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Abstract

his article reports the results of a study about the views of quality managers, in Chilean universities, with regard to the meaning of quality in higher education. The article begins with a brief description of Chilean higher education system. It portrays the context of the last 30 years, with a growing number of universities and little state regulation. An increase in coverage, student population's heterogeneity and diversity of the educational offer and of the quality of the education provided are described. After the nineties, the Chilean state established control mechanisms and demands for accountability. Consequently, universities developed organisational changes within the non-academic staff, incorporating professionals to administer quality assurance. The study analyses the opinions of these professionals. Data were gathered in two stages; the evidence discussed in this article comes mainly from the second stage, in which 20 quality administrators were interviewed to explore their conceptions of quality in higher education. The most recurring distinctions identified are framed within a conceptual scope that varies between complying with the demands of the external

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environment and adjusting internally to institutional goals. There were no significant differences between the interviewees from different universities. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)