphasised in Chapter 9, section 9.4.2, the varied levels of internationalisation among the higher education providers make an integrated analysis difficult. Nevertheless, some crucial elements are surfacing from the empirical findings with implications for the micro-level.

First, a recurrent theme in the interviews was the sense that it is from the micro-level that a strategic perspective to international higher education has emerged. A stronger strategic focus and a critical stance to the national policy have become ongoing challenges for the upper structures. However, despite an almost non-existent national policy in international higher education, a few of the universities have a leading position in internationalisation in the country. Therefore, it is essential for them to keep on strengthening their strategies and processes under a continuous improvement perspective. It is in this context that it is essential to provide space to these leading universities to share good practices. It presents an opportunity for those lagging behind to visualise the potential benefits of internationalisation for their institutional work.

Second, there are core elements to consider when linking internationalisation to the process of quality. One of them involves the institutional international strategy. It is critical to conceive the strategy in alignment with the overall institutional project. In other words, an internationalisation plan is not disconnected from a strategic plan for institutional development. Furthermore, how much an institution capitalises on international higher education positively correlates with how much that institution pursues a holistic perspective. Therefore, it is important to consider that internationalisation is a transversal process that
operates across all areas: governance structures, faculties, academic bodies, students and administrative staff. Moreover, it is transversal to the fundamental functions of higher education, undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, research and service to society.

Although the institutional international strategy has an important role to play, other factors should not be left unnoticed. Among them are private and public funding as a means of encouraging and assisting the institutional plans. Given the limitations that the vast majority of institutions face, sometimes there is no margin to cover internationalising as a priority. For some participants, an institution should not be detached from this process. Hence, if budget constraints exist, it might progressively advance on specific areas. For example, by focusing on one research area that may collaborate on equal terms with international peers. However, most important is institutional awareness that there is a long-term horizon to which to aspire concerning this process. The general perception is that, if higher education remains locally focused, Chile will continue to be a developing country concentrating on commodities.

Third, some instruments such as international agreements, operational information and networks are seen as common mechanisms associated with internationalisation. Nevertheless, these operational instruments do not necessarily connect to the notion of quality discussed in Chapter 6. Such is the case, for example, of the international agreements used for rhetorical or marketing purposes to attract students (see Chapter 8). Thus, as both the international experts and Chilean stakeholders suggested, it is relevant to concentrate on how the instrument is built. A contributor to quality should include quality components that are displayed when the instrument is in operation. There is another instrument, the learning outcomes of the international components of a programme. Although seen as relevant, not much progress can be found around it. It is important that, at a first stage, the universities leading in internationalisation consider strengthening the at-home activity by progressing the inclusion of an international dimension in the curriculum. Relevant here is to identify what is expected that a student will acquire, in terms of skill set, for an increasingly globalised environment.

Fourth, for the participants in this study, the perception of the student is fundamental. Therefore, when considering monitoring, an instrument that gathers student feedback becomes relevant. Some Chilean stakeholders also remarked on the need to build knowledge in this area through research about, for instance, how the student’s learning experience improves. There is little evidence to indicate that, in Chile, the student experience has been paid adequate attention in research. In addition, there is no public policy promoting its development and, as a consequence, there is not an adequate student survey collecting the opinion of domestic and international students regarding their experience in higher education.

Finally, Chilean stakeholders drew attention to some factors that may lead to unintended consequences for the institutions. These factors link to internationalisation dynamics that might hinder the relationship with the processes of quality as follows.

i. **Academic capitalism**

The first concern raised relates to the growing competition that has become embedded in academic life as a result of the expansion of marketisation dynamics in higher education. Insofar as knowledge is a significant part of internationalisation, so is the market competition for that knowledge (Paasi, 2005). Coupled with these dynamics, what is known as academic capitalism has intensified in recent years (Slaughter, 1998; Stromquist, 2007). Academic capitalism presumes a relationship between knowledge and economic profit maximisation.
IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE AND FURTHER RESEARCH

(Münch, 2014) which eventually transforms peers into potential competitors for resources and prestige.

For Chilean stakeholders, the introduction of competition in academic life is seen as a good incentive for academic staff to pursue international collaboration, mobility and better outcomes in general. However, it also involves a tension between academic values and the action of taking a position against competitors to maximise economic margins. This tension may play against coordination modes and lead to individual purposes that go beyond those pursued by a higher education institution in its mission to deliver public goods to the Chilean society.

ii. Over-emphasis on the process of internationalisation at the expense of the primary functions

Another concern is that internationalisation might have unintended consequences in the overall academic quality. An impact on quality may occur as a result of prioritising administrative tasks at the expense of primary higher education functions (Knight, 2014). For some participants, internationalisation could be more detrimental than beneficial. This is because the process of internationalisation may destroy the central purpose of the university, in pursuit of the benefit of the operation. Therefore, it is central to acknowledge that internationalisation is a means to the strategic development of an institution more than a purpose in itself.

Associated with this idea, contextual, conceptual and empirical developments in the dissertation highlight the significance of delineating an institutional international strategy. This strategy helps set out goals that can serve as a basis for support and socialise the meaning and nature of the process in the community, among others (Childress, 2009; Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Knight, 2008). It is a way in which the institution approaches internationalisation from a holistic perspective including actions, priorities and resources. Participants mentioned the relevance of a comprehensive view to avoid inefficiencies. Such a view also considers realising that this process goes beyond the mere implementation of an international office.

iii. A limited conceptualisation of international higher education

There is a third issue that involves the way in which some higher education institutions understand internationalisation. As discussed in Chapter 8, section 8.3.3, for some participants, institutions adopt a restricted approach to internationalisation by connecting it to the subscription of international agreements with peers and other organisations around the world. However, these agreements sometimes help to sustain a political discourse or marketing campaign with insufficient attention to the effect on the academic experience of students and the community.

On the other hand, internationalisation is classically aligned with student mobility and, to a lesser degree, with academic mobility and international research collaboration. Nevertheless, by primarily linking internationalisation to mobility, the emphasis is placed on just one of the core functions of higher education, teaching. So, the impact is quite limited regarding what could be a broader stance centred on internationalisation as a process rather than some discrete activities. A process that, as described in Chapter 2, section 2.2, and earlier in this section, has a multidimensional and evolving nature that manifests in numerous forms and has potential benefits for other areas of the institution.
iv. A pursuit of internationalisation only as an ‘in-fashion’ trend

Another concern lies in that internationalisation be adopted just because it has become an ‘in-fashion’ global trend in higher education. Frequently new themes and concepts appear as ‘fashions’ that shape the debate in the sector (Teichler, 2004). Late in the 1980s, internationalisation became part of the agenda in North America and Europe (see Chapter 2). Afterwards, it spread to the rest of the world. Nevertheless, as outlined earlier, when it comes to Chile and any country in South America (Gacel-Ávila, 2007), North-South influences ought to be contextualised.

For some participants, internationalisation has to be acknowledged together with the institutional specificities that shape responses and adjustments. There is a risk in the adoption of foreign models without a detailed analysis of what internationalisation entails for the institution, its processes and community. Such a risk centres the debate, again, on the need to recognise internationalisation as a means to institutional strategic development and not as a purpose in itself. In this way, what arises once again is the need to consider international higher education in convergence with the strategic plan for institutional development and the ambitions of the institution to contribute to the development of the country.

v. Overuse of the English language

A final issue is that the English language may be regarded as representing internationalisation (de Wit, 2011). To some of the Chilean stakeholders, this approach can give rise to practices that can be questionable to the national reality. These practices include, for instance, publishing research in English about topics that are strictly domestic under the premise that will become internationalised. However, what may occur in such cases is that the scope of that research is actually reduced, turning it inaccessible to Chilean researchers who are the main target audience.

This issue concurs with relevant literature on how the English language is increasingly selected as a teaching medium and as a means of disseminating research via publications (Knight, 2014). Like the empirical findings, the literature highlights the controversial debate around such perspective. For example, it is argued that overemphasising the English language expands the ‘commodification’ of higher education and undermines a focus on the local languages (Burgess, Gibson, Klaphake, & Selzer, 2010; Jiang, 2008; Leydesdorff & Wagner, 2008; Phillipson, 2006; Saarinen, 2012).

On the whole, these five factors point out the importance of approaching international higher education from a strategic and holistic perspective. It is essential to raise awareness on the unintended consequences that the process might have on the institutional work. By doing so, it is possible to adopt the model that best fits the individual situation of the educational provider. On the other hand, it is relevant to think about a horizon, a long-term vision, then, further on, to make progress by stages accordingly to human and financial capacities and resources.

10.5.4 Support structures

Both the international experts and the Chilean stakeholders concurred in the view that a framework for quality in international higher education has to be supported by complementary parts. This is because quality involves multiple inputs which this study identifies as primary processes and support structures. The previous sections expanded in detail on the primary
process. The next section will concentrate on the support structures. As argued in Chapter 9, section 9.4.5, some of these structures show a deficiency that transforms them into potential barriers to the development of international higher education framed by processes of quality. Some of the recommendations that emerged from the empirical findings to face these potential barriers are presented.

10.5.4.1 Regulatory framework

As outlined before, given the new Law on Higher Education, the regulatory framework is changing. Concerning quality in international higher education, importance is attached to two areas covered by the law. These are, first, the changes to the national quality assurance arrangement and, second, the mandate to work on a national qualification framework. It is expected that these developments will become a step forward for Chilean higher education to reach a higher level of maturity. This would progress the improvement of processes internally and also develop more capacity to undertake conversations internationally.

Despite ongoing transformations, there is much room for improvement, for example, in quality mechanisms. The new law creates an institution for controlling, the Superintendence. In part, the National Council for Education (CNED) accomplishes that purpose, too, because it is responsible for ensuring the performance of new projects. The National Accreditation Commission for Accreditation (CNA) conducts quality assessment. However, for some participants, the unsolved issue is improvement. The Ministry can promote improvement through policy but the national quality assurance agency should also deploy mechanisms in this regard.

Thus far, what has been identified is that the higher education agenda has failed in dealing with new strategic demands. Instead, it has concentrated on internal inefficiencies, for example, how to reconcile quality with massification in a sector dominated by the market. This internal focus raises several challenges. Among these are 'second-generation' instruments that emphasise, on the one hand, continuous improvement and, on the other hand, quality assurance in international higher education, especially regarding the expectations of international students.

The empirical findings show that there are other areas of regulation in need of further attention. For instance, when considering international higher education in conjunction with the labour market, some rigidities affect the human capital inflow. Among these are rigidities to train workers abroad and extant barriers to professional mobility. For some participants, these issues prevent 'brain circulation' in higher education accordingly to the needs of research projects or teaching activities. Chile does not have the internal conditions for brain circulation, that is, that the human capital can migrate and move freely for a given period.

Therefore, as discussed in Chapter 7, section 7.5, regarding the regulatory framework to support international higher education quality, there is a need for an integrative approach. It is crucial to assess the impact of quality assurance and qualification recognition developments. Additionally, it is necessary to increase awareness of the relationship between the measures to protect international students against malpractices and the academic reputation of the country. Moreover, it is relevant to see the educational market in close connection to the labour market and acknowledge the importance of updating the migration system appropriately.
10.5.4.2 Funding schemes

The findings of this study suggest that funding schemes play a significant role in stimulating international higher education developments. Given this importance, various elements emerge as recommendations for policy and practice in the area, some of them concurrent with previous reports (e.g. OECD & The World Bank, 2009). These recommendations include the need for ensuring equity and access to mobility opportunities, particularly among those students coming from socio-economically disadvantaged groups. For some participants, the economic reality of an average Chilean student indicates that it is necessary to implement scholarships programmes. Such types of support would help to make strategic actions more effective in this regard.

As discussed in Chapter 9, the institutional capacity to cope with funding requirements to implement international higher education is restricted. Budget constraints oblige them to prioritise and maximise what they have. In this context, it is relevant to address the issue of equity in international higher education from a national policy perspective. It might be necessary then to establish a national initiative, similar to the Becas-Chile Programme but focused on the undergraduate level. Support for mobility is perceived as necessary because a student who participates in exchange is a better-prepared professional with increased global awareness. Overall, there is an added value to her/his education. Additionally, a positive correlation is seen between student mobility and the pursuit of further studies abroad, whether a doctorate candidature, masters degree or general training.

This study has found that there is recognition of the support provided by existing mechanisms: for instance, the Becas-Chile Programme, CONICYT, the MECESUP Programme, the LearnChile brand, and others discussed in Chapters 3 and 9. However, the sentiment that resonated was that the articulation among initiatives is lacking. Thus, in contrast with what might be a coordinated action, the impact is more limited. Therefore, it is important a shared strategic perspective aligns the actions of the recently created Under Secretariat of Higher Education, the future Ministry of Science and Technology (still in discussion in the Parliament), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy. The study has raised important challenges for the future. These challenges comprise, to name a few, the need for a reinsertion policy for grantees of the Becas-Chile Programme and possible measures to confront brain drain.

Furthermore, questions surfaced about the sustainability of the Becas-Chile Programme versus strengthening the local doctoral programmes. Questions also arose about equity in international higher education, as discussed above, including the unequal distribution of resources for internationalisation among universities and the logic of competitive funds, among others. All will require the coordination and integration of the involved parts.

The data also suggest that regional perspectives should not be left unnoticed. For some participants, it is relevant to draw lessons from other regional experiences. The most mentioned example was Europe and its structures to support regionalisation through programmes such as Erasmus, Socrates and other initiatives for research. The perception is that in the bloc Mercosur or South America, in general, there is little of this type of programme. The Pacific Alliance was mentioned as the first programme that gives access to student mobility in the region and involves Mexico, Colombia, Peru and Chile. It appears to be a matter of funding, inviting questions of: What is the national policy approach to support internationalisation? How much funding does the state allocate to support this type of initiative? How much funding do the states of the region invest in interacting with neighbouring countries?
Encouraging the development of intraregional initiatives in Latin America, both student mobility and collaboration in a broader sense will complement institutional efforts.

10.5.4.3 Second-language support

Along with funding, the research has also found that second-language proficiency, fundamentally English, is a factor that contributes to international higher education. As outlined in Chapter 8 and reinforced in Chapter 9, the level of competence in a second language among the Chilean population is low. For some participants, such a condition inhibits the expansion of academic linkages, predominantly, with North America and Europe. The general perception, however, is that the current situation should improve in the coming years. The use of the English language is progressively increasing among new cohorts of students in higher education. The primary concern was centred on those academic staff who have not learnt another language but interact with these students so are not able to promote, for example, the use of bibliographies or collaborations in languages other than Spanish.

This limitation is perceived as a structural problem of the educational system. The evidence from this study suggests the adoption of an integrative approach to solving it, which concurs with extant literature (e.g. OECD & The World Bank, 2009). This approach should include articulation among the educational levels, from early childhood to tertiary education, in term of second-language development. Given its magnitude, achieving such an articulation appears to be a long-term task. However, a near-future implication for higher education links to the possible development of domestic strategies of internationalisation by incorporating English or other languages in the curriculum. This development depends on the strategic view of the institutions. Nevertheless, a general recommendation is that, when considering these components, services for language support to students are essential. This is most notable for students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

10.5.4.4 Human resources

The study has shown that educating the human resources involved in international higher education is an essential feature. The importance lies in this process involving an understanding of new socio-cultural and educational needs, especially regarding international students. For example, as discussed in Chapter 7, increasing intercultural awareness among staff is a contributing factor to expansion of international ties. Another factor is the installation of a ‘quality culture’ in international higher education. That means a shared commitment to the stated purposes in the area not only by the leaders but the institutional community (Harvey & Green, 1993; Yorke, 2000). The evidence suggests that the general, quality assurance processes progressively installed since the 1990s have helped to instil such a culture upon traditional higher education processes. However, given the heterogeneous character of the Chilean sector, this advancement does not seem to be consistent among institutions.

When taken together, these results suggest that, as part of the strategy, the macro, intermediate and micro-level should include actions for professionalisation of the staff participating in the implementation phase. At the micro-level, whether to internationalise or not is an autonomous decision. It is important to be aware that this is the level where the core interaction with international students and scholars occurs. So, the training component here is crucial. On the other hand, the process of socialisation of the strategy among the faculty, administrative staff and institutional community in general is a fundamental step. The installation of a quality culture assumes, first, the involvement of the community and, second,
that this community can build an understanding of its involvement. General quality assurance developments mean an important advancement that sheds light on how this concept can be incorporated into new processes, including internationalisation.

10.5.4.5 Information and communication technology

The current data highlight the importance of information and communication technology (ICT) for international higher education. Concurrent with existing literature, the rapid expansion of ICT is acknowledged as a significant catalyst of internationalisation in higher education (Enders, 2004; Gacel-Ávila, 2005; Nigel, 2008). There are several reasons to include the ICT impact on knowledge transfer (Kehm & Teichler, 2007) and the innovation on methods for teaching and research (Enders, 2004). The research has shown that there is a positive perception about ICT developments in Chile. The positive aspects include but are not limited to access to the Internet, digital resources like learning management systems, digital libraries, online education and institutional platforms. Given this strength, what might be needed, then, is a focus on content, that is, the information provided by the institutional platforms to target international audiences who are, in the main, prospective students, scholars, researchers, higher education institutions and international agencies.

This study has identified progress in this respect, for instance, the online platform of the brand LearnChile, but more needs to be done. For example, offering an English version of the relevant information. In contrast to what happens in highly internationalised countries, in Chile, government bodies involved in international higher education do not display information in other languages. This is the case of the Ministry of Education, the Higher Education Authority, the National Accreditation Commission, the National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research and others. Even in the Council of Rector of the Chilean Universities, which undertakes relevant initiatives in the area, very little is found in a second language regarding the dissemination of its work or areas of international interest.

10.6 Summary

This final chapter presents the key contributions of the study to the knowledge of quality in international higher education. In doing so, it analyses the main findings yielded from the exploration of the research question. The principal theoretical implication of this study is to approach a complex and abstract process such as quality in international higher education through a framework based on an expanded cycle of quality as continuous improvement. Given that this process is contingent on higher education dynamics and modes of coordination, the framework reflects influences, governance levels and support structures. The framework follows an integrative perspective and comprises several instruments and actors that work in close coordination to achieve outcomes. Overall, the present study offers a comprehensive approach to quality in international higher education and its empirical findings complement and expand previous relevant literature.

The chapter concentrates on the implications that the empirical findings have for policy and practice in Chilean higher education. By analysing each of the layers of the framework, it becomes clear that a strategic approach to international higher education at the macro-level is vital for its further development. Further, initiatives at the micro-level are central to explain advancements and achievements. However, much needs to be done to overcome the current heterogeneities and reach a minimum baseline. The intermediate level has also been dynamic regarding its responses to the challenges.
Articulation is still lacking, which the institutional arrangement set out by the new Law on Higher Education should address in the short-term as a first step. This chapter makes evident that, beyond the motivation and efforts within the micro and intermediate level, the macro-level plays a substantial role. The macro-level gives direction, support and funding to international higher education endeavours. Therefore, the actions carried out by the governing bodies to give a vision and a priority to the process are fundamental for its feasibility and maintenance in the long-term.

By approaching the three subsidiary questions, the study offers systematic insights into the overarching research question: *What is the nature of quality in international higher education in the contemporary global system?* The case of Chile helps to explore its multidimensional and multilevel characteristics in a real higher education setting. The case study enriches the understanding of the complex and abstract nature of quality in international higher education. The findings might be of interest to researchers, policymakers and practitioners in the field of quality and internationalisation in higher education.

However, the study has limitations. On the one hand, its scope was limited to one national context. Additionally, since it was focused on the analysis of the nature of quality in international higher education in a national context, it was not possible to elaborate deeply on the specificities of every dimension and level in the framework, particularly institutional components. Given the scope, time and resources constraints, the study raises a number of opportunities for further research work, which are discussed in the next section.

### 10.7 Recommendations for further research

As shown in Table 10.1, considerably more work needs to be done to explore specific dynamics across dimensions, levels and components of the conceptual model.

#### Table 10.1: Summary of recommendations for further research work by scale, level and component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCALE/LEVEL/COMPONENT</th>
<th>Recommendations for further research work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRAMEWORK OVERALL</td>
<td>Adaptation of the model to other national education systems in the world (national case study and cross-national analysis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPRA-REGIONAL</td>
<td>Expanded analysis of the bi-directional forces and dynamics between countries and their region. Detailed investigation into Latin America and its dynamics of student mobility, academic collaboration and quality assurance convergence. Analysis of the impact of international rankings on policy and practice at the national-local level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIONAL-LOCAL:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACRO-LEVEL</td>
<td>More detailed exploration of the quality cycle at this level. Further attention to the systemic dynamics, rationales, coordination modes and relationship with intermediates agencies and institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERMEDIATE LEVEL</td>
<td>More detailed exploration of the quality cycle at this level. A greater focus on its role as an interface between the macro and micro-levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICRO-LEVEL</td>
<td>More detailed exploration of the quality cycle at this level. Examination of drivers across different types of providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT STRUCTURES</td>
<td>Greater focus on each support structure could produce interesting findings that account more for their specificities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTORS</td>
<td>Detailed research about higher education stakeholders, its rationales, drivers, and power dynamics. Levels of influence and principal-agent relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUMENTS</td>
<td>More detailed exploration of the instruments, contextualisation to different institutions and implications for autonomy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Even though a focus on Chilean higher education offers a socio-cultural and academic background for the study of quality in international higher education, the empirical findings might be limited to its contextual particularities. Previous studies on internationalisation have been crucial in understanding that the different approaches to the process link to the specific rationales of each nation (Knight, 2004; van der Wende, 2001). Therefore, a natural progression of this work is to explore the model’s adaptation to other national education systems in the world. Given that the study has developed a policy framework for quality in international higher education, further applicability to a single, national, case study or cross-national analysis may provide additional validation and new insights.

The findings from this study reveal that linkages can be built between countries and their region in matters of international higher education and quality. There are still many unanswered questions about regionalisation and aspects such as student mobility, academic collaboration and issues of quality. Further investigation into the Latin American context and the impact of regionalisation on the nation-states and governance structures is strongly recommended. Comparison of the findings with those of other studies confirms that international rankings have progressively become an internationalisation driver at national and institutional levels (Cantwell & Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009; Delgado-Márquez et al., 2013; Marginson & van der Wende, 2007). Additional studies will be needed to develop a full picture of how international rankings exert an influence on the national policy and the processes of the higher education institutions. A question that arises is whether they contribute to introducing elements of quality in the international higher education activity.

Another issue that emerges from the empirical findings relates to the different dynamics found across the macro, intermediate and micro-levels concerning the quality cycle. Further research by levels is, therefore, an essential next step in confirming relevance and feasibility of the model’s instruments. The study highlights, as a challenge for the future at the macro-level, the existence of a systemic structure that corresponds to the ambitions of a country. Another factor is the way in which the state, the market and the academic structures coordinate. As these appear to be major determiners in the adoption of a strategic approach to international higher education, future research needs to examine more closely the links between these elements and the national policy in this area. More information on the relationship between the state and the intermediate and micro-levels would help to establish a higher degree of accuracy on this matter.

At the intermediate level, further studies regarding its role as an interface between the macro and micro-levels are worthwhile. The precise operation of the quality cycle at this level might be elucidated through a case study analysis.

At the micro-level, the study indicates that the higher education providers are the leading players in the implementation of the international higher education strategy. Considerably more work needs to be done to determine, with greater emphasis, the dynamics occurring at this level. Because of the high diversity and heterogeneity, an in-depth exploration of the whole cycle of quality at this level was not feasible. Notwithstanding this limitation, the study lays the groundwork for future research into the higher education institution level. The results provide support for the hypothesis that the international dimension is particularly relevant to research-intensive universities. Different levels of importance are attached to internationalisation by universities with a long public tradition and private universities recently created. What might explain this difference is that the traditional universities are organised in a council to deal with internationalisation matters. The council, as an intermediate body of the state, exerts a direct agency on the macro-level. When observing the non-university sector, the gap becomes more profound. Further research needs to examine more closely what drives
internationalisation across different institutional contexts and how the process of quality frames the existing international higher education activity.

Other research questions that could be asked include those about the support structures: the regulation framework, funding schemes, human resources, support services and communication and information technology. This study has remarked on the role of each of them but has limited theoretical and empirical depth. So, this offers a fruitful area for further work. On the other hand, a future study could assess issues related to the actors of the model. Among these are the rationales, drivers, interactions and stakeholder power behind the quality process as well as the agent-principal relationship. The research findings have also strengthened the idea that more empirical exploration is needed upon some important instruments of the framework to expand the existing literature. This includes the national qualification framework (Ensor, 2003; Westerheijden et al., 2007), student experience surveys (Coates, 2010; Richardson, Slater, & Wilson, 2007) and their implications for the enhancement of the support services (Andrade, 2006; Zhou & Cole, 2017). The issue of how these instruments contextualise and interact with the different higher education institution models and their autonomous character is an intriguing one which could be usefully explored in further research.
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REFERENCES


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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - INTERNATIONALISATION INDEX STAGE 1

1. Methodology

Based on the connectivity module included in the Universitas 21 Ranking of National Systems of Higher Education (Williams et al., 2015), the study builds on an internationalisation index. The purpose is to identify countries that are high performing in international higher education to select twenty as the basis for conceptual analysis. Following the Universitas 21 ranking methodological approach (de Rassenfosse & Williams, 2015), the study chooses a number of variables that contribute to explaining performance in international higher education.

Table A. 1 presents each variable together with its data source. The selection of countries derived from the Universitas 21 ranking, but given the lack of international data for Taiwan, this country is excluded from the index. Consequently, the total number considers 49 nations instead of 50 as in the ranking. The index includes three out of six variables in the original methodology (de Rassenfosse & Williams, 2015). Three complementary variables that have publicly available data are proposed to enrich the tool: international staff ratio, international diversity and a measure of cross-border activity.

Table A. 1: Variables of performance in international higher education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V2 Gross outbound enrolment ratio, 2012 (Total number of students from a given country studying abroad, expressed as a percentage of the population of tertiary age in that country)</td>
<td>UNESCO Institute for Statistics (<a href="http://www.uis.unesco.org">www.uis.unesco.org</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3 Proportion of articles co-authored with international collaborators, 2008-2012</td>
<td>SCImago data, Scopus data bank (<a href="http://www.scimagoir.com">www.scimagoir.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V4 International staff ratio calculated by averaging the 2014 QS World University Rankings international faculty scores for the nation’s three best universities</td>
<td>QS Top Universities data (<a href="http://www.topuniversities.com">www.topuniversities.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V5 A measure of international diversity defined as 3 if students come from the five regions of the world and at least 30% of international students come from another region.</td>
<td>OECD Education Statistics: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (<a href="http://www.uis.unesco.org">www.uis.unesco.org</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V6 A measure of development of cross-border activity calculated by averaging a score based on the number of International branch campuses and a score that derives from the offshore student share, 2011</td>
<td>The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, International Branch Campuses: Data and Developments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Variables selection criteria

- Data availability: From a public source of information for the selected 49 countries.
- Data consistency: Same piece of information across the 49 countries
- Data source reliability: Official and trustworthy source

3. Results

The results for the internationalisation index are displayed in Table A. 2. In accordance with the data, the top five leading countries in internationalisation are the United Kingdom, Australia, Switzerland, Ireland and the United States. In contrast, the lowest performing countries are Iran, Japan, Croatia, China and Serbia.
### Table A. 2: Internationalisation index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RK</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hong Kong SAR</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B - RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS STAGE 2

CONSENT FORM
Centre for the Study of Higher Education
Melbourne Graduate School of Education

Project: Quality in international higher education: A framework for the Chilean system

Primary Researcher: Emeline Jerez (PhD student)
Additional Researchers: Professor Hamish Coates (Supervisor)
Professor Leo Goedegebuure (Co-supervisor)

Name of Participant: ____________________________________________________________

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written plain language statement to keep.

2. I understand that the purpose of this research is to investigate quality in international higher education to develop and validate a framework for a higher education system.

3. I understand that my participation in this project is for research purposes only.

4. I acknowledge that the possible effects of participating in this research project have been explained to my satisfaction.

5. In this project I will be required to participate providing online responses to a questionnaire and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the plain language statement.

6. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from this project anytime without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data that I have provided.

7. I understand that the data from this research will be stored at the University of Melbourne and will be destroyed after 5 years.

8. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements; my data will be password protected and accessible only by the named researchers.

9. I understand that given the small number of participants involved in the study, it may not be possible to guarantee my anonymity.

10. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form, it will be retained by the researcher.

Participant Signature: __________________________ Date: ______________

HREC: 1545716.1; Date: 12/05/2016; Version: 1.2
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT
Centre for the Study of Higher Education
Melbourne Graduate School of Education

Project: Quality in international higher education: A framework for the Chilean system

Professor Hamish Coates (Responsible Researcher)
Tel: +61 3 8344 0756   Email: h.coates@unimelb.edu.au

Professor Leo Goedegebuure (Co-Supervisor)
Tel: +61 3 8344 9246   Email: leo.g@unimelb.edu.au

Ms Emeline Jerez (PhD student) Email: ejerez@student.unimelb.edu.au

You are invited to participate in the above project, which is being conducted by Emeline Jerez (PhD student) and supervised by Professor Hamish Coates (Supervisor) and Professor Leo Goedegebuure (Co-supervisor) of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne. Your name and contact details have been drawn from public sources of information. You have been approached as an expert in the field of international higher education.

The aim of this study is to develop and validate a framework of quality in international higher education. This project, funded by the Becas-Chile Program, will form part of Ms Jerez doctoral thesis and has been approved by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee.

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to contribute in the following way. We would ask you to respond a questionnaire, so that we can get a more detailed picture about your ideas and opinion with regards to the dimensions and mechanisms that have been proposed for a framework of quality in international higher education and likewise, your suggestions for improvement. We estimate that the total time required of you would not exceed 20 minutes.

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, subject to any legal requirements. Your name and contact details will be kept in a password-protected computer file, separate from any data that you supply. This will only be able to be linked to your responses by the researchers. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. Any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity will be removed, however, due to the small sample of participants, it is possible that someone may still be able to identify you. The data will be kept securely in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education for five years from the date of publication, before being destroyed.

Participation is not expected to involve any harm or danger to your physical or mental health and is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice.

Once the thesis arising from this research has been completed, a brief summary of the research findings will be made available for the researchers. Any participant who would like to have
access to this report can contact ejerez@student.unimelb.edu.au to receive a copy by email. It is possible that the results will be published and presented at academic conferences. Paper-based data will be stored in a locked cabinet and online responses will be kept in a password protected computer file. Research data will be only accessible by the researchers.

If you would like more information about the project, please either contact the student researcher at ejerez@student.unimelb.edu.au or the supervisor at h.coates@unimelb.edu.au.

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, please contact Ms Kate Murphy, Manager, Human Research Ethics - Office for Research Ethics and Integrity, the University of Melbourne VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au.

If you would like to participate in this project, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by completing the accompanying consent form.

Kind regards,

Emeline Jerez
PhD Student

Professor Hamish Coates
Supervisor

Professor Leo Goedegebuure
Co-Supervisor
# Quality in International Higher Education: A Framework for the Chilean System

## Questionnaire

**International Experts**

*Quality in International Higher Education: A Framework for the Chilean System*

Please respond to the questions below in the cells shaded grey. Please provide as much information as possible. Please leave blank the cells for which you do not have any comment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Likely actors</th>
<th>Relevance of these actors?</th>
<th>Mechanisms</th>
<th>Relevance of these mechanisms in general/theory?</th>
<th>Relevance of these mechanisms to a developing higher education system?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Policy and Strategy Definition of what needs to be done in the area of international higher education</td>
<td>1. National higher education authority</td>
<td>1. National strategy for international higher education (plan to internationalise the higher education sector)</td>
<td>Policies, strategies, actions and procedures that operate at every level to ensure that quality of international higher education activity is being planned, maintained and enhanced</td>
<td>1. National strategy for international higher education (plan to internationalise the higher education sector)</td>
<td>1. National strategy for international higher education (plan to internationalise the higher education sector)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. National quality assurance agency</td>
<td>2. National policy for quality assurance in higher education (principle of action to assure and enhance quality in the higher education sector)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Higher education institutions</td>
<td>3. International strategy at the quality assurance agency level (plan to internationalise processes at the agency level)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
<td>4. International strategy at the institutional level (statement about international activity and resources to support it within the institutional context)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Operations Implementation of policies and strategies in the area of international higher education</td>
<td>1. National higher education authority</td>
<td>1. Recognition framework (national framework to guide the recognition of academic and professional qualifications)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Social science and policy analysis</td>
<td>2. Standards (threshold definitions to assess quality in international higher education)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. National quality assurance agency</td>
<td>3. Guidelines for cross-border provision (parameters to assure quality across borders, e.g. procedures for international branch campuses or guidelines for awarding joint degrees)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. National body for cooperation and exchange</td>
<td>4. Code of practice (parameters to safeguard rights and wellbeing of international students and protect them from malpractices)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. National body for statistics</td>
<td>5. International provider register (official list of providers that have complied with requirements to enrol international students)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Higher education institutions</td>
<td>6. Mutual recognition agreement (signed Accord to recognise quality processes, decisions and judgements)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
<td>7. Memorandum of understanding and/or cooperation (common intent about quality and standards in higher education)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Operational information (official sources of information to guide international students and promote educational services, exchange and cooperation, e.g. study-in websites, statistics &amp; reports and overseas representatives)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9. Networks (participation in international, regional and local instances of dialogue and exchange about quality in higher education)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (please specify):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Monitoring Assessment of outcomes of the implemented policies and strategies through analysis of metrics and relevant data</td>
<td>1. National higher education authority</td>
<td>1. Review of national policies and practices (assessment of the implemented mechanisms for international higher education, internally or externally conducted)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. International organisations</td>
<td>2. Institutional assessment (internationalisation outcome measurement and assessment of mechanisms in place at the institutional level)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Higher education institutions</td>
<td>3. Monitoring information (relevant to decision-making, e.g. statistics from national and supranational sources, reports on internationalisation and rankings)</td>
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<td>4. Improvement Actions on the basis of results</td>
<td>1. National higher education authority</td>
<td>1. National plan (statement about the actions to be taken as a result of the assessment, to be revised and debated by the main actors in the higher education sector)</td>
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<td>2. National parliament</td>
<td>2. National Act (if necessary, with the subsequent debate at the parliamentary level)</td>
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APPENDIX C - RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS STAGE 3

CONSENT FORM
Centre for the Study of Higher Education
Melbourne Graduate School of Education

Project: Quality in international higher education: A framework for the Chilean system

Primary Researcher: Emeline Jerez (PhD student)
Additional Researchers: Professor Hamish Coates (Supervisor)
Professor Leo Goedegebuure (Co-supervisor)

Name of Participant: __________________________________________

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written plain language statement to keep.

2. I understand that the purpose of this research is to investigate quality in international higher education to develop and validate a framework for a higher education system.

3. I understand that my participation in this project is for research purposes only.

4. I acknowledge that the possible effects of participating in this research project have been explained to my satisfaction.

5. In this project I will be required to participate in an interview and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the plain language statement.

6. I understand that my interview will be audio-taped.

7. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from this project anytime without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data that I have provided.

8. I understand that the data from this research will be stored at the University of Melbourne and will be destroyed after 5 years.

9. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements; my data will be password protected and accessible only by the named researchers.

10. I understand that given the small number of participants involved in the study, it may not be possible to guarantee my anonymity.

11. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form, it will be retained by the researcher.

Participant Signature: ____________________________ Date: ______________

HREC: 1545716.1; Date: 27/06/2016; Version: 1.2
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT
Centre for the Study of Higher Education
Melbourne Graduate School of Education

Project: Quality in international higher education: A framework for the Chilean system

Professor Hamish Coates (Responsible Researcher)
Tel: +61 3 8344 0756   Email: h.coates@unimelb.edu.au

Professor Leo Goedegebuure (Co-Supervisor)
Tel: +61 3 8344 9246   Email: leo.g@unimelb.edu.au

Ms Emeline Jerez (PhD student) Email: ejerez@student.unimelb.edu.au

You are invited to participate in the above project, which is being conducted by Emeline Jerez (PhD student) and supervised by Professor Hamish Coates (Supervisor) and Professor Leo Goedegebuure (Co-supervisor) of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne. Your name and contact details have been drawn from public sources of information. You have been approached as stakeholder of the Chilean higher education system.

The aim of this study is to develop and validate a framework of quality in international higher education. This project, funded by the Becas-Chile Program, will form part of Ms Jerez doctoral thesis and has been approved by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee.

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to contribute in the following way. We would ask you to participate in an interview of about 30 minutes, so that we can get a more detailed picture of what quality in international higher education means in Chile and the mechanisms to be considered. With your permission, the interview would be audio-recorded so that we can ensure that we make an accurate record of what you say. When the tape has been transcribed, you would be provided with a copy of the transcript, so that you can verify that the information is correct and/or request deletions. We estimate that the total time required of you would not exceed 45 minutes.

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, subject to any legal requirements. Your name and contact details will be kept in a password-protected computer file, separate from any data that you supply. This will only be able to be linked to your responses by the researchers, for example, in order to know where to send your interview transcript for checking. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. Any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity will be removed, however, due to the small sample of participants, it is possible that someone may still be able to identify you. The data will be kept securely in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education for five years from the date of publication, before being destroyed.

Participation is not expected to involve any harm or danger to your physical or mental health and is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice.

HREC: 1545716.1; Date: 27/06/2016; Version: 1.2
Once the thesis arising from this research has been completed, a brief summary of the research findings will be made available for the researchers. Any participant who would like to have access to this report can contact ejerez@student.unimelb.edu.au to receive a copy by email. It is possible that the results will be published and presented at academic conferences. Paper-based data will be stored in a locked cabinet and audio records will be kept in a password protected computer file. Research data will be only accessible by the researchers.

If you would like more information about the project, please either contact the student researcher at ejerez@student.unimelb.edu.au or the supervisor at h.coates@unimelb.edu.au.

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, please contact Ms Kate Murphy, Manager, Human Research Ethics - Office for Research Ethics and Integrity, the University of Melbourne VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au.

If you would like to participate in this project, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by completing the accompanying consent form.

Kind regards,

Emeline Jerez  
PhD Student  

Professor Hamish Coates  
Supervisor  

Professor Leo Goedegebure  
Co-Supervisor
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Project: Quality in international higher education: A framework for the Chilean system

I. WARM-UP QUESTION:

1. Can you describe your role at the moment?

II. MAIN QUESTIONS:

FIRST PART: ABOUT INTERNATIONALISATION IN CHILEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

1. As stakeholder of Chilean higher education, what does “internationalisation in higher education” mean for you?
2. According to your understanding of “internationalisation”, do you think this benefits Chilean higher education? In what way?
3. In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the current development level of international higher education in Chile? Very high, High, Moderate, Low, Very low.
4. In your opinion, what are the factors that have contributed to the development of international higher education in Chile? And, what are the factors that have inhibited?

SECOND PART: ABOUT QUALITY IN CHILEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

1. What does “quality in higher education” mean for you?
2. According to that understanding, do you think this process benefits Chilean higher education? In what way?
3. In your opinion, which one of the following best describes the current development level of quality in Chilean higher education? Very high, High, Moderate, Low, Very low.
4. In your opinion, what are the factors that have contributed to the development of quality in Chilean higher education? And, what are the factors that have inhibited?

THIRD PART: ABOUT A FRAMEWORK OF QUALITY IN INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Thinking about the Chilean context, in your opinion, what does “quality in international higher education” mean?
2. Please indicate how relevant the following mechanisms are for quality in international higher education? [Ideal Model]
3. Please indicate how feasible is to implement each of these mechanisms in Chile? [Feasible Model]
4. To finish, is there anything else that you would like to add in relation to the mechanisms for quality in international higher education in Chile?

III. FINAL MATTERS

To thank the interviewee for his/her time and participation in the project;

Assure participant that a verbatim transcript of the audio record will be sent to him/her for validation or deletions. Asking for cooperation in that following phase.
STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE
Quality in international higher education: A framework for the Chilean system

Please indicate how relevant the following mechanisms are for quality in international higher education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AT THE LEVEL OF POLICY AND STRATEGY</th>
<th>Not relevant</th>
<th>Slightly relevant</th>
<th>Moderately relevant</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Very relevant</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>National strategy for international higher education</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>National policy for quality assurance in higher education</td>
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<tr>
<td>International strategy at the quality assurance agency level</td>
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<tr>
<td>International strategy at the institutional level</td>
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<td>Code of good practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>International provider register</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Memorandum of understanding and/or cooperation</td>
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<td>Networks</td>
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<td>Programme learning outcomes</td>
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<td>Student feedback</td>
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Please indicate how feasible is to implement each of these mechanisms in Chile?

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<td>International strategy at the quality assurance agency level</td>
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<td>Recognition framework</td>
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APPENDIX D - RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS IN SPANISH VERSION STAGE 3

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO
Centro para el Estudio de la Educación Superior
Escuela de Graduados en Educación

Proyecto: Calidad en la educación superior internacional: Un marco para el sistema chileno

Investigador Principal: Emeline Jerez (Estudiante de doctorado)
Investigadores Asociados: Profesor Hamish Coates (Supervisor)
Profesor Leo Goedegebuure (Co-supervisor)

Nombre del Participante: ________________________________

1. Acepto participar en este proyecto, cuyos detalles han sido explicados y sobre el cual se me ha proporcionado información escrita en un lenguaje comprensible que ha quedado en mi poder.

2. Entiendo que el propósito de este proyecto es investigar sobre la calidad en la educación superior internacional para desarrollar y validar un marco para un sistema de educación superior.

3. Entiendo que mi participación en este proyecto es solamente para propósitos de investigación.

4. Reconozco que los posibles efectos de participar en este proyecto de investigación han sido explicados a mi entera satisfacción.

5. En este proyecto se requerirá mi participación en una entrevista y acepto que el investigador pueda usar los resultados en la forma descrita en la información a los participantes.

6. Entiendo que mi entrevista será registrada en audio.

7. Entiendo que mi participación es voluntaria y que quedo en plena libertad de retirarme del proyecto en cualquier momento sin explicación o consecuencia y, asimismo, de retirar cualquier dato provisto que no haya sido procesado.

8. Entiendo que los datos de esta investigación serán almacenados en la Universidad de Melbourne y, que serán destruidos después de 5 años.

9. He sido informado que la confidencialidad de la información que yo provea será resguardada con sujeción a cualquier requerimiento legal; mis datos serán protegidos con contraseña y quedarán accesibles solamente para los investigadores anteriormente individualizados.

10. Entiendo que dado que el número de participantes involucrados en el estudio es pequeño, puede que no sea posible garantizar mi anonimato.

11. Entiendo que después de firmar y devolver este formulario de consentimiento, el mismo será retenido por el investigador.

Firma Participante: __________________________ Fecha: ________________

HREC: 1545716.1; Date: 27/06/2016; Version: 1.2
INFORMACIÓN A LOS PARTICIPANTES
Centro para el Estudio de la Educación Superior
Escuela de Graduados en Educación
Universidad de Melbourne

Proyecto: Calidad en la educación superior internacional: Un marco para el sistema chileno

Profesor Hamish Coates (Investigador Responsable)
Tel: +61 3 8344 0756 Email: h.coates@unimelb.edu.au

Profesor Leo Goedegebuure (Co-Supervisor)
Tel: +61 3 8344 9246 Email: leo.g@unimelb.edu.au

Emeline Jerez (Estudiante de Doctorado) Email: ejerez@student.unimelb.edu.au

Tenemos el agrado de invitarle a participar en el proyecto conducido por Emeline Jerez (Estudiante de Doctorado), supervisado por el profesor Hamish Coates (Supervisor) y el profesor Leo Goedegebuure (Co-Supervisor) desde el Centro para el Estudio de la Educación Superior de la Escuela de Graduados en Educación de la Universidad de Melbourne, Australia. Su nombre y detalles de contacto han sido obtenidos desde fuentes públicas de información y usted ha sido considerado debido a su rol como actor relevante en el sistema de educación superior chileno.

El propósito de este estudio es desarrollar y validar un marco para la calidad de la educación superior internacional. Esta investigación, financiada a través del Programa Becas-Chile, formará parte de la tesis doctoral de la estudiante y, ha sido aprobada por el Comité de Ética en Investigación Humana de la Universidad de Melbourne.

En caso de que usted esté dispuesto a participar, nos gustaría que nos concediera una entrevista de aproximadamente 30 minutos para obtener una visión detallada de lo que significa la calidad en la educación superior internacional en Chile y los mecanismos asociados a este proceso. Con su permiso, la entrevista sería grabada en audio para asegurar un registro exacto de lo que usted planteó. Una vez que el audio sea trascrito, se le proporcionará una copia, de modo que pueda verificar si la información es correcta y/o algún dato requiere ser suprimido. Se estima que el tiempo total requerido no debiera exceder los 45 minutos.

Es nuestra intención proteger en la mayor medida posible su anonimato y la confidencialidad de sus respuestas, sin perjuicio de cualquier exigencia legal. Su nombre y datos de contacto se guardarán en un archivo computacional protegido con contraseña, separado de cualquier información que usted proporcione. Sólo los investigadores del proyecto podrán vincular sus respuestas con su identidad, por ejemplo, para saber donde enviar la transcripción de audio de la entrevista para su revisión. En el reporte final, usted será referido a través de un seudónimo. Se eliminará cualquier referencia relacionada con información personal que pudiera permitir reconocer su identidad, sin embargo, cabe notar que como el tamaño de la muestra es pequeño, existe la posibilidad de que alguien igualmente pudiera identificarlo. Los datos serán guardados en forma segura en la Escuela de Graduados en Educación de la Universidad de Melbourne durante cinco años a partir de la publicación de la tesis, y serán destruidos después de esa fecha.

HREC: 1545716.1; Date: 27/06/2016; Version: 1.2
Se espera que su participación en este proyecto no involucre ningún daño o peligro para su salud física o mental y, además, es completamente voluntaria. Si usted desea retirarse en algún momento, o desea retirar información que haya suministrado y se encuentre sin procesar, tiene libertad para hacerlo sin ningún tipo de consecuencia.

Una vez que la tesis doctoral asociada a esta investigación se haya completado, los investigadores pondrán a disposición un breve resumen de los principales hallazgos. Cualquier participante que desee tener acceso a este reporte puede contactar a ejerez@student.unimelb.edu.au para recibir una copia por email. Es posible que los resultados sean publicados y presentados en conferencias académicas. Los datos recopilados en papel serán almacenados en un fichero que se mantendrá cerrado con llave y los registros de audio se guardarán en un archivo computacional protegido con contraseña. Sólo los investigadores tendrán acceso a los datos del proyecto.

Si usted quisiera más información sobre el proyecto, por favor contacte a la estudiante de doctorado en la dirección email ejerez@student.unimelb.edu.au o a su supervisor en la dirección email h.coates@unimelb.edu.au.

En caso de tener comentarios o preocupaciones relacionadas con la conducción de este proyecto, por favor contacte a la Sra. Kate Murphy, Directora de la Oficina para la Ética e Integridad en la Investigación, Ética en Investigación Humana, Universidad de Melbourne, Victoria 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 o HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au.

Si usted quisiera participar en este proyecto, por favor indique que ha leído y entendido esta información mediante el formulario de consentimiento que se acompaña.

Le saludan atentamente,

Emeline Jerez
Estudiante de Doctorado

Prof. Hamish Coates
Supervisor

Prof. Leo Goedegebuure
Co-Supervisor
**PROTOCOLO ENTREVISTA**

Proyecto: Calidad en la educación superior internacional: Un marco para el sistema chileno

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### I. PREGUNTA DE INTRODUCCIÓN:

1. ¿Podría describir su rol en este momento?

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### II. PREGUNTAS PRINCIPALES:

#### PRIMERA PARTE: ACERCA INTERNATIONALIZACIÓN EN LA ES CHILENA

1. Cómo actor relevante de la educación superior chilena, ¿qué significa para usted “internacionalización en la educación superior”?

2. De acuerdo a lo que usted comprende como “internacionalización”, ¿cree que beneficia a la educación superior chilena? ¿En qué forma?

3. ¿Cuál es, en su opinión, el mejor descriptor del nivel de desarrollo actual de la educación superior internacional en Chile? Muy alto, Alto, Moderado, Bajo, Muy bajo.

4. ¿Qué factores, en su opinión, han contribuido al desarrollo de la educación superior internacional en Chile? Y, ¿qué factores lo han inhibido?

#### SEGUNDA PARTE: ACERCA DE LA CALIDAD EN LA ES CHILENA

1. ¿Qué significa para usted “calidad en la educación superior”?

2. De acuerdo a esa comprensión ¿cree que la calidad beneficia a la educación superior chilena? ¿En qué forma?

3. ¿Cuál es, en su opinión, el mejor descriptor del nivel de desarrollo actual de la calidad en la educación superior chilena? Muy alto, Alto, Moderado, Bajo, Muy bajo.

4. ¿Qué factores, en su opinión, han contribuido al desarrollo de la calidad en la educación superior Chilena? Y, ¿qué factores lo han inhibido?

#### TERCER PARTE: ACERCA DE UN MARCO PARA LA ES INTERNACIONAL

1. Pensando en el contexto chileno, en su opinión, ¿qué significa “calidad en la educación superior internacional”?

2. Por favor indique ¿cuáles importantes son los siguientes mecanismos para la calidad en la educación superior internacional? [Modelo Ideal]

3. Por favor indique ¿cuán factible es la implementación de cada uno de estos mecanismos en Chile? [Modelo Factible]

4. Para finalizar, ¿hay algo más que quisiera agregar en relación con los temas conversados?
**CUESTIONARIO ACTORES RELEVANTES**  
Proyecto: Calidad en la educación superior Internacional: Un marco para el sistema chileno

Por favor indique ¿cuán importantes son los siguientes mecanismos para la calidad en la educación superior internacional?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NIVEL</th>
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<th>Poco Importante</th>
<th>Moderada Importancia</th>
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Estrategia nacional para la internacionalización de la ES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Política nacional para el aseguramiento de la calidad de la ES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Estrategia internacionalización a nivel de agencia de calidad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Estrategia internacionalización a nivel de IES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| A NIVEL OPERACIONAL  
Marco de cualificaciones | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Estándares de calidad para la ES internacional | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Directrices internacionales (ej. UNESCO, OECD) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Código de buenas prácticas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Registro de proveedores internacionales | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Acuerdo de reconocimiento mutuo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Memorándum de entendimiento y/o cooperación | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Información | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Membresía en redes de calidad de la ES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Resultados de aprendizaje componentes internacionales | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| A NIVEL DE MONITOREO  
Revisión de políticas y prácticas nacionales | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Revisión de políticas y prácticas a nivel de institución de ES | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Información | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Encuestas a estudiantes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| A NIVEL DE MEJORAMIENTO  
Plan nacional de mejoramiento | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Cambios regulatorios | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
Por favor indique ¿cuán factible es la implementación de cada uno de estos mecanismos en Chile?

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### APPENDIX E - BASES FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

**Table E. 1:** Instruments relevance and feasibility at the national-local level in Chile

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<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>INSTRUMENTS</th>
<th>RELEVANCE</th>
<th>FEASIBILITY</th>
<th>CURRENT DEVELOPMENT</th>
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Author/s:
Jerez, Emeline

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