

## What is Institutional Accreditation?

Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira was granted Accreditation as an Institution of Excellence under resolution 2550 on 30th June 2005. It is as a result ranked alongside the best universities in the country and forms part of an elite group that enjoy this title of distinction.

The university submitted its application to the title in 2002, year in which the Board of Governors approved, under Agreement 10 of the same year, the creation of a Supervisory Committee in charge of the self-evaluation and accreditation processes. Thus at the end of 2002 it became possible to request of the National Council of Accreditation the corroboration that the university had met with the minimum standards required of any institution seeking accreditation. These include a minimum number of accredited programmes over a range of subjects. The process of self-evaluation was consequently initiated. It lasted approximately two years and culminated in a final analysis which was sent to the C.N.A. in November of 2004.

This body accepted receipt of the analysis and selected the academic assessors charged with the independent evaluation of the university. The assessors were: Ramses Hakim Murad, Co-ordinator of the Board of Commissioners for the Universidad del Bosque, Bogotá Elsa Margarita Uribe Gonzalez, Secretary of the Board of Commissioners Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá; Ernesto Guhl Nannetti of the Quinaxi Institute for Sustainable Development, Bogotá; Julio César Cañon of the Universidad Nacional, Bogotá and Juna Tomicic of the Universidad Católica del Norte, Antofagasta, Chile.

Their findings were submitted before the National Council of Accreditation (C.N.A.) which then elected a Councillor for defence. On the 22nd June 2005 at the height of the CNA discussions it was recommended that the Minister of Education accredit the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira. On 30th June 2005 the Minister of Education, by means of a resolution, granted Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira Institutional Accreditation for a period of seven years.

The act of Institutional Accreditation is applied to an institution as a whole. It is the institution therefore in its entirety that is recognised for its record of achievement both in the goals it sets itself and in terms of its social responsibility. These elements being fundamental to the mission statement and educational concept of any institution.

By the same gesture it certifies the quality with which the university conducts its affairs both with regards to its staff and its students; in the interaction between academia and society and in the competent development of its administrative bodies, management strategy, health programme, sports facilities and financial resources.

One of the greatest benefits in being accredited as an Institution of Excellence is stipulated in Article 38 of Decree 2566, 10th September 2003. Therein are stated the minimum standards and further requirements demanded in order to be able to offer and develop academic programmes. Furthermore it declares that accredited institutions of higher education can

offer and develop academic programmes and specialist subjects anywhere in the country. This can be obtained simply by requesting a certificate of authenticity for the aforementioned programmes from the Ministry of Education rather than having to undergo academic assessment or submit paperwork for revision and without having to pass through the National Commission for the Quality Control of higher education institutions CONACES.

Just as important, it represents a vote of confidence on the part of society that our institution is one of quality. This has a positive effect not only on the university and the role it has to play but also on its graduates who will be prized on the job market.

What is more it will be able to take advantage of all the academic agreements established by the CNA with partner universities around the world. This will increase the mobility of students and academic groupings as well as the interchange between research networks and the collaboration between communities.

Amongst the strong points highlighted by the academic assessors in their final report were:

- The university's commitment to the quality of its academic programmes, evident in the accreditation of six undergraduate degrees and the renewal of the accreditation given originally to Medical and Industrial Engineering disciplines.
- The organisation and distribution of funds as well as the development of lines of research and investigative groups encouraging the participation of the students.
- The strategies implemented in the development of the institution and efficient use of the resources and space available to the university.

The Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira therefore not only can be said to work at a regional level, offering outstanding education and participation in local development; it is also an institution of national merit that meets the highest exigencies of quality. It is a model of responsibility, integrity, equality, coherence, transparency, democracy and efficiency. The university is effective, sensitive to its context and above all able to guarantee an outstanding service to society. All of these are fundamental considerations when accrediting institutions.

**Fuente:** <http://www2.utp.edu.co/english/institutional/211/what-is-institutional-accreditation>