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Having a look inside-out: Impact of Self-evaluation processes on quality assurance in higher education - the case of Unibe University

by

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ABSTRACT

This study sets to investigate the use of self-evaluation mechanisms and processes as a device for improving quality in higher education. The study presents a single, longitudinal case study of a private university in the Dominican Republic and provides an account of how two self-evaluation processes helped in shaping a culture of self-reflection, quality awareness and actually improved some aspects of institutional performance. Most existing studies self-evaluations to date are grounded in the context of developed nations. This study therefore, aims to contribute to the existing literature on self-evaluation in higher education by exploring the experience of a private university in a developing nation.

The findings show that the self-evaluation processes acted as triggers of positive change and improved the quality of a number of institutional functions as well as helped develop an evaluation culture in the university. The study recommends a model for Self-evaluation Quality Culture as well as a framework for successful self-evaluation as a trigger of positive change.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Vhyna Ortega

declare that the thesis entitled

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and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
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- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- none of this work has been published before submission.

Signed:

Date:.....

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Definitions and abbreviations

Unibe	Universidad Iberoamericana
CONES	National Counsel of Higher Education
UASD	Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo
MESCyT	Ministerio de Educación Superior Ciencia y Tecnología (Rep Dominicana)
CEU	Circulo de Egresados de Unibe (Alumni Circle of Unibe)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizaton
ADAAC	Asociación Dominicana de Autoestudio y Acreditación
IESALC	Intl. Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
CINDA	Centro de Interuniversitario de Desarrollo (Chile)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CVCP	Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (now Universities UK)
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
EUA	European University Association
QME	Quality Management in Education
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
TQM	Total Quality Management
EQFM	European Quality Foundation Model
SACS	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis
CIE	Commission of Institutional Evaluation (Unibe)
PPS	Permanent Programme of Self-evaluation
SEF	Self-evaluation in schools
SI	School Improvement
RADAR	Results, Approach, Development, Deployment, Assessment and Review
UNAM	Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico

Chapter 1: Introduction

The main purpose of this research was to analyse the underlying principles of self-evaluation processes and how they relate to quality improvement and change by comparing the results from two self-evaluation processes conducted in a private university in the Dominican Republic in order to contribute to the literature on quality improvement, and evaluation in that type of setting. The research was conducted using the case of 'Universidad Iberoamericana' (herein after Unibe) in the Dominican Republic. The particular case was conveniently chosen due to the full access I was granted. For a period of time before embarking on this PhD I was Director of Strategic Planning (2001-2003) at Unibe and I was in charge of designing and conducting the first comprehensive self-evaluation process for local accreditation purposes at a time where the need for Universities to be accredited by an independent body was just beginning to be explored and understood in the Dominican Republic. At the time the study was designed, there was no significant literature or practical evidence of how and/or if universities in the Dominican Republic conducted self-evaluation process and whether these processes had any impact on quality improvement. There is still very little written on university evaluation, self-evaluation, accreditation, quality improvement or quality culture in the higher education system in the Dominican Republic and therefore this research aimed at providing an account of how a private university in a developing country used these self-evaluation processes for quality improvement and how this case may also be useful in helping other universities understand and use self-evaluation techniques for quality improvement purposes.

1.1 Rationale of the study

The role of higher education in developing countries is one of great significance and one that has not been explored in as much depth as needed in the Dominican Republic. Dominican universities usually limit themselves to writing evaluation reports that meet the basic requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education, but hardly any go beyond that. Many of the documents available are descriptions of systematic audits conducted by the Ministry of Education or presentation of statistics and/or historical accounts of how the system has evolved though the years. Authors such as Altbach (2002) argue that higher education can help developing countries meet the challenges of the knowledge economy and therefore

it is important to conduct research that contributes to achieving this goal. However, he explains that in order for higher education to actually help meet the challenges, higher education systems in such countries need to overcome major problems that are usually generated by severe resource constraints and in some extreme cases lack of resources, poor educational quality, low relevance to economic needs, and rigid governance and management structures. These resource-constraints usually lead to funds being allocated only to resolve urgent situations and hardly any resources go in to preventing such situations from happening in the first place. This study focused on highlighting the importance of using systematic tools such as self-evaluation where prevention and prompt problem identification are at the heart of improvement.

Jackson (2001) affirms that self-evaluations are basic tools for effective management of change because they help in the organisation's learning process and therefore makes it respond to change better. Therefore, it could be argued that self-evaluations can be used as a tool to identify the problems universities in developing nations have and help them improve their situation, contributing that way to continuous quality improvement in the higher education systems of developing nations.

Many organisations undergo evaluation processes to determine the situation they are in and to identify their weaknesses. Evaluations diagnose problems and usually suggest solutions, are commonly considered as valuable instruments for ensuring the wellbeing of the organisation and their results can also be used as examples to show what is to be done in order to prevent certain situations. Self-evaluations, self-studies or self-assessments (the three terms will be used to mean the same throughout the document) are defined by Kells (1995a) as a process which describes and analyses conditions, intentions and results in order to bring improvement to the institution.

Higher education institutions are of great importance for the achievement of a new social and economic strategy for development. There is extensive discussion on the view that the future of developing countries might depend on the good measurement of its capacity for development in knowledge generation (for example see UNESCO, 2003). The ability to create, adapt and adopt new technologies constitutes a challenge, both to increasing the competitiveness of the region and to improving the potential for involvement in the world economy. Because of all these factors, the expectations that are placed upon universities, professional and technical institutes and other tertiary institutions today require a redefinition of

policies, plans, programs, vision, curricula and management capacity, and, above all, they require a great commitment to innovation, deep transformation and quality. These steps are fundamental in order to reach a new economic stage of development, of productivity and of competitiveness; a great challenge for Dominican higher education institutions. Among other challenges for the universities in the Dominican Republic, Mejia (2003) suggests: to keep an open door policy in enrolment, to create a true public higher education system, to further develop postgraduate studies, to link studies with research and to create better conditions for teaching. By presenting the case of Unibe, highlighting the uses they have given to a tool like self-evaluation and the impact it had on their development as an institution, this study intended to present a university who tried to overcome the challenges mentioned by Mejia (2003) by looking inwards first.

This study aimed at looking at the case of a private university in a developing country and how self-evaluation mechanisms helped create quality awareness. In more detail, the specific objectives of this study were:

1. To analyse the underlying principles of self-evaluation processes and how they relate to quality improvement and change.
2. To analyse and compare the results of two self-evaluation processes conducted at the same university and determine:
 - a. the impact self-evaluations may have on stakeholders' perception of quality and/or evaluation culture
 - b. the impact self-evaluations may have and on overall quality assurance/improvement in a private university
 - c. the usefulness they have for university management and if they can act as triggers of positive change

By achieving these objectives the study aimed at contributing to building on the scarce and much needed literature on higher education management in developing nations, providing a comprehensive account, of the impact of self-evaluation processes on quality improvement and quality perception of stakeholders of private universities. Through this study, other higher education institutions within similar contexts may benefit from understanding Unibe's experience and may find the framework, models and guidelines recommended as a result of this study useful for their own experience.

The research problem identified for this research was to determine the usefulness of self-evaluation processes in terms of quality assurance. Many universities, especially in developing nations such as the Dominican Republic, get involved in

evaluation processes without realising the potential uses these processes may have. Many of these evaluations are used as controlling tools and are created using simple situation description and not in-depth analysis which could then may be used to highlight potential problems and propose possible solutions. If self-evaluations are used mainly for accreditation purposes, what is the true benefit of conducting them? How could processes such as self-evaluations, imposed in many cases by external agencies or government pressure, contribute to quality improvement if these were conducted as 'tick-in-the-box' processes and not embedded in the culture of an organisation? How can staff can get successfully involved in these processes and make evaluation a part of their normal activities? Is there any empirical evidence or practical account of private universities which compares self-evaluation processes conducted at different periods of time in the same institutions and getting any benefit from it? Questions such as these ones set the context of the research problem.

In particular, the research questions the study aimed at answering were:

1. How do the principles of self-evaluation relate to quality improvement?
2. What is the use and impact of self-evaluation techniques:
 - a) on stakeholder's quality perception and/or evaluation culture?
 - b) for university quality improvement?
 - c) For university management and change?

The study compared results of two self-evaluation processes conducted at two different time periods at Unibe (2002 and 2007). The processes were conducted using the same methodology (see Appendix 1) and results were compared and linked to changes that occurred, in order to provide answers to these research questions. Furthermore, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted with key staff members to determine their perceptions on the impact of the self-evaluation processes had.

1.2 Higher Education in the Dominican Republic

In order to understand the situation of higher education in the Dominican Republic, it is important to situate its system within a wider context. Historically speaking, the Dominican Republic is considered a Latin American country due to its Spanish heritage. Geographically speaking, it is considered the second biggest country of the Caribbean.

The International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC), an institute created by UNESCO which works to improve higher education systems in that geographical area, prepared a very interesting paper on the reforms developed in some Latin America and Caribbean countries between 1998-2003 (UNESCO, 2003) which provides a summary of reforms in the area from the last 50 years. The First Reform started in 1918 with the Reformation of Cordoba (University of Cordoba, Argentina), which ignited a push for autonomy and co-government of universities “overcoming the elite models and democratizing access to Higher Education to new urban contingents” (Rama, 2007, p11). The first reform also promoted the expansion of a model of public, free, and monopolistic higher education, homogeneous level of quality through internal mechanisms in the institutions and few professions and high-hierarchy teaching (UNESCO 2003). Arocena and Sutz (2005, p573) state that this first significant movement “emerged as a revolution ‘from below’ and ‘from inside’ against an ancient regime of a very old type of university”. They stated that for several decades during this reform the Latin American higher education landscape was dominated by a quite ‘original’ university which was distant from government and industry but not a socially isolated institution, as it maintained ties with other sectors: an attribute which is currently highly desired by modern universities.

The Second Reform, also named ‘Mercantilization and differentiation’ took place between the 1960s and 1970s and was produced within the frame of a strong crisis of free-public education due to financial restrictions and political conflicts. This Reform was characterised by the birth and expansion of private higher education. This freedom of expansion without regulatory control produced a “global deterioration of degrees” (Rama, 2007, p12), which was very evident in the Dominican Republic as will be discussed below.

By the end of the century higher education systems in Latin America were facing some serious issues due to some of the changes promoted by the Second Reform, to name a few: lack of mechanisms to ensure quality within the institutions, lack of incorporation of new information and communication technologies in their curricula and teaching systems which were increasingly separated from research in a context of an overcrowded teaching market with low levels of training and preparation (UNESCO 2003). Altbach (1979) presents a number of problems universities in developing nations face among which he highlights the lack of importance that is given to research in such universities, and, although his book is quite dated, it is sad to find that the situation of many of the universities in the Dominican Republic is still in some ways very similar to what he describes.

The final phase presented in the IESALC/UNESCO higher education reforms report (UNESCO, 2003) presents is the reform that resulted from the issues just mentioned. It began in the middle of the 1990s and it is still currently taking place. Among the distinctive features was the new regulatory role of the State through the establishment of national quality assurance systems.

Lanz et al. (2003) state that reforms usually happened within two dimensions, structural reform and reformations in the ways of thinking. They claim that in order to change the universities ways of thinking the following points should be approached: Social Relevancy, Democracy, Fairness, Quality and Innovation, Responsible Autonomy, Exercise of Critical Thought, Integral Formation, Humanistic and Ethical Education and Lifelong Education. From this list, 'quality' was the main focus of this study and it tried to determine whether, as Lanz et al. (2003) suggest, changes in quality perception actually trigger changes the way of thinking of the university.

The concept of quality in higher education will be further explored in the Literature Review (part 2.3); however, it is interesting to present at this point information on how quality is seen from the Latin American perspective. According to Aguila-Cabrera (2003), the concept of quality in Latin American Higher Education usually relates to excellence, a response to the requirements of society, a dependence to declared purposes, social pertinence, general international norms and the comparison of pre-established standards. A concept of quality which lies close to the reality of Latin American universities was also presented by Dias Sobrinho (2006, p282) as follows: "Quality means the degree in which a group of indicators owned by higher education institutions meet a pre-established necessity or expectation". The more an institution is closer to the pre-established standards, the more quality it is considered to have, and if it reaches the maximum standards it is then considered to be excellent.

However, the main challenge faced by the region according to Dias Sobrinho (2006) does not seem to be to be able to define quality but for universities to 'grow' with quality. Gonzalez (2008) highlights some of the problems with quality in Latin American universities which include a limited number of teaching staff with post-graduate degrees, difficulties in managing human resources, dated curricula, the use of traditional methodologies in teaching, scarcity of vocational orientation, poor efficiency of teaching processes, inadequacy of information systems, lack of regulation in the offer or programmes, low level of financial investment, poor links

with the needs of the market and limited links of the institutional mission within the context of each country.

Abukari and Corner (2010, p192) affirm that:

For higher education in developing countries to make any significant progress and strive one of the important areas it needs to tackle is to make efforts to establish a clear conceptual and pragmatic meaning to the concept of quality within its contexts.

The issues highlighted by UNESCO (2003) and Gonzalez (2008) were, and some still are, very present in the Dominican higher education system, especially the lack of use of new information and communication technology, the lack of modern management systems, the lack of justness in free, publicly funded institutions and overall, the lack of mechanisms to secure quality and value of degrees. Teacher quality in some cases has reduced due to several reasons, including low salaries and wages; and full-time teaching staff are almost non-existent and therefore research is not high on the agenda for some universities.

Even so, the Dominican Republic plays an important role in the history of higher education in Latin America as it is the host of the first university in the Americas. In October 1538, the *University of Santo Tomás of Aquino* was founded. During the 473 years of its existence, the now UASD University suffered changes and similar transformations to those of state universities in other Latin America countries. These changes include various periods of inactivity or closure, one of them for 90 years (1822-1912), and culminated in a long process of fights for autonomy in the early 1960s; this movement was influenced by the impact of the Cordoba Reform. For more than 400 years, the country only had one university and, in a period of almost 50 years managed to increase the total number of higher education institutions to 32- and growing!

This period of rapid increase of higher education institutions in the Dominican Republic marked the significant beginning of a more modern system of higher education and a series of laws were issued in order to regulate this new-born system (Royero, 2002) starting in 1966 with the Law regulating the creation of private university creation.

It is important to note that, regardless of the dispositions of the Laws to control the system, during the period 1962-1983, an accelerated growth of the number of higher education institutions was evident, and many universities were created without necessarily going through a process that guaranteed fulfilment of the

norms established. The quality levels of such institutions were uncertain and this period of uncontrolled university growth had a very negative impact on the reputation of Dominican universities, nationally and internationally. This situation provoked objections that created the conditions for the creation of the National Council of Higher Education (CONES) which was to evaluate and regulate higher education in the Dominican Republic.

In 2001, a revised higher education Law emphasised the need for quality improvement in some of its articles. However, the role of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MESCyT) has been mainly regulatory, conducting periodic reviews every five years, without providing sustainable quality assurance mechanisms and, in some cases in the past, as was widely reported to me in interviews and conversations, it was not applying regulations with enough rigour. This comment does not intend to undermine the efforts and desires of the Ministry for quality improvement; it just suggests that, although present, facilitation of quality improvement in universities may not have been as high on the agenda as it should be.

However, during the past two decades, the Ministry of Higher Education realised the need to focus on quality improvement and started limiting the creation of new private universities; this, of course, put more pressure on existing private institutions to start meeting at least some quality standards. In 2001, the Ministry also started collecting information on management procedures in order to document and compare such processes between universities. Another positive development is that the Ministry of Higher Education in the Dominican Republic, like most of the other Ministries in Latin America and Caribbean (see UNESCO, 2007) has understood the importance of bonding higher education institutions with their environment, and has transmitted this to universities by promoting cooperation with diverse organisations of the economic, social, and cultural sectors. Higher education institutions have become aware of the fact that they cannot continue functioning in a relatively isolated manner, that they can project themselves towards the outside world, nationally and internationally, and can cooperate with several institutions without losing their identities, their academic aims, and, very important for private universities, without losing their market share. These changes have been so evident in universities in Dominican Republic that many have established partnerships with international universities, local companies, government agencies and, most surprisingly of all because of the Dominican academic mentality, partnerships with what traditionally they had considered to be their direct competition: other local universities offering similar courses (see for example the

work being done by the Independent Financial Centre of the Americas, where universities which were traditionally competing against each other now work together to offer training in different areas). The Ministry has played an important role in promoting such issues.

The higher education systems in Latin America and in the Dominican Republic have gone through difficult stages and are evolving constantly, however, there does not seem to be enough research on higher education management to help in the positive evolution of such systems. One of the purposes of this study was to contribute to the bibliography on higher education in developing countries highlighting the particular case of Unibe in an attempt to understand quality issues surrounding the university. Having reviewed the existing literature on higher education practices in Latin America and in particular in the Dominican Republic, this research aimed at bringing together quality issues presented by different authors and placed them within the context of university self-evaluation processes so as to understand its usefulness and possible impact on quality improvement.

1.3 Universidad Iberoamericana (Unibe)

The *Universidad Iberoamericana* (Unibe) was founded in 1982 as a result of initiatives articulated by the *Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana* (Institute of Iberoamerican Cooperation) and by its Executive Committee in the Dominican Republic.

The University itself was established through the effort of the Dominican authorities, and the main causes that motivated its establishment can be summarised as follows: the celebration of the 5th Centennial of the Cultural Encounter among Spain and America; the intention to fortify the Hispanic ties among the American countries and Spain, and also to offer an answer to the educational needs of the country, as an institution of high academic quality.

The University opened its doors in September 1983, offering academic programs in Law, Engineering, and Medicine. The following year Unibe added Architecture and Business Management to its roster and in 1985 established the Dentistry program. Over the years, Unibe has expanded; today, more than 6,000 enrolled students pursue programs in a total of 18 fields and over 7,000 alumni, members of the Alumni Circle of Unibe (CEU). At present, some of the degrees the University offers are degrees in Architectural Design and Decoration, Advertising Communication,

Tourism and Hotel Management, Marketing, Business Management, Religion Sciences, Early Childhood Education, and Psychology, degrees in Medicine, Dentistry, and Law, Civil Engineering, Industrial Engineering and Architecture.

Unibe's academic year consists of three 16-week semesters, which include classes, coursework and exams. Its founders and senior managers argue that academic excellence has been the University's driving force since its creation and that the development of state-of-the-art infrastructure, the recruiting of highly qualified professors, and the careful structuring of syllabi all come together to achieve this ideal of excellence. They go on to affirm that from the moment of its establishment in 1982, Unibe expressed its willingness to help in the development of the Dominican Republic, dedicating itself to the scientific and academic exercise and to forming the leaders that will promote modernisation in the country.

In 2006, significant changes took place due to the Institutional Reform. The Institutional Reform consisted of a plan of action that started with a re-definition of the mission, vision and values of the institution. Then a formal strategic plan was designed (Strategic plan 2006-16). Following the Strategic Plan, a model for educational reform was designed and implemented. For this to be successful proper training of the academic staff needed to take place as well as a full revision of all academic programmes and curriculum. The Strategic Plan was successfully designed with the following objectives:

1. Design, implement and consolidate the "Unibe Educational Model" for the teaching and learning process
2. Ensure academic quality to its three main dimensions: Students, Teachers and programmes of study
3. Promote research in order to answer to the needs of the country
4. Consolidate academic excellence
5. Maintain the infrastructure at its high quality level
6. Promote efficiency and improvement in all its processes
7. Maintain an excellent working environment and proper levels of communication
8. Acquire the technology needed to guarantee the successful application of the 'Educational Model'
9. Strengthen and expand the alliances, agreements and inter-institution exchanges
10. Develop extension of the university so that it may have the desired impact on the community

11. Incorporate the institutional values of the university in the members of its community and create students that are known for their responsible leadership in society

Unibe has defined its philosophical principles and has tried to diffuse them through different means. This study explored the inside world of Unibe over a 7 year period to determine the impact self-evaluation processes had on the creation of a quality culture inside the university.

1.3.1 Previous Evaluation Efforts in UNIBE

Unibe has been subject to different types of evaluations since its creation. These evaluations have responded to the requirements of national and international institutions as well as to satisfying internal needs. The following is a very brief summary of the most important evaluation processes carried out through the years at Unibe, before the self-evaluation in 2002, which along with the self-evaluation of 2007, were the main focus of the study.

1. Diagnosis of Dominican Higher Education 1985, (CONES, 1985). In 1985, Unibe formed part of a group of institutions studied for the elaboration of the Diagnosis of the Dominican Higher Education System, carried out by the National Counsel of Higher Education (CONES). This report included an overview of the philosophy, mission and administrative objectives, academic structure and management of the Dominican higher education institutions. Although this report included some classifications and generalities about the universities of the country it did not emit judgments; it only grouped and categorised the institutions following different criteria.
2. Self-study 1990 (Unibe, 1990). In May 1990, a self-study report was presented which contained the results of a process of investigation and reflection of the University as totality. The study was based on some general guidelines that were established by ADAAC (Dominican Accreditation Agency). This report was very general and did not involve the different stakeholders in the gathering of information. Although it had some useful insights, many of the points it highlights were biased due to the fact that it was conducted by a very limited number of people and did not involve the opinion of the rest of the academic community. It marked a significant moment in the evaluation history of the university where it recognised the

importance of self-evaluation; however, it did not become a permanent part of its managerial processes. The self-study was not conducted in a truly objective way and it mostly presented the 'good' parts of the university and hardly mentions any 'bad' parts. The report included a description of the governance structure of the institution, the profile and functions of the academic faculty, and a general overview of the administrative processes, the academic management and the services that the university offers.

3. 5-year Evaluation - '*Diagnostico Quinquenal 1989-1994*' (CONES/Unibe, 1995). In September 1994, the results of the Evaluation were presented carried out by the National Counsel of Higher Education (CONES) and Unibe. The report contained a brief analysis of the areas evaluated, such as: Institutional Philosophy, Students and Alumni, Institutional and Academic Policies, Educational Level of the Administrative and Academic Personnel, Curriculum Offering, Permanent Education, Planning, Self-evaluation, Investigation, Publications, Political of Extension and Services, Registration, Admissions, Library, Laboratories and Shops, Physical Plant and Financial Resources. It aimed to gather mainly descriptive information on what were the universities doing during that period and how they were developing their activities in order to propose recommendations intended to remedy the faults detected.
4. 5-year Evaluation '*Diagnostico Quinquenal 1994-1998*' (CONES/Unibe, 1999). In 1998 the report of the Evaluation was elaborated for the period of 1994-1998. This evaluation, performed by requirements of CONES, had four general objectives: to determine the level of correspondence among the Academic-Administrative management of the institution with its mission, vision and objectives; to verify if the processes that the units of Admissions and Registration execute were carried out with transparency, control, organisation, efficiency and security, and if they agreed with the institutional regulations of CONES; to determine if the teaching and administrative staff have the professional experience required for the fulfilment of its functions; and to verify that the institution arranged the infrastructure facilities. Again, a descriptive study that gathered information in the areas of interest.
5. Evaluations to the School of Medicine. The School of Medicine of Unibe has been object of diverse evaluations performed by national and international agencies for the purpose of verifying the level of quality of the programs offered, to determine the level of achievement of the objectives formulated, and to obtain the formation associations recognition in the area of the health.

After presenting this brief summary of the evaluation efforts at Unibe, it is important to note that traditionally within the university there has been a slight resistance towards evaluation and it has been seen as something imposed by outside institutions to meet certain standards. Some of the evaluations carried out in Unibe, as well in all other Dominican universities throughout the years, have not been carried out with sufficiently high standards and their results cannot be considered reliable due to the amount of bias and subjective interest of each institution. Furthermore, most of them have been conducted solely for the purpose of fulfilling certain requirements and not for the specific purpose of using their results for quality assurance. That is why the results of this study were viewed as important, not only for the university, but also to the higher education system in the Dominican Republic as it presented a pragmatic account of two self-evaluation processes conducted aiming at quality improvement.

1.5 Conclusion

This study examined the case of Unibe University, a private university in a developing country, and how self-evaluation mechanisms helped create quality awareness within this context. The importance of the study can be seen from different perspectives, including contribution to the literature on higher education management in a developing country. However, the study also provided a detailed account of how self-evaluation could be used as quality improvement tool within a system which shows no evidence of ever systematically using results of evaluation processes for these purposes. The story told within this research contributes to knowledge by providing a framework which is both useful, and, more importantly, relevant to the higher education system in developing nations, something that has been in scarce offer to universities in developing nations.

The dissertation was arranged into 5 chapters, including this introduction. Chapter 2 aimed at providing the reader with a comprehensive literature review that discussed definitions of what a University is and who its stakeholders are along with an analysis of what is meant by University Quality Culture. The literature review also discussed Quality and Quality Assurance, Evaluation, Accreditation and Self-Evaluation. Chapter 3 aimed at providing the methodology chosen to conduct this study, explaining how the study was designed and the methods and techniques used. Chapter 4 provided an analysis of the findings and discussion of results and Chapter 5 aimed at summarising the conclusions of this study and presenting the recommendations of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This section will concentrate on presenting previous work from other authors that relates to the research and on critically evaluating their views, highlighting strengths and weaknesses of the theories discussed. It will also introduce theories that will act as the basis for data collection and analysis, and give the reader a flavour of the areas that have encouraged this work forward. The theories presented will be linked with the research questions of this study and will be also used to illuminate the findings.

The chapter will start by giving an overview of how universities are defined and the types of higher education institutions currently operating as well as who their stakeholders are. Following, an introduction to the concept of culture and what some authors mean by quality culture within the university context is presented. It then moves to the issue of quality in higher education and discusses different views on quality and quality assurance in higher education. Finally, the importance of the evaluation concept within higher education is highlighted, defining accreditation and self-evaluation processes in universities.

2.1 The University

Defining the term 'university' is a difficult task. The university can be seen as a concept, as a group of people with certain goals, as a group of buildings, as a culture, and even as an 'idea'. The idea of a university has been subject of many books (See Newman, 1873; Pelikan, 1992; Smith & Langslow, 1999) which focus on finding a philosophical definition for the term university, trying to find its essence and what its main priorities are. This study, however, was not primarily concerned with discussing the essence of the university or the views on where research should be headed or what should be included in the curricula. This research did not intend to undermine the importance of understanding the values and priorities of the university as a centre of higher learning; rather, the study intended to focus on the more practical and managerial side of the university as well as on presenting to the reader the university in the context of developing countries.

It is important, however, to understand what we mean by 'university' before exploring its more practical side. A traditional definition of the ideal type of universities was given by the German humanist Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835). He described the ideal university as "an autonomous body of self-governing professionals, accountable to and monitored by itself...with a clear boundary between the academy and the outside world" (in Baert and Shipman, 2005, p159). The 'Humboldtian' university never really existed in its pure form but its definition helps in understanding how the concept of 'university' has changed over the years. This traditional definition, while being close to what many academics might desire, may no longer be accurate as increasingly universities are asked to produce professionals with relevant employability skills for the labour market and the links of such institutions and its academics with the 'external world' are seen as an asset.

Perhaps a more current definition was given by Lockwood (1985, p30) as follows:

In its main purpose it (the university) is an organisation; it employs labour and capital which interact through formal processes to generate the products of teaching and research... Equally, in those basic purposes it functions as a community, both in that relationships amongst its current members have ends in themselves and in that provides supports and services for social cohesion. Similarly, it functions as an institution by the intrinsic nature of the values placed permanently (beyond the current community) upon activities, such as scholarship.

Even more recently, Animos (2007, p307) suggested the aims of the university are to transmit "scientifically documented knowledge through teaching" and "advancing

science through research and engaging in economic development, social prosperity and progress”, clearly linking the university with the outside world instead of highlighting its boundaries with it, as the Humboldtian model suggested.

Other authors, such as Lazzeroni and Piccaluga (2003), define the university in terms of the mission such institutions have, which is an interesting way to offer a definition since it focuses on specific purposes of its existence. Lazzeroni (2001, p40) states that there are four specific missions universities should have as follows:

- first of all, the university can be identified as the most important knowledge factory, i.e. an organisation oriented towards basic research and involved in the production of new knowledge;
- the university is also a human capital factory, at various level of specialisation;
- further, the university is a technology transfer factory, that is, an organisation which interacts with the business world and favours the exploitation and transfer of its scientific results;
- finally, the university is a territorial development factory, through the promotion and management of projects - more or less complex - of territorial innovation

Lazzaroni and Piccaluga (2003) are careful to present the basic mission of the university which in their view is to produce knowledge. However, unlike earlier definitions, they make sure to include that the knowledge it creates is linked to practical use.

For the purpose of this research, the university was seen and analysed as: a) an *organisation* (Livingstone, 1974, Lockwood & Davies, 1985) subject to theories of organisational behaviour and evaluation; b) a *community* - with a group of stakeholders each with different expectations of what the university should be; and c) an *institution* - with inherited values, core activities and specific culture (since one of the main research questions is linked to quality culture).

Universities have been a central part of society for hundreds of years and through different times have faced many challenges. Kells (1995a, p458) states that the university “continue to march at its own beat as it has for 800 years, surviving these challenges”. In particular on Latin America, the place of the university is key in promoting development in such countries. Lanz et al. (2007) state that Latin American and Caribbean universities should clarify the epistemic framework they have as well as their place in society. CINDA (2007) suggests that, the iberamerican university in particular, should incorporate a new university model on the basis of the traditions of the modern university, incorporating new functions

and guidelines and therefore making the university the motor for sustainable development for Latin American societies.

However, becoming a modern university is not an easy task. Duderstadt (2000, p304), in his book which intends to present the characteristics the university of the 21st Century, affirms that, according to an old saying, the best way to predict the future is to invent it. Therefore, by envisioning and seeking to understand the paradigms of the university of the 21st Century, we will, in fact, take steps to create them. He predicts that the characteristics of the new university will shift from:

- teaching to learning organisations
- passive students to active learners
- faculty-centred to learner-centred
- solitary learning to interactive, collaborative learning
- classroom learning to learning communities
- linear, sequential curricula to hyperlearning experiences
- just in case learning to just in time learning to just for you learning
- student or alumnus to lifelong member of a learning community
- campus-based to asynchronous to ubiquitous learning opportunities (Duderstadt 2000, p304)

Many of those functions are already present in some Latin American universities, while others seem to be moving away from such trends – most of the times unwillingly because of lack of resources.

However, Kells (1995b, p458) argues that universities are “protected by a structure with basic resistance to change which has evolved over the centuries”. This is true for many universities in Latin America which are very traditional and in many ways resistant to change. Kells (1995b) goes on to describe specific characteristics that make universities resistant to change which are summarised in the table below. These characteristics were taken into consideration when the results for this study were analysed and were part of the conversations that took place in the interviews while trying to identify if self-evaluation process promote positive change in universities.

Table 1: Why universities resist change

Characteristics of universities which makes them resistant to change
Too many purposes and goals which are often poorly stated, and upon which there may be only meagre consensus and a confused sense of priority
The basic 'production' or process steps in universities which are not as sequential and linear and not as interdependent as they are in simpler, single-purpose, for example, product-oriented institutions
Extensive and complicated delegation of authority in the organization
The nature of the governance - how decisions are made
The people of the university themselves, particularly those who most feel they are the university, the faculty (scholars and teachers)
The usual absence of useful and timely information about the organization and how it does or does not work, and the lack of mechanisms to gather and use such information.

Source: adapted from Kells (1995b)

It is possible to imagine some of the positive shifts Duderstadt (2000) mentions in universities in developed countries; however, it is much more difficult to imagine them in developing nations where the characteristics mentioned by Kells (1995b) are even more evident. Duderstadt (2000) is right in stating that we must try to invent our future. However, each country has to face their own realities and overcome their different challenges. What for some nations looks like the near future, for others seems more like a distant dream. For example, Arocena and Sutz (2005, p577) affirm that

the 'academic revolution' of the 19th century, that made research a main function of universities in the industrialized world, was transmitted at least a century later to Latin America in a slow, gradual and certainly 'non-revolutionary' manner.

Many universities in the Dominican Republic are far from being close to the university Duderstadt describes. However, through research in areas that help the advancement of universities in developing countries we may help make some of those dreams come true. Hopefully this piece of research will contribute to the better understanding of quality in the higher education environment and processes that help improve of universities in developing countries.

2.1.1 Types of Universities

Universities have been evolving for centuries. It is safe to say that universities, along with the church and the military system, are among the oldest institutions in the

world. Patterson (1997) suggests that, although many authors believe that the origins of the university as we now know it can be traced to the Middle Ages, the university emerged from the community of scholars of the 5th Century in Ancient Greece. The purpose of this part of the literature review is to define the different types of university and provide information on how such an ancient institution has transformed into different kinds of organisations depending on the orientation they choose. It is important to present such differences because the research was mainly focused on one type of university - the private university - and although all universities have similar goals and objectives, the way to achieve them can be quite different, especially when they all have their own particular management styles and peculiarities.

The speed in which society is changing seems to have increased in the past few years forcing the university to sometimes stay behind in satisfying those needs. It is no longer just a matter of adapting to the changing requirements of society, the new challenge is to stay ahead and acquire the tools that will be needed to excel in both today's and tomorrow's higher education markets. This is no small challenge. New forms of learning institutions like corporate universities and virtual universities are invading the higher education system. The range of internal and external stakeholders of the university is also expanding, going from high school graduates to lifelong learning students and from administrative and academic staff to future employers and the government. The pressure for accountability from stakeholders is increasing and quality assurance and control seem to be at the top of their agendas. Mitroff (1983) defines stakeholders as the concrete entities that affect and in turn are affected by an organisation's actions, behaviour and policies. Freeman (1984, p46) goes along the same lines and defines them as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives". Therefore if the stakeholders are those who 'affect or are affected', their opinions should be taken into serious consideration when defining strategic plans, quality issues and in general the future of the organisation.

Higher education, like any other organisation, has a number of stakeholders. However, due to the changing nature of higher education in the last decades, defining them can be somewhat tricky. Room (2000) identifies three groups of stakeholders in higher education: the higher education institutions themselves, the end-users and the government. Freed et al. (1997, p58) give more detail and categorise them as follows:

In higher education therefore stakeholders can include students, parents, alumni, faculty, administrators, staff, funding organisations, religious affiliations, and employers.

Sirkanthan and Darlymple (2003) group stakeholders into four: providers, users of products, users of outputs and the employees of the sector, depending on the quality perspectives they may have. It is important to mention at this point that of particular interest to this study was the fact that stakeholders have also been identified as the ones who can define quality in higher education, since quality for each of them may mean a different thing (see Table 3: Quality concepts organised in terms of different quality definitions in order to see the many meanings stakeholders might give to the concept of quality). Harvey and Green (1993) were strong supporters of quality from the perspective of the stakeholder and building on Vroeijenstijn (1995) view of quality being in the eye of the beholder, this study also agrees that quality is in the eye of the stakeholder.

From the previous discussion it could be concluded that stakeholders have certain power on the changes universities undertake. According to Duderstadt (2000, p321) the forces of change that are of most direct concern to higher education are: “financial imperatives, changing social needs, technology drivers and market forces”. CVCP (2000) have identified four factors that may destabilise the central ‘status quo’ of universities as follows: reductions in public financial support for universities, pressure from governments and industrial sector for applied research, lifelong learning movement and the globalisation of higher education. For whatever reasons, the reality is that universities are now faced with great obstacles; some entirely new, like technological advances, though some, however, are traditional difficulties that have taken a different light such as student accountability and competition with other higher education institutions.

In order to meet these modern challenges some universities have been borrowing tools that are indigenous to commercial companies and adopting entrepreneurial styles of management (Nicklin, 1995; Room, 2000; Lenington, 1996; Gould, 1998; Allen, 2000; Clark, 2000; Davies, 1987; Liu & Dubinsky, 2000). The university in itself is looking for new ways of attracting funds. Traditionally, state universities were mainly supported by the government, nowadays student tuition fees; consultancy work and intellectual property are also major sources of funding for these universities.

The invasion of commercial trends has had a great influence on university administration, for example TQM and benchmarking. Of particular interest to this research is the influence and use of self-evaluation techniques, which have their roots within quality assurance mechanisms in the business world context. Many

authors have expressed their feelings towards the use of businesslike techniques and adoption of corporate culture within the university. Some, like Morrison (1998) and Nicklin (1995), feel that it is the way forward for such institutions. However, others like Grow (2000) strongly feel that adopting such trends and ignoring tradition is against the essence of a university and may very well destroy the university as we know it. Instead of supporting either of these views, this study wants to take an alternative - intermediate - position. Universities are much more than businesses (Clark, 2000). They are complex social organisations (Sporn, 1996) faced with stakeholder pressures and environmental changes. They are in need of guidance and therefore can learn from the success and failures of businesses without necessarily changing their core values (Duderstadt, 2000).

Duderstadt (2000) affirms that the university has been successful because of its ability to adapt to the demands of society without overlooking its core values. Because of this ability to adapt, many different types of universities now exist. Within the higher education world, we can now find traditional universities, private universities, corporate universities, distance-learning universities, virtual universities and service universities. For the purposes of this research, a brief description of traditional universities, innovative/commercial universities, entrepreneurial universities (Clark, 1998; Davies, 1987) is given below, since these are the most relevant to the study and present certain similarities with Unibe University.

'Traditional universities' are the well-established universities whose main focus is research, and are mainly state-funded. Nevertheless, these universities are now exploring new markets and extending their core business and already many of those traditional universities are engaging in entrepreneurial activities. 'Innovative universities' have as their main goal to stay up-to-date, and view themselves clearly as non-traditional institutions. 'Innovative universities' are similar - if not equal - to 'entrepreneurial universities'. However, Clark (1998, p4) explains that he chose the term entrepreneurial over innovative because "it points more powerfully to deliberate local effort, to actions that lead to change in organisational posture". He pointed that such universities have transformed themselves by means of entrepreneurial action.

CVCP (2000) state that the entrepreneurial culture is characterised not only by the wanting to take risks and to do different and new things, but by the ability to evaluate those activities, learn from those experiences, and the transfer this

experience across the university. However, according to Zhou (2008, p110) one must not confuse the role of the entrepreneurial university:

The entrepreneurial university is a different concept from university entrepreneurship activity. An entrepreneurial university must have three missions: teaching, research, and service for the economy through its entrepreneurship activities at one time.

It can be argued that even if Unibe is mainly a private university, it also presents traits that are similar to entrepreneurial universities, and in the discussions with some of the interviewees they mentioned that Unibe worked to be ahead and always do new things, focusing on the needs of the local economy, as entrepreneurial universities do.

'Commercial universities' are usually for-profit institutions or institutions that need to acquire their funding through alternative sources – not from the government. These institutions can be compared to 'service universities', which sell their research or knowledge-based services different clients (Tjeldvoll, 1997).

The introduction of commercial/innovative/entrepreneurial universities to this literature review gives the reader a flavour of the types of universities most closely related to the private university, and in particular to Unibe. They are closely related because most of them pay careful attention to market forces. Altbach (1998) explains that Private higher education is influenced by the market. He argues that Private universities depend on student tuition for most of their income which means that private institutions must be sensitive to student interests and that they must ensure that a sufficient number of students enrol in order to provide the needed income. Since Unibe can be defined mainly as a private university, the next part of this discussion will focus on further exploring the definition of private universities.

Private universities are autonomous organisations financially supported mainly by student tuition fees. Most of them are non-profit and may receive some kind of support from the government (tax exemption for example); however, for-profit private universities are also growing in number. Even though they are independent, private universities are subject to a variety of external controls, such as accreditation and quality control. In some countries - East Central Europe for example (Giesecke, 1999) – students in most private universities are not considered of high academic standard and the 'Degree mills' (CVCP, 2000) are perceived to have serious quality problems. However, in other countries like the United States,

private universities are considered to be among the most prestigious universities in the world - Harvard, for example. In the Dominican Republic, private universities can be seen at the two extremes. There are a few private universities that are considered to be the best universities in the country, but there are still a greater number of private universities with disputed quality.

According to Levy (1985), there were three 'waves' of growth of private universities in Latin America. The first were the Catholic universities, then came the 'secular elite' or 'elite' and then came the non-elite secular institutions. Levy explains that "these waves were neither fully self-contained nor internally uniform" (Levy 1985, p447). He goes on to affirm that all three private sub-sectors have satisfied their key stakeholders and that this ability may be taken as a measure by which to evaluate private success.

In Latin America both private and public universities co-exist, however, CINDA (2007) argue that their differences are no longer 'black or white'. In their report they present a table with dimensions and characteristics of public and private universities such as property and control, government intervention, mission and purposes, quality control over a continuum which moves from the pure public to the pure private model, showing that the traditional, clear-cut differences are no longer there.

According to Mejia (2003), in the Dominican Republic there are four modalities of governance in universities, in some aspects close to the modes in CINDA (2007): the public-democratic, the public-centralised, the private-secular and the private-religious. Unibe University falls under the private-secular. Fernandez Lamarra (2004) corroborates this and divides the types of universities in the Dominican Republic into public: either autonomous or centralised and private: either secular or religious. In the public democratic modality, the university authorities are elected every 3 years in a secret vote from all the teaching staff and a sample of students and administrative staff. In the public centralised modality the authorities of the universities are elected by the intuition of higher standing in the relevant area. In the private secular modality where the authorities are elected by the general assembly designed by the founders of the institution (this is the case of Unibe). Finally, in the private religious the authorities are elected by both their general assembly and the church.

The Law 139-01 (2001) of the Dominican Higher Education system states that there can be three types of universities: public, private and mixed and it also states that higher education institutions have to be non-profit organisations. Unibe, the focus of this study, is a private non-profit university, in many ways presenting a mix of characteristics from both traditional and modern institutions which will be further explored in the results chapter.

2.2.2 University Quality Culture

Following the basic assumption that the university by definition is a type of organisation, theories of organisational culture can be used to explain the culture of universities.

Perhaps one of the most quoted writers on organisational culture is Edgar H Schein. In most of the literature reviewed for this study his description of the different levels of culture was found. He argues that culture can be found at different levels within an organisation, ranging from the visible to the unconscious (Schein, 1997). Kotter & Heskett (1992) have developed a similar framework to Schein's, with two levels instead of three, that go from what is visible and easier to change to the invisible and harder to change. They argue that group behaviour – the behaviour patterns – is quite easy to see and to reshape. However, shared values – such as goals – are much harder to perceive and very difficult to change.

Brown (1998) adjusted Schein's model to include a very important detail. He draws a line from bottom to top that indicates the movement from the deepest levels of culture – the basic assumptions – to the most superficial manifestation of culture – the artefacts. Schein (1997, p26) explains:

it is important to recognise in analysing cultures that artefacts are easy to observe but difficult to decipher and the values may only reflect rationalisations or aspirations. To understand a group's culture, one must attempt to get at its shared basic assumptions and one must understand the learning process by which such basic assumptions come to be.

Taylor and Miroiu (2002), also define institutional culture by pinpointing the levels which are below and above the surface, however, they mark the different levels by adding whether they are clearly visible (above the surface), and detectable, not readily visible or buried (under the surface) which helps when trying to identify attributes, values and beliefs. They go on to claim that:

It is necessary to look beneath the surface in order to understand the culture of the organization. Universities and institutions of higher education are no different from other organizations in this respect (Taylor and Miroiu, 2002, p33).

Another interesting view of organisational culture was that of Hofstede (1991) cited in Ehlers (2009) (See also Ehlers (2009, p351) for an interesting table summarising the different approaches to organisational culture by four major contributors in the field). He defined culture as 'mental coding' and proposed an onion (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005) which they arrange based their stability through time with values at the heart of the onion and in its most outer layer he places symbols. It is interesting to see that in Elhers' summary table of the different approaches to culture by four of the major contributors of the field, the common denominator those four authors agree on is 'values', making them an essential cultural element. Some of the values of the academic culture as expressed by White (2005, p294) are academic freedom, intellectual development, exploration and examination, peer review, acquisition of knowledge for its intrinsic worth, and collegiality. However, she also states that a number of academic values run counter to the values of a learning organisation, and this poses a paradox as universities are considered to be at the centre of learning. For example, she says that academic life can sometimes foster autonomy, competition, critical judgment, intellectual scepticism, power distance and self-interest and that instead learning organisations should include growth and development, openness, risk-taking, innovation, change, flexibility, collaboration, and interdependence. This divide is evident in many higher education institutions, and therefore for the case of Unibe these areas were explored during the interviews for this study.

Maassen (1997, p112) suggests that the values that are at the heart of higher education are "the search for truth and the pursuit of knowledge". Kothari (2007, p51) argues that academic culture "traditionally has been one where the loyalties of academic staff lay more with individual disciplines rather than with the institution" but that the emphasis should now be placed on core competencies, external accountability and the need to respond instantly to changing situations. Building on what is implied in this quote, that academic culture should focus in part on how to respond to changes, this study analyses if self-evaluations are in fact triggers of change. Since this study focused on results from two self-evaluations which took place 5 years apart, it was logical for the university to experience changes during that period. One of the goals of this research was to determine if self-evaluation processes played an important part in triggering those changes. Through the self-evaluation final reports the university recorded several issues to be addressed and

within this study a comparison of the two results as presented in the final self-evaluation process was made to determine if in fact the issues that were pinpointed by the report were addressed and whether these processes have had an impact on how the university reacts to changes. The possibility of these processes to help build a quality culture was also explored as part of the study's research questions.

Going back to the definition of culture, and more specifically in what it means in the higher education context, culture has been defined by Kuh and Whitt (1988, p12-13) cited in Freed et al. (1997, p36) as

the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behaviour of individuals and groups in an institute of higher education and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus.

This definition is very similar to the more general definitions of culture, just adding the 'higher education' environment to how many others have already defined it, including terms such as norms, values, beliefs, which are evident in the more general definition of cultures of organisations. Thus, this goes along with the previously idea from Taylor and Miroiu (2002) that when it comes to culture, universities are the same as any other type of business as seen from the similarities of the term when it comes to defining both types. Building on this last argument, it can be concluded that definitions of culture designed for organisations can also apply to universities.

da Cruz (2006) tries to identify some of the historical components of European university culture and he mentions three dimensions in particular: academic autonomy, universality of knowledge and community of learning. He goes on to present some interesting challenges to those traditional components of university culture including distortion of autonomy and the trend towards the 'mass university' and claims that in order for the European university to stay competitive it should try to give answers to new challenges but at the same time it needs to preserve its essential cultural traits. This is true not only for European universities but for universities around the world, including Unibe University.

Brennan and Shah (2000, p115) agree that tradition should be preserved and argue that it is those

traditional features of higher education institutions - loosely coupled basic units, a high degree of professional autonomy for the people who work in them, highly

specialised work roles – (that) ensure an important role for cultural factors in determining the inner workings of these organisations.

They also express that academic culture “encompasses how people feel about themselves, their work and their institutions. It embraces values, attitudes and behaviour and, above all, it is shared” (Brennan and Shah 2000, p115). They suggested that one of the best ways of looking at culture in higher education was using the analysis provided by Douglas (1982) which analyses culture in terms of the strength of group boundaries in relation to the external rules and regulations imposed on an individual, her work is also known as Douglas’ Grid-group Theory. According to Vaughan (2002, p411) Grid-group theory measures cultural biases “in terms of their level of prescriptiveness of norms (grid) and affiliation between individuals (group)”. Grendstad and Sundback (2003, p290) expand to say that:

the grid dimension expresses degree of individual prescriptions. At high grid, individuals’ social positions and distinct social roles are clearly differentiated...at low grid, few prescriptions block individuals’ actions or hamper their lives. The group dimension expresses degree of individual integration into a collective.

In simple terms, Grid signifies the extent to which people’s lives are defined by rules and regulations, and Group identifies the levels of association and connection between people. This relationship produces four types of social relations hierarchy, fatalism, egalitarianism and individualism. Hierarchy and fatalism are both high on Grid but hierarchy is high on Group and fatalism is not. Egalitarianism and individualism are both low on Grid, but as its name suggest individualism is low on Group whereas Egalitarianism is strong on Group.

Grid-group theory has been widely used and further developed by many authors trying to categorise culture, including Gross and Rayner (1985), Hampton (1982), Thompson (1982), Thompson et al (1991), the later authors expanding the use of the Grid-group theory to any collectivity, they added a significant development to Douglas’ theory, they introduced the concept of competition between cultures and helped establish what is now known Cultural Theory.

The different typologies should not be used to classify people’s possible reactions because it is not what it is intended to do. It is better used as Vaughan (2002, p411) suggests, as “a means of investigating how social groupings are organized and the attendant benefits and difficulties that each mode of organization bears”. Therefore, as a tool for understanding culture, Douglas’ Grid-group Theory is very useful and the different categories where used in the analysis of the interviews for this study, as can be seen in the analysis of results chapter.

Hendry (1999, p558) cautions, however, that “any attempt to apply anthropologically-derived theories to contemporary organizations must be conducted with extreme caution” because organisations are in many ways different than societies. Even so, Douglas work has been effectively used in many organisations, helping managers or interested parties better understand the culture their organisations operate under.

Another culture typology very useful for this study was based on Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) work in their Competing Values Approach. The Competing Values Framework was initially based on their research to identify indicators of organisational effectiveness using 3 value dimensions relating to organisational focus, structure and organisational means and ends which offer competing values such as flexibility versus stability. The framework was later used as base for research from Cameron and Freeman (1991) who offered the Competing Value Framework as a model of cultural types for organisations, naming the four typologies as follows: Clan, Adhocracy, Market and Hierarchy. According to Yu and Wu (2009) the clan culture is full of shared values and common goals and an atmosphere of collectivity and mutual goals and “a sense of family” (Fjortoft and Smart (1994, p435), the adhocracy culture is organised around tasks and it works like a temporary institution, the market culture focuses on transactions and the goal is to earn profits through market competition and finally the hierarchy culture, very similar to Douglas’ type (1982) has a clear structure, standardised rules and procedures, strict control and well defined responsibilities. What is interesting about these cultural types is that within the framework they represent opposite or competing assumptions (hence the name of the framework) that flexibility versus stability, internal versus external (Cameron and Quinn, 2011).

Cameron and Freeman (1991) in their attempt to determine whether differences in organisational effectiveness exist between cultural congruent cultures and those with incongruent cultures researched 334 institutions of higher education using the Competing Values Framework. They discovered that all institutions possess attributes of several of these cultures, but several of the institutions have a clearly dominant culture. Clans was the most frequent type, then hierarchies, adhocracies and markets. Unibe presents attributes from all the cultural types described in the Competing Values Framework and these are further developed in the analysis of results chapter.

Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983, p376) argue that their model helps “recognise the seeming contradictions in the effectiveness construct” and that these contradictions or inaccuracies can then give rise to new insight. Indeed, they seem to be right,

since this model has been used in thousands of organisations (Cameron and Quinn, 2011) to assess not only cultural types, but also to analyse leadership roles, effectiveness criteria, management theories, TQM, human resource management roles and even mission and vision statements. They go as far as to state that this model is the dominant framework in the world for assessing organisational culture. It has been used in higher education in several studies, for example Fjortoft and Smart (1994) used it to determine the independent effects of organisational culture type and level of mission agreement on perceptions of the organisational effectiveness of four-year colleges and universities, and as mentioned before, Cameron and Freeman (1991) also used it in higher education institutions.

Other authors who have typified culture in educational organisations were Handy and Aitken (1986) who present 4 culture types: Club, Role, Task, Person and they state that elements of each culture will be present in all schools (same as Cameron and Freeman (1991)) and colleges. Handy (2011, p19) makes an interesting point when attempting to judge cultures, he argues that “no culture, or mix of cultures, is bad or wrong in itself, only inappropriate to its circumstances” and Fjortoft and Smart (1994) suggest that the specific cultural type that is best for specific institutions is a matter of institutional choice. This argument presupposes, however, that culture can be chosen, managed and arranged, which many authors argue is very difficult.

A very similar model to that of Handy and Aitken (1986) was designed by McNay (1995) in his model of universities as organisations. He identified four cultures of universities according to their control implementation and policy definition as follows: Collegium, Bureaucracy, Enterprise and Corporation. He summarises each of the characteristics of the university models and includes a factor that relates each type to Handy’s organisation cultures in a way they perfectly match. That is, the Collegium model, where the dominant value is freedom, fits under Handy’s Person culture type; the Bureaucracy model, which is dominated by equity and rules, fits under the Role culture type; the culture type from Handy’s model for the Corporation is the Power culture; and finally for the Enterprise model Handy’s Task culture is most appropriate. However, may also be associated with the Competing Value Framework Adhocracy culture mentioned above. Like Handy and Aitken (1986), he suggests that “all four cultures co-exist and will continue to do so, though some may have only trace element status” (McNay 1995, p 111), but his framework is different from Handy’s in that it suggests development from one model to another. He implies a clockwise movement from different cultures and points out that in most universities (not all) a shift from Collegium to Bureaucracy to Corporation and then to Enterprise is evident throughout their years of operation.

He therefore suggests that the university may need to move from 'ivory-tower' to 'entrepreneurial academy' in order to satisfy the changing needs of society.

McNay's model helps identify a specific culture of the university by highlighting characteristics each of the four models universities may adopt. In practice, universities may be a mix of these models as we see even traditional Collegium style universities looking at 'market strengths' a characteristic more evident in the Enterprise model. Unibe has had an interesting shift from being mainly a 'Bureaucracy' with 'reactive adaptation' towards becoming more of a 'enterprise' with focus on 'project teams' and 'tactical flexibility'.

Culture both facilitates and blocks change (Brennan and Shah, 2000, p115).

According to Bush and West-Burnham (1994, p115)

a more complete understanding of organisational culture appears to have become something of a touchstone to those educationalist wishing to promote continued educational improvement in an increasingly turbulent environment.

But they warn that there is a significant difficulty for managers wishing to change or influence the existing culture because they are embedded in it and may not be able to truly separate themselves. A way to alleviate this is for "managers to influence the development of organisational culture by attending to the way it is demonstrated and symbolised in all areas of organisational activity" (Bush and West-Burnham (1994, p106). Using cultural models such as Douglas and McNay's will help identify symbols in order to understand which category the institution is closer to, making it easier for managers of universities to influence it, if they wish to do so (see conclusion section for more detail on how this was done for this study).

Part of the goals of the self-evaluation process at Unibe was to create a quality culture that would promote continuous processes of evaluation. However, even if using cultural models creating a quality culture is not an easy task (Gordon, 2002).

Lomas (2004, p158) argues that

embedding quality can be considered as requiring the development of a culture within an academic department, faculty or higher education institution where staff strive continually to improve the quality of the provision and where it is a naturalistic process with a desire for excellence being routine and commonplace.

This means that stakeholders need to own the feeling of improving quality in order to be able to act on it and for it to be embedded in their activities.

Similarly, Freed et al. (1997, p35) affirm that “if a university fails to understand the role of organisational culture for quality improvement then it is more difficult to face the challenges of higher education”. They state that some organisations trying to change the culture to a quality culture focus only on changing quality-related behaviours instead on “changing the underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions about continuous quality improvement” (Freed et al., 1997, p38). This implies changing the culture as a whole and not just changing the quality aspects, as Freed (1997) suggests. Therefore one can only expect a shift to a quality culture if a quality improvement desire is deeply embedded in stakeholders’ values and beliefs and thus their actions reflect this wish for quality improvement. The interviews conducted for this study were designed having this in mind and careful attention was paid to cues that indicated an evident desire for quality improvement through actions taken as a consequence of the self-evaluation processes.

Ehlers (2009, p345) argues that not much has been done to relate the organisational culture to quality culture in higher education and takes up what Kogan (1999) that an “uncritical” and “unreflected” approach has been taken.

Nevertheless, the European University Association (EUA) has been extremely active in trying to promote a quality culture in higher education institutions across Europe. In 2002 it launched the ‘Quality Culture Project’ which involved nearly 300 institutions from 40 countries aiming to increase awareness for the need to develop an internal quality culture in institutions and promote the introduction of internal quality management for the following purposes: to improve quality levels, to ensure the wide dissemination of existing best practice in the field, to help institutions approach external procedures of quality assurance constructively and to contribute to the Bologna process by increasing the attractiveness of European higher education (EUA 2006, p7). In summary, the project concluded, in agreement to what most authors suggest, that quality is difficult to define and must be contextualised. They also express that most institutions found that a formative approach to quality culture is best which implies that institutions prefer to build the quality culture without it being imposed or as part of a normative approach.

They argue that success factors for effectively embedding a quality culture are to include the capacity of the institutional leadership to provide room for a grass-roots approach to quality (wide consultation and discussion) and to avoid the risk of over-bureaucratisation. (EUA 2006, p32)

These are aspects that are also seen as success factors for self-evaluation processes as can be seen later on in the self-evaluation section of the literature review, in particular in table 9 where elements of successful self-evaluation are presented.

Another project conducted by EUA in 2009, where 222 institutions from 32 countries across Europe took part called 'Examining quality culture in higher education institutions'. The first part of the project focused on mapping existing quality assurance processes to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education area and discuss the dynamics between developing a quality culture and quality assurance processes. 66.2% of respondents identified the role of senior leadership in building a quality culture (Loukkola et al., 2010). Muijs (2011, p45) argues that "leadership has long been seen as a key factor in organisational effectiveness, but interest in educational leadership has increased over recent decades". Fjortoft and Smart (1994), building on Schein (1992) affirm that the management and change of culture are paramount responsibilities of college leaders. Also at school level, leadership is considered important. McNarmara et al (2011, p76) highlight the results of a study conducted by Davidsdotti and Lisi, (2008) which determined the factors in teachers perceptions of school improvement and self-evaluation processes. They found and McNarra (2011) agrees that "leadership that is empowering" was considered by far the most important factor. Furthermore, Bubb and Earley (2008, p4) affirm that their project "found that SEFs (self-evaluation processes) varied considerably in quality, accuracy and potential to make a difference" depending on the leadership in place.

One of the first values in Venkatraman's (2007, p100) framework is "leadership and quality culture". This highlights the importance of identifying stakeholder perception of the impact of self-evaluations on Unibe's quality culture and whether leadership played an important role in this. The works of Spanbauer (1989), Doherty (1994), and Clayton (1995) all in Osseo-Asare et al. (2007, p543) "identify leadership as the most important ingredient for successful TQM implementation in HEIs". The importance of leadership at Unibe and the role leaders played in creating and managing a quality culture and on promoting change was analysed in this study in the findings chapter.

But what is a quality culture? EUA (2006, p10) defines it as "an organisational culture characterised by a cultural/psychological element on the one hand, and a structural/managerial element on the other hand with defined processes that

enhance quality and aim at coordinating individual efforts". The divide in cultural and structural elements they highlight in this definition is of special interest to this study as it emphasises the role management plays in developing such cultures.

Vlăsceanu et al. (2004, p51) in their Unesco Glossary define quality culture as

a set of shared, accepted, and integrated patterns of quality (often called principles of quality) to be found in the organizational cultures and the management systems of institutions. Awareness of and commitment to the quality of higher education, in conjunction with a solid culture of evidence and with the efficient management of this quality (through quality assurance procedures) are the ingredients of a quality culture. As quality elements change and evolve over time, so must the integrated system of quality supportive attitudes and arrangements (quality culture) change to support new quality paradigms in higher education.

He highlights that awareness and commitment to quality and a solid culture of evidence are the recipe for quality culture. A culture of evidence can be enhanced through self-evaluations which help stakeholders be aware of quality issues and promote the need for evidence. This definition also suggests that quality culture is inward generated, meaning that internal stakeholders define the culture by closely committing to quality. However, culture may be externally generated and Tabatoni et al. (2004, p17), express that the demands of society may provoke different quality-oriented cultures as follows:

- a *culture of compliance*, requiring universities directly to operate or conform to externally designed quality processes for assessing teaching and research;
- a *culture of introspection*, requiring universities to develop internal processes which are intended to satisfy broad external criteria and benchmarks;
- a *culture of normalization*, requiring universities to set standards for accreditation purposes;
- a *culture of quality management*, requiring universities to have an institutional strategy and transparent quality processes;
- a *culture of retroactive strategies*, requiring linkages between quality reviews and resource allocation, directly or indirectly;
- a *culture of transparency*, benchmarking university performance in such domains as teaching, research, cost effectiveness, value for money, resource base, student satisfaction, income generation.

Currently, the higher education climate in the Dominican Republic still asks for a culture introspection and a culture of normalization, where society is assured through different means of the quality of an institution. Unibe was aware of this and was one of the first universities that joined the movement for accreditation, back in 2001.

Davies (2004) points out several vital elements for a university to have a quality oriented culture, including the need to be able to bend or change rules and regulations, to encourage feedback and to promote collective approaches to quality useful points that were used when analysing the information gathered in the interviews for this dissertation.

Furthermore, Harvey (2007) summarises the outcomes of their eight discussion groups in the 1st European Forum for Quality Assurance that the following features are indicative of a quality culture:

- There is academic ownership of quality. (in agreement with Vlăsceanu et al. (2004)
- There is a recognition by academics and administrators of need for a system of quality monitoring to ensure accountability (and compliance where required) and to facilitate improvement. However, this should not be a 'bureaucratic' system.
- Quality culture is primarily about the behaviour of stakeholders rather than the operation of a quality system.
- The quality system needs to have a clear purpose, which articulates with the quality culture.
- A quality culture places students at the centre.
- A quality culture is about partnership and co-operation, sharing of experiences and team working.
- A quality culture is about supporting the individual as an autonomous scholar but not at the expense of the learning community; there is a symbiotic relationship between individual and community.
- in a quality culture is inspirational rather than dictatorial. Leadership is at all levels in the institution and does not refer to just senior managers.
- A quality culture welcomes external critical evaluation from a variety of sources including formal external evaluations, external peers acting as critical friends, and internal peer review and support.
- At heart a quality culture is about facilitating and encouraging reflexivity and praxis; self-reflection, developing improvement initiatives and implementing them.

These points were used during the last set of interviews to senior management at Unibe in order to determine whether they believed that a quality culture had been embedded at Unibe since the early attempts of self-evaluation and can be seen in chapter 4. These indicators of quality culture are inline with the success factors for self-evaluation presented later on in table 9. This implies that having a quality culture enables successful self-evaluation processes and vice versa.

Instead of listing the elements of a quality culture, Loukkola et al. (2010) present an interesting figure that highlights them. They place communication, participation

and trust at the centre, making a clear distinction between formal quality assurance and the quality culture. Even if they make this clear distinction, they argue that both quality assurance and quality culture are both interrelated and that “quality culture can be enforced by structural decisions which stimulate shared values and beliefs” Loukkola et al. (2010, p17).

These points were also considered during the interviews for this study and interesting results came from discussing how communication, participation and trust played an important role in the development of the self-evaluation processes and in turn possible quality culture. The Conclusion Chapter presents a framework as a result of the findings where communication and trust, along with some other characteristics such as leadership, reflection and ownership embedded in self-evaluation processes may help increase the quality culture of the university.

In summary, and for the purpose of this study, a quality culture can be defined as a set of values, beliefs and processes based on quality commitment and reinforced by formal quality assurance mechanisms, including self-evaluation processes.

However, it may be that Unibe does not have a quality culture and then the question should be: how easy it is to create a quality culture? According to EUA (2006, p11) the “starting point of the development of a quality culture is the mission of the institution”. They affirm that if the mission reflects clearly the institutional priorities then it is easier for the university to develop a strategy for quality culture and to embed it. Taylor and Miroiu (2000, p27) suggest that the mission statement of a university should “encapsulate the essential philosophy and raison d’être of the institution” and, if this reason for being includes caring for quality issues then the university is on the right track for quality culture development.

Other important issues that need to be considered for embedding a quality culture are those suggested by EUA (2005, p10) which include stressing the self-evaluation stage as a collective exercise to ensure the implementation of appropriate change by embedding a quality culture through internal communication and involving the appropriate external and internal stakeholders. Here again elements such as ‘communication’ and ‘participation’ previously mentioned by Loukkola et al. (2010), are highlighted as important to a building quality culture.

These elements are also used by Ehlers (2009), who presents a model of quality culture for higher education as shown in figure 1 below. It is a conceptual and structural model which identifies the different components of the concepts of

quality culture and relates them to each other in a very interesting way. The model uses organisational culture as a bridge or path to develop a quality culture in the institution by using enabling factors to get from one side to the other. These enabling factors are of great importance because they are what make individuals able to take up new processes and make them their own. His model uses ‘communication, participation and trust’ (like Lukkoula et al., 2010) as a link between concepts and as key transversal elements that move across all components to harmonise the different cultural patterns and “create a sense of direction” (Elhers, 2009, p 358).

At the centre of the model he places the already existing quality management structures of the institution, then enabling factors such as skills, attitudes and commitment facilitate the movement towards a quality culture. These three components are linked through communication and trust making it a “holistic framework, supporting stakeholders to develop visions, shared values and beliefs” Elhers (2009, p 359).

Figure 1: Quality Culture for Higher Education



Source: Elhers (2009, p351)

This model was extremely useful for the purposes of this research because it focuses on change and offers support in the advancement of quality culture within institutions of higher education. The Conclusion Chapter presents an adaptation of this model based on the results of this study and proposes a Self-evaluation Quality Culture Model.

However, not all stakeholders find having a quality culture is something positive. Poole (2010) argues that some aspects of the quality culture may not be in line with what academics expect. Kong (2008, p14) states that this may be because the quality assurance processes are “not open for debate” and this is opposite to the academic culture. Here the ‘participation culture’ fostered by self-evaluations might help give ownership to academics in such processes and allow them to ‘debate’ any quality issues they wish to.

The following table summarises the benefits and barriers to a quality culture as presented by Harvey (2007). This table was used in the analysis of the data for this study since it briefly (but to the point) identifies the key features of a quality culture as well as the possible barriers that may exist.

Table 2: Benefits and barriers of a Quality Culture

Benefits	Barriers
Increases co-operation	If the assurance process has ‘high stakes, then this may lead to risk aversion on the part of academics and administrators
Gives students a voice	May be inhibited by heterogeneous departmental structures and practices
Provides a strong front for an institution in a competitive higher education world	Lack of consistency in policy and strategy
Champions innovation	If implementation procedures keep changing
Encourages and enables change	Incompatibility between quality strategy and quality assurance processes
Allows staff to take risks	If the quality process is not seen as part of everyday life
	Lack of cohesion

Source: adapted by the author from information in Harvey (2007)

It is interesting to note that Harvey suggests that one of the benefits of quality culture is that it encourages and enables change, therefore one could assume that a self-evaluation process is conducted in a quality culture it will produce positive changes. Sporn (1996) suggests that identifying the culture and making it part of the management process increases the possibilities of cultural change. She designed a very useful framework that connects university culture with strategic management which places university culture at the centre of goal and strategy formulation and in turn strategic management. The university is an institution influenced by its external environment in serious need of advice on how to set goals congruent with stakeholders’ needs. It is also an institution in need of advice on how to achieve such goals; therefore, techniques such as strategic management

may just be the right way of getting there. The culture of a university may give a real picture of the values, beliefs and attitudes of the university community and it can be used to provide support for strategic management.

Culture is clearly an important dimension of the context where strategy operates (Middlewood & Lumby 1998). Sporn's model links culture with strategic management putting them both at the heart of the university. Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2003) suggest this is a correct approach, highlighting the importance of a supportive organisational culture at the base of the model.

Finally, this part of the literature would not be complete if it did not include the following quote from Harvey (2009, p7) "perhaps the construct of quality culture is, itself, as transitory and delusional as the idea that quality can be safeguarded", some food for thought for all of us searching for the meaning of a quality culture.

2.3 Quality in Higher Education

After much discussion on quality culture in the previous section, this part aims at understanding what is meant by quality in higher education. The concept of quality is directly related to this research in many ways. Usually, when one thinks of issues of quality improvement, 'evaluation' of some sort always comes up. Almost every single evaluation process in higher education is based on certain quality standards. But just what is quality?

Quality is a tricky concept. Many have given different definitions for it; however, due to its relative nature, it has always been hard to give precise definitions.

Vroeijenstijn (1999), cited in Van Damme, (2002), believes that is impossible to give an accurate definition of quality; he compares it with love, understood by all but hard to define. Crosby (1979), cited in Scholten and Udink ten Cate (1999, p199-200), on the other hand, compares it with sex:

...quality has much common with sex. Everyone is for it (under certain conditions, of course), everyone feels they understand it (even although they would not want to explain it). Everyone thinks that execution is only a matter of following their natural inclinations (after all, we do get along somehow). And of course, most people feel that all the problems in these areas are caused by the other people. (If only they would take time to do things right) In a world where half the marriages end in divorce or separation, such assumptions are open to question (Crosby, 1979, cited in Scholten and Udink ten Cate, 1999, p199-200)

Stake (2010, p162) argues that it is difficult to explain quality because even "if we break it into parts to analyse the quality of the outcomes" the sum of the quality of the parts may not be comparable to the quality of the whole. This is quite interesting when considering the use of self-evaluation reports for accreditation in that many of such processes (as I will explain in the next section) report scores for different areas of the university only to add them up to an overall score. In the case of the Dominican accreditation agency, institutions were granted accreditation if they scored an overall total average of 80%, without indicating if scores in individual areas should be to a minimum standard as well. Limitations on the use of a pre-determined instrument in self-evaluations are discussed in the conclusions chapter.

Kolarik (1995) explains that quality has been defined in many ways, ranging from simple definitions to broad societal-oriented definitions. Even so, most people agree that quality is a desirable attribute, however it may be defined. According to Cheng and Tam (1997) the management literature gives many different meanings to the

quality concept, for example product or service that enjoys good sustainable markets (Deming, 1986a, cited in Liston, 1999), predictable degree of uniformity and dependability (Deming 1986b) fitness for use (Juran and Gryna, 1988), excellence (Peters and Waterman, 1982), conformance to requirements (Crosby, 1979), meeting and/or exceeding customer's needs (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985) and customer's satisfaction (Wayne, 1983).

In higher education, many have linked the term quality to excellence (Harvey and Greene, 1993; Aguila-Cabrera, 2002 Bogue and Hall, 2003; Doherty, 2008), however, Poole (2010) finds the notion of quality as 'excellence' in higher education unhelpful and argues that it is better to adopt "short-hand definition in which the equivalent of 'quality' is also something inherently variable" (Poole, 2010, p9).

Tam (1999) is quoted in Shanahan and Gerber (2004) saying that there are certainly plenty of debates on the definitions of quality, as a result we end up not having any single or correct definition. He goes on to affirm that different perceptions of quality "are both inevitable and legitimate, and subject to continuous change" (Tam, 1999, p166).

Mertova (2009) suggests that a greater focus on quality in higher education came from different competing factors including: political control over higher education, the growth in the number of students in higher education and finance control on the part of national governments. Quality in higher education that has come from government pressure often focuses too much on accountability rather than on enhancement.

Scott (1994) expresses that there is not a truly dependable definition of quality in higher education because there is not enough theory of quality in higher education to begin with. This is a strong statement, however, very relevant to the reality of the higher education system in the Dominican Republic, and one of the reasons this study focuses on the term, to contribute in the building of the literature in this area which is relevant to universities in developing nations.

Cheng and Tam (1997, p23) suggest that "education quality is a rather vague and controversial concept". According to O'Neill and Palmer (2004), the term quality did not exist in the lexicons of most universities until a couple of decades ago. However, Rowley (1995) argues that, although there is great scepticism regarding the current focus on quality, higher education institutions have always been

committed to quality. Using the ideas from the management literature, Cheng (1995) (cited in Cheng and Tam, 1997, p23) defined quality in education as follows:

Education quality is the character of the set of elements in the input, process, and output of the education system that provides services that completely satisfy both internal and external strategic constituencies by meeting their explicit and implicit expectations.

Vroeijenstijn (1995, p292) concludes that “quality is in the eye of the beholder and that any definition of quality must take into account the views of various stakeholders”. Therefore, the ‘stakeholder approach’ (Harvey and Green, 1993) for defining quality has been numerously researched within the higher education literature because it recognises that a number of different views of quality can be present in the higher education environment (Watty, 2006). In table 3 the study further explores these different definitions of quality linking them to different stakeholder views.

One of the most cited definitions of quality through a stakeholder perspective was that of Harvey and Green (1993). Royero (2002) introduces the concept of quality in higher education by taking the interpretation made by Gonzalez & Ayarza (1998) of Harvey & Green’s (1993) popular quality definitions. They explain that there are 5 ways of interpreting quality: Quality as an exception, Quality as perfection, Quality as fitness for purpose, Quality as value for money and Quality as transformation. Royero (2002) further explains that quality as exception implies that the concept arises like a special quality of upper class, elitist, exclusive and of maximum excellence through minimum standards to reach. Quality as perfection indicates the non-existence of defects or errors in the product evaluated in agreement with the own institutional specifications without indicators of comparison, under a zero-defect culture. Quality as fitness for purpose, supposes that any product that is elaborated in agreement with the objective desired represents a model of quality to the user or client that requires them. Quality as value for money supposes that the institutions of higher education are accountable to their financial providers and need to present to them evidence of socially valid achievements. Quality as transformation is centred on the principle of the qualitative change in university performance; such change is evident in the responsibility of the institution to provoke changes and improvements of the learning activities of students inside educational patterns of quality. Further on in the discussion, as mentioned before table 3 organises the concept of quality in terms of different quality definitions is presented in order to organise the different definitions found in the literature review conducted for this study.

Shanahan and Gerber (2004) categorised quality into eight conceptions: quality as public image, quality as leadership, quality as value for money, quality as value-added service, quality as resources, quality as work practices, quality as intrinsic goodness and quality as satisfaction. Among these categories two can be considered as really new or different ways of defining quality. The first, quality as public image is based on three assumptions:

that quality is as much a perception as it is a reality, that the institution should exude quality in its public face and that the nature of the market as well as competition will affect the extent of how well such quality exudes. (Shanahan and Gerber, 2004, p168)

The second, quality as leadership, is a different way from that of other authors of defining quality and they say that quality as leadership ‘builds on knowing and understanding the ‘big picture’ in which the university operates and then moving the university forward in positive ways.

The authors themselves argue that some of these conceptions have common ground with the concepts presented by Green (1994) but that they mainly differ in that their concepts centre on the humanistic focus rather than conforming to standards and meeting goals. Shanahan and Gerber (2004, p171) highlight this humanistic approach by producing a figure that shows the relationship of their eight quality concepts under the umbrella of “quality as intrinsic goodness” and “quality as a public image”, where the rest of the definitions fall under.

Harvey and Greene (1993) argue that quality can be viewed as ‘stakeholder-relative’ and Green (1994) states that when assessing quality one should define the stakeholder’s criteria for measuring quality and then take each of these different views into account. The importance of stakeholders in the university context was previously discussed in section 2.1.1.

The stakeholder approach, while extremely useful for understanding quality from different perspectives, does not focus on other issues such as the evolution of the term. However, in table 3 I have tried to map the different quality concepts to the interest of stakeholders, and their views on quality are presented.

From the criteria given by Vlăsceanu et al. (2004), and based on the work of Harvey and Stensaker (2007), Green (1994), Watty (2002), NZQA (2007), Harvey & Green (1993), Bollaert et al. (2007), Parri (2006), Royero (2002), Shanahan and Gerber (2004), Gonzalez & Ayarza (1998) Harvey and Knight (1996) cited in Yorke (2000) and EUA (2005) the following table was designed for this dissertation:

Table 3: Quality Concepts organised in terms of different Quality Definitions

	Interest to Stakeholders	References	Attributes of the academic world
Quality as an exception/ Quality as excellence	Implies that the concept arises like a special quality of upper class, elitist, exclusive	Quality is achieved if standards are surpassed	Maximum excellence through minimum standards to reach. Only the best standards of excellence (usually meaning a high level of difficulty and of complexity of a programme, the seriousness of the student testing procedures, etc.) are understood as revealing true academic quality.
Quality as perfection/ Consistency/ Zero-errors	Shift from measuring outcome standards, to measuring process standards. More applicable to industry than higher education.	Indicates the non-existence of defects or errors in the product evaluated in agreement with the own institutional specifications without indicators of comparison, under a zero-defect culture	Often thought not to apply to a learning situation where no one wants students to be all the same, however, it has relevance in areas such as consistency of academic judgement and reliability of management information
Fitness for purpose	Concentrates in meeting the needs of the customers/ stakeholders of higher education. Purpose defined by the provider. In sharp contrast to the elitist notion.	Focuses on the defined objectives and mission of the institution or programme with no check of the fitness of the processes themselves in regard to any external objectives or expectations.	Used frequently in higher education. The focus is on whether the product/service fits the stated purpose, for example the mission of the university.
Value for money	Will the stakeholders find it valuable to pay for the product or service? A populist notion of quality (government)	Owing to the (implicit) focus on how the inputs are efficiently used by the processes and mechanisms involved	Typical assurance mechanisms include performance data, such as student competition or employment rates. At the heart of value for money in higher education is the notion of accountability
Transformational approach	Is strongly student centred. 'Doing something to the student as opposed to doing something for the	It considers quality as a transformational process within which the better a higher education institution is, the better	Empowering the student through the learning process. Concept closer to academia.

	consumer'. Democratisation of the process, not just the outcomes.	it achieves the goal of empowering students with specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable them to live and work in a knowledge society.	
Quality as threshold Quality as basic/minimum standard	A threshold is set that the institution should cross in order to certify that the instruction meets the quality standard. Standards help to rationalise the definition of quality, make it more objective	Certain norms and criteria are set and any programme or institution has to reach them in order to be considered to be of quality. Closely linked to accreditation	The starting point is that of specifying a set of minimum standards to be met by an institution or programme and to generate the basis for the development of quality-improvement mechanisms. Allows comparability in higher education systems.
Quality as enhancement	Constant development and raise of quality is primarily the task of academic personnel	Achieving quality is central to the academic ethos and to the idea that academics themselves know best what quality is	Focusing on the continuous search for permanent improvement, stressing the responsibility of the higher education institution to make the best use of its institutional autonomy and freedom.
Quality as consumer satisfaction	Focuses on the importance of the external expectations of consumers and other stakeholders.	Quality perceived as closely linked to the growing importance of market forces in higher education	External stakeholders of higher education (students, families, employers, society at large) seen as the customers of higher education
Quality as control	May be used as a reward system	Quality is defined as a punitive/rewarding process of quality assurance.	Used as part of some quality assurance processes in higher education

This table used three out of four of the criteria one could use to identify the meanings quality could have according to the UNESCO Glossary on quality in education and its purpose is to summarise and compare the different definitions of quality in order to obtain a fuller picture of how quality has been defined in higher education.

The definition offered by Vlăsceanu et al. (2004), in the UNESCO glossary for terms and definitions relating to quality assurance and accreditation may be by far one of the most comprehensive definitions available in the literature. They first define the concept in broad terms as follows:

Quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional, multi-level, and dynamic concept that relates to the contextual settings of an educational model, to the institutional mission and objectives, as well as to specific standards within a given system, institution, programme, or discipline. (Vlăsceanu et al., 2004, p46)

They then go on to explain the different meanings the word can have in higher education as well as the different movements it can make in terms of evolution. In terms of meaning they explain that, depending on the following criteria, quality can take one of the many meanings it has been given over time:

- the understandings of various interests of different constituencies or stakeholders in higher education (quality requirements set by student/university discipline/labour market/society/government);
- its references: inputs, processes, outputs, missions, objectives, etc.;
- the attributes or characteristics of the academic world which are worth evaluating; and
- the historical period in the development of higher education.

In terms of evolution it can be defined as movements between:

- between relative *versus* absolute,
- internal *versus* externally oriented,
- and basic *versus* more advanced and sophisticated notions of quality

The authors of the UNESCO Glossary noted that common to all the definitions of quality is the integration of the following, according to van Damme (2003):

the guaranteed realization of minimal standards and benchmarks; the capacity to set the objectives in a diversifying context and to achieve them with the given input and context variables; the ability to satisfy the demands and expectations of direct and indirect consumers and stakeholders; the drive towards excellence (Van Damme (2003) cited in Vlăsceanu et al., 2003, p48)

Aguila-Cabrera (2002) explains that the real issue is not to try to give a new definition for quality but to determine one that is relevant to evaluation purposes. He argues that once this definition or concept of quality for Latin America is determined, it should permit quality to be operational in order to be easily identified in a guide, model or evaluation procedure, it should include all dimensions of the university, it should be linked to evaluation and it should be pertinent to society. His views go well with the purpose of this study, since the main research question focuses on the relationship between self-evaluation processes and quality improvement and link with the Self-evaluation Quality Culture Model proposed in the recommendation section of this study.

In 2006, ENQA held a very interesting conference on terminology of quality assurance. One of the workshops focused on the language of European quality assurance in order to raise awareness on the problems and pitfalls of working across language barriers. The results are very relevant to this discussion on quality as they present perspectives on quality jargon from 16 European countries. For their discussions, they grouped 'quality' with 'standards, quality assurance, quality control, accountability, enhancement and improvement'. They found, in agreement with most of the literature, that it was very difficult to "pin down to a definition of quality in any language" (Dearlove and Helle, 2006, p8).

Koslowski (2006, p282) argues that "in the same way that definitions of quality differ, there are many types of quality as well". Seymour (1991) in Koslowski (2006) affirms that there are five types of quality in higher education as follows: Transcendent quality, Manufacturing-base quality, Product-based quality, Value-based and user based quality, all defined and used in different ways in higher education

Apart from the famous 'stakeholder perspective' for defining quality, there have been several attempts to define quality models from an educational perspective, by re-examining fundamental educational processes. Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2007) offer an interesting summary of 5 quality models for universities and then use them as base for their Holistic Model of Quality Management in Education (QME). They argue that in an ideal world one would use TQM for the service areas of the university and QME for the teaching and learning functions. The core elements of the QME model are "a focus on 'transformation' of the learners (and the institution); a synergistic collaboration at the learning interface; and a significant commitment, by the institution and individuals" (Srikanthan and Dalrymple, 2007, p185). The application of some TQM procedures may be something Unibe may wish to explore

in the future in order to contribute to building its quality culture since usually TQM systems use self-assessment techniques as part of the process.

It is important to note, as mentioned before, that quality efforts have not always been welcome in universities, especially from the part of academics. Newton (2007) designed a table to present the perception of some academics regarding quality, based on an ethnographic study he previously conducted. The perceptions presented were quite negative, including views of quality as “burden”, “lack of mutual trust” and “constraint on teamwork” (Newton (2007, p19). This table also reminds us that any attempt to improve quality or achieve a quality culture needs to be relevant to the different stakeholders and they need to want it. Newton (1999, p19) affirms:

Any quality assurance model, method or system, will always be affected by situational factors and context. This leads to the view that the success of a system may be less dependent on the rigour of application, ...and more on its contingent use by actors and protagonists, and on how the system is viewed and interpreted by them.

This may be particularly true for self-evaluation processes, and one of the reasons why importance is given to stakeholder perception of quality, one of the study’s research questions.

To sum up this discussion on quality, the review of all these different definitions and models of quality in higher education helped the author better understand the different meanings quality has within the sector and with this information designed appropriate methods for understanding quality at Unibe. For the purpose of this study, the quality definition from van Damme (2003) given before was the one this research subscribed to, keeping in mind the arguments from Aguila-Cabrera (2002) regarding the use of an operational definition of quality for evaluation purposes.

After attempting to present the different meanings that the word quality might have in the context of higher education, it is necessary to move on to the issue of guaranteeing that quality to the different stakeholders and the role they may play in its assurance.

According to Rowley (1995, p24), quality assurance is “a general term which encompasses all the policies, systems and processes directed towards ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of educational provision”. The UNESCO Glossary agrees with this definition and adds that it is an “ongoing, continuous process of evaluation” (Vlăsceanu et al. (2004 p48). Kettunen (2008) affirms that it

is a holistic approach providing a philosophical framework for the development of higher education institutions.

Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2004, p276) argue that “quality assurance can be seen as having two aspects: improvement and accountability”. They argue that one should focus mainly on improvement and accountability should be the consequence of this improvement. This cause and effect relationship they highlight is often seen the other way around and sometimes even twisted in the mind of some stakeholders. In trying to identify the impact of self-evaluations on the different perceptions stakeholders of Unibe the views of Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2004) were used, especially when trying to understand if quality assurance was seen as a positive activity.

The purposes of external quality assurance are summarised by Billing (2004, p115) from the results of two different surveys done by Neave (1991) and Frazer (1997) on quality assurance to different European countries as follows:

- improvement of quality
- publicly available information on quality and standards
- accreditation (i.e. legitimisation of certification of students)
- public accountability: for standards achieved, and for use of money
- to contribute to the HE sector planning process.

These are well known purposes of external quality assurance and most seem to be in line with those in the Dominican Republic. Throughout the years, the Ministry of Higher Education has proposed different models of quality assurance over the years; however, many of them were not as successful as expected. This may be in part due to the fact that many in the Dominican Republic still fail to see the possible contributions of quality assurance to the higher education planning process as per Billing (2004).

van Vught and Westerheijden (1993) and El-Khawas (1998) all talk of the possibility of developing a ‘general model’ of quality assurance based on a list of common issues in different international quality assurance mechanisms. Their model has four main elements: a national body, self-evaluation, external peer evaluation and a published report. Self-evaluation, of course, is of particular interest for this study, where I argue that self-evaluations may be seen as a quality assurance tool in its own right.

However, Lim (1999) suggests that a general model might not fit everyone, especially developing countries. These countries need to have models that are

realistic to their situation, which usually is very different from that of developed nations. An interesting discussion came out on this subject in one of the meetings with the accreditation consultants on the subject of accreditation that went to the Dominican Republic from Chile to support the universities in their process. Their view was defiant and clear. They expressed their disappointment with many Latin American universities trying to copy accreditation models from the United States arguing that 'our context and realities are quite different from those of the States'. They argued that by doing so we only contribute to the 'imperialism' (also quoted in Van Damme, 2002) that some developed nations try to impose on developing countries.

Offering an alternative to applying the 'general model', Woodhouse (1999, p133) suggests that the general model can be used as a base or "starting point from which to map deviations, and to which relate them". Therefore, more than a ready-made model, what developing countries may need is a guide for conducting quality assurance processes based on their own situation and realities. This point is further argued in the recommendations part of the conclusion chapter.

Perhaps one of the most complete framework for quality assessment in higher education has been given by Brennan and Shah (2000). They conducted case studies in 29 institutions from 17 different countries in order to clarify the purposes, methods and intended outcomes of different national systems of quality assessment and to investigate their impact on institutional management and decision-making. They argue that

the growth of quality assessment can be linked to the growth of a world religion, a religion whose believers are divided into many different sects and who confront non-believers daily in their working lives.(Brennan and Shah, 2000, p1).

This statement may be corroborated with the literature on quality management of higher education which ranges from true believers of the use of business models in higher education institutions, to those truly opposed, who even get offended by the unfamiliar management terminology, acting like its use would insult the 'God' of academia.

Brennan and Shah (2000, p1) suggest that most of the literature on quality management is normative and although there is an increasing amount of literature on methods of quality assessment, they argue that very little actually addresses the effect such process have on "other educational and organisational processes in higher education". In summary, what they are saying is that everyone assumes that the results of such assessments will be just what people expect. They do give credit

to some studies that are empirically-based, and explain that their study is a complement and extension of previous investigations. They point out that in the quality management literature, the debates about quality have serious ideological problems in that many fail to differentiate between intention and outcome. Based on these arguments, Brennan and Shah (2000) offer a very interesting conceptual model which presents the relationship between the issues that influence the possible impact a quality assessment method might have. They argue that impact will depend on the context and the methods used for the assessment and will affect higher education at different levels through the use of different mechanisms. Self-evaluation may be one of these methods, and indeed, this study is searching for its impacts at different levels of the university.

Brennan and Shah (2000) also present a table on the values of quality. For the purpose of this dissertation that table has been adapted, re-arranging its columns and adding a column of 'characteristics' as well as one suggesting 'quality definitions' from the ones previously presented in Table 3. The following is the result of the adaptation:

Table 4: Values of Quality

Type	Cultural type McNay/Handy and Aitken	Characteristics	Focus of Assessment	Authority	Quality Value	Quality Definition
Type 1 <i>'Academic'</i>	Collegium/ Person	Strong control, rigid socialisation, academic hierarchy and academic freedom	Subject focus	Professional authority	Varies across the institution	Quality as excellence
Type 2 <i>'Managerial'</i>	Bureaucracy/ Role	Concerned about procedures and structures, relative little direct focus on academic matters	Institutional focus	Managerial authority	Invariant across the institution	Quality as fitness for purpose
Type 3 <i>'Pedagogic'</i>	Corporation/ Power	Teaching skills and classroom practice are important, training and staff development, little emphasis on content offered but a lot on emphasis on delivery.	People focus	Staff developers/e educational influence	Invariant across the institution	Quality as a threshold
Type 4 <i>'Employment focus'</i>	Enterprise/ Task	Production of good graduates, standards and learning outcomes, looks at both subject specific and core characteristics, employers are the customer	Output focus	Employment/ professional authority	Variant and invariant across the institution	Quality as customer satisfaction

Source: adapted from Brennan and Shah (2000) (p14)

This table helped inform this research as it progressed. The types of academic values and may also be related to the previous discussion on quality definitions. I also added the column on cultural types in order to relate these concepts to the different university cultures (McNay, 1995, and Handy and Aitken (1986).

Going back to the issue of quality assurance, in order to respond to quality assurance pressure from different stakeholders, a series of agencies have been established. According to their website the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education was established in Europe in 2000 “to promote European cooperation in the field of quality assurance” (ENQA, 2007), they were then transformed in 2004 to the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). They have created, among many other useful documents, a booklet called ‘Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area’ which provides a thorough list of European standards for quality assurance and lists recommendations of significant to the European higher education system (ENQA, 2007).

In the UK, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) plays a key role in ensuring quality standards. They were established in 1997 and have also produced a series of documentations which universities in the UK use for quality assurance such as ‘the Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland’ and the ‘Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education’. In their website, they define their role as follows:

It is our responsibility to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications, and to encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education (QAA, 2008)

The work of ‘Centro Internuniversitario de Desarrollo’ (CINDA) based in Chile on quality assurance is of particular relevance to the case of Unibe University, as CINDA’s members include international universities of Latin America and Europe and they work together to address the main development problems universities in this region face (CINDA, 2008). Experts from CINDA were consulted at several points during evaluation procedures at Unibe and their contribution was significant to the development of the self-evaluation process.

Furthermore, there was the Dominican Association for Self-study and Accreditation (ADAAC), who was the principal body for quality assurance in the Dominican Republic. Currently ADAAC is not functioning, mainly due to lack of resources, however, it played a significant role in triggering awareness for the need of

evaluation and quality assurance in the Dominica Republic. Details of the ADAAC guidelines for self-evaluations are available in Appendix 1.

To conclude, when expressing the apparent advantages of quality assurance processes one must not ignore that some authors such as Turner (2004) cited in Poole, (2010) argue against quality assurance process as he sees them more relevant to 'factories' and not to universities. He worries that most quality assurance processes fail to focus on what is really important in higher education: the teaching and learning process, and Poole (2010, p132) explains that this probably because these approaches "oversimplify the teaching and learning process".

2.4 Evaluation

Evaluation is a process. This implies that it is neither an activity nor a disconnected task. It is a process of identification of elements, variables and situations that are given in the process. Those elements have to be measured and then judgments of value have to be passed on. However, evaluation is an extensive term with many different meanings. To try to define it in all the different contexts it can be used is a difficult and time-consuming task. Therefore, this part of the literature review will concentrate on giving a few important definitions of evaluation in the higher education context and briefly present some evaluation models used in higher education.

Evaluation is defined by Dias Sobrinho (2006) as a participatory process of analysis, study and discussion regarding the merit and value of educational systems, institutions and programmes with the objective of improvement. Bush and West-Bunham (1994, p158) define it as “an internal or external formative process designed to provide feedback on the total impact and value of a project or activity”.

Evaluation, however, is many times conceived as control. This view is too static, and defined in this way is often perceived like a sanction tool. If we understand it as an element that helps make decisions, it is then viewed as more dynamic and open and it is possibly seen as more useful.

Historically, evaluation in higher education became more common from the mid-1980s. In the United States “evaluations sprang from the need to define a minimum level for thousands of higher education institutions whose levels had previously been quite heterogeneous” (Hamalainen et al. 2001, p5).

The Law 139-01 (2001) of Higher Education Science and Technology of the Dominican Republic explores the theme of evaluation in one of its chapters and defines it as a systematic and continuous process whose fundamental purpose is the development and the transformation of institutions of higher education and of activities of science and technology, directed to achieve significant levels of quality, to determine the efficacy, the efficiency and the relevance of activities of the university, and to establish the relation of the mission, the objectives and the goals with the results of the institutional tasks.

It is important to note that evaluation in higher education also has different meanings within this same context. It can relate to different objectives, anything

from evaluation/assessment of students, teachers and programmes or to institutional evaluation. This research mainly concentrates on Institutional Evaluation because it is the subject which relates directly to management in higher education and the aims and objectives of this study. According to Hamalainen and Wahlen, 2001 in Hamalainen et al. (2001, p7)

the aim of institutional evaluation is usually development: to provide feedback to the management of the higher education institution on the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation in order to help them improve the institution's performance.

Stake (2010) argues that when one is evaluating it is important to remember that quality is seen differently by different people and that one needs to consider these various views. The different meanings found in the literature review for quality were explored in table 3. Stake (2010) however, affirms that differences should not be seen as a problem or a sign of invalidity of the evaluation and that multiple view points should be seen as "an arena, an argument, a dialectic, in which new understandings of the evaluand and its quality may be discovered" (Stake, 2010, p162). Quality in education gives the purpose towards improvement while evaluation processes actually provide the methodological tool, the critical judgement and the proposals for improvement (Garduno-Estrada, 1999).

Hoffman (2003) worked on a project reviewing 60 EUA evaluation reports to determine the lessons learned from doing external evaluation. The survey was built around what the institution is trying to do, how it is trying to do it, how it knows it works and how it changes in order to improve. The four lessons she claims were learned were:

that all universities have deficits, there are frequently analysed problems (common deficits), there are both questions and answers and there is no blue print solution. (Hofman 2003, p35)

However, even if she found that there is no blue print solution, according to Caldeiro (2005), the use and value of evaluation mechanisms in education depends to a great extent on the quality on which this process of evaluation is conducted.

House (1980) summarises the different approaches to evaluation in the general education arena comparing 9 models. His table, seen in the next page, is useful for quickly identifying which model or approach one can use when conducting evaluation processes. In the case of this research, the immediate approach one would select from the table is the 'Professional Review' because the evaluation processes conducted at Unibe emerged from the need of accreditation. Even so, one can draw important conclusions from most of all the approaches. For instance,

because Unibe is the main focus for the research, the approach of a 'Case Study' was adopted and the results from the inquiry will be used for 'Decision making' as well as for determining 'Behavioural objectives'. Therefore, as House (1980) clearly explains, there is no need to stick to only one approach.

Table 5: Evaluation Approaches

<i>Model</i>	<i>Major Audiences or Reference Groups</i>	<i>Assumes Consensus On</i>	<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Typical Questions</i>
Systems analysis	Economists, managers	Goals, known cause and effect, quantified variables	PPBS, linear programming, planned variation, cost-benefit analysis	Efficiency	Are the expected effects achieved? Can the effects be achieved more economically? What are the <i>most</i> efficient programs?
Behavioural objectives	Managers, psychologists	Pre specified objectives, quantified outcome variables	Behavioural objectives, achievement tests	Productivity, accountability	Is the program achieving the objectives? Is the program producing?
Decision-making	Decision-makers, especially administrators	General goals, criteria	Surveys, questionnaires, interviews, natural variation	Effectiveness, quality control	Is the program effective? What parts are effective?
Goal-free	Consumers	Consequences, criteria	Bias control, logical analysis, modus operandi	Consumer choice, social utility	What are <i>all</i> the effects?
Art criticism	Connoisseurs, consumers	Critics, standards	Critical review	Improved standards, heightened awareness	Would a critic approve this program? Is the audience's appreciation increased?
Professional review (accreditation)	Professionals, public	Criteria, panel, procedure	Review by panel, self-study	Professional acceptance	How would professionals rate this program?
Quasi-legal	Jury	Procedures and judges	Quasi-legal procedures	Resolution	What are the arguments for and against the program?
Case study	Client, practitioners	Negotiations, activities	Case studies, interviews, observations	Understanding diversity	What does the program look like to different people?

Source: House 1980

Kells (1995b) provides a different approach, a division of models according to the country where they were developed. In his view, the American model intends to improve institutional programmes and give a guarantee of quality to the general public. This is true in the case of evaluation models in the Dominican Republic. Similarly, the European model focuses on improvement of quality and in giving a quality guarantee to the general public but is also accountable to the government and his view is that the focus of evaluation is more on the academic programs rather than on the services and administration of the university. The British model emphasises establishment of standards and fulfilment of the quality criteria of academic programmes and promotes the use of performance indicators. Jackson (2001) explains that, in the UK, understanding the purpose of the evaluation is essential in order to design the most appropriate evaluation methodology.

Even though there are a great number of models of evaluation, Royero (2002) affirms that not all of such models constitute true models because of their poor interest in the nature of evaluation and therefore classifies them into pseudo-evaluative, quasi-evaluative and truly-evaluative models. These definitions are interesting for this research because they classify processes based on what happens with their outcomes. The pseudo-evaluative models usually do not present true conclusions and either falsify results or carefully select which information to present. The quasi-evaluative models want to resolve a specific problem and focus only on doing that, instead of measuring the total outcomes. And, finally, the truly-evaluative models work under an integral vision and without any prejudice towards improving the system. In the Dominican Republic, evaluation has traditionally been seen as an imposition from an outside agency for accountability and many institutions are afraid that, if they do not present the 'right' results, they would be closed or be sanctioned, therefore some of them may 'invent' the expected outcomes.

Dias Sobrinho (2006) argues against this view, affirming that Latin American countries, including the Dominican Republic, have embraced evaluation and accreditation processes as a response to the problems generated from massification of higher education, expansion of private education, crisis in public financing of universities and the threat of commercialisation of higher education. He affirms that there are evident conceptual and technical advances in the field and that most important of all an evaluation culture in the education community was created.

Finally, Harvey (2002, p251) asked the question "why evaluate?" and went on to answer it by providing an interesting list of the purposes of external and internal

agencies for evaluation. However, he argues that even if it is a comprehensive lists, the real purposes of evaluation may be “subsumed by political imperatives and despite the comprehensiveness of the purposes, significant questions are side-stepped” (Harvey, 2002, p252). To his question of why evaluate the conclusion part adds another reason for evaluating based on the results of this study, that is, evaluate in order to build and promote a quality and evaluation culture.

2.4.1 Accreditation

Accreditation, like evaluation, can refer to different activities depending on the context within which it is used. It can mean anything from accepting credits from other higher education institutions to validating degrees. Accreditation is not always voluntary, as in some countries it can be imposed by the government.

For the purpose of this research, accreditation will be defined as follows:

Accreditation is a process by which an institution of postsecondary education evaluates its educational activities, in whole or in part, and seeks an independent judgment to confirm that it substantially achieves its objectives and is generally equal in quality to comparable institutions or specialized units. (Young et al., 1983, p21)

According to Royero (2002), institutional accreditation defines the extrinsic evaluation of quality by demonstrating responsible processes to one or more social groups interested in the institutional results. Those results should try to define, on the one hand, the social mission of the university and, on the other, to demonstrate that the universities have successfully achieved such mission.

Dias Sobrinho (2006) states that accreditation of an institution gives public faith in the quality of the institutions, gives information to the citizens and to authorities, publicly guarantees that the degrees offered achieved pre-set standards, and gives official conformation that the institution meets the quality requirement. He also argues that the central focus of accreditation is control and guarantee of quality.

It is also important to discuss the role of The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in accreditation procedures. The Commission on Colleges Division is the accreditation agency in the United States authorised to grant accreditation to the Southern States of the United States and to Latin American countries wishing to be accredited by American standards. This is the organisation any university in the

Dominican Republic would have to contact in order to apply for accreditation from the United States. They define accreditation as follows:

Accreditation of an institution by the Commission on Colleges signifies that the institution (1) has a mission appropriate to higher education, (2) has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain that mission, and (3) maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers, and that indicate whether it is successful in achieving its stated objectives (SACS, 2010, p1)

Like many other developing countries in Latin America, institutions in the Dominican Republic seem to assume that anything 'accredited' by the United States is a good thing. It may be due to the old complex of being under the shadow of imperialism, or it may be that indeed accreditation processes from agencies in the United States are rigorous and guarantee a certain level of quality. This dichotomy is highlighted by Singh (2010, p193) when he questions the quality assurance "kingdom" where established systems continue tinkling the edges while newer ones become increasingly institutionalised. The systems in countries with long traditions of quality assurance act as 'templates' to be adopted by the newer countries or can it be that countries in developing nations bring "new possibilities into the routinised ways of undertaking quality assurance" (Singh 2010, p192).

SACS's definition of accreditation is an accurate definition of what accreditation should mean to any accreditation agency. However, universities in the Dominican Republic should not have as a main objective to receive accreditation from SACS because their requirements are not designed for universities of developing nations. This is not to minimise the potential of universities in the Dominican Republic. On the contrary, they are encouraged to analyse and apply the criteria for accreditation and try to raise their standards as much as possible but it could be argued that it is wasteful of resources, at this moment, to try to gain accreditation from SACS in order to be equal to American universities that exist in a different context.

In the Seminar of Quality Standards for Institutions of higher Education carried out by the Higher Education Counsel of Chile in 2003, accreditation was defined as an integral system of supervision of private institutions of higher education that is carried out by means of diverse mechanisms of periodical evaluation fulfilment. It covers the most significant variables of the development of each institutional project: infrastructure, equipment, financial and economic resources, teaching resources (libraries, laboratories, shops, equipment computational), academic body, students, services, investigation and extension. This definition highlights the importance of the periodic nature of evaluation, which, for many Dominican

institutions, is a hard concept to grasp since they see evaluation as a foreign requirement to be completed only when asked to do so. Evaluation should be continuous and should be motivated internally.

According to Gonzalez (2008, p10), accreditation is one of the most used procedures for assuring quality in higher education and its objective is to “give public faith” in that both institutional and academic standards are met. However, he argues that in order for accreditation to be successful, it needs to take into account the particular necessities of each higher education system for accreditation in each country. In most Latin American countries this includes three processes: self-evaluation, external evaluation and formal accreditation by an accreditation agency.

Some authors do not necessarily see accreditation as a positive process. Harvey (2003) in Di Nauta et al. (2004, p17) affirm that “accreditation is a shift of power from educators to managers and bureaucrats” and that its “main function is to maintain control of the sector”. Some authors go as far as calling it “a licence to kill” (Scheele, 2003, p19). Harvey (2003, p16) goes on to criticise accreditation by saying that it is “not a benign process” and that there is evidence in the UK and the US that it “bites into academic autonomy and undermines the skills and experience of educators”.

According to a study conducted by van Kemenade et al. (2011, p33) accreditation was clearly seen by respondents to have a negative influence on their workload and caused “more stress and insecurity”. However, the study showed a significant difference in perception between the people that wanted accreditation to take place than those who did not choose accreditation processes, a concept which is further discussed in chapter 4.

Getting staff to participate willingly and to enjoy the process is a difficult task that requires a clear vision and compromise from senior management. Erickson and Wentworth (2010) analyse the opinions of academic staff in the United States that have gone through accreditation of teacher preparation programmes. They summarised the different types of tensions staff claimed to have experienced during the accreditation process. They identified tension regarding the amount of participation of staff in the process and whether the process was conducted top-down (imposed and administered by senior management) or bottom-up (in a collective way). These tensions revolve around “who was ultimately responsible and accountable for accomplishing the process” (Erickson and Wentworth 2010, p296). Other conflicts identified were those that came from tensions relating to who was

leading the process and if this person was experienced or not, or if the person responsible had no control over the situation or outcomes. Tension also arose when trying to establish a culture of evidence based on “hard evidence, outcomes, informed decision-making, systematic, data-driven, comprehensive, valid and reliable” (Erickson and Wentworth, 2010, p296) procedures. Collaboration and the issue of working with people who hold different views also led to tension. Finally, cost and the tension that comes from having to make decisions on resource distribution was found in academics during accreditation processes.

Even though they highlight several difficulties evident in other previous accreditation processes in the United States, they emphasise that their goal is not to criticise the process but to highlight the challenge of resolving the tensions that may be encountered in order to instruct both teachers and accreditation bodies in the “noble pursuit of preparing excellent teachers” (Erickson and Wentworth, 2010, p316).

Some of the tensions presented in Erickson and Wentworth (2010) are true for self-evaluation processes and were found in the results of this study (see Results Chapter for further details).

2.4.2 Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation, self-study or self-assessment has been defined by Landi and Palacios (2010) as the opportunity to re-think the sense of purpose of the academic institution in order to help reach its goals. It is used at institutions delivering all levels of education, including primary schools, high schools, colleges and universities.

According to the European Foundation for Quality Management (1994) cited in Ritchie and Dale (2000, p241)

Self-assessment is a comprehensive, systematic and regular review of an organisation’s activities and results against a model of business excellence. The self-assessment process allows the organisation to discern clearly its strengths and areas in which improvements can be made and culminates in planned improvement actions which are monitored for progress.

Bolivar (1994) defines it as a process started by the institution with the purpose of finding answers to problems of the institution and unlike in most cases for accreditation not to issues planted by agents or external bodies. According to Tari (2010, p21) "self-assessment is a tool that helps managers to improve the management of the organisation." In the context of schools, self-evaluation has been defined by Hofman et al (2009, p48) as "a systematic process, including cyclic activities such as goal-setting, planning, evaluation, and defining new improvement measures. In these broad definitions, school self-evaluation is almost synonymous with definitions of quality assurance" and he also mentions that in most definitions evaluation is referred to as a process, directly or indirectly aimed at school improvement. MacBeath (2006) defines self-evaluation in schools as a process of reflection on practice, made systematic and transparent, with the aim of improving pupil, professional and organisational learning.

Unlike Bolivar (1994), Kells (1995a) defines a self-study process as a process that takes place usually before an external review that looks at the conditions, intentions, processes and results of an institution and it is conducted by the organisation's own staff. He sums it up as the report that comes out of this course of action and argues that the main purpose of a self-evaluation is to bring out some kind of improvement in the unit being evaluated.

Another way of seeing self-evaluation is as a process in which an institution analyses its purpose in the light of previously defined criteria regarding purpose, objectives and activities. It is an internal form of evaluation oriented towards improving the quality of teaching and learning by strengthening the administration's capacity for designing and implementing actions for improvement. Ritchie and Dale (2000) state that the main purpose of self-evaluation is to detect the positive and negative aspects in the development of an academic unit in order to identify strategies for solutions. It is an important administrative tool as it helps in the gathering of important information in an objective matter in order to help improve quality. In this sense, this study reviews positive and negative aspects of two different self-studies to determine, if, like Ritchie and Dale (2000) suggest, they indeed help improve quality.

Bush and West-Bunham (1994, p165) express that the purpose of institutional evaluation "might be summarized as changing perceptions, serving as the basis for action and informing on the basis of evidence". This study argues in the conclusion chapter that perception of stakeholders was indeed changed throughout these processes.

Overall, many authors agree there are some benefits of self-evaluations, Ritchie and Dale (2000, p45) present a very interesting table with the benefits of the process categorised into immediate and long-term.

Table 6: Benefits of self-evaluation

Category	Benefits
Immediate	Facilitates benchmarking
	Drives continuous improvement
	Encourages employee involvement and ownership
	Provides visibility in direction
	Raises understanding and awareness of quality related issues
	Develops a common approach towards improvement across the company
	Seen as marketing strategy raising the profile of the organisation
	Produces 'people friendly' business plans
Long Term	Keeps costs down
	Improves business results
	Balances long and short-term investments
	Provides a disciplined approach to quality
	Increases the ability to meet and exceed customers expectations
	Maintains a quality image
	Provides a link between customers and suppliers

Source: Ritchie and Dale (2000, p45)

Ritchie and Dale (2000) seem to focus on a business perspective of self-evaluation, however, since Unibe is a private university, most of these points are applicable.

Differentiating its benefits in terms of *when* the university may actually start to see its benefits is very interesting, as many argue they mainly see long-term benefits, and this makes the process seem like they are wasting time. Ritchie and Dale (2000) provide a substantial list of immediate benefits in the above table which may be attractive when trying to convince those who believe self-evaluation has only long-term effects.

Based on the works of Van der Wiele et al., 1996a, b; Van der Wiele and Brown, 1999; Ritchie and Dale, 2000; Samuelsson and Nilsson, 2002; Sharma and Hoque, 2002; EFQM, 2003; Balbastre et al., 2005; Ford and Evans, 2006, Conti, 2001, Ritchie and Dale, 2000 (all cited in Tari 2010); Tari (2010, p21) presents advantages and difficulties of self-assessment processes which have been re-arranged for the

purpose of this study in the following table to include the views of and Espinoza et al. (1994) and Stake (2010):

Table 7: Advantages and difficulties of self-assessment

Advantages	Difficulties
<p>Contributes to identify strengths and areas for improvement in order to develop an improvement plan</p> <p>The rationality of decisions that aim for improvement are strengthened.</p> <p>There is an increment in the awareness of what the institution has and does</p> <p>Can be linked to strategic planning</p> <p>Objectivity is favoured in the revision of goals and purposes of all the activities the institution undergoes.</p> <p>A better organization of information is achieved.</p> <p>Measures performance</p> <p>Involves people in developing a process improvement approach to quality</p> <p>Raises the understanding and awareness of quality-related issues</p> <p>Facilitates the integration of quality factors in all day-to-day practices</p> <p>Effective communication increases in the university community.</p>	<p>Lack of commitment and enthusiasm among management and employees</p> <p>Time-consuming nature of the process</p> <p>Difficulty in implementing the improvement actions</p> <p>Not knowing where to start</p> <p>Lack of resources; time, manpower, finance</p> <p>Lack of support by the quality department</p> <p>Can be seen as self-serving, self-protecting, promotional, advocating the home point of view by people from the outside</p> <p>Getting the assessment done in time to link into the business plan</p>

Source: Adapted by the author from Tari (2010, p21) and Espinoza et al. (1994), Stake (2010)

The table summarises a number of advantages conducting self-evaluation processes may provide to the organisations that significantly outnumber the disadvantages. The process of having to carry out a detailed regular self-evaluation seems to be helping most schools identify their strengths and weaknesses in a more organised and methodical manner and to plan the next steps towards institutional improvement (Bubb and Early, 2008). The journey from self-evaluation (SEF) to school improvement (SI) was tracked in 38 schools - 13 secondary, 22 primary and three special - over 20 months from January 2006 to August 2007 and results seemed to be positive.

It is important to note, however, that Landi and Palacios (2010) argue the fact that the advantages are not completely evident if there is no participation culture. This is not an easy task; it demands great effort and can be difficult and challenging. Some of the difficulties may arise when the decision to participate is not based and

supported by clear objectives, goals, processes, methodologies and fieldwork and the experience may then become traumatic. Some authors such as Vanhoof and De Maeyer (2009, p26) go as far as arguing that many stakeholders in schools may not wish to participate very simply because “the nature of the activities involved in self-evaluation has the effect of putting people off initiating a self-evaluation or even taking part in an externally imposed self-evaluation”.

Landi and Palacios (2010) argue that without a participation culture it is unlikely that the self-evaluation process will be successful. The advantages of having a participation culture for effective self-evaluation according to Landi and Palacios (2010) are that it promotes interest and collective reflection, it determines in agreement with groups of stakeholders the necessary points to be evaluated, enriches the possibility of improvement, gives importance to the roles being played by the different actors involved and better definition of educational purposes. Therefore, a participation culture will deliver self-evaluations where everyone is involved and, in turn, everyone is more interested in the outcomes and in their contribution to change. More on participation in the conclusion chapter.

Furthermore, the fear that errors and mistakes may be found when the evaluation takes place makes participants weary of participation as they wrongly think that if found ‘guilty’ this will bring negative repercussions. Some of the risks Landi and Palacios (2010) present were adapted by the author in the table below:

Table 8: Risk in self-evaluation processes

Self-evaluation process	Risks
If high priority is not given to the process because of lack of commitment, support for it to take place	Every-day activities will take priority and the process will be put on the side and will not take place
If the process is not clear to those who will be involved	Lack of confidence by the rest of the academic community may arise
If it is not supported by the relevant authorities	The plans for action may stay as just plans
If a larger group is not involved (more than just those promoting it)	Reflection may not be wide enough and may be seen as a ‘closed’ process
If auto criticism is not practiced during the process by those conducting it	Results from the self-evaluation will not be presenting the reality of the institution
If it is not understood that the end result is not the self-evaluation report and people are not willing to change	The actions for improvement will never be implemented

Source: Adapted from Landi and Palacios, (2010)

They also note the importance of the process itself and highlight that it is not exclusively a technical procedure but that it also involves ethical and political action. They summarise the process as follows:

It is a complex process that is based on reflection and valuable action on a series of organisational, curricular, contextual, administrative aspects that interact in order to achieve quality. (Landi and Palacios, 2010, p3)

McAdam and Welch (2000, p123) argue that another significant risk is the fact that “the timescale for benefits derived from self-assessment to be fully realised is not short”. As was seen in table 6 where at least 7 benefits of the process were long-term. Based on research project conducted in 1996 by the London and Manchester Business School they argue that “the majority of respondents believed that a gap of at least four years was required between introduction and benefit realisation” (McAdam and Welch 2000, p123).

Tari (2010) argues that few studies have focused in analysing the difficulties, benefits and success factors in higher education institutions and he therefore conducted a case study to try to identify these within the Spanish higher education context. His findings show that results from his study are consistent with what the literature suggests are the advantages and disadvantages of self-assessment. The case study of Unibe also compared results against the literature in order to determine if what the literature supports is applicable to the context of higher education in the Dominican Republic. More details in the Results Chapter.

Self-studies can be complicated processes in universities which have no significant prior background of evaluation. There are certain elements that support effective self-evaluation processes that academic organisations may wish to have in order to guarantee the success of the process. The following table was adapted for this study and presents a mix of conditions identified by Kells (1995a) and Espinoza et al. (1994), Landi and Palacios (2010), Ritchie and Dale (2000) and Tari (2010).

Table 9: Elements for successful self-evaluation

Elements that promote successful self-evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear purpose of the self-study • Institutional compromise and willingness from senior management to engage in the process • Construction of a participation culture • Commitment and compromise of all actors involved • Positive internal motivation and employee involvement • Open communication • The ability of leaders to establish a climate of trust • Adequate participation of stakeholders (psychological ownership of the results) • Appropriate design • Use of relevant information and viable access to information • Include external collaboration • Focus on important areas and problems • Not allowing the process to be 'added on' to employees' existing workload • The extent to which resources can be made available to fund the process • Use of appropriate incentives • Follow-up and feedback • Actions being taken from previous self-assessment • Establishment of periodical cycles of self-evaluation • Developing a framework for performance monitoring • Development of an improvement plan and follow-up process based on results of self-assessment

Source: adapted by the author from Kells (1995a), Espinoza et al. (1994), Landi and Palacios (2010), Ritchie and Dale (2000) and Tari (2010).

The first element in the table suggests a clear understanding of the purpose of the self-study. *Clear* in this sentence means that there will not be any confusion on what the main purpose will be, as well as being sure that there are not too many purposes to be fulfilled in a single self-evaluation. Also, the perception of stakeholders involved in the process needs to be coherent with the main purpose of the self-study; if not, they will most likely be working towards other goals and reduce the effectiveness of the self-study process.

Meuret and Morlaix (2003) used data from an European project on school self-evaluation in order to understand which characteristics of the self-evaluation process were associated with a positive appreciation of its effect and which ones made it a successful process. They found out that "the main determinant for a positive attitude to self-evaluation was neither strong participation, nor even high satisfaction of the stakeholders, nor the initial attitude of staff towards self-evaluation, but the judgement on the impact of the process on school effectiveness and ability to improve" (Meuret and Morlaix, 2003, p65). Therefore, the involvement of school stakeholders in defining the criteria used in the self-evaluation processes may eventually encourage their active participation in using the self-evaluation

results for improvement purposes since, according to Demetriou and Kyriakides (2012, p150) “teachers may adopt a more positive attitude towards evaluation results when they are involved in the evaluation procedure”.

Attitude towards the process was included in Elhers (2009) Quality Culture model previously presented in figure 1 as an enabling factor for development of quality culture. Attitude was also discussed by Vanhoof and De Maeyer (2009). They argue that there is limited evidence to support the positive picture towards school self-evaluations even if they are usually widely applauded, which raises concern on how the self-evaluation is being applied to yield worthwhile results. Therefore, he suggests that positive attitude (achieving awareness that self-evaluation is a meaningful and fruitful activity) is crucial and a pre-condition for success. However, he states that this is yet to be achieved in many schools, with many indications that attitudes towards self-evaluation are generally not positive, consider it “as something strange” and “it would appear that there is insufficient awareness in schools of the objectives and usefulness of self-evaluation” Vanhoof and De Maeyer (2009, p21).

Self-evaluations per definition have an element self-criticism in that it should dig deep into different areas to pinpoint areas for improvement. One could argue therefore that one of the theories that underpin this study is Habermas’ Critical Theory. According to Carr (2000, p209) Critical Theory aims to produce a particular form of knowledge that seeks to realise an emancipatory interest, specifically through a critique of consciousness and ideology”. Lakomski (1987) suggests that critical theory is a variant of the cultural model which goes beyond it to offer explicit commitment and orientation towards social change and that therefore it holds some way in educational administration. However, she argues in her research that even if Critical Theory promises social change, it has actually fallen short of actually doing so. Robinson (1994, p57) agrees saying that critical research “has difficulty delivering its practical promise” and most critical researchers in education “do not carry their critique through to a stage of education and social action” and therefore few researchers are conducting their work as a change process. This may be because Critical Theory may focus on or tends to formulate grand-scale problems and holistic problem analysis and this, in the view of Robinson (1994 p73) reduces “the likelihood that people will be motivated to engage in a change process”. Authors like Ogbor (2000, p591) disagree, and argue that critical theory “serves the important purpose of effecting change in societies, including its institutions, by the very dissociation of itself from the material practice as defined by the established order”. In his research of the use of Critical Theory in corporate

culture analysis he found that it can help trainers navigate resistance to change “by providing insights into ways in which power and authority become legitimised and institutionalised in organisational practices”. Mabovula (2010, p1) agrees with Ogbor (2000) and states that Habermas’ communicative action “takes the place of revolution as a mode of change”.

Habermas’ Social integration refers to an ‘internalist’ perspective that focuses on actors’ or participants’ views and strategies, and on the way their orientations are coordinated (Mouzelis, 1992, p268) social integration promoting “a normatively secured or communicatively achieved consensus”. Bolton (2005, p1) explains

“In his theory of communicative action actors in society seek to reach a common understanding and to coordinate actions by reasoned argument, consensus, and cooperation rather than strategic action strictly in pursuit of their own goals” (Bolton, 2005, p1).

Habermas (1987) provides a theoretical basis for a view of planning that emphasises widespread public participation, sharing of information with the public, reaching consensus through public dialogue rather than exercise of power, avoiding privileging of experts and bureaucrats, and replacing the model of the technical expert with one of the reflective planner (Bolton, 2005, p2). He thinks that practical issues of the social life, including social conflicts, can be resolved by the rational discourse among people (Mitrovic, 1999).

According to Frazer (1995, p14) an essential part of quality assurance is for a university to demonstrate that it is “a self-critical academic community striving to enhance the quality of all its work. Self-evaluation is not easy and in some universities will require a change in culture as well as training of the staff”. This statement highlights the role of criticality, inline with critical theory, and links it with a change in culture in order to make it effective. Again the role of culture in the success of self-evaluations is highlighted, in line with one of the research questions of this study.

Moving forward with the self-evaluation discussion, traditionally, and mostly in the United States, a comprehensive self-evaluation process is required by accreditation agencies before they give any certification. According to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (2002), there are four major models for self-study. They are the ‘comprehensive model’ where the institution addresses every aspect of its programs that relates to accreditation standards such as educational outcomes, services, governing and supporting structures, and resources in relation to the institution’s mission and goals, ‘the comprehensive with emphasis model’ which is

particularly useful for institutions wishing to give some special attention, within the comprehensive format, to selected areas or issues that affect the institution and finally 'the selected topics model' which enables the institution to devote concentrated attention to issues that the institution selects as being most important, without providing a comprehensive analysis of institutional programs and services and addressing all accreditation standards within the self-study report. The Middle States Commission affirms that, within these broad models, there are many possible approaches to self-study evaluation, because the mission, purpose, internal conditions, needs, and external influences at each educational institution are different (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2002).

Jackson (2001) developed the following approaches to self-evaluation from Kells (1995a):

- Measurement of achievement of stated intentions
- Measurement of adequacy of functioning of the process
- Measurement of extent of compliance with externally set standards
- Measurement of the extent to which practice matches up to acknowledged 'good practice'

These approaches are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, what is more common is to find an interesting mix of them, with one approach being stronger than others.

The approach to self-study that an institution selects should be sufficiently broad to meet the institution's needs, as well as sufficiently thorough to provide the basic information that will enable the accreditation agency to fulfil its responsibility of determining if the institution has fulfilled its stated mission and goals. It should also consider, according to Samuelsson and Nielsson (2002, p11) "the organisation's maturity and culture and must be correctly positioned as a part of an overall management process". They argue that EFQM and the Malcolm Baldrige National Qualification Award are the most well known award models used for self-assessment.

The EFQM model has been used for self-assessment processes by a number of higher education institutions as presented by Tari (2010). The EFQM Excellence Model according to EFQM (2011) is a non-prescriptive framework based on nine criteria. Five of these are Enablers and four are Results. The Enabler criteria, including leadership, people, strategy partnership and resource, and processes, product and services, cover what an organisation does and how it does it. The

Results criteria including people, customer, society and key results cover what an organisation achieves. Results are caused by Enablers and Enablers are improved using feedback from Results. This model was successfully used by 17 Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland in 1998 and its impact was analysed by McAdam and Welch (2000). They explain that self-assessment was used as part of the Business Excellence Model (BEM) of the EFQM and that

There is evidence to suggest that the first time self-assessment is carried out, a considerable change agenda will be generated. There is also evidence to suggest a link between the rigour of the self-assessment carried out by the organisation and the number of improvement areas identified (McAdam and Welch, 2000, p122).

However, their research focused on comparing the organisations and how they approached quality management as well as the concept and implementation of the EFQM and results, but not on assessing the usefulness of self-evaluations per-se (they focused on the entire model), which is the purpose of this study at Unibe. Their results did show that “quality schemes are not embedded in further education colleges in Northern Ireland” but that “colleges have begun to consider the use of quality schemes for service improvements such as customer satisfaction” (McAdam and Welch, 2000, p129).

According to Osseo-Assare and Longbottom (2002), the EFQM methodology as a basis for self-evaluation was rapidly emerging in the UK during that time because it provided a holistic way of ensuring long-term success. They argue that the model is “a diagnostic tool for self-assessment of the current health of the organisation” (Osseo-Assare and Longbottom, 2002, p27). According to Doherty (2008) this method emphasises leadership instead of management, people processes, results and the importance of innovation and learning. It uses the RADAR cycle methodology based on results, approach, deployment, assessment and review.

Others evaluating the use of EFQM in higher education were Hides et al. (2004). They focused particularly on the different approaches of implementing self-assessment through EFQM and conducted a case study of 6 different universities and colleges in the UK and then compared them to how other public institutions had implemented similar processes. They summarise their findings as follows:

The early signs are that EFQM model self-assessment can help to produce a more customer-oriented culture in HE institutions, providing that the lessons learned from the wider public sector are put into practice (Hides et al. 2004, p201).

Davies et al. (2001c) go as far as arguing that the EFQM could be used as a possible vehicle for improving leadership in higher education. In their case study of Salford

University they used the EFQM self-assessment to highlight areas needed for improvement. They argue that “leadership is needed to combine the collegiality ethos of universities with the responsive, business-like approach demanded by customers” and that “leadership is needed for universities to survive and as such leaders will need to be identified and nurtured” (Davies et al. 2001c, p1030). This will be further discussed in the finding of this study, where results indicate the importance the figure of the leader played in the successful completion of the process.

Finally, Calvo-Mora et al. (2006) attempt to analyse the relationship between the EFQM and quality improvement in higher education by engaging senior managers of 111 Spanish universities in answering a questionnaire after the EFQM self-assessment was completed. They found that

The role of senior management stands out among the key activities. The top management leads the excellence development of key processes in the university through appropriate leadership, strategy formulation, establishment of partnerships, resource allocation, and human resources management (Calvo-Mora et al. 2006, p99)

The methodology is presented as promising by many authors; however, Osseo-Assare and Longbottom (2002) also present some limitations to the methodology of the model:

- It is too prescriptive, albeit in philosophy but not in methods or techniques used
- Too time consuming and requires adequate resources
- Prior knowledge and deliberate strategy required for successful implementation
- High degree of subjectivity in scoring the EFQM criteria

Van Kemenade et al. (2008) argue that the popularity of the EQFM model seems to have decreased, with more universities applying for ISO 9001:2000 certificate. Some authors even said that it degenerated to a control model (Hardjono, 2005).

The other very well known self-evaluation methodology suggested by Samuelsson and Nielsson (2002) was the Malcolm Baldrige model. Ruben et al. (2007, p231) affirm that “of the various approaches to organizational assessment, none has become more influential than the Malcolm Baldrige model”. This framework suggests that organisational excellence requires the following (summarised from Ruben et al. 2007):

1. Effective leadership
2. Inclusive planning process and coherent plans
3. Knowledge of needs, expectations, satisfaction/dissatisfaction levels of stakeholders
4. Development and use of indicators of organisational performance

5. A workplace culture for excellence
6. Focus on mission-critical and support and programme services
7. Documented and sustained positive outcomes

However, irrespective of the approach chosen, the generic stages for self-assessment are the following: developing management commitment, communicating self-assessment plans, planning self-assessment, establishing teams and training, conducting self-assessment, establishing action plans, implementing action plans and review (Tari and Juana-Espinosa, 2007)

With regard to the specific case of the Dominican Republic, ADAAC defined the self-study process as the first formal phase of the process towards accreditation. Therefore, great importance should have been placed to this activity. Consequently ADAAC created the Guide for Evaluation that worked as a framework for this essential part of the accreditation process with 27 areas for evaluation, including the mission or purposes, the resources and facilities assigned and available for the attainment and execution of the mission, plans and aspirations and the developments in teaching, research, support services according to the characteristics and priorities of the institution evaluated, among other areas. They explain that the organisation and execution of this process can require a variable time, between 3 to 18 months, depending on the magnitude and available resources to carry it out. See Appendix 1 for more details.

The project of self-evaluation of a university should also include: description of the elements included in the process, a precise presentation of the purpose of the self-evaluation, detailed definition of what it is that will be studied, description of the organisation of the process, establishment of the methodology to follow, definition of the information to be obtained, determination of the resources that should be employed, and production of a report document.

The report is seen to be a crucial part of the process as it presents a picture of a critical analysis conducted based on a series of criteria. In the UK, the QAA, in its role as a quality assurance organisation reviewed 70 audit reports submitted between 2002 and 2004 to identify the extent of whether self-evaluation reports were evaluative or not and the contribution of the reports to the audit process. They claim that, overall,

almost half of the first 70 institutional audit reports commented that the self-evaluation documents provided to support the audits were both evaluative and accurate. No self-evaluation was considered to be both unevaluative and inaccurate. Many reports stated that self-evaluation documents were found to be frank, honest

and self-critical, though occasionally criticisms directed by institutions at their own arrangements for quality and academic standards were found to have overstated their deficiencies. Conversely, in a few other cases audit reports found that self-evaluation documents overstated the strengths of the institution's arrangements. (QAA, 2011)

Unfortunately, most discussions of accreditation emphasise the site visit and the final decision instead of focusing on the self-study process. Jackson (2001) argues that the construction of the report is not the key element in a self-study. He explains that it is the process of enquiry what makes a self-study relevant because, without the engagement of individuals, change will never take place. This point of view focuses more on the process than on the final report and therefore it supports the objectives of this study in that suggestions for improvement should not stay on a piece of paper. However, the two self-evaluation reports were used as a base for the analysis of the data of this study. With this view Jackson is not undermining the importance of the final report (and neither is this study, on the contrary, see results chapter), which will always be a useful tool for problem identification and feedback support; what he seems to want is more attention on the process itself.

To conclude, McNamara and O'Hara (2008, p178) explain that self-evaluation has changed the way they focus their work "away from once-off or external evaluation and towards contributing to the development of cyclical processes of quality assurance within which systematic self-evaluation is embedded" and Dias Sobrinio (2006) confirms the importance of self-evaluation by saying that it is not only the base and foundation for accreditation, but also, and most importantly, it is a strategy for academic and administrative improvement.

2.5 Conclusions

The literature review for this study expanded on the main concepts planted in the research questions and objectives of this study: the higher education context and the role of the university, quality in higher education and the use of evaluation and self-evaluation processes for quality improvement purposes.

The higher education environment in Latin America has gone through several reforms and it has significantly improved throughout the years, however, it still faces many challenges, in particular how to continue to grow ensuring quality. The university itself has evolved, with different types of universities operating within the same higher education system.

The concept of culture encapsulates a range of characteristics that shape it. Definitions of organisational culture can be used to understand culture in higher education institution, however, safeguarding the particular features of universities.

Quality is hard to define and has different meanings to different stakeholders. In particular for higher education, the quality concept has been largely discussed and quality assurance mechanisms have been created. These mechanisms attempt to provide society with the reassurance that universities achieve certain standards and having a quality culture within the university may help manage change effectively and improve procedures to better achieve this goal.

The review concludes with an analysis of the concept of evaluation and self-evaluation and how these processes may be used for quality improvement in higher education, the central topic of this PhD. The literature highlights advantages and difficulties of self-evaluation processes, its benefits and risks, and mainly argues that these are positive processes which have an impact on quality improvement. These processes are mainly presented as part of wider quality assurance initiatives, such as accreditation of universities. This study will argue, linking the theory reviewed and the results of the data analysis, that these processes should be used as quality assurance mechanisms in their own right and, if applied under certain conditions, such as the promotion of participation, trust and communication, they will help contribute to an increase in quality and act as triggers of positive change.

Chapter 3: Methodology

According to Travers (2001, p2)

the methodology chapter should be a statement of your theoretical position, reviewing issues and debates in that tradition, and setting out how you have employed methods to address a particular research question.

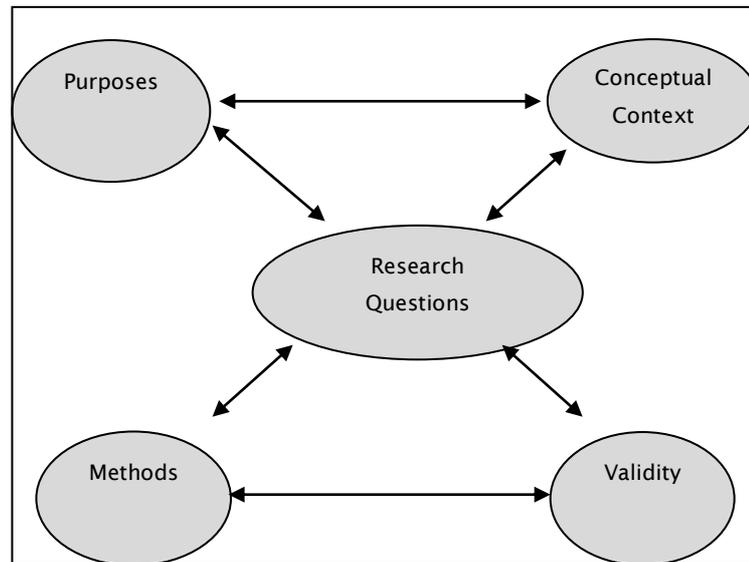
The methodology chapter for this thesis intends to do just that. The chapter discusses the research design for this dissertation, mainly based on the interactive design model by Maxwell (1996), explaining details of research philosophies, approaches, strategies and methods of data collection used for this research along with explanations on how the data was analysed and collected. Validity and ethical considerations of the study will also be presented in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

The research design describes the planning stage and acts as a blueprint that helps build a strong study. Yin (1994, p19) defines a research design as follows:

Colloquially, a research design is an action plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions.

It is good to have an action plan to follow; it keeps the researcher focused on what is important. However, this plan needs to be flexible and open to new insights. Maxwell (1996) developed a very useful model of research design. As the graph below shows, an effective research design helps the researcher think about salient issues of the study and their links with each other.

Figure 2: An Interactive Model of Research Design

Source: Maxwell, 1996

Maxwell and Loomis (2002) believe that this model is not very different from other models in content, but what is interesting about it is how the concepts are interrelated (linked by two-way arrows) and any of the five components can influence each other, having the research questions at the heart of the model. The research questions in this model do not act as a starting point or guide; their role is “to be responsive to all of the other components of the design” (Maxwell and Loomis, 2002, p246).

The methodology chapter for this study is organised based on Maxwell’s model as per figure 2 and will present sub-parts detailing purpose and research questions, conceptual context, methods and research process, and finally issues of validity will be explored.

However, before going into the details of the different parts of the model and how this study approached them, an introduction to the type of research design used for this research is given. The methodology used to conduct this research was the mixed-method approach and further details on how it was applied and how this methodology was chosen will be given in section 3.1.3.3. It is important to note that in this type of methodology, Greene (2007) has identified 2 types of research designs: component and integrated design. In a component mixed method design the methods are combined at the level of interpretation whereas in the integrated designs “methods intentionally interact with one another during the course of a

study" (Greene, 2007, p125). The design used for this study is an integrative design, mixing for reasons of substance and values (of better understanding) and not for iteration (where one method informs another) or blending (where methods complement one another) or nesting (or embedding a secondary method into the primary methodology) which are other options Greene (2007) provides for integrated mixed method design. This type of design allows for an intentional interaction among the different sets of data during the study at all stages. More details are given in the following sections.

3.1.1 Purpose, research questions and objectives

The main purpose of this study is to determine the usefulness of self-evaluation processes in relation to quality in a private university. This purpose guided the design of specific research questions and objectives for this dissertation.

A research question is a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied and acts as the backbone of any research process, guiding and reminding the author of what the main focus of the research should be. The research questions for this study are:

1. How do the principles of self-evaluation relate to quality improvement?
2. What is the impact of self-evaluation techniques:
 - a. on stakeholder's quality perception and/or evaluation culture?
 - b. for university quality improvement?
 - c. for university management and change?

In order to be able to investigate these topics, Unibe University in the Dominican Republic was used as a single case study. Before starting this PhD I was employed as Director of Strategic Planning for two years (2001-2003) at Unibe, in charge of designing and conducting the first self-evaluation process this relationship helped me obtain valuable access to the data needed for this study. The idea for the topic came at a time of reform in the Dominican Republic, where the local accreditation agency, supported by the government, opened the doors to the first formal accreditation movement in the country. Accreditation of universities would be granted on the basis of the successful completion of a self-evaluation process and then a subsequent visit to the premises.

Also, it is worth mentioning that prior to being Director of Strategic Planning, I was Financial Aid assistant for two years and also completed my Bachelors degree at the University. While working as Director of Strategic Planning I was also a lecturer in the Business School. These experiences provided me with a fuller and more comprehensive view of the University, from different stakeholder perspectives, since at different points in my life I have been a student, a graduate and an employee of Unibe. Ethical considerations around having such a close background with the university are presented in section 3.1.5.

Building on the research questions previously presented, more specific research objectives were designed to explore the topic. These objectives are as follows:

1. To analyse the underlying principles of self-evaluation processes and how they relate to quality improvement and change.
2. To analyse and compare the results of two self-evaluation processes conducted in different periods at the same university and determine:
 - d. the impact self-evaluations may have on stakeholders' perception of quality and/or evaluation culture
 - e. the impact self-evaluations may have and on overall quality assurance/improvement in a private university
 - f. the usefulness they have for university management and if they can act as triggers of positive change

3.1.2 Conceptual context

Theory building varies from quantitative to qualitative methods. Quantitative methods define strict theories that have to be tested; conversely, qualitative methods are sometimes characterised by a lack of an official theory at the initial part of the research (Glaser & Strauss, 1979; Strauss, 1991). In quantitative studies, the researcher knows exactly what he/she is looking for, while in some qualitative studies such as those using grounded theory, the researcher is expected to go into the field with an open mind and make sense of the data as the research progresses.

Sarantakos (1989, p15) compares the differences of theory building between both methods and suggests that a qualitative study must start with "orienting, sensitising or flexible concepts" and many authors (for example Robson, 2002; Sarantakos, 1998, Walliman 2001) suggest that in qualitative research it is useful to start with a

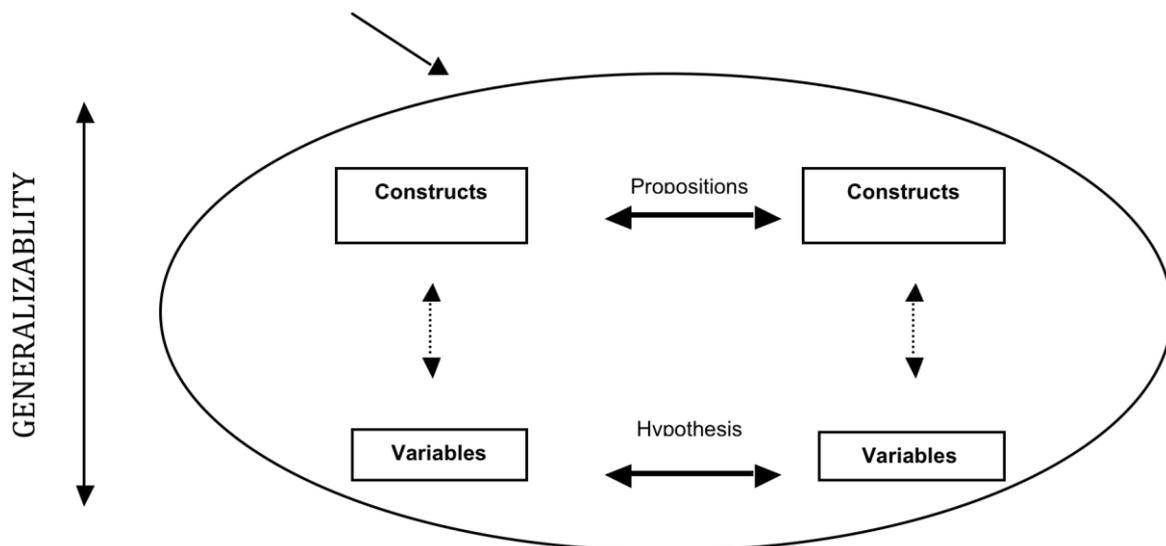
tentative theory, statement or guiding questions. This helps the researcher keep on track and focus on the points that really shape the work, instead of wondering off to investigate everything that looks interesting in the area. A statement must be flexible and by no means restrictive; it is meant to act as like a guide and not as a constraining tool.

The figure below presents a model designed by Bacharach (1989) that introduces what he calls ‘concepts of theory’. He defines theory as

a statement of relations among concepts within a set of boundary assumptions and constraints. It is no more than a linguistic device used to organise a complex empirical world. (Bacharach 1989, p 496).

Figure 1: Components of Theory

Boundaries: assumptions about values, etc.

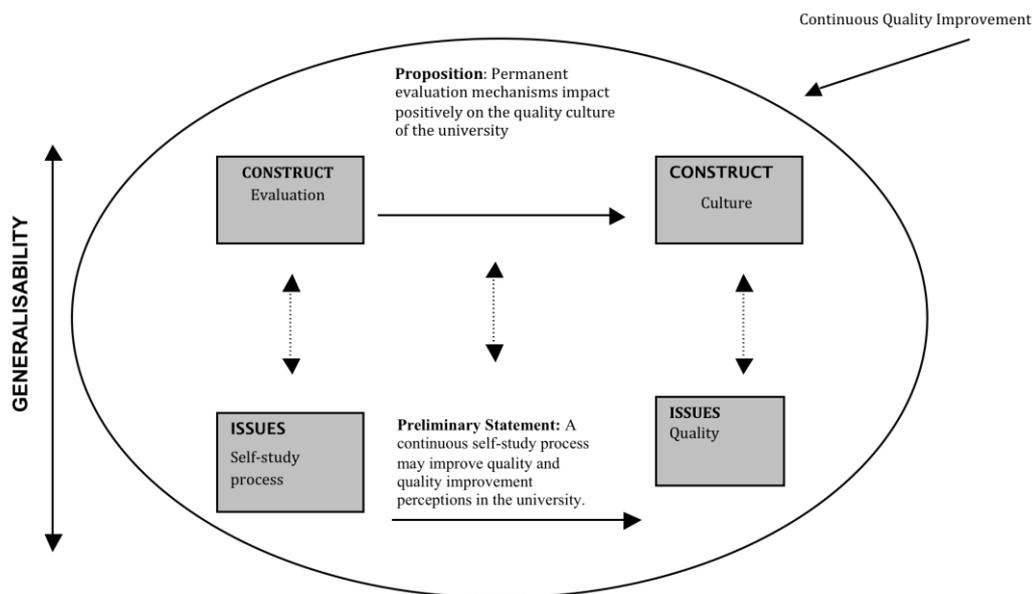


Source: Bacharach, 1986, p499

This model is very appropriate for use in quantitative research because of its emphasis on variables and hypotheses. However, as Walliman (2001) argues, hypotheses are not appropriate for all types of studies. This study includes results of significant quantitative work (the self-evaluation results), but also include results of qualitative nature from the interviews and document review, therefore, this model was adapted and used as a flexible conceptual framework to fit with the mixed method approach used in this research, as will be seen in more detail in section 3.1.3.3.

Adapted from Bacharach’s model of theory building, the figure below presents the concepts and issues relevant to this study. It is important to note than in this figure the terms ‘variables’ and ‘hypothesis’ have been changed for more flexible terms, such as ‘issues’ and ‘preliminary statements’ respectively. The change of terminology makes the framework more flexible and less focused on measurement, and, in turn, more consistent with the paradigm and of methodology chosen for the work, which aims mainly at understanding and not as much at measuring.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for this research



Source: Adapted for this research from Bacharach, 1989

The propositions and preliminary statements, in a way, related to some of the objectives presented in the introduction section. This is consistent with Walliman’s (2001) suggestion of alternative techniques to hypotheses. He explains that, instead of hypotheses, researchers can use questions, propositions, and statements of intent or definitions of research objectives.

This conceptual model is simply a summary of the initial ideas for the research; in practice, the purpose of the research evolved as the work progressed. It should not be taken as a static tool or a delimitation of concepts that were explored. It should only be seen as the base that I used for building ideas for the research.

3.1.3 Methods and Research Process

Saunders (2007) visually arranged the research process as an 'Onion' to help readers understand the different steps involved in this process. The idea of 'layers' which have to be 'peeled off' or, in this case, 'identified' and 'used' in order to get to the next part of the onion and then eventually to the heart of the process, seemed like a very appropriate way of organising and presenting information in this chapter and therefore I used the Saunders et al. (2007) 'Onion' to discuss the methodology chosen for this research in the following sections, starting with the research philosophy, then research strategies, followed by choices of research methods, to then find, in the 'heart of the Onion', the techniques and procedures used to gather the data. More details on each 'layer' in the following sections.

3.1.3.1 Research Philosophy and Research Paradigms

Paradigms are the combination of "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p157). The term was made famous by Kuhn (1970, p10) where he introduced the concept as "accepted examples of actual scientific practice – examples which include law, theory, application, and instrumentation together – provide models from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research". They are therefore meant to be used as examples, in order to guide, not restrict; clarify, not obstruct; and, most important of all, simplify, not complicate. This is because paradigms hold substantial information of an epistemological, ontological and methodological nature that helps the researcher to understand his/her beliefs and how to develop them further, following the same line of reasoning.

Sarantakos (1998, p31) defines paradigms as follows:

A paradigm is a set of propositions that explain how the world is perceived; it contains a world view, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world, telling researchers and social scientist in general what is important, what is legitimate, what is reasonable.

A more simple explanation was given by Sandelowski (2000, p247): "paradigms of inquiry are best understood as viewing positions: ways and places from which to see". Scott and Morrison (2006, p170) argue that "since the paradigm is an epistemological construction, it affects everything that individuals do in the world". Similar epistemological and ontological issues hold these viewpoints and actions

together. Epistemological issues explain how one knows the world and its relationship to the researcher/researched (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) and what is acceptable knowledge in a discipline (Bryman, 2001). Epistemological issues guide the view of knowing and the relationship between knower and to-be-known. The definitions of epistemology are very similar to the ones of paradigms; however, paradigms are the whole view, the 'full picture', if you like, and epistemological issues are used to explain a paradigm and give detail of the use of knowledge within a paradigm. They act as a base and support for paradigms. The same must be said for ontological issues. Bryman (2001, p16) explains that "questions of social ontology are concerned with the nature of social entities". In more simple terms, epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge and ontology deals with the nature of reality, and they both act as bases for the paradigms.

Paradigms may be difficult to understand because they can mean different things to different people – even Kuhn, known as the 'founder' of the concept, used the term to refer to different issues in his famous book *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. He stated that the term would be used throughout the book to "substitute a variety of familiar notions" (Kuhn, 1970, p11). Morgan (2007) reviews four versions of the paradigm concept all defined as shared belief systems with the only difference being the level of generality of such belief systems. He further explains that "the four versions of the paradigm concept are not mutually exclusive nor is one of them right and the others wrong" (Morgan, 2007, p54) - what he is suggesting is that researchers select the one that is most appropriate for the purpose in question.

Paradigms have been divided into many different categories. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) describe, compare and contrast the four paradigms they feel are more important: Positivism, Postpositivism, Pragmatism and Constructivism. Others, such as Guba and Lincoln (2000), in Denzin & Lincoln (2000), present a selection of paradigms ranging from positivist on the one end to participatory paradigms on the other. On their summary table, paradigms range from being based on realism/objectivism to being based on relativism/subjectivism. At one end of the table, they have the inquirer posture of Disinterested scientist and the other end as a Passionate participant. It is very interesting to see how all the paradigms they present (Positivism, Post-positivism, Critical Theory et al., Constructivism and Participatory) have their own ontology, epistemology and methodology and how different they range from one end to the other. However, some authors argue that paradigms could only be divided into two classes based on their ontology and epistemology: positivist and non-positivist. That is, they can be divided into those that support pure science methods (hypotheses-testing and laws) and those that

have alternative ways of understanding knowledge. Easterby-Smith et al. (1991, p22) suggest that there are two opposite paradigms as follows: “in the red corner is phenomenology; in the blue corner is positivism”.

Positivism argues that the issue or problem under investigation has an objective existence of its own, free from external influences (within defined limits) and capable of rational explanation. The scientific method used for investigation is value free, that is, the choice of what to study, and how to study it can be determined by an objective criteria rather than by human beliefs and interests and also the researcher the observer must be independent from what is being observed (Easterby-Smith et al. 1991). On the contrary, with paradigms such as constructivism, interpretivism and phenomenology, the researcher has values which influence the research and gets involved in the research, in a world which is socially constructed and subjective. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide several axioms that differentiate those paradigms which are summarized in the following table.

Table 10: Comparison of Paradigms

	Positivism	Naturalistic Paradigms
<i>Ontology</i>	Single reality	Multiple, constructed realities
<i>Epistemology</i>	The knower and known are independent	The knower and known are inseparable
<i>Axiology</i>	Inquiry is value-free	Inquiry is value-bound
<i>Generalisations</i>	Time and context free generalizations are possible	Time and context free generalizations are not possible
<i>Casual linkages</i>	Cause/effect	Impossible to distinguish causes from effects

Source: adapted from Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998)

This traditional view of research paradigms somewhat limits researchers looking for a practical approach as it presents the world as either black or white. In trying to understand research paradigms, I felt many times trapped within a specific philosophy and afraid to use techniques usually associated with the opposite paradigm. I was scared to be charged as conducting research that was not rigorous. When I started reading the literature related to paradigms and research philosophy, I easily identified myself with the phenomenology/interpretivist paradigms because

of their flexible and subjective nature. Most of the work carried out in this project was people-oriented; the stakeholders of the university were the main source of information on its culture and situation, and they held the key that allowed me to go inside their world and to try and understand it. It was not my intention to test if what they were doing was right or wrong; useful or not useful; good or bad. Rather, I wanted to understand how people saw the university and what they expected from it in order to lay out some of the most salient issues of university quality culture and to understand more about the usefulness of self-evaluation tools.

However, as I read more on the 'paradigm wars' (Brannen, 2005; Gage, 1989; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, Bazeley, 2002), it became evident that subscribing to one of the traditional paradigms would, in a way, limit my practical approach because of the very thick historical wall promoted (back then) by authors such as Lincoln and Guba (1985), where you were supposed to be either on one side or the other of the paradigm wall. This situation may create, as Hase (2000, p1) suggests, "paradigm paralysis" by fear of opening the door to the "enemy - the other paradigm". In the case of this research, the 'enemy' was the positivist paradigm and the fixed logical world it proposed. In a traditional world where, as Armitage (2007, p2) suggests: "quantitative approach implies the holding of positivist paradigm beliefs whereas a qualitative approach implies the holding of beliefs associated with constructivist paradigm position", how then could I use quantitative techniques (suggested by ADAAC) in gathering, analysing and interpreting the data if my view of the world seemed to be closer to seeing it through the eyes of a phenomenologist/interpretivist?

Before providing some possible answers to the above question it is important to explore another, more 'peaceful' view on paradigms. Some authors (for example Smaling, 1994), are against the traditional view of clear and major differences between paradigms, and some (Gioia and Pitre, 1990; Smith, L, 1999; Luck et al., 2006) argue that instead of building thick walls between paradigms, researches should be trying to build bridges that link these traditionally incompatible paradigms. Luck et al. (2006) suggest that the use of case study methodology may act as a bridge that brings together the different paradigms. They warn that this metaphor does not argue for paradigm unification, but that:

Like a bridge, the existing structures on either side of the bridge remain distinct (Miller and Fox 2004). The existing paradigms, and their assumptions, equally remain distinct. The bridge therefore offers the researcher openness with respect to the selection of methods used to inform the inquiry, from either side of the bridge. Thus, the distinctive contributions are both respected and mutually informative (Miller and Fox 2004). Depending on the research question, design and purpose both

qualitative and quantitative methods can be applied to single or multiple case studies. (Luck et al., 2006, p107)

There are also many authors that argue against the line of reasoning that a qualitative approach implies a constructivist paradigm and a quantitative implies a positivist paradigm. For example, Smaling (1994, p240) affirms that “quantitative research methods are not always excluded in both interpretative and critical approaches in social science”. Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (2000) (who since 1985 have changed their stance on paradigm uses) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) clearly state that positivism and post-positivism paradigms can be used to support qualitative research. Bergman (2008) spends the first chapter of his book *Advances in Mixed Methods Research* deconstructing some of the myths behind quantitative and qualitative methods and their relationship with paradigms and argues that “we must rethink the division of labour between QL and QN in order to better understand the possibilities and functions of methods more generally, and to better justify and apply mixed methods design specifically” (Bergman, 2008, p15).

However, it is evident that the literature is filled with ‘purists’ (see Smith, 1994) who defend the differences between paradigms and argue for paradigm “superiority” as explained by Denzin, (2010, p421). In a way, the paradigm ‘purist’ may be ‘blamed’ for fuelling the paradigm wars. Denzin (2010, p421) has an interesting view on the paradigm wars and explains that there have been three paradigm wars, each with its own “questioning of paradigm assumptions” that try to reconfigure “the relationship between paradigm, methodology epistemology, and ethics”. He names the wars as follows:

the postpositivist war against positivism (1970-1990); the wars between competing postpositivist, constructivist, and critical theory paradigms (1990-2005); and the current war between evidence-based methodologists and the mixed methods, interpretive, and critical theory schools (2005 to present). (Denzim, 2010, p421)

Nevertheless, the literature also offers the views of some ‘pacifiers’ looking for a way to positively use the differences. Some even argue that deep down paradigms are not that different - see Feilzer (2010, p8) in her interpretation of Dewey’s (1925) belief “that the main research paradigms of positivism and subjectivism derive from the same paradigm family, that they seek to find “the truth” — whether it is an objective truth or the relative truth of multiple realities”.

It seems my research is ‘fighting’ in Denzin’s (2010) third war, arguing for the use of mixed methods and trying to find a ‘winning’ paradigm. However, the notion of

war (even if used as an interesting metaphor for explaining the situation of paradigms) is not one I would like to further expand in this research - as previously explained there is plenty written on paradigm wars already. Rather, and in trying to answer my question on how could quantitative and qualitative methods could be used together for this particular research, I would like to focus attention on Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003, p 17) six different positions on the issue of “how paradigms are to be used in the development of mixed methods research”. They argue that scholars may have at least six different ways of justifying paradigms in mixed method research including the a-paradigmatic thesis (methods and paradigms are independent of each other), the incompatibility thesis (previously explained with the ‘paradigm wars’ discussion), the complementary strengths thesis, the dialectical thesis, the multiparadigm thesis and the single paradigm thesis. The complementary strengths, the dialectical and multiparadigm thesis all agree that more than one paradigm can be used in different ways within the same research. Sandelowski’s (2000, p246) proposes that “the complexity of human phenomena mandates more complex research designs to capture them”. She goes on to suggest that mixed methods do not actually mix paradigms *per se*, but rather “paradigms are reflected in what techniques researchers choose to combine, and how and why they desire to combine them” (Sandelowski, 2000, p247).

Gioia and Pitre (1990, p599) affirm that “multiparadigm approaches to theory building can generate more complete knowledge than can any single paradigmatic perspective” because they

offer the possibility of creating fresh insights because they start from different ontological and epistemological assumptions and, therefore, can tap different facets of organizational phenomena and can produce markedly different and uniquely informative theoretical views of events under study. (Gioia and Pitre, 1990, p591)

Furthermore, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003, p 20) state that most of the authors that contributed to their handbook on mixed methods “are comfortable with mixing their methods and are, in general, not very concerned with the purity of the underlying paradigms being maintained”. In their list of how researchers use paradigm with mix method methodology they also present the single paradigm thesis and introduce the pragmatic paradigm as a possible foundation for mixed research methods in that “pragmatism rejects the incompatibility thesis” and “embraces both points of view (or a position between the two opposing viewpoints)” (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003, p21). Furthermore, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), in their article on mixing research methods suggest that the time for the pragmatic paradigm has come and argued that

the project of pragmatism has been to find a middle ground between philosophical dogmatism and skepticism and to find a workable solution (sometimes including outright rejection) to many longstanding philosophical dualisms about which agreement has not been historically forthcoming. (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p18)

Denscombe (2008) also presents pragmatism as the philosophical partner for mixed method research. Greene (2007, p84) suggests that “the attractiveness of pragmatism as a paradigm for mixed method social inquiry is evident in its rejection of historical dualisms, its acceptance of both realistic and constructivist strands of knowledge, and its practical, consequential character”. Simply put by Shields (1998, p197), “pragmatism is the philosophy of common sense”.

As a formal philosophy born in the United States, pragmatism started when Charles Sanders Peirce introduced his beliefs that consequences should be used as “test of the validity of propositions” (Colapietro, 2006, in Shook and Margolis, 2006, p59). Following the pragmatic footsteps of Peirce, William James, another founder of the Pragmatism philosophy, argued that any philosophical dispute will “collapse into insignificance the moment you subject them to this simple test of tracing a concrete consequence” (James, 1907, p38). The last of the three co-founders of pragmatism was John Dewey, who according to Shook and Margolis (2006, p61), “wanted at once to be as logical as Peirce and as humanistic as James”. He agrees with Peirce that one needs to look at the consequences of any propositions as a necessary test of its validity, but as Jackson (2006, p59) explains, this is “provided, of course, that those consequences are not just imagined but are the result of actions taken in accordance with the proposition itself”. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003, p53) “meaningful research for these early pragmatists began not with a single method or set of methods but rather with ordinary experience and the desire for a better world”. In particular, James (1907, p41) argues that the pragmatic method is a programme for more work where “theories become instruments, not answers to enigmas, in which we can rest”.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), in their article on mixing research methods present an interesting table with the general characteristics of pragmatism with basic information on the philosophy. After analysing their statements, I selected some of the issues they present and re-arranged them in the table below according to 5 categories: general issues, epistemology, ontology, what the paradigm supports and what it rejects. The table, I hope will help the reader identify the main characteristics of Pragmatism.

Methodology

Table 11: General Characteristics of Pragmatism – ‘Decomposed’

In General...	On Truth and epistemology...	Ontology...	Supports...	Rejects...
The project of pragmatism has been to find a middle ground between philosophical dogmatisms and skepticism and to find a workable solution (sometimes including outright rejection) to many longstanding philosophical dualisms about which agreement has not been historically forthcoming.	Views current truth, meaning, and knowledge as tentative and as changing over time. What we obtain on a daily basis in research should be viewed as provisional truths.	Recognizes the existence and importance of the natural or physical world as well as the emergent social and psychological world that includes language, culture, human institutions, and subjective thoughts.	A strong and practical empiricism as the path to determine what works.	Rejects traditional dualisms and generally prefers more moderate and commonsense versions of philosophical dualisms based on how well they work in solving problems.
Offers the "pragmatic method" for solving traditional philosophical dualisms as well as for making methodological choices.	Capital "T" Truth is what will be the "final opinion" perhaps at the end of history. Lowercase "t" truths are given through experience and experimenting.	Replaces the historically popular epistemic distinction between subject and external object with the naturalistic and process-oriented organism-environment transaction.	Takes an explicitly value-oriented approach to research that is derived from cultural values; specifically endorses shared values such as democracy, freedom, equality, and progress	Generally rejects reductionism
Our thinking follows a dynamic new process, where the person or researcher constantly tries to improve upon past understandings in a way that fits and works in the world in which he or she operates.	Knowledge is viewed as being both constructed and based on the reality of the world we experience and live in.	Places high regard for the reality of and influence of the inner world of human experience in action.	Endorses fallibilism (current beliefs and research conclusions are rarely, if ever, viewed as perfect, certain, or absolute).	
According to Peirce, "reasoning should not form a chain which is no stronger than its weakest link, but a cable whose fibers may be ever so slender, provided they are sufficiently numerous and intimately connected" (1868, in Menand, 1997, pp. 5-6).	Theories are viewed instrumentally (they become true and they are true to different degrees based on how well they currently work).		Prefers action to philosophizing	
	Human inquiry is viewed as being analogous to experimental and scientific inquiry.		Practical theory (theory that informs effective practice; praxis).	

Source: Adapted from information taken from Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) Table 1 p18 General Characteristics of Pragmatism

Rorty, (1999) in Feilzer (2010, p8), affirms that

Pragmatists also hold an “antirepresentational view of knowledge” arguing that research should no longer aim to most accurately represent reality, to provide an “accurate account of how things are in themselves” but to be useful, to “aim at utility for us”.

And precisely the main question this research wanted to answer was the ‘usefulness’ of self-evaluation processes. This takes us closer to the topic of this research, which looks into self-evaluation methods, and Datta (1997), while giving a pragmatic basis for mixed methods in evaluation studies, suggests that being pragmatic means that decisions should be practical, contextually responsive and consequential. That is,

practical implies a basis in one’s experience of what does and does not work. Contextually responsive involves understanding the demands, opportunities, and constraints of the situation in which the evaluation will take place. Consequential ...[means] that the truth of a statement consists of its practical consequences, particularly the statement’s agreement with subsequent experience. (Datta 1997, p34)

Pragmatism offers the idea of using ‘common sense’ and ‘whatever works’ (Bryman, 2006; Howe, 1988) and seemed to be the natural choice to suit not only the kind of research I wanted to conduct, but also my personality as a researcher. However, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p19) warn that there are some weaknesses in the pragmatism philosophy including the fact that “what is meant by usefulness or workability can be vague unless explicitly addressed by the researcher”. What really caught my eye from the list of weaknesses they present was that they affirm that “many come to pragmatism looking for a way to get around many traditional philosophical and ethical disputes” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p19). I therefore wondered to what extent, in the beginning of my work, my choice of using the pragmatism paradigm was made because of my initial lack of understanding of deep philosophical issues and because it was the closest to my overall personality, character and view of the world, rather than what was appropriate for my research. However, putting aside the compatibility of the paradigm with who I am as a person, pragmatism “places high regard for the reality of and influence of the inner world of human experience in action” and “views current truth, meaning, and knowledge as tentative and as changing over time” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p18), two characteristics embedded in the specific research questions of this thesis. The research findings are supported by data that comes from interviews and everyday conversations with the university’s stakeholders and it was necessary to take a partially subjective point of view in

order to get the most out of the discussions The meanings people give to certain concepts are one of the most useful resources for understanding their socially constructed world and for determining the university's needs. The stakeholders are complex entities and the key players of the university; in a way they are the university, so, in order to get the best results, the research had to be hands-on, practical and human-oriented, and, as Sale et al. (2002, p46) argue, "complexity of phenomena requires data for a large number of perspectives", something that can be better accomplished when using a pragmatic approach through the pragmatism paradigm.

3.1.3.2 Research Strategies: Case Study

According to Saunders (2007), there are several main strategies one could follow which may include experiments, surveys, case studies, grounded theory, ethnography, and action research. The primary strategy used for fulfilling the objectives of this research was the single case study. The decision to use a single case was quite simple as I had complete access to critical information on my subject with respect to the university I used to work for.

According to Yin (2009, p18), a case study is

an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

Others, such as Eisenhardt (1989) and Morris and Wood (1991) argue that the purpose of case studies as research strategies is to focus on understanding the dynamics present within particular settings. Woodside (2010) offers a broader definition on Case Study Research (or CSR as he calls it) than Yin's definition. He argues that CRS "is an inquiry that focuses on describing, understanding, predicting, and/or controlling the individual" (Woodside 2010, p1) - and applied to this study 'the individual' would be the University. Case study research perfectly matches with the pragmatic paradigm that this research subscribes to because it is based on practical experience and gives precise examples of a certain situation, mixing description and analysis of what is happening, so as to develop a better understanding of the case (Cohen et al., 2000). This focus on understanding was the main drive for conducting this research, in line with the view of Woodside (2010, p6) that

deep understanding of the actors, interactions, sentiments, and behaviours occurring for specific process through time should be seen as the principal objective by the case study researcher.

But what exactly is it that I am trying to understand by conducting this particular case study? Stake (2005, p443) argues that “case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied” and what is being studied is defined by Yin (2009) as the unit of analysis, which one can define by relating it to the main research question. For this particular case study, the main unit of analysis could be Self-evaluation because what the case study seeks to understand is whether and how self-evaluation contributes to quality assessment and assurance in universities. Seen from a more general perspective, one could argue that the unit of analysis is the university itself because the purpose is to determine how the university has reacted to two self-evaluation processes over a certain period of time. Both views are found in the research questions of the study and, therefore, a more complete unit of analysis would then be a mixture of both: university and self-evaluation process.

In particular, and as mentioned before, the single case of Unibe University was used to analyse the impacts of university self-evaluation as a quality assurance mechanism. In justifying single case study research, Gerring, (2007, p20) states that “a case study may be understood as the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of classes (a population)”. He goes on to argue that “the fewer the cases are, and the more intensively they are studied, the more a work merits the appellation ‘case study’” (Gerring, 2007, p20).

Single case studies have been classified as holistic cases or embedded cases. Holistic cases focus on the general picture whereas embedded studies rely on holistic data collection strategies for studying the main case but then call upon surveys or other more quantitative techniques to collect data about the embedded units of analysis. Yin (2009) argues that for single case studies a mixed method approach may be more useful as it permits to collect “richer and stronger array of evidence” (Yin, 2009, p63). This particular case offers a holistic view, integrating data at different stages of the research process. More details in further sections.

The rigour of research findings from single case studies has been widely criticised within the methodology literature (Johnson, 1994). Flyvbjerg (2004) described five common misunderstandings about case studies one of them being the issue of

generalisation. In his article he went on to correct each one as follows, and the second row refers to generalisation:

Table 12: Five ‘corrected’ misunderstandings about case studies

Misunderstanding	Correction
General, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge.	Predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is therefore more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals
<i>One cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development</i>	<i>One can often generalise on the basis of a single case, and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalisation as a supplement or alternative to other methods. But formal generalisation is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas ‘the force of example’ is underestimated</i>
The case study is more useful generating hypothesis, that is, in the first stage of a total research process, while other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building.	The case study is useful for both generating and testing of hypotheses but is not limited to these research activities alone.
The case study contains a bias towards verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher’s preconceived notions.	The case study contains no bias towards verification of the researcher’s preconceived notions than other methods of inquiry. On the contrary, experience indicates that the case study contains grater bias towards falsification of preconceived notions than towards verification.
It is often difficult to summarize and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies	It is correct that summarising case studies is often difficult, especially as concerns case process. It is less correct as regards to case outcomes. The problem in summarising case studies, however, are due more often to the properties of the reality studied than to the case study as a research method. Often it is not desirable to summarise and generalise case studies. Good studies should be read as narratives in their entirety.

Source: visually adapted from: Flyvbjerg (2004)

The single case strategy has been known to have problems with generalisability (Nisbet & Watt, 1984; Cohen et al., 2000; Robson, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994; Sarantakos, 1993; Burton, 2000; Flyvbjerg, 2004)). How can one come to general conclusions that are applicable to other cases with data from only one case? Stake (1995) explains that case studies should not be thought as generalising instruments:

It might be useful to try to select cases which are typical or representative of other cases, but a sample of just a few is unlikely to be a strong representation of others. Case study research is not sampling research. We do not study a case primarily to understand other cases. (Stake, 1995 p4)

According to Cooper and Schindler (2006, p217), “the objective is to obtain multiple perspectives of a single organisation, situation, event, or process at a point in time or over a period of time”. Even if some authors believe that they do not address the issue of generalizability, a case study “enables the researcher to gain a holistic view of a certain phenomenon or series of events and can provide a round picture since many sources of evidence were used” (Mohd Noor 2008, p1063).

In understanding the issue of generalizability, the classification of case studies developed by Stake (2005) may help because it categorises them according to their purpose. The intrinsic case study is conducted for the sole reason of getting a better understanding of the particular case. The instrumental case study, on the other hand, “is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalisation...plays a supportive role and it facilitates our understanding of something else” (Stake, 2005, p445). In this research, the case of Unibe may be considered as an instrumental case based on Stake’s definition.

Furthermore, according to Denscombe (2010, p189) it is important to differentiate between generalizability and transferability. He defines generalizability as “the methodological application of findings from one set of data, one piece of research, to other instances of the phenomenon” and it is usually associated with quantitative research. On the contrary, transferability, he argues,

is the imaginative application of findings to other settings...it is the process carried out by readers of research when they infer from what they read and transfer the results to other situations. Denscombe (2010, p190)

Cohen et al. (2000, p109) suggests that

it is important in qualitative research to provide a clear, detailed and in-depth description so that others can decide the extent to which findings from one piece of research are generalisable to another situation, i.e. to address the thin issue of comparability and transferability.

With this case study, I did not intend to generalise about the situation of universities in developing countries, or even suggest that what happened in Unibe happened in other universities in the Dominican Republic. On the contrary, I wanted to present an interesting case that would help readers understand the impact of a

self-study process. I explored how the stakeholders of the university felt and analysed the power they had over the quality culture of the university. Instead of being an instrument of generalisation, I wanted this case to act as an ignition tool that opened people's perceptions and curiosity to the mostly unexplored world of higher education management in developing nations. I would like the findings to help readers infer and transfer the results to their own situations, like Denscombe (2010) suggests.

There are some theories that support the value and use of institutional self-evaluation for quality improvement purposes in universities (Kells, 1995a; Tari, 2010), however, not enough of it draws from the experience of private universities in developing countries. Again, I would not say that the purpose of this particular case is to create new theories and then generalize from them. On the contrary, it may be more appropriate to say that this research wanted to try to "sharpen existing theory by pointing to gaps and beginning to fill them" (Siggelkow, 2007, p21). Furthermore, the conceptual contribution of this study may be to illustrate and highlight the relationships between institutional self-evaluation and quality. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007, p27) argue that cases chosen using theoretical sampling are "particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic among constructs". In the case of Unibe, the reasoning behind it being selected as a theoretical sample was the opportunity for unusual research access (Yin, 1994). Unusual in the sense that I had complete access to any kind of information with no limitations, which is not very frequent, as usually university in developing countries do not share information or conduct research for other than internal purposes. Unusual also relates to the fact that I have acted as a different stakeholder of Unibe in different points in my life (student, alumni, mid level employee, senior employee) giving me different perspectives that other researchers in the area may not have.

Yin (2009) also highlights the importance of defining the rationale for using a single case study design and suggests that there may be five different rationales for choosing this type of strategy: when the case represents a critical case, when it represents an extreme or unique case, when it is a representative or typical case, when it is a revelatory case and, when it is a longitudinal case. It could be argued that Unibe's case could be a representative case, as it is a typical private university under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic, going through most of the same processes as other private universities. Having said this, it could also be argued that this is a longitudinal case. It is important not to confuse the longitudinal case with the longitudinal analysis; this research does not use

longitudinal analysis to understand the data, but the case study approach may be considered longitudinal since it is looking at the institution in two different periods of time. It could also be argued that traces of a revelatory case can be seen in this particular analysis of Unibe. The fact that I had previously worked at the university gave me significant access to information other researchers may not have had and therefore particular insights together with the level of trust interviewees had due to our history and the possible unique interpretations of data I could offer due to the different roles I previously played at Unibe. In fact, using Yin's (2009) rationale, the longitudinal case rationale is closer to the reasoning of this study and therefore can be considered a longitudinal case.

According to Saunders et al. (2007, p148), "the main strength of longitudinal research is the capacity that it has to study change and development". Furthermore, Becket and Brookes (2006, p128) affirm that

different snapshots of quality can be used in conjunction with one another over time to produce a more comprehensive longitudinal picture of quality and to benchmark performance.

This study comprised of several snapshots (Becket and Brookes (2006, p128)) of quality assessment techniques, and the main themes of the research developed over the years. However, issues of stakeholder perception and quality improvement were always central to the objectives of the research.

A significant advantage of doing case studies is precisely the strength of being able to trace changes over time (Yin, 2009) and therefore, a very appropriate technique for this research since one of the main intentions of this research was precisely to analyse the impact of university self-evaluation and examine if and how perceptions of its value towards quality assurance have changed over time and to determine what else changed as a consequence of such processes.

Case studies can also be defined as exploratory, descriptive or explanatory (Robson, 2002; Tellis, 1997). This particular case was of an exploratory nature. As mentioned before, the research aimed to discover what was happening and to understand it; it was inquisitive, an inquiry into the situation of the university, and it wanted to bring previously explored areas of higher education management into a different context, one which had not yet been explored in depth.

To conclude, it is important to note that researchers doing case studies have in some cases been characterised as being 'sloppy' (Yin, 1994) in the way they conduct and analyse their work, presenting information that may not be reliable.

Atkins and Sampson (2002) provide some interesting guidelines for conducting single case studies based on the Bronts et al. (1995) framework for investigating information system development methods. These guidelines provide an organised way of approaching case study research which helped me to build a mental structure of how to develop the case. These are more clearly presented in the following table. The last column indicates in which part of the dissertation those issues are further discussed.

Table 13: Guidelines for undertaking case study research

Element	Guideline	Authors	Section in which these elements are addressed for the Unibe's Case Study
Way of thinking	Provide an argument for why a case study is appropriate.	Greenhalgh (1997), Darke <i>et al.</i> , (1998).	Explained in section 3.1.3.2 of the methodology chapter
	State philosophical stance and perspective. Take account of bias when performing data analysis.	Walsham (1995); Klein & Myers (1999).	The philosophical stance is explained in section 3.1.3.1 of the methodology chapter The issue of bias is addressed in sections 3.1.4 and 3.1.5 as well as in 3.1.3.5.2 of the methodology
Way of controlling	Define and use some form of quality control measures.	Greenhalgh , Miles & Huberman (1994), Yin (1984).	See section 3.1.3
	Ensure that the results are credible.	Greenhalgh , Moody & Buist (1999), Mays & Pope (1996).	Explained in section 3.1.4
	Determine how to draw conclusions and justify the results through the appropriate use of theory.	Walsham (1995), Carroll & Swatman (2000).	Conclusions were based on the analysis of results and linking these results to theories discussed in the literature review chapter, when appropriate
Way of working	Construct a clearly formulated question that describes an important IS issue or problem of interest.	Greenhalgh , Yin , Darke <i>et al.</i> (1998).	Presented in section 3.1.1 of the methodology chapter
	Create a first cut conceptual framework	Miles & Huberman, Carroll & Swatman	Explained un section 3.1.2 of the methodology chapter
	Devise first cut case study questions.		Presented in section 3.1.1 of the methodology chapter
	Make explicit the research approach.	Shanks <i>et al.</i> .(1997)	Discussed in section 3.1.3 of the methodology chapter
	Perform a pilot case study	Yin	A pilot was not conducted for this research
	Determine criteria for selecting the appropriate case and participants.	Greenhalgh, Patton, (1990) Maxwell (1996).	Explained in section 3.1.3.2 of the methodology chapter

	Refine the case study questions based on lessons learnt from the pilot study.		Not applicable since no pilot was conducted
	Revisit the research purpose/question and modify the conceptual framework as necessary	Greenhalgh, Klein & Myers, Miles & Huberman, Carroll & Swatman.	Done throughout the study
Way of supporting	Choose appropriate methods for collecting data. Ensure that these are described in enough detail.	Greenhalgh, Walsham	Explained in section 3.1.3.5 of the methodology chapter
	Employ a systematic way to analyse the data. Ensure that these are described in enough detail	Greenhalgh, Richards (1997), Miles & Huberman.	Explained in section 3.1.3.3 of the methodology chapter
Way of communicating	Create a plan for the final report.	Yin, Walsham.	Followed university guidelines for writing a PhD dissertation
	Determine how the case study findings might be transferable to other settings.	Greenhalgh, Miles & Huberman.	Discussed in section 3.1.3.2 of the methodology chapter
	Determine how to present the findings to the academic and practitioner communities.	Darke <i>et al.</i> , Miles & Huberman	See Results chapter

Source: adapted to this research from Atkins and Sampson (2002), *Critical Appraisal guidelines for single case study research*

3.1.3.3 Choices of Research Methods

Sarantakos (1998) explains that there are two meanings of the term 'methodology'. He states that it can be equivalent to a research model, that is, all the tools and methods used by a researcher in a specific project, or "it can offer the research principles which are related closely to a distinct paradigm" (1998, p33). Having stated in the research philosophy section that the research paradigm this work subscribes to is the pragmatic paradigm of thinking, it naturally follows that a mixed-method approach would be the most appropriate choice of method.

In trying to find the meaning of mixed-methods research, Johnson et al. (2007) asked 19 experts in the field to define what they thought mixed methods was. They analysed the definitions given and categorised them into themes: what was mixed, the mixing stage, the breath of the mixed research, why mixing and the orientation. Based on their findings they then offered a general definition as follows:

Mixed method research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (eg, use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breath and depth of understanding and corroboration. (Johnson et al. 2007, p123)

Greene (2007, p13) agrees, and states that the core meaning of mixing methods in social inquiry is

to invite multiple mental models into the same inquiry space for purposes of respectful conversation, dialogue, and learning one from the other, toward a collective generation of better understanding of the phenomena being studied.

This better understanding that mixed methodology offers is in line with the case study strategy used in this work. As mentioned before, case study methodology also offers a better understanding of the issues being researched, which is in line with the aims of the research questions of this study to better understand the impact of self-evaluation on quality in higher education.

Sarantakos (1998) compares the essential features of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies of research presenting them in totally opposite directions, which is both an advantage and a disadvantage for mixed methods research. However, it is important not to limit ourselves to these differences and to believe that it is impossible for these two methods to ever work together. Bryman (2001) dedicates a whole chapter in the book 'Social Research Methods' to

explaining how the links between paradigms and research methods are not deterministic. They explain that there are fundamental differences between qualitative and quantitative research, but affirm that it is very important not to overstate them because there are some cases where both of them can be used inside the same paradigm. Therefore, in this study a mixture of both methodologies was used.

In the research design section, I presented Maxwell's model for research design, which I had adopted very early on in my research. I was happy to re-encounter this model when reading about multi-method research in Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), where it is presented as an alternative to the accusation that "a pragmatic pluralism lead to no new thinking and does not clarify how to integrate approaches or when to stop" (Pawson and Tillie, 1997, p54).

Maxwell and Loomis (2002) believe that this model can help address these problems and, as mentioned before, argue that this model is not very different from other models in content, but that what is interesting about it is how the concepts are interrelated (linked by two-way arrows) and any of the five components can influence each other, having the research questions at the heart of the model. The research questions in this model do not act as a starting point or guide; their role is "to be responsive to all of the other components of the design" (Maxwell and Loomis, 2002, p246).

One of the advantages of mixing methods, instead of using a single method, as noted by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), has precisely to do with the importance of research questions and the ability that mixed methods have to answer research questions that other approaches may not be able to answer. Another advantage is that, in some areas of the social sciences, the issues being explored can be complex and therefore require data from a large number of perspectives (Clarke and Yaros, 1988; Sandelowski, 2000). On the other hand, and as a possible disadvantage, Bryman (2006, p3) argues that "multi-strategy research is not obviously beneficial when rationale for combining quantitative and qualitative research is not made explicit". This is why researchers need to be clear on why they are mixing the methods and what the purpose of mixing them really is.

One of the most well-known categorisations of the purposes for using mixed methods is offered by Greene et al. (1989) after they conducted research on 57 mixed-method evaluation studies. They argue that there may be 5 different purposes that researchers have when choosing to conduct mixed-method studies:

Triangulation, Complementary, Development, Initiation and Expansion. The next table presents the purposes for each of those methods according to Greene et al. (1989).

Table 14: Purposes for mixed methods design

TRIANGULATION	Seeks convergence, corroboration, correspondence of results from the different methods.
COMPLEMENTARITY	Seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method.
DEVELOPMENT	Seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly construed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions.
INITIATION	Seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method.
EXPANSION	Seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components.

Source: taken from Green, et al (1989), table Purposes for mixed-method evaluation designs, p259

I would argue that this study used mixed methods not just for one of these purposes; but that, at different stages, mixed methods were used for different purposes, and in some cases there was more than one purpose for using mixed methods. It can be argued, however, that the main purpose of mixing methods for this research was expansion, because what I was ultimately seeking was to extend the breadth and range of inquiry in order to increase the scope of my work.

Bryman (2006) uses the categorisation of purposes created by Green et al. (1989) in his analysis of 232 articles looking for how qualitative and quantitative methods are combined. He presents a more detailed set of purposes for combining methods - 15 possible reasons - of which two seemed very relevant to my work: offset and completeness. He suggests that you may choose to do mixed methods research because quantitative and qualitative methods have both advantages and disadvantages, and, by combining them, you may want to “offset any weaknesses to draw on the strengths of both” (Bryman, 2006, p106). “Completeness” refers to presenting a more “comprehensive account of the area of enquiry” (Bryman, 2006, p106) if methods are mixed. Indeed, one of the main reasons for choosing to mix methods was to try to make my findings stronger and more complete by using the best of both worlds. For interesting views from different authors of reasons and purposes of mixed methods see table created by Collins et al. (2006, pp74-75).

Mason (2006), in her well known attempt to categorise the purposes for selecting a mixed methodology, or, as she call it: 'strategies for linking mixed methods' presents six strategies for mixing methods in a practical way. Having read the paper, I would say that, rather than strategies, the six issues she analyses are closer to the rationale or to the logic behind using mixed method methodology. She presents the following 'strategies':

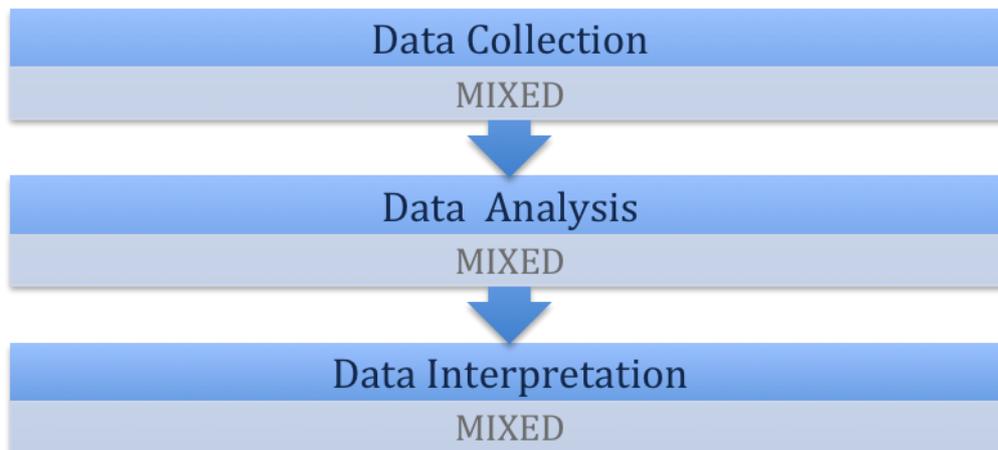
1. Mixing methods for a close-up illustration of a bigger picture, or for background: rhetorical logic
2. Mixing methods to ask and answer differently conceived or separate questions: parallel logic
3. Mixing methods to ask questions about connecting parts, segments or layers of a social whole: integrative logic
4. Mixing methods to achieve accurate measurement through triangulation: corroborative logic
5. Mixing methods to ask distinctive but intersecting questions: multi-dimension logic
6. Mixing methods opportunistically: no intrinsic logic

It could be argued that my work may lie somewhere close to mixing methods to ask distinctive but intersecting questions as I can see a trace of the multi-dimensional logic she suggests in my work and I agree with her when she states that "the social world and the issues and problems we seek to research are multi-dimensional" (Mason, 2006, p9). She states that mixing methods through a multi-dimensional logic is very difficult to do, and involves asking questions in different ways, moving away from integrative or parallel logic to a multi-dimensional way of thinking. My study focused on 'understanding' the impact of self-evaluation processes in a context so rich in complexities such as the university environment that 'thinking outside the box' questions and creative approaches to answering them helped to provide better understanding of the issues involved. However, I did not use a multi-dimensional way of thinking. The purpose of the study probably lies more close to asking questions about connecting parts of a social whole using an integrative logic. Integration of different parts of the whole to get a better sense of the overall picture was one of the main reasons methods were mixed at the different stages of the research.

According to Jehn and Jonsen (2010, p316) researchers need to reflect carefully on why to mix methods, what does mixing solve, when to mix and how to mix. Why mix was explained in the discussion above and it solves the limitations each methodology may have when used on its own. I will now explain how I chose 'when and how to mix'. The research process followed in this study is very common to most researchers: research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation and

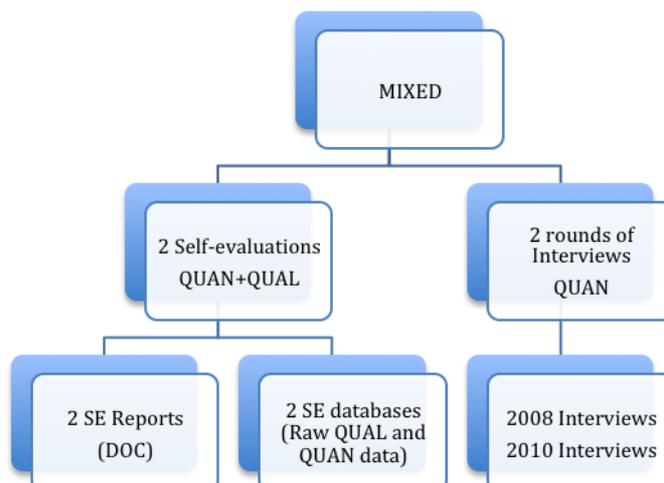
results. This particular research aims at answering research questions by integrating and mixing data at most stages. The following figure shows the different stages and the type of methodology used.

Figure 3: Use of methods at different stages of this study



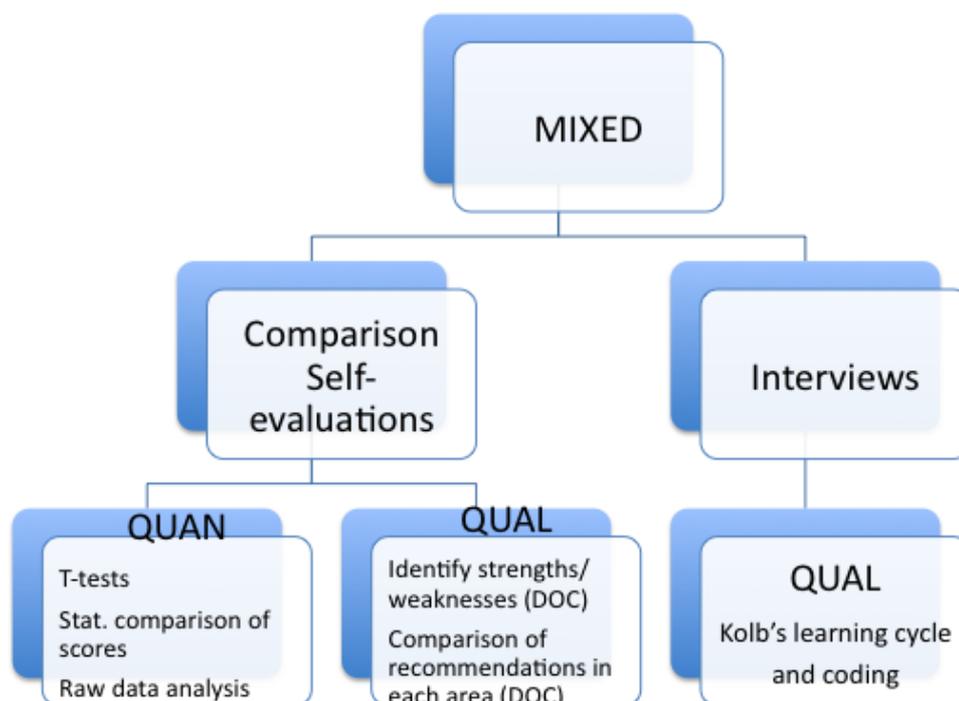
As can be seen above all stages used a mixed methodology. In the data collection stage the data came from 3 main sources: 2 full self-evaluation reports, 2 databases with raw data from the two self-evaluation processes and 2 rounds of interviews, as can be seen in the next figure. Quantitative data showed clear evidence of development and quantitative data highlighted information on why changes might have happened.

Figure 4: Data Collection Methodology



The data analysis stage also involved a mixed methodology as can be seen in the next figure in more detail.

Figure 5: Data Analysis Methodology

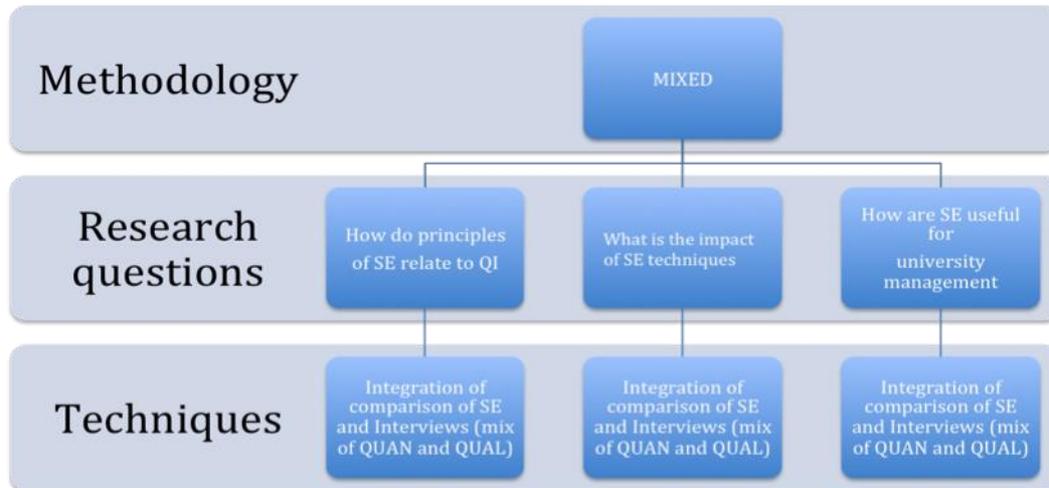


The comparison of the self-evaluation processes was done by analysing the 2 self-evaluation reports using document analysis techniques (more in chapter 4), which is considered a qualitative methodology, and also mixing qualitative and quantitative data from the databases, which is considered as a mixed methodology. Finally, a qualitative analysis of the interviews was done (see section 4.2 for details). The main activities conducted during data analysis were data reduction and data transformation as well as data correlation and comparison in order to investigate patterns of relationships in the data sets. Yin (2009) argues that in order to successfully analyse a case study one should follow a general analytical strategy. He offers 4 possible strategies, one of them being “using both qualitative and quantitative data” which is what I have done for the Unibe case using the explanation building technique.

Once the data analysis was conducted, data interpretation was also done using a mixed method approach by integrating results from the analysis. As Teddlie and Tashakkori (2006, p15) explain “mixed method research is defined as research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both quantitative and qualitative approaches or methods in a single case study”. This was exactly what was done for the case of Unibe. The next

figure shows how the data interpretation stage used mixed methods to answer the research questions.

Figure 6: Data Integration Methodology



At this data integration stage, I conducted something similar to what Moran-Ellis, et al (2006) apply to integrate analysis, a methodology they call ‘following a thread’. I took the results from the analysis of the different data sets (which included mixed methods, document analysis, interview analysis, statistical analysis) and identified patterns that contributed to answering the research questions, then picked this analytic theme and followed it across the other data sets as a thread and integrated it to produce answers to my research questions. According to Moran-Ellis et al (2006, p 54) “ the value of this integrated approach lies on allowing an inductive lead to the analysis, preserving the value of the open, exploratory, qualitative inquiry but incorporating the focus and specificity of the quantitative data”.

3.1.3.5 Techniques and procedures

Within a case study research a number of techniques can be used. In particular for this research, the main techniques used to collect data to answer the research questions were document analysis and interviews, including a comparison of the documented quantitative and qualitative results of the self-evaluation. However,

before going into the details of the techniques used, it is important to chronologically describe at this point the different stages this study went through.

The first self-evaluation process at Unibe was conducted from 2001-2003, under my supervision, when I was the Director of Strategic Planning at Unibe, before starting my PhD. The details of this experience are not included as part of this PhD, however, being involved in this first self-evaluation process gave me exceptional insider knowledge which influenced this study (more details in the analysis of interviews, section 4.2). The following table illustrates the different stages that took place during the PhD process.

Table 15: Chronological stages of study

Year	Activity
2004-2007	Research design Literature review Analysis of first self-evaluation process
2008	Analysis of second self-evaluation results First set of interviews
2008-2010	Comparison of first and second self-evaluation processes
2010	Second set of interviews
2010-2013	Mixed analysis of comparison of the two self-evaluation processes and the two sets of interviews in order to answer the research questions

From 2004, when I became a PhD student at the University of Southampton, until 2007, I focused on the research design, the literature review and analysis of results from the first self-evaluation process. In 2008, I received the second self-evaluation report and the raw database (which was used to produce the report) and I started analysing this information for the purpose of answering the research questions of the study. Also in 2008 the first set of interviews took place (more details in section 3.1.3.5.2). Between 2008-2010 I performed the comparison of the two self-evaluation processes using both the final reports plus the information from the two raw databases to build the answers to my particular research questions (see section 3.1.3.5.1). In 2010, the second set of interviews took place (again, details available in section 3.1.3.5.2). The following sections give further details on how both the document analysis/comparison on the self-evaluation processes and the interview process were conducted.

3.1.3.5.1 Document analysis and comparison of self-evaluation results

Document analysis was conducted throughout this study in order to understand different aspects of the university. As mentioned by Perakyla (2005)

By reading and rereading their empirical materials, they try to pin down their key themes and, thereby, to draw a picture of the presuppositions and meanings that constitute the cultural world of which the textual material is a specimen. (Perakyla, 2005, p530)

Bryman (2001) explains that documents may be biased depending on who wrote them and, therefore, that this may affect their credibility. However, he affirms that the documents can be interesting precisely because of the biases they reveal. Any bias in the data collected was not seen entirely as a weakness in this study; on the contrary, such (aware) biases presented clues as to where the direction of the university culture was headed.

One of the disadvantages of carrying out case study research is that the case is often set in a specific period of time, thereby making it difficult to assess what happened before or after. To obtain an understanding of the overall quality culture of the university over the years (not only during the period I worked there), documentary methods were used. Documents, such as organisational charts, strategic plans, mission statements, manuals of job descriptions, internal magazines, webpages, official government reports, internal quality control forms, reports of previous evaluation attempts, speeches made at graduation ceremonies, students files, and minutes of meetings were available (a full list can be found in Appendix 2) were used to obtain information relating to the research questions that was not available from the interviews or to triangulate information given at the interviews.

However, the most valuable documents were the official self-evaluation reports for 2002 and 2007 as well as the databases with the raw data collected for these two self-evaluation studies.

The two self-evaluation reports were compared and analysed. In order for the reader to better understand how the comparison was made it is important to explain the basic structure of the self-evaluation reports. The self-evaluation processes, in both 2002 and 2007, were conducted using the guide from ADAAC. This guide divided the university into 27 areas (these can be seen in the Result's Chapter), and assigned a weight to each area in order of importance to ADAAC of a total of 1000. So, for example, the area of Admissions could achieve a maximum score of 30, in

2002 it scored 24.75 and in 2007 it scored 30. The scores for each area were also calculated as a percentage, so, for example, again using the area of Admissions, in 2002 it scored 83% and in 2007 it scored 100% (see Appendix 1 for more details).

The comparison, for the purpose of this study, was made per area, matching results and determining whether they had increased, decreased or remained the same. The self-evaluation report documents were prepared by Unibe using the same format, which included a description of the area, a summary of the scores, details on strengths and weaknesses per area and points for improvements or recommendations, and this made the comparison more straightforward and easier to accomplish. In order to determine if the results were statistically significant, t-tests were conducted in the areas where data permitted these types of tests to be done. See results chapter for more details.

The two databases with the raw data for the self-evaluation processes were of significant use since I could further analyse the raw data in order to find answers to my particular research questions and not just to fulfil the requirements of the self-evaluation. The data included results from interviews, surveys and document review for all areas gathered by the university to answer the self-evaluation questions. The areas had been divided into further sub-areas with specific issues which needed to be addressed, which were answered using a mixed methodology with information coming from quantitative and qualitative instruments. The analysis of this data was done after 'cleaning' the data to use only valid responses. Data reduction and transformation (Greene, 2007) took place so that I could integrate results with the analysis of the two self-evaluation reports and at a later stage with the interview results.

3.1.3.5.2 Interviews

Interviews are usually considered to be the primary method for data collection in qualitative studies. They can provide information that may be difficult to obtain using other techniques. Cohen et al. (2000, p267) argue that the use of interviews “marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulable and data as somehow external to individuals”. That is, there is great richness in the perceptions people hold of different issues and the development of an understanding of how people own information is one of the advantages of interviewing. It is considered to be “one of the most powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow humans” (Fontana and Frey, 2005, p697).

Easterby-Smith et al. (1991, p74) argue that interviews are appropriate when one aim of the interview is to develop an understanding of the respondent’s world so that the researcher might influence it, either independently or collaboratively as might be the case with action research.

This was precisely one of the objectives of this research, to develop understanding of how stakeholders view the university, and therefore, interviews are an appropriate option for data collection.

Interviews can range between structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Cooper and Schindler, 2006). In this study, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted at two different points in time (therefore the argument of this work being a longitudinal case). A semi-structured interview is based around a set of predetermined questions, but the order and the wording of the questions can be modified based on the interviewer’s perception of what seems most appropriate (Robson, 2002). In January 2008, I conducted 8 semi-structured interviews with senior management and staff involved in both self-evaluation processes to determine whether they believed a quality and evaluation culture had been embedded in the university after going through such processes. Then again in 2010, I conducted 15 interviews with some of the same senior management staff interviewed in 2008, as well as with mid and lower level management and lecturers. The following table presents the positions of the participants within the university.

Table 16: Participants of Interviews

2008	2010
Former Vice Rector	Former Vice Rector
Current Vice Rector	Current Vice Rector
Academic Pro Vice Rector	Academic Pro Vice Rector
Administrative Pro Vice Rector	Administrative Pro Vice Rector
Dean of the School of Education	Dean of the School of Education (now Dean of Educational Innovation)
Director of Strategic Planning	Director of Strategic Planning
Dean of the Business School (also a lecturer)	Curriculum Coordinator (also a lecturer)
Dear of the School of Psychology (also a lecturer)	Director of Innovation in Education
	Director of Postgraduate Programmes (Dentistry School) and Coordinator of Innovation in Education Projects
	Planning Analyst
	Director of General Cycle (also a lecturer)
	Assistant to the Rector
	Coordinator of School of Medicine (also a lecturer)
	Coordinator of School of Dentistry

As can be seen above, in 2010 several of the same people were interviewed, some who still had the same position and others with different roles, such as the Dean of the School of Education is now Dean of Educational Innovation; the Dean of the Business School is now the Administrative Vice Rector and the Dean of the School of Psychology is now the Academic Vice Rector. Also, some of the stakeholders interviewed had both an administrative as well as an academic position as lecturers. The same interview guides were used for both attempts, with minor changes to the interviews held in 2010, and copies of the questions used are attached in Appendix 3. This means that the same questions were asked to respondents that were involved in the two periods and I could compare their answers and identify whether their views had change.

The interview guide consisted of 18 open-ended questions. This style of interviews ensured that the same basic lines of inquiry were pursued with each of the

participants. I started all the interviews by introducing myself (to those who did not know me personally, which was more the case with some of those interviewed in 2010) or giving an update on what I am doing at the moment (to those who knew me), then I gave a summary of my PhD topic and the purpose of the interviews (this had been previously sent in writing to them), then asked the interviewees about their role within the university and how many years they had been working at Unibe. I tried to comment on their role based on what I knew about it when I used to work there - as a form of Icebreaker to establish rapport (Maylor and Balckmon, 2005). Then came the questions as per the interview guide. The first set of questions focused on determining whether the interviewees were part of both self-evaluation processes and what their role was within the process. The guide then focused on determining if the processes were useful, what were the advantages and disadvantages of self-evaluation and how the university has managed change. It then moved to ask the interviewee for a definition of quality and how self-evaluation may or may not impact their quality perception. Finally, it attempted to find out whether the interviewee felt there was a quality and/or evaluation culture in the university.

Interviews took approximately an average of 25 minutes, with the longest one being 40 minutes and only one being very short (10 minutes approx). They were all digitally recorded with the consent of all participants. According to Fontana and Frey (2005), asking questions and getting answers is not as easy as it may seem at first. However, for this particular research the interviews were relatively easy to carry out as most of the participants knew me or knew about me, because of my work in the University during 2001-2003 (before starting on the PhD) and my constant link with Unibe through this research.

At this point it is important to note that, in a way, I felt during the interviews that I was playing the role of the 'insider' (Labaree, 2002; Brannick and Cohan, 2007).

According to Labaree (2002, p101) the insider is an

Individual who possesses intimate knowledge of the community and its members due to previous and ongoing association with that community and its members. The general assumption is that this intimate knowledge offers insights that are difficult or impossible to access by an outsider.

Even though I did not conduct the research while being an employee of Unibe, I possess intimate knowledge of the community of Unibe because as mentioned before, I have played different stakeholder roles such as student, staff member and alumni.

The role of the insider has many challenges as presented by Brannick and Coghlan (2007, p67) such as “access, preunderstanding, role duality, and organizational politics”. I will now offer a brief description of my experience on each of these challenges. Access was not a problem in my case; in fact, access was one of the factors that made my research unique since I had complete and full access to any information I needed. Preunderstanding was indeed a challenge since I felt, from the beginning of my work, that I could understand the different stakeholders because of my history with the institution – finding the right balance was indeed a challenge and it was through a balancing act of attaching and detaching myself from the data when analysing it that preunderstanding played a positive role in the research. Role duality was probably my greatest challenge, since I was at the same point in time a researcher, an ex co-worker, an alumni, and a friend. It was confusing at some points, but the drive was the same for every role: to do my best to achieve the goals set for my research and for my work while positively using my pre-existing knowledge of the institution to obtain useful information for the university and for higher education as a whole. To achieve this, I tried to take the best out of each of my different roles and then de-construct and create distance from (as van Heugten, 2004, suggests) what I already knew and then playing some sort of “devil’s advocate” on myself, questioning my own beliefs in order to be as objective as possible. When I conducted the interviews I experienced many of the issues raised by Taylor (2011, p8) in the role as “intimate insider” which is what she defines as the “relation to researchers whose pre-existing friendships (close, distant, casual or otherwise) evolve into informant relationships”. I developed very good friendships with many of my co-workers and some of them I interviewed as part of this research. I came to wonder whether the interview results would have been different if I had spoken to other co-workers who were not good friends and had similar concerns as Taylor (2011, p13) of “the potential for data distortion and my lack of objectivity and possible insider blindness... role displacement or confusion and the vulnerability of friendship”. I was extra careful when interviewing my friends and made sure to use our ‘history’ only towards answering the research questions and not to allow this to distort data. Garton and Copland (2010, p548) argue that “acquaintance interviews do allow researchers access to resources that are not always available in more traditional social sciences interviews” and interviewing my friends meant that during the interview we felt comfortable discussing issues that might be seen sensitive to others outside our both friends/co-workers environment. Here I was careful to ensure ethical considerations were in place and more on this topic can be seen in section 3.1.5. It may be that the fact that I was in charge of the 2002 self-evaluation made it somewhat difficult for some stakeholders to openly comment on their views of the first process. This was openly discussed during the

interviews and due to the nature of our relationship, which had been built on trust; they seem to have felt that they could openly discuss their views without fear of my reaction. The fact that I was no longer an employee of Unibe also helped in making them feel comfortable to say what was on their minds without feeling they could offend me if they made negative comments. Finally, organisational politics was also a challenge, especially during the first self-evaluation process as some of the more senior managers were expecting some specific, somewhat inflated, outcomes, and I had to argue for objectivity and letting the data tell its true story.

Going back to the actual interview process, most of the participants seemed comfortable with participating in the process and answering the questions, and because of the relaxed nature of the conversations, many interesting topics came about that were not included in the interview guide. It was, however, a challenge for me as an interviewer to remain unbiased, again because I was part of the university for a long time before embarking on this PhD. I was aware of this limitation before conducting the interviews and tried to remain focused on the interview guide, without showing my feelings but being open enough so that the interviewees felt comfortable – like they were speaking to a colleague or co-worker and not an interviewer. Rapley (2001, p306) argues that interviews should be seen as “spaces of finely co-ordinated interactional work in which the talk of both speakers is central to producing the interview”, therefore, I tried to establish conversation that would lead to the answers to the questions in my interview guide, always having in the back of my mind that how I ask the questions may influence the answer I would get.

It was interesting to see how I was moving in time through these conversations, as stated by Warren, (2002, p98):

In the social interaction of the qualitative interview, the perspectives of the interviewer and the respondent dance together for the moment but also extend outward in social space and backward and forward in time.

The data collected in the interviews was analysed using Kolb’s learning cycle for qualitative data analysis as presented by Maylor and Blackmon (2005). They adapted the famous Kolb’s learning cycle (Kolb, 1985) which starts with your data, then a second stage that includes familiarisation, spending time considering issues raised and reordering or summarising the data, then a third stage where you extract the key concepts from the data, followed by a fourth stage of checking for (re)occurrence of concepts, emerging patterns and if the patterns fit with the data (Maylor and Blackmon, 2005, p34), only to go back to stage one and start the cycle again and again. Using this cycle, I was able to categorise, using codes or ‘issues’ to arrange the information. The codes were selected after reviewing (again and again)

the transcription of the interviews (and in some cases re-listening to parts of the interviews) and then indentifying the areas that were constantly repeated. The codes or 'issues', as can be expected, were mainly in line with the interview guide, but issues such as leadership and strategic planning which were not included in the interview guide were also identified.

In order to make sense of the data, categories were created after reviewing, classifying, comparing, weighing, combining and arranging the answers of the interviews and the research questions. In the first part of the analysis 13 categories were created and data were arranged within those categories. Patterns were then identified and categories were combined, integrated and merged in to three groups or larger categories as follows:

1. Usefulness, advantages and disadvantages of self-evaluation processes
2. Changes emerging from self-evaluation processes
3. Quality issues, perception and evaluation/quality culture

The list with the categories can be found in Appendix 4. I then proceeded to analyse the results based on the following advice given by Vogel (2005, p5):

you systematically examine codes, sorting them into appropriate groups, comparing them, and look for patterns and connections. You combine what different interviewees have said about the same concepts to refine your understanding of what each concept means. You compare and weigh contrasting descriptions of events to work out your own interpretation. Once you have worked out preliminary ideas from examining the sorted data units, you sort your quotes a second time according to different background characteristics to highlight them in a different way.

The outcome of this process can be found in Chapter 4, where results are presented and discussed. The results from the interview analysis were then mixed with the results of the comparison of the self-evaluation processes at the interpretation stage of this study in order to answer the research questions.

3.1.4 Validity

It is important to highlight issues of validity. Cohen et al. (2001) argue that the definition of validity has moved forward from the traditional viewpoint that an instrument measures what it was meant to measure to now a days the term taking different forms, especially different when referring to validity in a qualitative or quantitative study. Bryman (2001) explains that there are some writers that accept the term and adapt it to qualitative studies; others argue that the term validity has quantitative connotations and therefore cannot be used in qualitative studies; and suggests alternative terms. There are some others, however, that lie somewhere in between these two views. This latter perspective on validity is the one this study supports, in line with the mixed-method approach adopted. Dellinger and Leech (2007, p316), after discussing the different attempts from well-known authors to define validity for mixed methods studies, offer a definition more in line with how validity was seen for this study as follows

the definition of validity could be rewritten as an overall evaluative judgment of the extent to which empirical evidence and/or theoretical rationale support the adequacy and appropriateness of interpretations and actions on the basis of data generated through any means. (Dellinger and Leech, 2007, p316)

Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) argue that for mixed methods it is more appropriate to use the term legitimation instead of validity since this latter term has been increasingly associated with quantitative methods. They offer a very interesting table with the Typology of Mixed Methods Legitimation Types which includes 8 types of legitimation: Sample Integration, Inside-Outside, Weakness Minimization, Sequential, Conversion, Paradigmatic mixing, Commensurability, Multiple Validities and Political (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006, p57). How these were presented during this study is discussed towards the end of this section, where I explain how validity was ensured for this research. Furthermore, Dellinger and Leech (2007) provide a very useful Validation Framework which has different elements, including legitimation, which was used to guide this study with issues of validity.

Maxwell (1996, p86) affirms, however, that “the validity of your results is not guaranteed by following some prescribed procedure”. It is not only following methods that will ensure that the study is a valid and reliable one; Maxwell (1996) affirms that validity depends on the relationship of the research conclusions with the real world. Therefore, ensuring that the study always paid attention to validity issues and that the results of the study were applicable to the real world was high

on the list of priorities for this research. Hammersley (1992, p69) argues that “an account is valid or true if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain or theorize”. Therefore, results were matched to the research questions to confirm that what the study was set out to research was actually accomplished.

Validity has been divided into many different types. In particular, Cohen et al. (2000) list 18 kinds of validities. They then go on to describe in detail 7 types: internal validity, external validity, content validity, construct validity, ecological validity, catalytic validity and criterion-related validity. In the following table I summarise their main characteristic and maps them against this particular research, for the purpose of this particular study.

Table 17: Validity issues

Type of Validity	Definition	In this study...
Internal Validity	‘Seeks to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data. The findings must accurately describe the phenomena being researched.’ P107	See research design
External Validity	‘Refers to the degree to which the results can be generalised to the wider population, causes or situations.’ P109	See transferability in part 3.1.3.2
Content Validity	‘To demonstrate this form of validity the instrument must show that it fairly and comprehensively covers the domain or items that it purports to cover.’ P109	See part 3.1.3.5.2 Interviews
Construct Validity	‘ In this type of validity agreement is sought on the ‘operationalised’ forms of a construct, clarifying what we mean when we use this construct’ p110	See literature review parts on self-evaluation and quality and research design
Ecological Validity	‘Is to give accurate portrayals of the realities of social situations in their own terms, in their natural or conventional settings. For it to be achieved is important to include and address in the research as many characteristics in, and factors of, a given situation as possible’ p110	See Results chapter
Catalytic Validity	‘Strives to ensure that research leads to action. Catalytic validity suggests the need to expose whose definitions of the situation are operating in the situation. It reasserts the centrality of ethics in the research process’ p111	See research ethics in this part
Criterion-related validity	‘endeavours to relate the results of one particular instrument to another external criterion’ p111 it is divided into predictive and concurrent validity. The first is achieved ‘if the data acquired from the first round of research correlates highly with data acquired at a future date’ p111. The second is achieved when data gathered from one instrument correlates highly with data gathered using another instrument. P112	See Results Chapter

Source: adapter for this research from Cohen et al. (2000, pp107-111)

Validity has been indirectly discussed all through the methodology chapter by giving details on how data was collected, processed, analysed and compared, however, and using the above table as a guide, as well as a part of the Validation Framework designed by Dellinger and Leech (2007) and the legitimation typology offered by Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006), the following discussion will attempt to provide a summary of how the most relevant types of validities were addresses in this study.

Dellinger and Leech (2007) argue that the foundation level of the Validation Framework is very important in order to build proper construct validity. For this study, a comprehensive literature review was conducted which included an in-depth analysis of the theories relating to the subject of research in order to build knowledge and gain understanding of the topic. The literature review informed different parts of the study making it a significant useful part of the process. They move on to suggest the element of Inferential Consistency which “refers to whether the inferences in a study are consistent given what is known from prior understandings, past research, and theory” Dellinger and Leech (2007, p324). This was proven in the Results Chapter, where most of the findings were consistent with theories and results from previous studies.

Now moving to the Mixed Method Element of Construct Validity, they suggest that design quality, legitimation and interpretive rigour be in place throughout the process. Design quality, with its suitability and adequacy, can be related to the internal validity of the study. As can be seen in part 3.1 Research Design, Maxwell’s (1996) interactive model for research design was used, actively linking the research questions to the purposes, conceptual context, methods and validity of the study. This model was the base of the process and by appropriately using it throughout the research the findings were able to describe the issues being researched and answer the research questions. This model also helped ensure Construct Validity for the study, since one of its part requires the conceptual context to be well linked with the purpose of the study and the research questions. This conceptual context (more details in section 3.1.2) was used as a guide to determine what issues would be analysed in the literature review.

Regarding Legitimation (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006, p57), Sample Integration describes the relationship between the sampling design for quantitative and qualitative parts. For the quantitative part of the study appropriate samples for both self-evaluation processes were used by Unibe according to guidelines from ADAAC.

Then for the comparison of both processes the 27 areas were further analysed, that is, the totality of the areas and not just a sample. The sample of participants for the interviews was also appropriate for answering the research questions and the different samples for both qualitative and quantitative aimed at providing information to build the answers to the research questions. In this way, Weakness Minimization was also achieved, where the weaknesses from one approached were minimized by the strengths of the other and vice versa (one of the good reasons why to use a mixed methodology). That is, the qualitative part of the study provided in-depth insights to some issues that were also addressed in the quantitative part and the quantitative part provided greater scope into areas that were addressed in the interviews and document analysis.

The Inside-out Legitimation was very relevant to this study since it is all about the way “the researcher accurately presents and appropriately utilizes the insider’s view and the observer’s views for purposes such as description and explanation” (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006, p57). I previously explained my feelings and actions due to my previous association with Unibe in the interview part of the methodology.

External Validity was discussed in part 3.1.3.2 as part of the arguments justifying the use of the single case study and how the purpose of this study was not to generalise but to offer transferability of results. This was achieved by providing deep insights into the areas being researched to offer understanding on those topics so that readers can then decide if they can indeed transfer those issues into their own situations.

Finally, it is also important to highlight that since this could be considered as a longitudinal case study due to the self-evaluation taking place at different points in time, there are issues of Sequential Legitimation and Criterion-related Validity that need to be discussed as well as some specific threats to validity as presented by Street and Ward (2007) to this particular types of studies: the recall effect, the spoiler effect, and the longitudinal selection bias. Sequential legitimation is about minimizing potential problems if inferences “could be affected by reversing the sequence of the quantitative and qualitative phases” (Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006, p57). For this study, the sequence could not be changed to legitimize this issue and would not have made any sense to change since the interviews (which came at a later stage than the two self-evaluation processes) focused on reflecting on the self-evaluation processes, so changing the sequence was not an option. On the other hand, criterion-related validity which as Cohen et al. (2001, p111) explain

“endeavours to relate the results of one particular instrument to another external criterion” was evident since the results from the first round of interviews were very similar with the results from the second round and the data obtained from the interviews and document analysis correlates with data from the self-evaluation questionnaires.

The threats to validity for longitudinal case studies presented by Street and Ward (2007) include the Recall Effect “refers to potential inaccuracies introduced during the interview process by imperfect recall of historical events by human beings” Street and Ward (2007, p4). This issue was something I was aware of and tried to address it both during the interviews and in the data analysis. In the interviews I tried to minimise inaccuracies by asking the interviewees key questions that as a previous insider I knew would help them better recall events being very careful, however, being very careful not to influence their views. In the data analysis I triangulated the information given in the interviews with the results of the self-evaluation as well with the documents analysed in order to make sure informants were accurately reporting the past. The ‘Spoiler Effect’, was a particular threat for this study since according to Street and Ward (2007, p4) it “arises from the inadvertent skewing of results that can occur when researchers have prior knowledge of the outcomes associated with a sequence of events”. Results of the self-evaluation were known to the interviewees and there was a chance their responses would be influenced by those results. However, during the interviews I tried to maintain a climate of trust and confidentiality (see part 3.1.3.5.2 Interviews) where I encouraged the interviewees to disclose their true feelings about the processes and that they should assess their usefulness based on their experience after those processes and not on whether the results were positive or not. This was a challenge for me as well, especially because I was one of the advocates of the first self-evaluation process. I had to constantly remember my role as a researcher and maintain my ethical standards to the highest. Finally, Longitudinal Selection Bias, “an unintentional skewing of data that can occur if a dataset improperly represents a single point in time in terms of either size or scope) Street and Ward (2007, p4), was not a major threat since the two self-evaluations took place at different stages and were conducted using the same process, so there were no imbalances in data collection.

3.1.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical standards in research guide researchers to act with integrity towards the participants in the study (Guthrie, 2010). Denscombe (2002) offers a whole chapter on ethics, affirming that ethical practice is one of the 10 ground rules for good research and that researchers “need to recognise the rights and interests of participants” (Denscombe, p175). Wiles (2012) suggests that there are several factors shaping ethical decision-making such as ethical frameworks, individual moral framework, legal regulation and ethical regulation, professional guidelines and disciplinary norms. Particularly in case study research, Burgess (1989) argues that ethical issues are inescapable because of the fact that we are dealing with features of social life in all its particularity. Because of this, careful consideration was given to ensuring that ethical guidelines both from the University of Southampton and from the British Educational Research Association were followed. Apart from following standard professional ethical guidelines Cohen et al. (2000, p71) suggest to also create a personal code of ethical practice and give 6 clear advantages for doing this, including that this personal code will make the researcher aware of their obligations to their subjects, that it will help highlight alternative ways of doing the same things and that it will bring discipline to the researchers awareness. When thinking of designing a personal ethical code for this study I was particularly interested in Maylor and Blackmon (2005, p281) suggestion that there should be one overriding principle that governs how researchers deal with people and organisations:

“Treat others as you yourself would want to be treated and provide benefit to the organisation and individuals involved in your work”

This is a principle I use in all aspects of my life and was very careful to implement during my research process as my overall personal ethical code. For example, I was careful not to harm participants, not to invade their privacy, not to deceive them, respect their right to willingly participate and/or stop at any time. While initially reading about research ethics I found many authors that suggested being careful if the research would harm participants and my first thoughts were that I could not possible harm participants with the type of research I was conducting. However, while designing the questions for the interviews and after further reading in the area I realised that I could easily harm participants in their internal career prospects, for example, if I released confidential information to senior management that could hamper their progress in the university. I therefore was extremely careful about negative and/or confidential comments from respondents and how these would be presented inside the final document, if of course the participants agreed. Other

ways of harming participants could be according to Bryman and Bell (2007) causing them stress with the type of questions or the way some questions could be asked. As explained in the interview section, the interviews took place in a relaxed and friendly manner and participants were made clear that they did not need to discuss any issues they felt uncomfortable with. The issue of deception was one I was particularly worried about; since I played different roles at Unibe before embarking on the PhD process and most participants knew about these in one way or another. I was afraid that some of the participants might still see me as a former student (one of the interviewees had been my teacher when I was doing my Bachelors degree at Unibe) and not take me too seriously or others could see me as the previous director of strategic planning of the university with a 'hidden agenda' to supply senior management with key information. Whereas these different relationships I had with the university I believe were mainly positive towards the development of this research in other sections, when thinking about ethical issues I felt that these past relationships could have been unhelpful since they could have negatively influenced how participants behaved towards me. In order to reduce the chances of participants feeling uncomfortable or that they might be under deception, I made it clear well in advance that my research was completely independent from the university and that it was part of my PhD thesis on self-evaluation processes and not for informing management about how employees felt or their beliefs. I explained that the results would be openly available for anyone interested, but that their identities would not be revealed if they did not wish to. In order to avoid misunderstandings on the purpose of the interviews, written informed consent was acquired well in advance before the interviews took place and participants were explained of their right to not participate or to stop the interview if they wished. As BERA (2011, p6) explain in their Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research

researchers must take the steps necessary to ensure that all participants in the research understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported

Emails were sent to participants with a detailed explanation of the aims of the research, the type of questions they would be answering, the fact that they could decline the invitation to participate in the research and they were also clearly informed they could withdraw at any stage and for any reason. Only staff that positively replied to this email took part in the interview process. Regardless of my fear of the implications of my previous relationships with Unibe, staff members felt pleased to contribute to my research, and none of them asked for anonymity since they were happy to express their opinions freely. Even so, the option of anonymity was given to all participants. In fact, my previous associations with the university

gave some participants a unique sense of trust towards me, and some made ‘off the record’ comments which by definition (Wiles, 2012) need to be kept confidential. Some of these comments were very important and relevant to the research and I therefore sent the transcription of the interviews to those particular members and asked them if and how they wished I included their comments. After reading the transcription and some of them making minor changes, they agreed that their views could be included. More details on how the interviews were conducted and any possible ethical issues that arose during the interviews can be found in the interview section 3.1.3.5.2.

To conclude, the following is a checklist for ethical considerations for this study created based on the guidelines for educational research as presented by the British Educational Research Association towards participants in the research:

Table 18: Checklist BERA guidelines

✓	Voluntary informed consent	See explanations above
✓	Openness and disclosure	See explanations above
✓	Right to withdraw	See explanations above
✓	Children, Vulnerable Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Not applicable, none of these groups participated in this study
✓	Incentives	Not used for this research
✓	Detriment arising from participation in research	No detriments were found
✓	Privacy	See explanations above
✓	Disclosure	See explanations above

Source: adapted from BERA (2011)

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

This study has intended to analyse the underlying principles of self-evaluation processes and how they relate to quality improvement and change in the context of a private university in a developing country. This chapter aims to answer two goals. Firstly, to answer the question: how evident is the impact of self-evaluation? Relying on information collected from two self-evaluation processes, I will perform comparisons of all 27 areas defined by the ADAAC guide for self-evaluation. Secondly, I intend uncover stakeholder perceptions on the impact of the evaluation processes on issues of quality and change. To this end, I will analyse interviews conducted with senior management, administrative staff and lecturers. Finally, a discussion that summarises and links the results from both the comparison of the self-evaluations and the interviews. Therefore, this chapter will consist of three parts: 1) comparison of results from the two self-evaluation processes, 2) analysis and discussion of interviews and 3) Summary discussion of findings.

4.1 Analysis of the comparison per Area

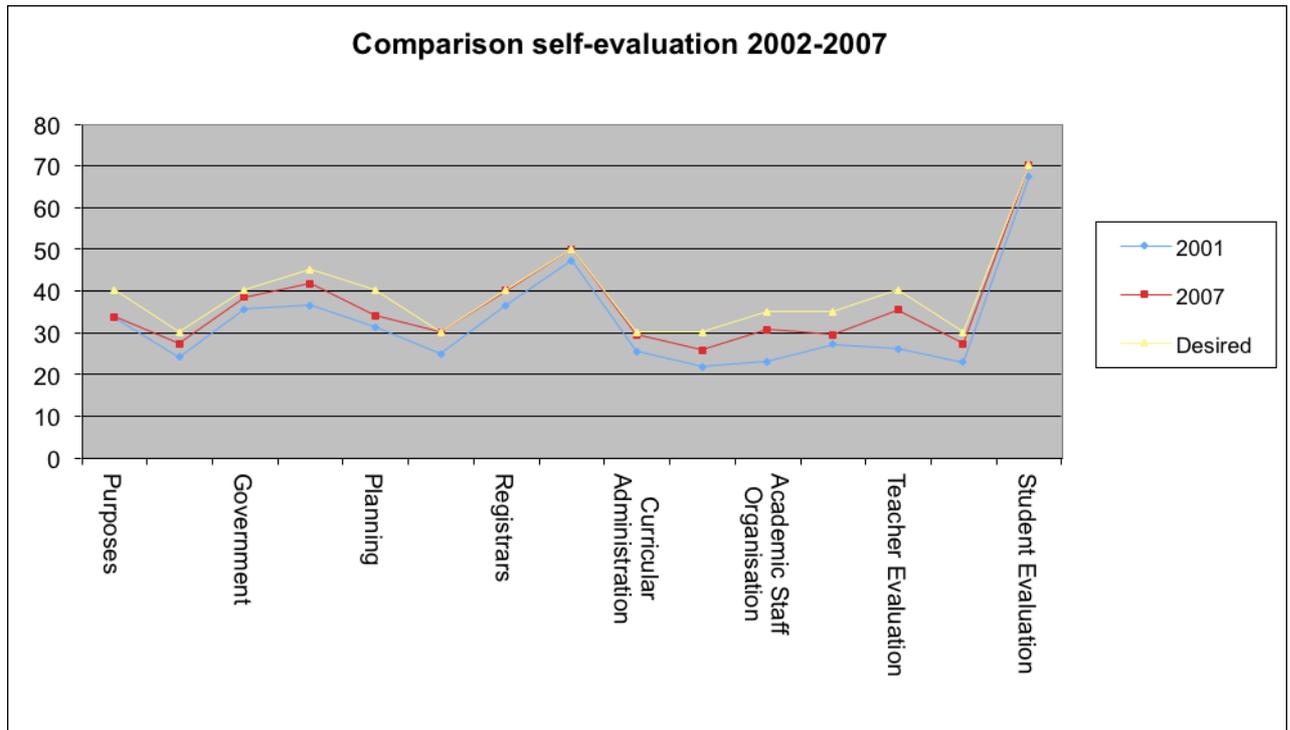
The ADAAC guide for self-evaluation proposed 27 different areas of the university to be evaluated. The following table presents all 27 areas along with their scores in both self-evaluation processes.

Table 19: Areas of Self-evaluation ADAAC

CATEGORIES / AREAS	2002	2007
	% achieved	% achieved
01. Purposes	84	94
02. Philosophy	80	91
03. Government	89	97
04. Organisation	81	93
05. Planning	78	85
06. Financial Administration	89	97
07. Rules and Regulations	93	99
08. Admissions	83	100
09. Registrars	91	100
10. Curricular Content and Structure	94	100
11. Curricular Administration	85	98
12. Teacher Selection	72	86
13. Academic Staff Organisation	66	87
14. Teacher Responsibility	80	80
15. Support Services for Academic Activities	77	84
16. Teacher Evaluation	65	89
17. Research development, promotion, adm	43	47
18. Artistic Creation development, promotion, adm	65	95
19. Scientific and Cultural Divulgateion	72	52
20. Permanent Education Relevance and Adm	67	97
21. Extension	77	80
22. Student Support	76	91
23. Student Evaluation	96	100
24. Infrastructure	86	84
25. Institutional Transparency	88	95
26. Relations	88	84
27. Alumni	76	85

As mentioned in more detail in the methodology chapter, the first self-study process was conducted at Unibe under my leadership in 2002. The second self-study was conducted and completed in 2007, using the exact same instruments and procedures as the first making the comparison of results from the two different periods possible. In 2002 719 stakeholders took part in responding to the instruments of the self-evaluation and in 2007 1,296 stakeholders participated (the increase in participants from one self-evaluation to the other was in accordance with the increase in the size of the university). The following table presents a visual representation of the results of the two processes and how those results relate to the maximum score.

Figure 7: Comparison of both self-evaluation scores to maximum scores by ADAAC



Results in 2007 were in most of the areas better than in 2002 and closer to what the perfect score from the ADAAC guide suggested and the following tables indicates more clearly the percentage increase/decrease from 2002 to 2007. It is arranged by percentage of increase/decrease in score, starting with the area which had the highest increase and ending with the one that had the highest decrease.

Table 20: Comparison of the Areas of the two Self-Evaluation processes

CATEGORIES / AREAS	2002 % achieved	2007 % achieved	% Increase/ decrease
18. Artistic Creation development, promotion, adm	65	95	46.15%
20. Permanent Education Relevance and Adm	67	97	44.78%
16. Teacher Evaluation	65	89	36.92%
13. Academic Staff Organisation	66	87	31.82%
8. Admissions	83	100	20.48%
22. Student Support	76	91	19.74%
12. Teacher Selection	72	86	19.44%
11. Curricular Administration	85	98	15.29%
4. Organisation	81	93	14.81%
2. Philosophy	80	91	13.75%
1. Purposes	84	94	11.90%
27. Alumni	76	85	11.84%
9. Registrars	91	100	9.89%
17. Research development, promotion, adm	43	47	9.30%
15. Support Services for Academic Activities	77	84	9.09%
3. Government	89	97	8.99%
6. Financial Administration	89	97	8.99%
5. Planning	78	85	8.97%
25. Institutional Transparency	88	95	7.95%
7. Rules and Regulations	93	99	6.45%
10. Curricular Content and Structure	94	100	6.38%
23. Student Evaluation	96	100	4.17%
21. Extension	77	80	3.90%
14. Teacher Responsibility	80	80	0.00%
24. Infrastructure	86	84	-2.33%
26. Relations	88	84	-4.55%
19. Scientific and Cultural Divulagation	72	52	-27.78%

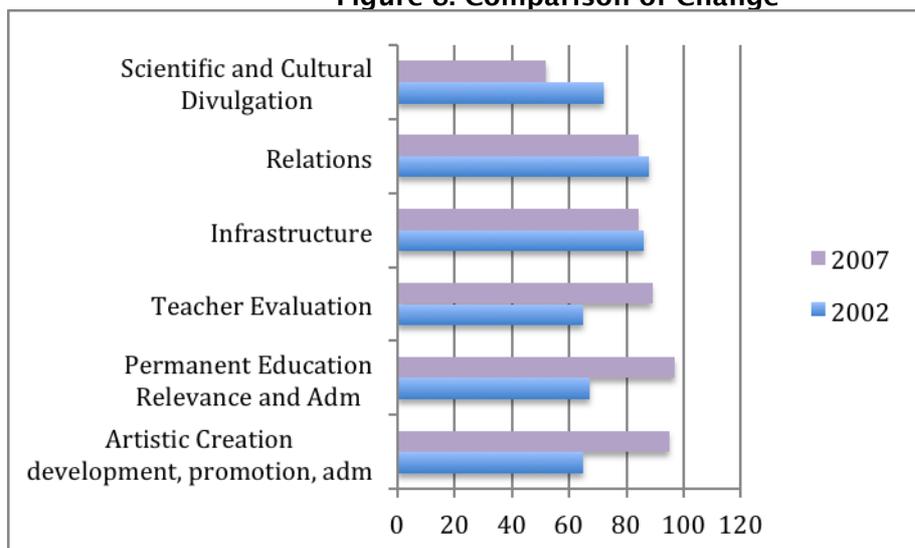
As can be seen from the table, most scores have positively changed in the second self-evaluation process. Scores increased in 23 of the 27 areas, remained the same in one area and decreased in 3 areas, 2 of those 3 having only a minor decrease in score. This positive change may have been triggered in part by the results of the first self-evaluation process, making the university more aware of its strengths and weaknesses and setting the grounds for what needed to be improved back then. The following table presents a comparison of the areas which obtained the best and worst score. Only the areas achieving the three highest scores for each category are presented in the table below.

Table 21: Best and Worst scores from 2002 to 2007

	2002	2007
Best Scores	Student evaluation - 96% Curricular Content and Structure - 94% Rules and Regulations - 93%	Student evaluation - 100% Curricular Content and Structure - 100% Registrars - 100%
Worst Scores	Artistic Creation, Dev, Prom and Adm - 65% Teacher Evaluation - 65% Research, Dev, Prom and Adm - 43%	Extension - 80% Scientific and Cultural Divulcation - 52% Research, Development, Prom and Adm - 47%

It is interesting to point out the areas with the highest and lowest percent of change and those that remained the same to give the reader amore precise idea of what had chaged. The figure below presents the significant differences more clearly, showing the areas with the most increase and decrease. It is interesting to see that the positive increase at the highest end was higher than 35% and the decrease in the areas that presented a reduction was below 5% for two of the three areas.

Figure 8: Comparison of Change



In order to determine if these changes were statistically significant an independent two sample t-test for each area was conducted. The table below shows that observed differences were statistically significant for 16 of the 17 areas where t-tests were performed. Only for the area “Registrars” observed differences were not statistically significant.

Table 22: T-Test results

	2007	2002	Mean Difference 95% confidence interval p - value
Mean (SD) of Area 1: Purposes	1.05 (0.08)	0.67 (0.33)	0.38 (0.35, 0.40) p < 0.0001
Mean (SD) of Area 2: Philosophy	2.63 (0.47)	2.51 (0.07)	0.12 (0.10, 0.14) p < 0.0001
Mean (SD) of Area 3: Government	3.20 (0.30)	1.98 (0.49)	1.22 (1.18, 1.26) p < 0.0001
Mean (SD) of Area 4: Organisation	1.90 (0.27)	1.45 (0.67)	0.45 (0.37, 0.53) p < 0.0001
Mean (SD) of Area 7: Rules and Regulations	2.42 (0.05)	1.48 (0.45)	0.94 (0.74, 1.14) p < 0.001
Mean (SD) of Area 9: Registrars	1.75 (0.31)	1.92 (0.63)	- 0.17 (-0.41, 0.07) p = 0.162
Mean (SD) of Area 10: Curricular Content and Structure	3.18 (0.34)	1.87 (0.54)	1.31 (1.06, 1.56) p < 0.001
Mean (SD) of Area 11: Curricular administration	2.60 (0.29)	2.08 (0.87)	0.52 (0.33, 0.71) p < 0.0001
Mean (SD) of Area 14: Teacher responsibility	2.13 (0.46)	1.28 (1.02)	0.85 (0.56, 1.15) p < 0.0001
Mean (SD) of Area 15: Support services for academics	6.40 (1.93)	4.91 (1.99)	1.49 (1.30, 1.68) p < 0.0001
Mean (SD) of Area 16: Teacher Evaluation	2.03 (0.38)	1.65 (0.63)	0.38 (0.31, 0.45) p < 0.001
Mean (SD) of Area 18: Artistic Creation	1.55 (0.23)	0.65 (0.42)	0.90 (0.72, 1.08) p < 0.001
Mean (SD) of Area 20: Permanent Education	2.42 (0.63)	1.60 (1.22)	0.82 (0.19, 1.45) p = 0.011
Mean (SD) of Area 22: Student support	2.31 (0.37)	1.82 (1.17)	0.49 (-0.01, 0.99) p = 0.06

Mean (SD) of Area 23: Student Evaluation	3.10 (0.35)	1.97 (0.61)	1.13 (0.93, 1.32) p < 0.001
Mean (SD) of Area 24: Infrastructure	1.65 (0.63)	1.78 (0.74)	-0.13 (-0.20, -0.06) p < 0.001
Mean (SD) of Area 27: Alumni	4.17 (0.32)	2.02 (1.74)	2.15 (1.85, 2.45) p < 0.0001

Due to the nature of the data, where in some cases no variations were observed in many answers since the source was document review or other qualitative method and therefore t-tests were not performed. The areas where t-test were not performed were: Planning, Financial administration, Admissions, Teacher selection, Academic staff organisation, Research development, Scientific and cultural divulgation, Extension, Institutional transparency and Relations and more details are given in each particular analysis of these areas regarding the nature of the data.

Before going into the analysis of change of the areas, it is important to highlight a key stage in the life of the university, which had an impact in all the major changes. In 2004, the university decided it needed to undergo an 'Institutional Reform' (as mentioned in section 3.1.3.5.2), which meant letting go of its traditional educational model for a more modern mode. The reason, clearly identified in the Preliminary Report of the Reform, was "the significant growth the university has had in the past few years, transforming itself in a more dynamic and participatory institution willing to take up the challenge of responding to the needs of the Dominican society" (Unibe, 2006, p1). It is important to note that in some of the discussions with the interviewees, several mentioned that they believed this reform was triggered by the first formal self-evaluation the university went through in 2002. One interviewee in particular mentioned that they felt *'the first self-evaluation put "the finger in the wound" and highlighted areas of necessary change and this very real "pain" in part triggered the Institutional Reform'*.

It should also be noted that the background information included in the Institutional Reform document clearly states that the activities around the self-evaluation process of 2002 highlighted the challenges the university needed to overcome in order to increase quality and set the starting point for organised action and positive change. That is, the university admitted in writing that the Reform was a consequence of the recommendations of the first self-evaluation process.

The next sections will present the analysis of the changes in each areas of the self-evaluation guide as per ADAAC guidelines, providing a description of the main activities/issues that have encouraged these changes by comparing results of the two self-evaluations in 2002 and 2007.

4.1.1. Purposes (Mission, vision, values and objectives)

The area of purposes refers to the motives that justify the existence of the institution, including its mission, and the goals and objectives which have been set, which should be clear and expressed in writing. These are intimately related to the direction and vision the institution has set. The total weight of this area assigned by ADAAC is of 40 points and in 2002 the university obtained a qualification of 33.55 points, which is equal to a level of achievement of 84%. In 2007 it had a 12% increase, with an overall score of 94%.

The main criteria measured in this area was whether the purposes of the university were explicitly established, documented and well known, as well as if there was evidence of their practical application and participation of the stakeholders in the revision of those documents.

The main purpose and philosophic views of Unibe were formulated when the university was founded in 1982, and up to this date they still state that Unibe's goal is to educate the future leaders of the Dominican society through teaching and research. In 2002, the philosophy of the university was revised to include an updated mission, vision, and values to rule the purposes of the institution. The 2002 report revealed that plenty of philosophical information of the university was published and publicly available, however, the level of detail of each issue was limited, unlike results from the second self-evaluation, which affirm that the content which was published was very rich in nature. The positive results from the 2007 report referred to the revised mission which was put in place in 2006, following recommendations from both the first self-evaluation and the academic reform.

The self-evaluation process in 2002 concluded that the authorities of the university used the purpose of the university, along with the mission, vision and values when taking actions and making decisions. However, back then the mission, vision and values were only partially known by the academic community according to the results of the self-evaluation. Evidence showed that the documents had been revised but that different stakeholders were not included in such process. On the contrary,

the results of the 2007 self-evaluation showed that these documents had been revised at least once in the past 5 years with the participation of the academic community. A significant change from the one self-evaluation to the other. This change is a direct result of the first self-evaluation where recommendations included that participation of different stakeholders in the revision of the mission, vision and values should be implemented. One of the interviewees stated in 2007: *“it is nice to see how we are now included in processes of revision of the mission and vision which were previously kept for senior management; being a part of these meetings (even if in some cases my voice is not directly heard) made me feel closer to the revised mission”*.

The participation of stakeholders in the revision of the mission which was presented in the 2007 results was not limited to internal stakeholders, Unibe invited the families of students, alumni, businesses professional bodies and other organisations to participate in the process and therefore validated the significance of the new defined philosophy.

The academic community was asked how well they believed the stakeholders of the university knew the mission of the institution. The majority of the people (64% in 2002 and 75% in 2007) that answered this question believed that the mission was quite well known by the different stakeholders of the university. If we compare this answer with some of the answers of the interview to some academic staff in both self-evaluations, it could be suggested that, even though people felt the mission was well known, when actually asked what the mission was they recite a line for the slogan the advertising agency uses. That is, although the answers to the question on knowledge of the mission state that the mission is well known, the definition of what ‘mission’ actually is might not be clear in the stakeholder’s minds because the slogan is not the mission of the university. This is a downside of the instruments used to gather the data for the self-evaluations, which do not dig deeper into the answers of the participants, to find the reasons behind their answers.

In order to better understand the views of specific stakeholders, the results from this question were also analysed by groups of people answering it. Most responses from both Deans and Teachers point out that the different stakeholders ‘totally’ know the mission of Unibe in both self-evaluations. The pattern of responses from both students and administrative staff is quite similar, with the majority of them confirming that stakeholders know quite well the mission. One of the students interviewed in the 2007 self-evaluation process confirmed that: ‘the mission, vision and the objectives of Unibe are taught clearly in one of our first modules called

Orientation and Guidance for students'. This means that the University had understood the importance of students knowing its core values and had included this material in one of the 'induction' modules for students.

However, when looking at responses from both self-evaluations from Deans, Directors and Coordinators, the majority affirmed that they believed people knew it 'quite well' (35% in 2002 and 37% in 2007) and 'partially well' (32% in 2002 and 29% in 2007). It can be argued that the reason why many of the Deans believed that the mission is only partially known by the community is because they have a more comprehensive knowledge of what the mission is and compare what they know with what they think others know and rate it lower. Again, this can be triangulated to the results of the interviews of both self-evaluations, where some Deans expressed the view that they felt the academic community was not completely aware of the correct mission and confused it many times with the advertising slogan.

It is important to note that this question is actually asking how well people believe the different stakeholders know the mission and not how well it is known by them. This question was constructed following ADAAC's guidelines but the responses it gives out are based on assumptions of the knowledge of other people and not on the knowledge of the person being asked the question. This question should have been designed asking directly the person completing the questionnaire how well they know the mission and with those results a more accurate analysis of the actual level of knowledge of stakeholders could have been made. This issue highlights one of the limitations of this study, the use of a pre-determined methodology in the self-evaluation processes defined by ADAAC, which in some cases does not give enough room for analysing deeper certain situations.

Moving on to the Vision and how the different stakeholders perceived others to know the vision, the results from this question are similar to those of the knowledge of the mission with the majority of stakeholders confirming that they believe the vision is quite well known. However, and again in comparison to the results of the mission, there is a greater number of people that believe the vision is partially and very little known. More in 2002 than in 2007, however, still high in both cases, 34% and 27% respectively.

An interesting comment from one of the Deans interviewed for the 2002 self-evaluation was that when he was asked to define the vision of the university he answered: *'Vision? What vision? The one that is written on papers or the one the 'rest' of us know?'* When he was asked to explain why he made that comment, he

answered that of course UNIBE has a vision, the problem is that no one knows about it, *'what we believe the vision to be is only a trace of what the marketing campaign has left in our minds'* he said.

If a comparison is made from the results of the three questions that asked how well stakeholders know the mission, vision and objectives, the distribution of results was very similar for both self-evaluations, with the mission being the best known and the vision the least known.

The questions as to whether the top management used the mission, vision and objective for making decisions and whether they are revised at least every five years were answered by senior management through a series of interviews in both self-evaluation processes. All senior management confirmed that they used the mission, vision and objective to make decisions in both self-evaluations, but in 2002 admitted that only from the information they had *'in the back of their minds'* and not by consulting official documents where those issues were defined. They affirmed that the vision, mission and objectives were revised every five years; however, when they were asked to present previous mission, visions, and objectives, the majority just responded that they have not changed those statements in a long time and that they were now going through the process of radically changing them. This was not the case in 2007, where there was clear evidence of change and consultation in this part.

The senior management were also asked whether the process of revising the mission, vision and objectives was done in a collective way and in 2002 many of them had reservations on answering this question, unlike the answers they gave in 2007, where they all confirmed that these were defined in a collective way. However, the instruments did not give room for asking how exactly this was done collectively, that is, there was no question that asked for evidence to confirm the opinion of senior management. In order to triangulate this information, the rest of the academic community were asked to respond to those same issues through the questionnaires; the majority answered more or less the same for the three issues, the most common answer in 2002 being that *'sometimes'* the revision of the mission, vision and objectives was done in a collective way. In 2007 the most common answer was *'almost always'* showing evidence of change as a result of the recommendations.

It is also important to say at this point that in the documents reviewed for the 2002 process, there was no clear evidence of involving the rest of the academic

community in the revision of the mission, vision and objectives. One student when asked about the subject mentioned: *'really, since I entered the university I have noticed that although the professors do stress and mention frequently the mission, vision and objectives of Unibe; particularly I have never participated either have seen that the students participate in the review and/or creation of them'*. This statement clearly indicates that in some cases even though students may have been aware of the philosophical principles of the University, because they were not part of the process of creating them they may have felt left out and did not identify with the institution. It is important that in any review effort from the University, all stakeholders are given appropriate participation and that is why this was included as a recommendation for 2002 results. This was picked up by senior management and evidence of change due to this recommendation was the fact that the whole academic community and the immediate external community is now involved in these processes. The results from the 2007 confirm this, with a perfect score in this part.

It is interesting to note the relationship between the strengths found in 2002 and in 2007 for this area. In 2002 the main strength was that the university had made efforts to foster reflection on the purposes of the institution, actively trying to involve teaching staff. In 2007 it was evident that it was not just the teachers being involved in the re-definition of the mission, vision and values, but the entire academic community, both internal and external stakeholders. The comparison of the two self-evaluations and the raw databases for the purpose of answering the research questions of this study showed that in 2007, after the profound revision of all the basic documents that make up for this area based on recommendations from the first self-evaluation, there was increased identification of stakeholders with the identity of the university.

Another recommendation from the first self-evaluation was to organize induction seminars for all administrative and academic staff to learn about the philosophy of the institution, since many felt they did not know the details. For example one member of staff admitted in the 2002 self-evaluation that *'No induction manuals exist that I know of to welcome the new personnel. If there are manuals them they are not to the reach of the personnel. It is important the implementation of these types of manuals, so that the personnel is able to identify with the institution'*. In 2005 compulsory induction sessions for new staff were established, and older members of staff were asked to attend these sessions as well in order to remind themselves of the purpose of the university. Again, a clear trace of change taken

place as a result of the particular recommendation of the self-evaluation process, which helped increase the total score of the area in 2007.

Overall, it is evident that the increase in score in this area was due to the increased participation in the revision of the purposes of Unibe, which addressed significant weaknesses that the 2002 self-evaluation report highlighted.

4.1.2. Philosophy

This area refers to the way in which the institution defines its nature and the principles that guide its actions. It has to do with the basic reasons the university chooses and carries out its functions; it is directly related to Area 1 in the sense that the mission, vision and objectives are derived from the philosophy of the institution and it is the feeling of the author that these two areas should have been defined and analysed in the same category. However, due to the constraints of the ADAAC Guide, the areas were analysed separately in both self-evaluation processes following the requirements for accreditation from ADAAC.

The total weight of this area assigned by ADAAC is of 30 points and in 2002 the university obtained a qualification of 24.05, which represents a level of achievement of 80%. In 2007 it achieved a score of 27.21, obtaining a 91% level of achievement, an almost 14% increase in score.

The ADAAC guide suggests that the first issue to be analysed in this area was the existence of a document that established the educational philosophy if there are written strategies in place to make the philosophy known. In 2002 there was a booklet that defined the philosophy of the university, which was somewhat dated. That constituted the only public documentation available on the philosophical foundation of UNIBE to that date and there were no specific written strategies other than teaching that booklet on the 'Orientation-induction' module. Therefore, the logical answer to whether the strategies to make the philosophy known are put into place regularly should have been that the application is limited to conducting the obligatory module during the first year of undergraduate studies. However, in 2002 the answers were quite the opposite, with 61% of the respondents answering that either always or most of the times the strategies to make the philosophy known to the academic community were applied. This question was also asked as part of the interviews in the self-evaluation to Deans, Directors and Coordinators in 2002, and 52% answered that the strategies were mostly or totally applied. One Dean affirmed:

'I think that the institution puts to the reach of all the professors and students the educational philosophy, if someone does not know it is not because of the university because we give them all the paperwork in the orientation course.' However, when they were asked to define some of the strategies, 77% of Deans answered that the main strategy was the compulsory 'Orientation' module students had to follow at the start of the semester, and only 23% of them mentioned other strategies such as the distribution of booklets and induction seminars for staff. This shows that although in the majority of people felt the strategies were applied in 2002, they were not that well informed on what those strategies were exactly. In 2007 they seemed more aware of how the strategies were applied but also very much aware of what the particular strategies were, with 91% of senior management, 87% of lecturers and 72% being able to clearly identify them. I was able to triangulate their answers to the actual strategies in place at that time and results were very encouraging. One of the reasons why the senior management felt they knew the philosophy so well was because, as expressed by the vice-rector of administrative affairs: *'of course I know the philosophy, I was one of the people who wrote the document!'* Most of the senior management at Unibe have been working there almost since its creation and have been part of all the changes the University has gone through. However, the philosophy the senior management were referring to may not have been the same one written in the booklet, as the booklet was created a very long time ago and it was not regularly used as a working document. Therefore, the issue of senior management knowing well the philosophy at that point gives the author room to assume that senior management were extremely confident of their work and knowledge and that the administrative staff had faith in the knowledge of the top management which in a way means they believed the senior management used the philosophy to guide their decision. But the issue of knowing a philosophy that may not be the same as the official one brings serious consequences to quality management as each member of staff may be working under different principles. It may have been good during the interviews of the self-evaluation process in 2007 to ask senior management to define the philosophy and compare results to the philosophy written in the booklet, as was done with the particular strategies.

The question of how well the teachers knew the philosophy was asked to both teachers and students. Teachers were asked in order to see if they felt they knew the philosophy and students were asked in order to record the perception they had of the knowledge of their teachers on the philosophy. The general result showed that 53% in 2002 and 67% in 2007 of the total group of teachers and students who answered this question believed that teachers knew the philosophy well.

However, when the results were divided between students and teachers, we can see that 35% (2002) and 40% (2007) of the teachers believed they 'mostly' knew the philosophy compared to only 25% (2002) and 37% (2007) of the students thinking the same. Even more significant is the difference between both groups on answering that teachers know very little of the philosophy. Only 5% (2002) and 2% (2007) of teachers believed they knowledge of the philosophy was 'very little'; however, 16% (2002) and 14% (2007) of the students believed teachers' knowledge of the philosophy was so minimal. These results may be either due to over confidence by the teachers or they may have failed to show to students how well they know the philosophy. A slight improvement in this issue is evident from one self-evaluation to the other; however, the difference between results is still large.

Even more significant were the differences of results between teachers and students in 2002, when the students were asked how well they knew the philosophy compared to the how well teachers believed the students knew the philosophy. 35% of students believed they knew the philosophy mostly well; however only 11% of teachers agreed with them, with 33% of them affirming that students knew 'very little' of the philosophy of Unibe. These results changed in 2007, where responses from teachers and students were positive, with most of the teachers 74% affirming that students knew the philosophy of Unibe relatively well.

The somewhat negative results from teachers towards students were also found in interviews in the 2002 self-evaluation, but not in the 2007 interviews. 80% of teachers interviewed in 2002 made negative comments towards the level of their students, making reference to the fact that Unibe attracts rich students who feel that they do not need a degree to advance in their careers as their families are very wealthy and own business where they will eventually be working. These teachers pointed out that many students come to Unibe thinking the 'philosophy' of the university is: *'just do the minimum to pass and don't worry about learning anything'*. The views of some of the teachers seemed to be shared by other stakeholders of the University and they mention that Unibe was seen as a 'fun' university. When students were confronted in the interviews in 2002 about these issues, many of them felt offended and stressed that some teachers had this opinion of them because the teachers were usually from a 'lower' social class and underneath had some level of complex. In 2007, results from teachers opinion were more positive toward students, with one particular lecturer mentioning that *'the quality of students in the past few years has increased, in line with the revised philosophy of the university.'*

The consultations carried out during the first self-evaluation process showed the need to divulge the philosophy of the University among the academic community, students and administrative staff. From the results of the interviews from the first self-evaluation, some of the students admitted to have studied it when they first enrolled at Institution, but affirmed that they had not participated in activities of disclosure/reflection for knowing it in depth. One student mentioned: *'As is typical, the authorities are inaccessible. The students are not presented the authorities of the institution, never mind knowing the lines of authority that they carry'*. Others manifested that from time to time the everyday institutional tasks, both academic and administrative, do not correspond with the philosophy assumed. These issues were corrected in the time between the two self-evaluation processes, where communication at all level was promoted through the use of different channels and is reflected in the increase in score of this area. Based on recommendations from the first self-evaluation of diversifying mechanisms of making the philosophy known to the whole academic community and including stakeholders in any reflection or revision of it, to promote their identification and feeling of belonging towards the institution.

The increase in score of this area in 2007 was also due to the Masters in Higher Education offered by Unibe, which has played a paramount role in the disclosure and analysis of the institutional philosophy. There are also professors that teach certain classes in which the mission and vision of the university are discussed among students, helping in the distribution of such information. They have also created a Diploma in Educational Models which promotes the philosophy of the university to the wider community.

To conclude, even if this area had a 14% increase in score, the design of the analysis of this area from ADAAC might have benefited from merging this area with the previous area of Mission, Vision and Values and use instruments that verify the perceptions of the participants with questions that go to the root of the problems.

4.1.3 Government

This area refers to the way in which authority and power are defined within the institution, and the committees and groups in place to safeguard governance. It looks into the structure of management and delegation, forms of election, transmission and succession, and institutional self-regulation, as well as into the representatives of the academic community and approval of the sources that inform decision making within the institution.

Before going into the results, it is important to highlight the fact that traditionally, a member of the family who owns Unibe headed and administered Unibe. For the first years of operation of Unibe the Rector was the founder himself and then his older son took his position. It was only in 1997 that the post was given to a non-family member, to one of the Deans that had been at the university since it was founded. In the 2002 self-evaluation the university had a traditional centralised government, and although the Rector took everyday decisions on his own, for more significant decisions the approval of the family members was still needed. This was not the case in the 2007 self-evaluation results, where the Rector was found to be an independent figure, which was also confirmed in the results from the interviews from this study (2008 and 2010). He was seen to be the central figure for the success of the 2007 self-evaluation and is known for his leadership skills.

Going back to the analysis of the area, the value assigned to this area is of 40 points of which 35.59 were obtained in 2002, which represented 89% of achievement. In 2007, 38.40 points were achieved, a 97% overall level of achievement, with a 9% increase from the first to the second self-evaluation.

The first issue explored in this area was whether the authority and delegation lines were explicitly defined in a specific document, for example by having an organisational chart. This issue was addressed in both self-evaluation processes by reviewing Unibe's documents and an organisational chart was found in both cases, which clearly stated the hierarchy in place.

In order to triangulate the information, the academic community was asked if they were aware of the authority and delegation lines of the university. In 2002 74% of the academic community was aware of such lines of authority and only 26% was not aware. However, one teacher mentioned: *the professors have never been formally told or in writing (specially if they are new), of the hierarchies, collegial bodies or*

academic authorities that exist in Unibe and how these can be of us. This view was also supported by one member of staff who said: *'In the majority of the cases the hierarchy levels of the employees are not completely known, which brings as a consequence that the levels of authority are jumped'*. Having said this, another member of the administrative staff affirmed that: *'Each employee has clear its functions and knows how to carry them out according to the rules and under the features that governs the institution'*. Two very opposite views on the same issue.

In 2007 78% of the academic community was aware of the lines of authority and 22% was not. Just a slight increase in this answer, however, no conflicting views were found in the information from the interviews, with the people that expressed not knowing saying that they were not completely clear, but knew some structure was in place.

When those results are broken down into the opinion of the different stakeholders, in both self-evaluation results the Deans, Directors and Coordinators were the ones who scored higher on knowledge about the lines of authority. On the other hand, the relationship is very different with students, where in both self-evaluations a great deal of students felt that they did not know the authority and delegation lines.

However, when the students were asked about their knowledge of the norms and rules that govern institutional life in its different aspects, the majority of students in both self-evaluation processes admitted they mostly knew the rules and only very few said they knew very little or nothing about the rules. This means that according to the results of both self-evaluation processes students were aware of the rules and norms of the institution and that the orientation-induction class had been somewhat effective. One student in particular in the 2007 self-evaluation admitted not to know the rules but expressed his overall satisfaction on governance by saying: *'Although I do not know the norms and rules I observe an environment of harmony and tranquillity which makes me believe that people are complying with the authority'*.

Apart from knowing the rules and regulations, the academic community was asked in both self-evaluations whether they actually followed them. The Deans, Directors and Coordinators in both processes were the ones who affirmed they followed the rules most of the times, none of them saying that they 'partially', 'very little' or 'never' followed the rules. Students, however, in a significant number (48%) considered themselves to follow partially the rules in 2002 and this changed in 2007 to the majority (74%) considering they mostly follow the rules.

In 2007 a student mentioned that it is one thing to know the rules and it is another how they are used, the student added: *'Many times the authorities and the members do not comply with its rules and do exactly the opposite'*. Along the same lines another student went as far as saying: *'In their majority, the authorities are respected and they know well the rules, but in regard to the application of the rules the authorities are very selective. For the same 'crimes' not all receive the same punishment, this preference causes students to lose confidence in the institution and make the authorities less accessible'*. These statements show a significant dissatisfaction with authorities and detachment from governance which was not addressed in the recommendations of the first self-evaluation, but were clearly stated in the recommendations of the second self-evaluation.

When the human resource department and the senior management were asked if they the majority of the administrative and academic authorities possessed the characteristics, experience and professional profiles required for the exercise of their functions only 5% in 2002 and 2% in 2007 of the respondents felt that only a few of the administrative and academic community did not possess such characteristics, meaning that the rest indeed possessed them. This showed a good level of confidence in the qualifications of staff working at the institution.

42% of the Deans and senior management asked whether the position of the members of the decision-making committee of the institution was always received with proper respect and taken into consideration at the appropriate moment, agreed that this was always the case and 38% confirmed that this happened almost always in 2002, whereas this significantly increased in 2007, with 82% confirming this always happened.

Revision of documents showed that it was explicitly established in the rules and regulations of the institution that the job positions of the top management should not be permanent. Also the mechanisms and procedures that assure the practicality of alternating top management positions were clearly indicated in the documentation revised both in 2002 and 2007.

Finally, when asked if there was autonomy in the exercise of academic functions of the members of the institution in 2002, 62% totally agreed that there was and 92% in 2007, which shows that teachers were reasonably free to develop their curriculum, within the description of the modules they teach, according to their preferences and abilities.

The 4 recommendations from the 2002 self-evaluation were all put on board, including the induction seminar for staff as explained in the previous section. Even though this area had an increase in score, in 2007 more recommendations than in 2002 were suggested. In 2002 there were 4 recommendations whereas in 2007 there were 6 recommendations, all different than the first. However, 4 of those new recommendations had to do with maintaining rather than changing, which means that only 2 recommendations had to do with changing the way governance was achieved.

4.1.4 Organisation

This area refers to the form in which the different parts that integrate the institution have been arranged, giving rise to a specific design and organisational chart that helps to facilitate its development, and to make more efficient and effective the fulfilment of its functions. The weight assigned by ADAAC to the area was 45 points and 36.51 points were obtained in 2002, equal to a level of achievement of 81%. In 2007 41.64 points were achieved, equivalent to a 93% level of achievement. This area showed an almost 15% increase in score.

Revision of documents confirmed that the university had a defined organisational chart and possesses documents that define the functions of the majority of the institutional actors, who act according to the attributions assigned to its position in both self-evaluation processes. However, the assessment of this area in 2002 denoted that a reformulation of the basic documents (manual, statutes) should be carried out according to a new vision, mission and aims of the University, as the existing documents were dated. Equally, the results showed that an organisational chart should be restructured according to the new instances that have been created. These points were all addressed and the increase in score in the 2007 self-evaluation confirms that a new organisational chart was created, which is favourable for the university's development, as well as a new mission, vision and objectives as explained in Area 1.

The participation of academic groups in committees for decision-making was somewhat limited in 2002. When asked, 56% of teachers indicated that they were rarely invited to the academic boards, because they were always represented by the Dean of the School. They did, however, feel that their voice was well presented at the boards and also one of them said: *'I feel the office of the vice-rector is my own*

office, I can go whenever I have a problem and speak to him and my problems are always taken into consideration', pointing that, although they did not directly participate in the decision-making process, their points of view were indirectly taken into consideration. This point was picked up in between self-evaluations and teacher participation in Boards was included through an elected representative of teaching staff attending all academic boards. The score increase in 2007 to 89% of teachers affirming they take part in the decision-making process.

When asked whether the current organisation scheme efficiently and effectively covers all the institutional necessities most of the stakeholders believed that the scheme mostly covered these needs, in both self-evaluation processes. A breakdown of answers from each stakeholder group was conducted for both self-evaluation processes and the distribution of answers was very similar in all three groups, with the majority selecting the answer that the organisation scheme 'mostly' covers the needs of stakeholders. However, there is no clear way of knowing what each of the stakeholders meant by 'institutional needs' and therefore even if answers seem to be positive, they cannot entirely be used because each stakeholder's definition of 'institutional needs' might be different.

Documentation analysis for this area showed that the hiring of staff process is defined and applied, and this information was triangulated by asking Deans, Directors and Coordinators, the personnel from human resources and the senior management whether they believed these processes are applied, in both self-evaluation processes. Answers from such groups were positive, however, the opinion of other staff was not taken into consideration for answering this criteria and therefore results provide a 'one-sided' opinion.

In 2002, the processes of induction and training to the new personnel, although in existence, should be strengthened and include the presentation of the institutional purposes. 49% of the administrative staff that answered this question believed that this process was only applied 'some time' or 'almost never', with 14% of them affirming that it is 'never' applied. However, 35% of the staff affirms that it was 'always' or 'almost always' applied, which may mean that up to 2002 some staff were trained and some were not and shows inconsistency in the way the administration of the university worked back then. In particular one Dean mentioned: *'I understand that the university is doing all the possible things to cover the institutional needs, but regarding to the teaching staff there is still a significant lack of structures and plans that integrate and improve the conditions of the professors'*.

These results gave way to the recommendation to improve the way induction and training is performed by adding among other criteria a clear trail in each employees record of when and how they received induction training. In 2007 the score increased to 96% confirming that there is a clearly defined induction and training process for all members of staff, most likely in part due to the recommendations made by the 2002 results.

After reviewing the documents, it was found that in both self-evaluations the institution had performance evaluation mechanisms for its staff clearly written and defined. However, in 2002, when staff and Deans were asked if the institution applied them regularly only 13% could say that the institution always applied such mechanisms and 25% asserted that they were never applied. Interestingly, when the results were divided between the two categories of stakeholders that answered this question, opinions between administrative employees and Deans, Directors and Coordinators were somewhat different. Results show that the three first options show similar answers, but the two last (almost never and never) show that about 16% of administrative staff compared to 3% of Deans, Directors and Coordinators affirmed that the performance evaluation mechanisms were 'almost never' in place, and 24% of administrative staff compared to 16% of Deans, Directors and Coordinators affirm that the performance evaluation mechanisms are 'never' in place. The reason for this difference may be because the staff are based in two different areas; the Deans are evaluated using mainly academic criteria and the administrative staff using only administrative criteria. Therefore it may be that performance development mechanisms were more in place for the academics and not so many for the administrative staff. These differences were identified in the 2002 report and changes to evaluation mechanisms were put in place to meet the recommendations. A system of 'administration by objectives' was put in place in 2006 and in the 2007 results more than 50% of staff agreed that evaluation mechanisms were used. However, 50% is still a low response for this significant point and questions to identify why half of the respondents still feel that evaluations are not often used when the paper trail shows otherwise. Some of the recommendations for the 2007 report included implementing reward mechanisms linked to the evaluations in order to motivate staff to perform better and to want evaluations to take place.

4.1.5 Planning

The Planning area refers to the formal and rational processes from where the decisions are taken that define the future of the institution. This area evaluates the diagnostic process, priority identification and resource management along with the design of strategies, mechanisms and interventions within the achievement timeline of actions. The weight assigned to this area is of 40 points and the qualification obtained in 2002 was 31.23, which equals to a level of achievement of 78%. In 2007 it obtained 33.98, 85% total, an increase of 9%. T-test could not be performed for this area because of the nature of the data, which was mainly document analysis and very few interviews. There were a couple of questions directed to the whole academic community, but their weight within the guide was limited.

The interviews with senior management on this area in 2002 were particularly useful for Unibe, because, it seems the questions helped the senior management realise that there was a lot of work that needed to be done in this area. This was evident by the comments they made such as the fact that they were *'not aware that so much work is needed in order to do strategic management and if we did all this things we would be in a much better position.'* Some of the questions in this area focused mainly on the budget, and it made the management realise the importance of linking the budget to the strategic plans. All in all, the budget at Unibe was a separate tool as seen in the 2002 results, which was described by one of the interviewees: *"we use the budget to make sure the money is well spent, however, when planning the budget we don't necessarily have the 'written' strategies next to us, we use the overall strategy in the back of our minds to guide us"*. Since 2001 a more active strategic planning department was put in place at Unibe, with more responsibilities and the 2007 results confirmed that 98% of respondents believed that the activities and reports of the strategic planning department are used in decision-making at Unibe, compared to only 42% in 2002, probably due to the department being new at that time and its role not yet clearly defined.

When asked if all the academic community took part in preparing the plans, 45% answered in 2002 that they partially collaborate, whereas 96% in 2007 felt they actively participate in the planning process. The strategic planning department played a significant role in this part, encouraging participation at all levels. One member of staff said: *'If indeed this mechanism of self-evaluation has been sponsored by the strategic planning department, then we can affirm that this*

department is trying to induce the active participation of the academic community and will take into consideration the opinion of all members.'

The actual role of the department changed over time, evident from the increase of score from 84% to 98% on the functioning of the planning department criteria. This change had to do with it being significantly more active and promoting participation of the whole community in the planning process.

In 2002, the university achieved a very low score in including other members of staff in the planning of the budgetary process, a 17% compared to a 63% in 2007. This significant increase was mainly due to the participation culture the new department promoted. However, it is important to note that the ADAAC guide suggests that in the creation of the annual budget administrative and academic units clearly participate, which means that a 63% is still quite a low score. This is because even if the opinion of the wider community was more heard in 2007 than in 2002, the different units still do not prepare official individual budgets for their departments. This was not placed as a recommendation in 2002 (one of the reasons it was probably not done), but it was clearly indicated in 2007 that a policy and mechanisms for formulating individual budgets should be in place.

An interesting remark was made in the 2007 report for this area. It indicated that based on the analysis, Unibe has a new culture of not only planning, but also constantly measuring the impact of its activities. This was also highlighted by some of the participants in my 2008 and 2010 interviews. However, this statement contradicts the fact that in 2007 staff at middle and lower levels of the university community stated they did not know of many actions and results of the planning department. Again the ADAAC instruments were not helpful in going deeper and getting further information.

4.1.6 Financial Administration

The analysis of this area includes elements of the policies, rules and processes designed and used to facilitate the administration, development and implementation of the institutional budget. It is related in some parts to the previous analysis of the budget in the planning area and such issues will not be analysed again in this part.

The area obtained 26.59 points of a total of 30, an 89% achievement in 2002. This increased to 97% achievement in 2007, with a score of 29. An approximate 9% increase was evident from one self-evaluation to the other. The variables for this area were addressed mainly through document analysis and therefore a t-test analysis was not conducted for this area.

Both self-evaluation processes confirmed that there is a specific department in charge of the financial administration of the institution, under the responsibility of the administrative vice-rector. This department acts accordingly to the existing norms and regulations.

In 2007 this area saw improvement in the proportional distribution of the budget per academic department. The score increased from 92% to a perfect score of 100% in 2007. However, the answers to the question of whether these distributions were actually implemented were less positive in 2007, with the score slightly decreasing from 90% to 88%. An interesting change that came out of both self-evaluations was the need to upgrade the software used. One of the recommendations in 2002 was that the system should be updated and in 2003 a new system was in place. Therefore results from the 2007 self-evaluation in this part were more positive, however, again recommendations were made to update the system. This was taken on board and in 2008 a new accounting and finance software (Grate Plains/Microsoft) was purchased.

The main weakness observed in this area from both results was that the university does not conduct an analysis of the differences between what was budgeted and what was actually spent. My interviews in 2008 confirmed that during that year an internal audit unit was put in place which had as one of its role to conduct this type of analysis. This was in response to the recommendations of the 2007 self-evaluation.

4.1.7 Rules and regulations

This area referred to the group of criteria and normative base, rules and regulations that stakeholders follow and can use in order make decisions, and to carry out their tasks.

The results from this area were positive in both self-evaluations, obtaining scores of 93% and 99% in 2002 and 2007, respectively, showing an increase of 6.45%. The review of the documents in both evaluations showed that the institution had a complete set of rules and a regulation framework that included most of the details requested by ADAAC. This area obtained the highest score in the 2002 self-evaluation.

The variable that significantly changed within this area was the knowledge stakeholders have of rules and regulations. In 2002, 70% of the respondents stated that they agreed that the rules and regulations framework was known and approved by all. In 2007 this particular score increased to 100%, with all the respondents affirming that they either 'completely agree' or 'agree' with this statement. The results of the 2002 evaluation identified the need for better maintenance and divulgation of rules and regulations and recommended courses of action that included an appropriate induction workshop for stakeholders, the creation of mechanisms to involve the main stakeholders in the process of revision and re-definition of the framework, and the creation of a team in charge of permanently revising the framework. Following the Institutional Reform (which based most of its recommendations on the results of the 2002 self-evaluation), new academic regulations, discipline regulations and student regulations were created and published in 2007. Working committees were established by School, and based on the revised mission, vision they revised all curricula of study. They created and then provided these new regulations for the Academic Board's approval. Since then, the Academic Board has the responsibility of revising and actualising the regulation framework of the institution, as needed. These regulations are a fundamental part of a compulsory module students need to follow and pass during their first year, giving them significant knowledge of the rules and regulations of the university. This module is incorporated into every programme of study, and, personally, I remember my own experience as a student in the 'Induction and Orientation' module where I had to learn the vision and mission of the institution, as well as all main points of the rules and regulation booklet available back then (1994). I remember feeling like passing this module was like a 'right of passage', were after completing it you no longer felt like a 'freshman' or a 'new-comer'. I discussed the value of this module with one of the interviewees in 2010, who was for many years in charge of teaching this module and had also been my lecturer for the module in question. We talked about how this module has changed throughout the years and if she thought the self-evaluation processes had anything to do with these changes. She explained that even if the module was in place before the first self-evaluation, the content and the way it was taught changed after the first self-evaluation. She

was an active member of the first process and was involved in gathering data for the self-study, and she claimed that *'being part of all these processes that make you reflect about the way things work in the university helps you feel closer to the institution and in turn echo this bond in your teaching and in your work'*.

A weakness spotted in the way this area was reviewed (following the guide from ADAAC) was that it focused mainly on determining if the University had a set of rules and regulations and whether they were known by the academic community. Apart from that, it would have been more useful if the questions asked would have also tried to determine whether these rules and regulations were appropriate and if they helped assure quality within the University, something which was not done.

Rules and regulations were all revised during the Reform period, in many cases with the help of external higher education consultants. According to the Academic Vice Rector in my interview in 2010, because of the recommendations for this area from 2002, Unibe felt the need to revise the rules and regulations and that *'for some reason the self-evaluation opened our eyes to what was really going on in the university and signaled the need to get help not only from outside the university, but also from external consultants of more experienced international universities'*. External consultants from the Tecnológico de Monterrey, one of the most respectful universities in Latin America were consulted in the reform process.

4.1.8 Admissions

The area of Admissions evaluates the admission criteria that gives access to the institution for the new candidates that wish to enrol in the university.

The value assigned to this area by the ADAAC guide is of 30 points, of which 24.75 was achieved in 2002 and a perfect score of 30 in 2007. That is a significant almost 20% increase from 83% to 100%. This was one of the four areas that achieved a perfect score in 2007. Questions in this area were asked only to the limited personnel working in this department, 2 members of staff, and were verified by document review; therefore no t-test analysis was conducted.

This area was evaluated using 4 main criteria: that specific admission requirements are in place, that the members of the university are aware of these requirements and are properly trained to apply them and that indeed all the procedures are

respected and applied. In the first three criteria, both self-evaluations offered high scores, however, it seems that in 2002 the admissions requirements were not always applied in accordance to regulations. This part obtained only a 50% score in 2002 compared to a perfect score of 100% in 2007, quite a significant increase.

The reduced score in 2002 was due to half of the answers suggesting that the admissions process did not always apply rigorously the established criteria that take into consideration the institutional philosophy, nor were the results of the diagnostic tests considered in many cases for granting admission. As mentioned before, in 2007 these questions were answered positively showing a significant improvement in this part, most likely because recommendations from the first self-evaluation were followed. However, and as a critique to the instruments used, it would have been useful to know why the results from the diagnostic tests were not always considered in 2002 and what criteria were used instead to accept or reject students. These types of questions were not asked due to the constraints of following the instruments designed by ADAAC.

Another serious fault in the design of the data gathering techniques for this Area as designed by ADAAC was that it did not triangulate information and therefore answers to questions between stakeholders were not compared or verified. This area should have also directed questions at existing students and possible candidates who were either not accepted or chose to enrol in another university in order to better understand the reasons for the outcomes in both self-evaluations.

4.1.9 Registrars

This area was defined by ADAAC to include the description of a complete and up to date system of academic registrations stored through means that guaranteed the preservation and reliability of the information recorded, as well as to confirm the agility in its management. It obtained a score of 100% in the self-evaluation of 2007, and had an approximate 10% increase in score from 2002. However, after a t-test performed for the purpose of this PhD, these results were found not to be comparable as no statistical significance could be determined; all other observed differences on the other areas apart from this one came out to be statistically significant.

In general, the results from the Registrar's department were very positive during both self-evaluation processes. In the 2002 self-study, however, it was interesting to see most (if not all) the members of the registrar's department answered very positively to most of the questions asked, but in many other questions they did not answer them at all. This may suggest some dysfunction within the Department back then, with staff being 'afraid' to answer negatively to some questions. For example, none of the members of staff said that procedures were not in place, (in comparison to 30% of students saying there were not such processes in place) and a large number of registrar staff (55%) choose not to answer the question in the first place. Another question regarding following procedures with rigour was left blank by more than 50% of the employees.

Overall, results for this Area in 2002 were very positive when presented in an overview format, but when they were broken down into stakeholder opinions, questions arose on the reasons so many employees choose not to answer questions and also on why those that did answer always presented the most positive answer. Another issue that came up from the breakdown into stakeholder results was that members of staff, teachers and Directors had a very different opinion from students.

This was not the case with the results from the 2007, where all members of staff of the department answered most of questions and most of the stakeholders were in accordance in their responses. In the 2007 self-evaluation, students were found to be especially satisfied, one in particular expressed: *'To our judgment, this unit is the most efficient of the institution, very modern, with effective controls and fast solution of the problems that are presented'*.

One of the possible reasons this area achieved a perfect score in 2007, was that all recommendations made in the 2002 self-evaluation were developed and implemented. Furthermore, proof of the use given to self-evaluation results is that the recommendations from the 2007 have also been met as per comments made in my 2008 interviews. Both physical and structural resources have been expanded with new larger offices, and new positions to support the department's activity were created. There is constant training in customer service and irregularities detection as was evident in the Staff Development Calendar. Most of the services are now online, which makes the workload more manageable. Finally, all the procedures and services are measured against response times and monthly reports are prepared by the Planning department in relation to student/teacher's use of the system and their satisfaction. This report is discussed with all the members of the department and

used as a decision-making tool. None of these mechanisms were in place before the 2002 self-evaluation and came about from the recommendations of that self-evaluation. The Academic Vice Rector confirmed in my 2010 interviews as follows: *'The registrar's department has always been one of the strongest departments of Unibe, always seeking ways of improving things. However, the results from the first self-evaluation were taken on board more seriously by the new Administrative Vice Rector, who played an active role in the first self-evaluation (before having this position when she was Head of the Business School), and felt strongly about implementing changes in her department'*.

4.1.10 Curricular content and Structure

In the area of structure and curriculum content the educational structure was evaluated, especially referring to the plans of study, establishing content, order of delivery, pre-requisites, levels and methodological strategies. This area was one of four to obtain a score of 100% in the self-evaluation of 2007, and had a 6% increase in score from 2002.

Even if this area had just a 6% increase, the changes that took place were paramount to the improvement of quality and quality perception, as mentioned by every single member interviewed during 2010. The new Educational Model brought forward by the Reform promotes innovation and state-of-the-art curriculum. Its pedagogical principles rely on significant and self-promoted learning, where leadership, entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation, values and community service are promoted by using teaching and learning techniques such as Problem Based Learning, Collaborative Learning, Case Study Method and Project Oriented Learning.

In the 2002 self-evaluation, several recommendations were made which included the design of a method to create an effective curriculum. This was achieved through the new Educational Model, created by and adapted to Unibe's reality and the needs of the Dominican society. After the new Educational Model was designed, a continuous methodology for curriculum revision and improvement was created and embedded in the continuous quality assurance procedures of the University. Based on this methodology, all the plans of study were re-designed, as explained in the interview in 2010 with the Academic Vice Rector.

In the 2002 self-study, stakeholders had different opinions about who should participate in the design of the curriculum. One Dean gave his opinion about the

involvement of alumni in making sure the content was aligned with what the market as asking for: *'In order to evaluate a curriculum or an educational program, the best way is pinpointing the strong points and weak points of the programme observed from the perspective of the alumni. The alumni can emit a real judgment; since not only did they follow the program but also they have implemented the knowledge gained in their daily jobs and knows what works or not, what needs updating and what is ok'*. Another Dean firmly believed that the voice of both the alumni and the employers was important, he said: *'The alumni and employers are of vital importance in this area'*. But yet another Dean affirmed the opposite, that this was only a job for teachers, as follows: *'The evaluation of the programmes is a task of the professor, since is he/she who handles the information pertinent of each subject. In order to be efficient in this task, the teacher should always be up to date in the area'*. Finally, one Director stated: *'No mechanism exist that permits the development of the programs by the professors of a specific area, this just occurs in some cases and there are no incentives to introduce changes'*. These were very mixed opinions on the same issue and indicated that due to the lack of a clear mission, vision, and philosophy of the institution at that time, people had mixed personal opinions, as was evident from the results of Area 1 'Mission and Vision' in the 2002 self-evaluation. The negative results from this area in 2002 triggered the first aim of the Institutional Reform, which was, as mentioned earlier, to re-define the mission, vision and values of the institution. One of the interviewees commented that *'it was horrible to see in the results of the first self-evaluation that the mission of Unibe was not completely known and I think that in the minds of many of the senior managers that particular result acted as a signal that flashed the words: wake-up, something is wrong!'* She also added that it took the university several years to act on this, a consequence of that was the educational reform.

This lack of clear mission and vision also started to be addressed by the Master's in Higher Education delivered by the University, which was targeted at Unibe's teaching staff. One Director mentioned in the 2002 self-study: *'I believe that the masters in higher education that at present is being offered in our university has been a great and important step to help improve the programmes with better criteria and efficiency'*. The Master's was only the beginning of Unibe's focus on academic staff development, and since then a whole Faculty has been created called Department of Educational Innovation, which explores the needs of teaching staff training and development and the use of new teaching and learning methods. The Department is divided into three areas: Academic Staff development, E-learning and Special Projects Unit. This Department has been key in improving the quality of the teaching staff, which in turn reflects on the quality of the university as a whole. The

Dean of this faculty mentioned in her interview in 2010: *'I remember that the first self-evaluation was what mobilised us all, it came at the right time and we were ready for significant changes to take place'*. Back in 2002, she was director of the School of Education and participated in the self-study as a member of the committee who developed the process. She felt strongly that the changes made were indirectly a result of the first self-evaluation, but she also affirmed that the university *'is still in diapers'* when it comes to having a true evaluation culture.

It is important to also mention that all recommendations for this area made in 2002 were met, which included the definition of parameters and procedures to be able to design an optimum curriculum. This was satisfied through the Educational Reform, as a consequence of the first self-evaluation in 2002.

The recommendations of the 2007 self-evaluation were even more demanding, which may indicate that even if the area obtained a perfect score in the last self-evaluation, the university still felt that there is more to be done. In the interview with the Dean of Innovation and Development in 2010, she explained that *'self-evaluations are very useful, but only if its processes are then embedded in the day-to-day'*. She was afraid that some people might see self-evaluation as a static process that takes place in a particular period and not see it as tool for constant improvement and trigger of change. She argued that if we stay focused just on the results then the impact of the self-study is just partial. This is in line with the difficulties of self-evaluations explained in the literature review that sometimes self-evaluations may be done just to satisfy external pressures and provide certain desired results. For example, of her area obtained a perfect score and if she was guided only by results this would mean that she did not need to improve anything – which is never the case.

4.1.11 Curricular Administration

This area deals with the procedures established to direct and coordinate the process of academic learning and development of the members of the institution, including level of participation in the curricula development and whether change mechanisms are in place.

The value assigned to this area by ADAAC was 30 points, of which it obtained in 2002 a score of 25.65, 85% of the total value. In 2007 this area scored 29.47, an almost perfect score of 98%, showing a 15% increase.

In the interviews to senior management conducted by the self-evaluation teams in both processes, they made it clear that the institution had established procedures related to the allocation of the teaching, planning, co-ordination, assessment and supervision of the educational activity and that it applies them with regularity. However, and another limitation of the instruments designed by ADAAC, it would have been good to triangulate this information by asking other stakeholders' views, not just the senior management. For example, where the instruments asked about a unit and programme in charge of assessment and re-design of the curriculum, interviews to the member of this unit would have been useful to determine their exact role and if they felt that they were doing their job properly. Also, the views of the future employers would have enriched the discussion and have made the self-evaluation more effective. The ADAAC guide did not include the views of different stakeholders on this point.

In 2002, 62% of the teachers, Deans, Directors, Coordinators and senior management, affirmed that teachers always or almost always participate in the modification of the curriculum. In particular, when asked who exactly participates in the revision of academic plans, 50% of the teachers, Deans, Directors, Coordinators and senior management agreed that it was actually only the teachers and Deans, Directors and Coordinators that participate in the review of plans. Even though this percentage might seem acceptable, one of the main recommendations of this first self-evaluation was to increase participation. In 2007 this part scored 100% mainly due to the inclusion of a new system in 2006 and a particular department for curriculum development in 2007. These changes show that the results from the first study triggered significant changes in the university.

When comparing comments from teachers from both self-evaluations, a change in perspective is clearly evident. In 2007, one of the teachers made the following comment regarding student participation: *'The students participate almost always in an indirect way, therefore the professors in the classrooms comment and analyze the contents of the programs and its strengths and weaknesses with them and take account of their comments.'* Another teacher said: *'Generally, us the professors take into account the issues students raise in class and then carry out the modifications in groups of teachers, and if applicable'*. Therefore, even though students were not officially involved in the revision, their views were taken into

consideration and brought to the Revision board by the teachers. This compared to comments from some teachers in 2002 saying that *'I do not know of the existence of procedures formally established at an institutional level'* or *'I do not know who participates in the review of the plans of study'*, making it obvious that only some of the teachers participated in such revisions and that the procedures might not have been formally in place back then.

Even if this area saw a significant increase and achieved an almost perfect score in 2007, it is important to highlight that the instruments defined by ADAAC do not include the opinion of students and other stakeholders of the university, making such results somewhat biased to the opinion of a particular stakeholder group.

4.1.12 Selection of Teachers

This area includes the evaluation of certain criteria and procedures that help select who will be able to become a lecturer in the institution. It covers issues from selection, induction and supervision of teachers to rewards for quality in teaching.

The total weight assigned by ADAAC for this area is of 30 points. The first assessment presented a qualification of 21.71, which shows a level of achievement of 72% in 2002. In 2007, this area scored 86% with an approximate 19% increase in score.

The review of documents during both periods showed that there were documents that generally explained the criteria and procedures for the selection and hiring of the teachers. However, in 2002 the documents were not as detailed as in 2007, but gave the basic information for teacher selection. In 2007 these documents contained detailed information with the recruitment, selection, hiring and categorisation of teaching staff, which state as a minimum standard for selection that lecturers have a Master's degree in their area of teaching.

The questionnaire for this area was only applied to the Deans, Directors and Coordinators, as well as to the Human Resource Department. Again at this point it should be noted that ADAAC should have included the opinions of lecturers in order to be able to triangulate the information obtained. In 2002 when the participants were asked if the criteria for hiring teachers was clearly documented, 46% said yes and 49% said no. This results show that although the documentation existed, almost half of the staff was not aware of it. These answers were very different in

2007, where 100% of the staff who participated affirmed that the criteria was clearly documented. One of the recommendations of the first study was to establish mechanisms to divulge and make known these criteria and that the process should be adopted in a systematic way. This led to the creation of a sub-department within the human resource department of the university which was assigned the responsibility to select the teaching staff according to the regulations, as well as to make known the regulations and include the Deans, Directors and Coordinators in the selection process. In 2007, 92% of the Deans, Directors and Coordinators felt their opinion was taken into consideration when making the final selection. One of the Deans highlighted the following: *'In general lines, I am able to say that the selection of teachers obeys to criteria and clear procedures, although there are some modules that due to their content and because of special situations make the Directors make selections that do not necessarily respond to the demands of the module.'* It is not clear what the Dean meant by 'special situations' and it would have been helpful to clarify what the regulations say about exceptions.

The senior management were asked if the departments or academic units participated in the process of selection and hiring of teachers and they affirmed in 2007 that it was vital for Directors and Deans to participate in this process because, as one of them explained: *'the Deans are the ones that know the specific area that is in need of a teacher, and know who will be the best candidate to fulfil it'*.

The ADAAC guide suggests that lecturer should be selected based on their qualifications, working experience and level of research. In 2002, research criteria scored only 25% and in 2007 it increased to 50%, still quite low. The area of research had always been a weak point for Unibe, as their main focus has always been teaching. In doing a self-evaluation it is important Unibe to revise their main goals and see if research has been put higher up in the agenda. ADAAC requires a good level of research in order to grant accreditation and therefore if Unibe is still seeks this governmental accreditation it should have stricter requirements on levels of research of teaching staff. More information regarding research at Unibe in section 4.1.17.

4.1.13 Organisation of the Teaching Staff

The area of Organisation of Teaching Staff makes reference to the mechanisms of integration of the lecturers into the environment at Unibe as well as their classification and categorisation within the institution.

The total weight for this area is 35 points, and in 2002 obtained a qualification of 22.97, which represents a level of achievement of 66%. In 2007 this area had a significant increase of almost 33%, with a level of achievement of 87% (30.54 points).

From the results of this Area it was evident that in 2002 the institution did not have a clear and fair process of induction for the successful incorporation of the new teachers into the institution. 51% of the stakeholders that answered this question in 2002 believed that there was no induction process available for lecturers. Most of the respondents also agreed that the process of induction did not take place in all cases. One lecturer went as far as to joke about it and said: *'induction? What is that? What does that mean? I have been here 10 years and never heard that word before!'* Results for 2007 in this part were very different, with a perfect score of 100% and staff confirming that there is a process of induction and it is successful in incorporating new teaching staff into the philosophy of Unibe.

The majority of the staff in 2002 (66%) that were asked whether academic support such as co-ordination, orientation and effective supervision of the work of the lecturers was in place, were positive in their responses. However, 30% confirmed that this type of support was not available, which is a significant number who believed that academics did not receive support and again relates to a point previously discussed about some rules and activities only being in place for 'some' of the staff. It would have been useful to ask in this area for more details from responses in both cases in order to be able to make a more valid analysis. This difference was not evident in 2007, where 85% had positive responses and only 15% suggested the support was limited in some minor cases. Again, the ADAAC instrument did not help in being able to find out the reasons behind some of the answers given.

When asked if training was available, 69% in 2002 and 91% in 2007 believed that training was available for academic staff, which meant a large percentage of the staff had been trained or knew that training was available. However, results for

2002 show that the training was not used for appraisal, with the majority of the staff confirming that training was 'never' used for teacher appraisal. This changed for 2007, since a modern appraisal system was put in place and 98% of the staff in 2007 confirmed this was being used.

In the 2008 and 2010 interviews participants expressed their satisfaction with how the university takes care of teaching staff. One interviewee in 2008 stated *'the most important change was in the academic part. There has been significant investment in training teaching staff and they have been the star in this change processes'*.

Results for both processes also showed that teachers had at their disposal infrastructure, equipment and accessories for an adequate process of teaching, with the majority of the answers grouped in the always and almost always category. One lecturer confirmed in 2007: *'Unibe is well equipped with modern teaching and learning resources available to anyone who wishes to use them'*. However, in 2002 one teacher mentioned: *'I feel that all teaching and learning resources that Unibe has are fair, but that they should be improved, especially in my area of work (languages)'*. This may be the case of preference for some schools or programme where Unibe might have invested more money and links to the issues in budget distribution evident in 2002 and discussed in section 4.1.6. Questions in self-evaluations need to dig further down and ask why stakeholders feel the way they do, giving concrete examples to support their views, a weakness of the ADAAC self-evaluation guidelines.

4.1.14 Teacher Responsibility

The area of Teacher Responsibility as defined by ADAAC evaluates the obligations of the teaching staff in the selection, organisation and direction of the academic activities. It also explores the degree of liberty they have the delivery of academic activities and regulations in place. This area also focuses on pinpointing their contribution to the development of knowledge, to the cultural enrichment of the curriculum and the positive transmission of ideas and values.

The total weight ADAAC assigns for this area is 10 points. The assessment in 2002 offered a score of 7.99, which signifies a level of achievement of 80%. In 2007 this area achieved the exact same score of 80% with a score of 7.98. It was the only area where no increase in score was evident.

It seems strange that this area did not show any increase and achieved the same score when other areas that relate to teaching staff had increase in score. It was divided into 3 main categories, participation of lecturers in decision-making, participation in the governance committees and participation in the design of academic activities. In the first category, both self-evaluations showed high scores, with teachers affirming that they participate in different ways in decision-making. Scores were higher in 2002 than in 2007 for this particular question. However, this might be because the question was designed in a somewhat vague way leading to different interpretations of which decisions they were actually involved in. The score of participation in governance committees was the same for both self-evaluation processes and in the third criteria, participation in the design of academic activities, the scores were higher in 2007 than 2002.

The way the ADAAC instruments were design for this particular area did not help in gathering significant information. This area has just 3 questions included in the surveys for teachers, which were written in a general manner and did not go into detail. No interviews were assigned for data collection in this area. The possible reason for not including further questions or a set of interviews may be due to the low total weight of the area, just 10 points, showing a lower level of importance to this area compared to other areas from ADAAC.

4.1.15 Service of Support to the Academic Activity

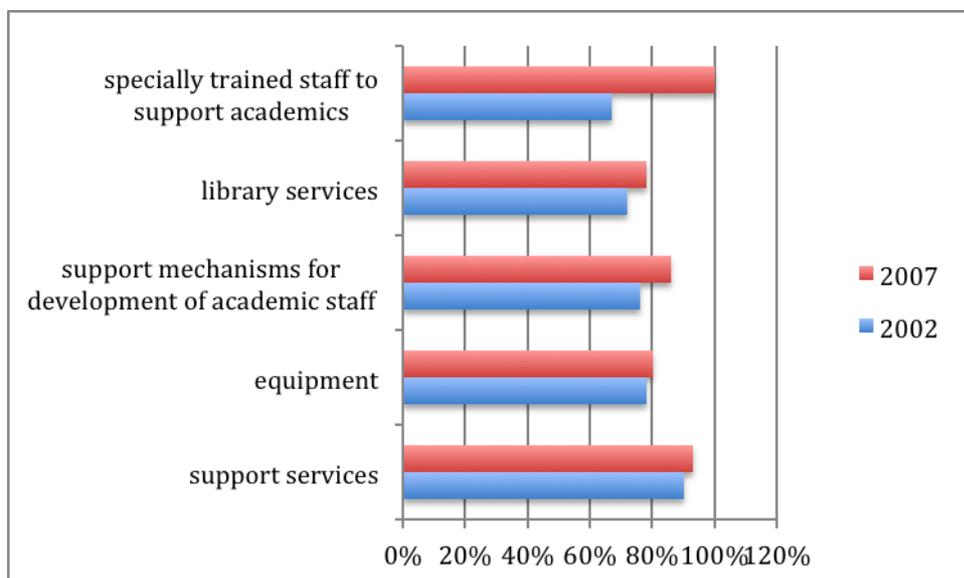
This area refers to the group of resources, services and facilities (library, teaching equipment, laboratory, shops, centres of practices, audiovisual equipment of support, computer services and Internet, services of maintenance, etc) that are available to the teaching staff, facilitating permanent support to the academic activities.

ADAAC assigned a total weight for this area of 35 points. In 2002 this area scored 27.09, a level of achievement of 77% and in 2007 it scored 29.28, equivalent to 84%. This signifies a approximate 9% increase in score.

The area was divided into 5 criteria for measurement: support services, equipment, support mechanisms for development of academic staff, library services and

specially trained staff to support academics. Results for both self-evaluations were as follows:

Figure 9: Support for academic staff



In the 2002 self-evaluation one of the recommendations suggested Unibe should create a center of academic resource production with specialised staff that would support teaching staff in their academic activity. This recommendation was taken on board by assigning one member of staff within the department of teaching innovation in charge of supporting and an increase in score for this criteria was evident in 2007.

The main weakness observed in 2007 was the issue of limited classroom due to the significant increase in enrolments. The report recommended the creation of new teaching spaces and in the 2008 and 2010 interviews participants highlighted that the university had bought a new building to satisfy the need for more space due to the growth of the institution.

4.1.16 Teacher Evaluation

This area referred to the regulations of the evaluation of the teaching staff and to the incentives mechanisms given based on the performance of the teaching staff. It had a 37% increase in results, the third highest increase of all 27 areas. The main reason this increase was so great appears to be that the whole evaluation process for teaching staff was re-designed, now taking information from different actors,

such as the Director and/or Dean of the School, students and the teacher him/herself in order to provide a fuller view, from different perspectives.

A review of the documents for this study showed that in 2002 the Human Resource Department had a file for each teachers; however, in some cases they were not updated. The main mechanism for evaluating teachers was the student feedback questionnaires, which were given to students at the end of each semester in order to grade teacher's performance. These were distributed to students during their last week of classes, a stressful period for students, and they were given limited time (usually no more than 15 minutes) to complete them. Once completed, Student Feedback Questionnaires were given to Deans, Directors and Coordinators after they were collected and a copy was also kept in the teacher's file. It was up to the Dean, Director or Coordinator to choose how to use the results and whether they would communicate those to the staff in question and most teachers never saw the results. In 2002, one teacher mentioned: *'I believe that the evaluation that takes place here at Unibe is subjective and may be biased, because students can write what they want or what works for their advantage. I don't believe it gives a true indication of the real result'*. In 2007 stakeholders expressed that students' voice was heard at Unibe, which is positive but also argued that students felt they had the right to complain about their teachers (which could have been done in an untruthful way in the past depending on the student's agenda). Therefore the feeling that teacher evaluation was one-sided and possibly biased was accurate, and probably the source for de-motivation in teaching staff back then. Currently the process is more sophisticated and teaching staff perception has significantly changed according to the results of the 2007 self-study.

Based on some of the general recommendations from 2002, the student feedback questionnaire was re-designed to address key issues and with specific criteria and results are now triangulated and processed by the Planning Department. It is also now completed online by all students and has 100% turnout, as they are not allowed by the system to enrol for their next semester if they have not completed the questionnaire. The evaluation now includes a self-evaluation from the teacher, a significant change to the process and to the overall culture back then. Also, these include a review from the Director/Dean of the department they belong to. The results of the whole evaluation process can be seen online in the teacher's profile page, and are used for appraisal and staff development needs. As mentioned before, the bases for these innovations were set in the recommendations of the 2002 self-evaluation, where issues of effective use and design of evaluations were put forward and many were implemented by 2007.

No peer-to-peer observation was practiced at the time the 2007 self-evaluation took place and this is a good practice the University may adopt to improve quality of teaching. This was not highlighted as a recommendation in either of the self-evaluation reports.

Another significant change to the area of Teacher Evaluation was the new Educational Model mentioned before. Questionnaires to evaluate the quality of teaching staff were re-formulated to assess how the new Educational Model was being used and implemented. The new Model includes the use of new technologies for teaching and learning as well as innovative teaching techniques. Up to November 2010, 67% of the teaching staff had been trained to use this Model and were actively adopting it in their teaching methods. The Dean of Innovation and development felt proud of this high percentage, but clearly stated in her 2010 interview that *'I can offer thousands of training courses to my lecturers, but if they, along with heads of department don't see the bigger picture and start measuring the impact of these courses and the practical results, it will take us a long time to get to a true evaluation culture'*. She went on to state: *'I remember that the first self-evaluation mobilised us all and made us see our weaknesses or areas of opportunities and got us moving, but there is still much to be done, especially in the minds of the different stakeholders'*.

One of the interviewees in 2010, commenting on her views on teacher evaluation, did not seem completely satisfied on how the process was taking place, at least in her particular case. She said *'as a lecturer I am evaluated at the end of each semester, but I hardly get any feedback on the results of those evaluations. The process is yet to be systematic and efficient.'* She also commented that even if she believes that self-evaluations are useful and instruments of change, in the case of Unibe the evaluation and quality culture that may emerge from those processes are only evident at senior management level.

Among the recommendations for this area in 2007 were to design reward mechanisms or future incentives for academic staff.

4.1.17 Administration, Development, Promotion of Research

In this area, the existence and development of concrete research and the criteria and procedures established by the university to ensure research takes place were measured. This area had the worst score in 2002, had an increase in score of 9% in 2007, but still continued to have the worst score of all areas. Overall, 16 recommendations were made in 2002, many of them not carried through, as evident from the total score in 2007. A t-test for this area was not performed because following the guidelines from ADAAC the data gathered for this area was mainly of qualitative nature. That is, documents were reviewed and limited interviews were conducted during both self-studies, however, surveys were not conducted for this area and therefore limited variations were observed.

The issue of research has been a significant problem not just for Unibe, but also for all universities in the Dominican Republic. The number of academic staff holding PhDs in the country is extremely low, with universities having an average of 6% of their teaching staff with Phd's. It is the goal of the Ministry of Education for 2018 that this percentage is increased by 4% for 2012 and by another 10% for 2018. NO t-test analysis was conducted for this area as the data was mainly gathered through document analysis and limited interviews by members of staff identified in the ADDAC guidelines.

According to the Statistical Report 1989-2005 (latest available, (ONE (2007)) from the Dominican Ministry of Education, Unibe was among the 5 universities who had research programmes of some kind, out of 44 institutions nation-wide. The 2006-16 Strategic Plan of the university has as one of its main objectives to promote research in order to provide answers to the necessities of the Dominican community and already 40% of the teaching staff have been trained to properly conduct research.

From the results of one of the interviews conducted in November 2010, the interviewee noted: *'It would seem like we are in the same place regarding research when you compare the scores of the two self-evaluations; still at the bottom of the line, however, significant developments have taken place during the past six months which will change the way we deal with research here at Unibe forever'*. She was referring to the fact that Unibe now has a new platform, which started to work in February 2011, which holds a new structure and official functions to deal exclusively with research. Since 2009, Unibe assigned a significant budget to research, but because the structure was not in place it was not effectively used. The

institution understood that in order for the budget to be well allocated and used, it had to re-design its research policies, internal competitions, and academic staff development. Research initiatives with both internal and external funds have been taking place, and up to November 2010 23 initiatives were running, compared to only 5 back in 2002. The Academic Vice Rector argued *'these changes are late, but they are still a consequence of the recommendations of both self-evaluations.'*

The fact that the Area scored so low in both self-evaluations was not something the senior management was proud of. The Rector mentioned in the interview in 2010: *'soon you will see that we will become pioneers once again, and the leaders in the research arena in the Dominican Republic'*. He said this with so much conviction and certainty that at that particular moment he made me believe it was a fact and not his view or prediction of the future. It was clear that the low scores played a significant role in triggering the changes, even if these took a while after they were identified to start taking place.

4.1.18 Artistic Creation, Development, Promotion, Administration

This area referred to the politics and procedures necessary to develop and promote artistic creation within the institution. This area had the highest increase in score of all areas, 46% higher than in 2002. This increase was significantly positive, not just because it is almost double the score it had in 2002, but also because this was one of the three areas with the worse score in 2002, which means that the university invested significantly in improving it, most likely due to the poor score it obtained.

The significant change came from the creation of permanent 'Cultural Groups', which include music, dance, theatre, paint, plastic arts, etc. This can be verified by looking at the documents that define the purpose and mission of the groups, along with their activities. There are also records of meetings and lists of activities of each group which show evidence that students are constantly involved and also that the Groups are supported by the new department of Student Affairs. Lecturers and administrative staff are also involved and these activities have given a cultural life to the institution.

Furthermore, a new elective module was included after the Institutional Reform called "Artistic Creation" and to the surprise of senior management, it was the most popular elective module in all disciplines. One of the senior managers commented

in the 2010 interviews: *'it was amazing to see how the elective module artistic creation had such a positive acceptance. The idea came from one of the recommendations of the 2002 self-study where it stated that a cultural group in charge of developing talks and short courses with cultural content should be established on a regular basis. I truly enjoy when such simple things make such a big difference!'*

Most of the recommendations from the 2002 self-study were followed, including the creation of a cultural unit and the involvement of stakeholders in cultural activities. However, in the 2007 self-evaluation, it was recommended that there should be a specific department officially in charge of the coordination and promotion of these activities, as this is done informally as mentioned above by the Student Affairs Department. Another recommendation made in 2007 was that a transparent budget should be assigned for these activities. These are still being considered.

4.1.19 Scientific and Cultural Divulcation

The Scientific and Cultural Divulcation area dealt with the general strategy that guided and defined the use of the mechanisms for diffusion of the results of academic research.

This was a disappointing Area, as results were 28% lower in 2007 than in 2002. It is the area with the highest decrease, even compared to the two other areas that showed decreases. Those other two areas had a decrease of 3-5% only, compared to the 28% decrease that this area presented. However, for the same reasons as for the area Administration and Promotion of Research, a t-test for this area was not performed. Again, the data gathered for this area was mainly of qualitative nature, only a small number of surveys were conducted and therefore limited variations were observed.

After discussions with different interviewees in November 2010, they all felt that they could not explain why there was such a large and negative difference between the two scores, as they did not feel things had changed significantly from 2002 in that area, and certainly (in their opinion) things had not gotten worse. One of the interviewees explained: *'you should check the scores in areas which back in 2002 the university was not too sure what they were about. I think this difference may be*

in part due to the fact that stakeholders who answered these questions were not clear on what “scientific and cultural divulgation” the study was referring to’.

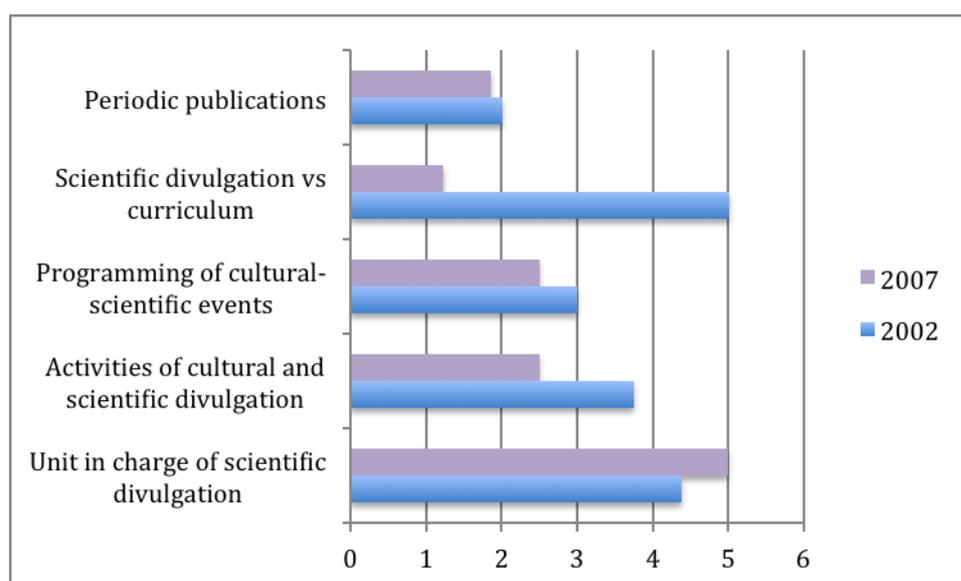
This statement suggested something was not right and therefore I went back to the individual scores of each section of this area to try with the results of this study to understand where the difference was. The variables and results from the two studies were the following (maximum score for each variable was 5):

Table 23: Comparison of variables scientific divulgation

Variables	2002	2007
Unit in charge of scientific divulgation	4.37	5
Activities of cultural and scientific divulgation	3.75	2.5
Programming of cultural-scientific events	3	2.5
Scientific divulgation vs curriculum	5	1.23
Periodic publications	2	1.86

Apart from the increase in the score of the first variable, the rest had a decrease, the most significant being in the link between scientific divulgation and curriculum, as can be seen in the chart below. However, it is important to remember that a t-test was not conducted for this area and there was no evidence that the changes in results are of statistical significance.

Figure 10: Comparison of Scientific Divulgation



In 2002 the scientific divulgation vs curriculum criteria received a perfect score, based on the fact that all schools regularly prepared seminars, workshops and conferences relating to their curriculum and in some cases made them open to the public. Looking at the activities planned in 2002 by school and then comparing them to what actually was divulged to the public, the reality was that the particular score should have been much lower in 2002. This was further discussed with one of the interviewees in 2010, who was the director of a School back then as well as a member of the committee of the self-evaluation, and she explained: *'it was the first time doing such an official self-evaluation and you should leave some room for mistakes. Being that research and scientific activities were not high in the university's agenda back then, most of us did not clearly understand what those questions were referring to and believed that because the seminars and activities were planned, this was enough'*.

There have been some changes in this area where one could argue that the score should have been better than in 2002, instead than worse. For example, in 2002 the base to scientific divulgation was mainly in the activities the different Schools arranged. In 2007, there was a specific department and committee in charge of promoting these activities (The Research Department as well as the Research and Publications Committee) who worked together with the Communications Department to promote these activities. In 2002 mainly lecturers and students participated in the activities whereas in 2007 regular inter-institutional activities were developed, also in which administrative staff also participated, including cultural dance and theatre groups.

It seems that the results of the comparison in this area should have been different, and certainly not have such a negative decrease. This does not mean, however, that the results should have had a high score. One of the interviewees highlighted: *'how can you expect the score of this area to be high when we are still "wearing diapers" in issues relating to research?'*. Only after the Research Department starts working to its optimum capacity will this area be stronger, but the newer activities in place will provide a starting point for improvement.

4.1.20 Permanent Education Relevance and Administration

This area referred to the existence of concrete initiatives of continuous and permanent education based on clearly stated institutional objectives that respond to previously identified needs. This was the area with the second highest increase in

score of 45%. The main reason for this high increase may be that in 2002 the initiative for permanent education was in the hands of the Schools or the Directors of the Schools. Now, as a result of one of the recommendations of the first self-evaluation, the university has a Department of Graduate and Continuous Education Programmes that is in charge of planning, coordinating, promoting and executing such programmes both internally for staff and externally for the public and society. Frequent surveys are conducted to determine such needs and the department has great credibility and good reputation for its programmes. All the recommendations presented in 2002 were met and the only weakness this area now presents is the limited physical area it has to offer the different programmes.

An interesting recommendation in the 2007 self-evaluation was to follow-up on the graduates of such programmes to determine the use they have given to the knowledge received during the courses. This idea was discussed with two of the interviewees in 2010, and they both explained that one of the activities of the Strategic Planning department is to process information that comes from follow-up surveys and they were happy to see that most departments now conduct these type of surveys for just about anything they do.

4.1.21 Extension

This area focused on the mechanisms available to help society and offer the services the university provides to satisfy the needs of society. No significant increase was evident in this area, with changes in score being only 4% higher. Similar to two other areas previously discussed, a t-test for this area was not performed. This was due to the fact that the majority of the data was mainly of qualitative nature. However, even if it was not possible to determine whether the observed changes in the results for the two self-evaluations were statistically significant, the results heavily relied on data that comes from documents and can be easily checked for validity and reliability. This means that there was a certain level of confidence on the overall results for this area.

This area was the third area with lowest score in 2007, however, at the moment the self-evaluation was completed, and as a result of the recommendation of both studies, the university put in place a unit in charge of planning, coordinating, promoting social services. In the past, each School conducted these activities individually and most were not communicated to the stakeholders. In 2006, Unibe

included extension and social services as a clear objective in its 2006-2016 Strategic Plan and up to November 2011 it was collaborating with over 45 community centres, federations and NGOs and each semester over 20 activities take place to raise funds for these places. Community service is actively done by 5 of the 15 Schools, with the Health Faculty being the most active.

To conclude, one of the recommendations made in 2002 was also made in 2007 and had to do with the money devoted to this area. There was no clear budget in 2002 or in 2007 and it was recommended that a fixed amount be in place every year for such activities. This is now evident in the annual budget of the university showing evidence that recommendations are taken on board by the university.

4.1.22 Student Support

This area evaluates the actions or activities directed especially to support the students. The weight assigned for this area by ADAAC is 30 points, of which Unibe obtained 22.78 points in 2002 (76%) and 27.24 (91%) in 2007, with a high increase of score of almost 20%.

Out of the 27 areas defined in the self-evaluation guide from ADAAC, this is the only one that deals partially with student satisfaction, and therefore results should be extremely important to Unibe.

Most of the students agreed in both self-evaluations that support activities and facilities are available, 79% in 2002 and 95% in 2007. The ADAAC guide asked students if the activities/infrastructure are available, but fails to clearly ask if the students are satisfied with them, which is of significant importance to the university. This is a weakness of the instruments, because the fact that infrastructure exists can be easily confirmed by other means than by asking the students. It would have been more useful to find out if they were satisfied with the condition of the facilities rather than from confirming their existence.

Most of the results from this area were positive in both self-evaluation processes; however, the questions asked did not go deep enough to find out what students really wanted and the type of support they required. Furthermore, this Area did not ask about levels of satisfaction of students, and in general, the ADAAC self-

evaluation guidelines do not give enough opportunities for people to express their views and the reasons why they may feel in a certain way or justify their answers.

Even if students confirmed that most of the activities of student support were in place in 2002, when the Institutional Reform took place in the period between both processes, student services and interest for students were among the four areas identified as not providing satisfaction for students. Students felt that the University did not show enough interest for the students because the following expectations were not being met:

1. Teachers were not fair and were not objective towards students
2. The University did not demonstrate interest for students as individuals
3. The staff in the Student Affairs Dept was not interested in the individual life of students
4. The academic advisors did not care for the students as individuals

Students also felt that excellence in student services was poor due to the following reasons:

1. The channels students could use to express dissatisfaction were not easily accessible
2. The staff in the Orientation department did not care for the students as individuals
3. The administrative staff of the University was not caring or collaborating with students

These opinions show significant student dissatisfaction in areas that the 2002 self-evaluation did not manage to highlight. The issue of student voice, for example, was not evident from any of the results of the two self-evaluations. The Area of Student Support should have had questions clearly asking if students felt they were receiving the appropriate support and why, and what kind of activities/changes should have taken place to increase quality in this Area. The score of this area significantly increased in 2007, however; again satisfaction of students was not measured.

4.1.23 Student Evaluation

This area referred to the specific criteria and procedures to evaluate the academic conditions of the students that wish to enrol in the university. No significant

increase was evident in this area, with changes in score being only 4% higher. However, this 4% increase pushed the score to perfection, that is, to 100%.

Unibe has always had some form of examinations for candidates applying to the university. In 2002, evaluations were conducted to determine basic knowledge and psychological status of the candidates. The main difference is that now all students need to take the POMA test (Diagnostic Orientation and Academic Level Test) designed by the Ministry of Education as well as the Academic Aptitude Test designed by the College Board. The College Board is an independent not-for-profit association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Results from these two tests, as well as other vocational tests the individual School students want to enrol on may have, are considered when granting admission to candidates.

According to three of the 2010 interviewees, these measurements have helped change the image some people may have had in the past about Unibe of the 'for-profit' university whose mission was only to make money (because all students that applied were accepted), since now only the students who pass these tests are accepted in the academic programmes.

More recently in the area of student progress (once they are enrolled in the university) the university has stopped talking about 'student evaluation' and has begun using the terminology 'evaluation of learning' as part of its new Educational Model. As mentioned before, teachers have been trained in this new Model, and there is a focus on identifying student problems from the root. Directors of Schools have to look at statistical reports of grade distribution (too many high or low grades), and student profile, to determine if there are modules where students are not performing well or dropping out and after discussion with the teaching staff and identifying the reasons why these things happen, official course of action is taken to correct the situation.

Even if this area has had a 4% increase, most of the recommendations put forward in the 2002 self-evaluation were still recommendations in the 2007 report, which may indicate that the issues that improved in this area were not necessarily a consequence of the first self-evaluation, contrary to what was seen in most areas.

4.1.24 Infrastructure

The buildings, physical space, furniture and equipment the university had and were at the disposal of the academic society were evaluated in this area. Generally known as an area where Unibe has a significant advantage over its competitors, it was a surprising to see that this area had actually decreased 2% since the 2002 self-evaluation. After performing a t-test for this area a p-value < 0.001 was obtained, and therefore I concluded that the observed difference on this area was statistically significant.

However, most of the 2010 interviewees were shocked with this decrease. One interviewee stated: *'No way! We have the best infrastructure in the country, and it is not just me saying this, the Ministry of Education has unofficially ranked us as having the best infrastructure, so there must be an error somewhere'*. Another very surprised interviewee highlighted: *'since 2006 we have built around 40 state-of-the-art classrooms and more than 400 parking spaces, and most important of all we have a new Campus! It is impossible to have a lower score than in 2002!'*

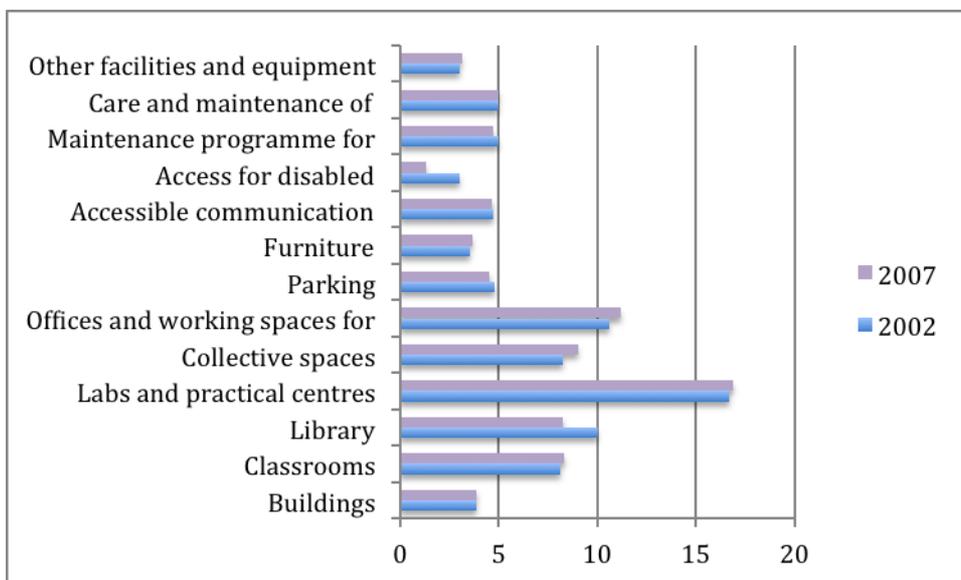
Therefore, I again decided to further analyse the breakdown of results for each self-evaluation and scores for the different variables were as follows:

Table 24: Comparison of variables Infrastructure

Variables	2002	2007
Buildings	3.88/5.00	3.88/5.00
Classrooms	8.08/10.00	8.31/10.00
Library	9.98/10.00	8.25/10.00
Labs and practical centres	16.71/20.00	16.87/20.00
Collective spaces	8.22/10.00	9.00/10.00
Offices and working spaces for lecturers and students	10.62/12.00	11.18/12.00
Parking	4.78/5.00	4.54/5.00
Furniture	3.50/4.00	3.65/4.00
Accessible communication services	4.72/5.00	4.67/5.00
Access for disabled	3.00/3.00	1.29/3.00
Maintenance programme for infrastructure	5.00/5.00	4.69/5.00
Care and maintenance of infrastructure	5.00/5.00	5.00/5.00
Other facilities and equipment	3.00/5.00	3.11/5.00

As can be seen in the chart below, which makes it visually easier to compare scores, the criteria that show a decrease are: Library, Parking, Access for disabled and Maintenance programme.

Figure 11: Comparison of Infrastructure criteria



The main reason why the university appeared to have a decrease in this area may be attributed to the significant increase in the student population. There were approximately 2,800 students enrolled in 2002 and in 2007 enrolment had reached 4,800, an increase of about 70% in only 5 years. Even if more parking space and more classrooms were built, they might not have been enough to cover the needs of the significantly increased population. This may explain why the scores were still low in 2007, even after significant progress in infrastructure. It was evident from the SWOT analyses conducted both in 2002 and in 2007 that Infrastructure was one of the main strengths of Unibe, but it was pointed out as a weakness back then that the university was growing too fast.

Another issue to consider is the importance given to prioritise disabled people. In 2002, the country as a whole was still not as aware of the needs of disabled people as it should have been, and this was reflected in all institutions. The requirements in 2002 were limited and Unibe at the time met all those requirements. Recently, awareness has increased and more requirements have been made compulsory. When the last self-evaluation was completed, Unibe still had to meet some of these new requirements and that is why the score for this criterion was so low. In November 2010, most of the requirements had been met. It is also important to

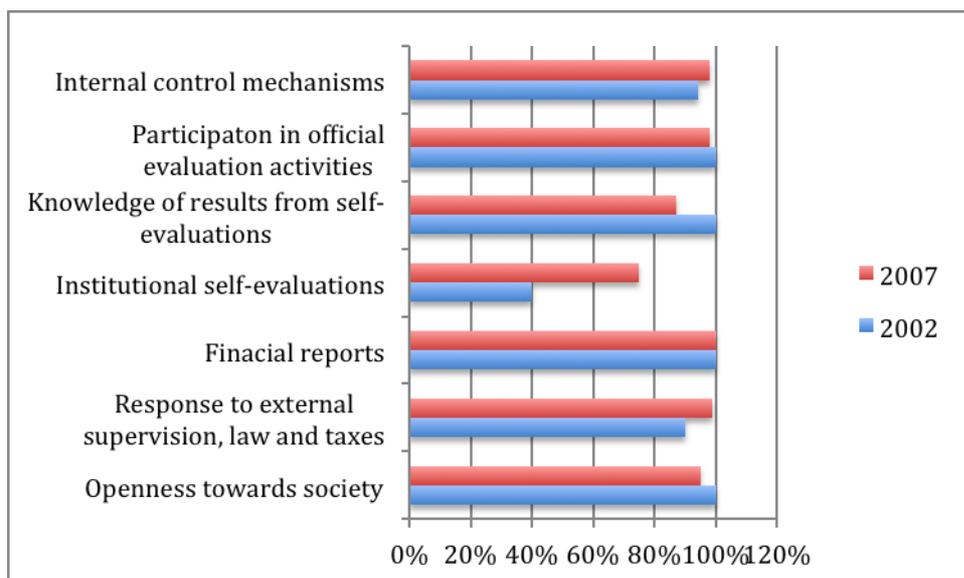
note that all the recommendations from 2002 were met for this area, again indicating that the self-evaluation was useful in promoting change.

4.1.25 Institutional Transparency

This area refers to the level of coherence between the mission of the university and what it actually delivers to society. It measures the level of openness of all areas and activities of the university towards society. The weight assigned by ADAAC for this area was of 35 points and in 2002 it scored 30.8 (88%). In 2007 it scored 33.15 (95%) an almost 8% increase. T-test analysis was not conducted for this area due to the nature of its data.

This area was assessed measuring 7 different criteria and results for both self-evaluations are presented below.

Figure 12: Institutional Transparency



The highest increase in score of the above criteria was in the institutional self-evaluation category. In 2002 it achieved a 40% score whereas in 2007 it obtained a 75%. The issues analysed for this area had to do with the efforts the university makes towards conducting self-evaluations and whether its results are divulged within the institution. In 2002, many members of staff were not aware of the self-evaluation (as discussed by some of the participants in the 2008 and 2010 interviews) hence the low score, however, a significant increase was evident in 2007.

Among the recommendations for this area the 2007 report suggests that the university divulges the results of the self-evaluation to all the stakeholders compared to the more tough recommendations in 2002 of using the self-evaluation in a systematic way as well as to use it as a base in planning its programmes and projects. This shows a change in the actual use of the self-evaluation results by the university, since the recommendation in 2007 only highlight the need to further divulge results implies that all other aspects (use of self-evaluation) were satisfied.

To conclude, one recommendation that appeared in both self-evaluation processes was to improve internal communication at all levels.

4.1.26 Relations

This area dealt with the link and interaction the university had with other academic institutions locally and internationally. This was one of the three areas that presented a decrease in score, with scores being 5% lower than in 2002, the second largest decrease. The data for this area was gathered by using mainly document review and therefore t-test analysis was not conducted.

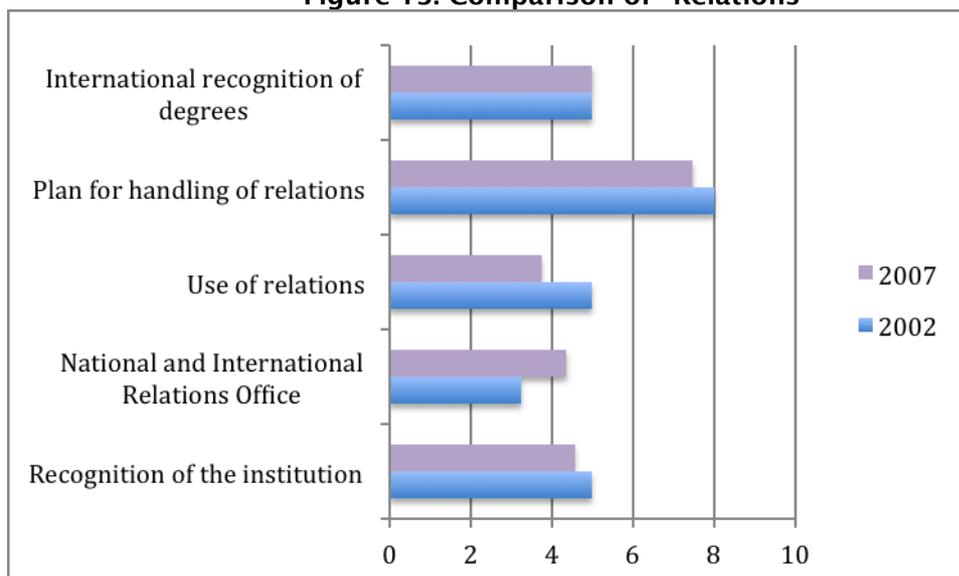
The following table presents a breakdown of the variables evaluated for this area during both studies.

Table 25: Comparison of results for Relations

Variables	2002	2007
Recognition of the institution	5.00/5.00	4.56/5.00
National and International Relations Office	3.25/5.00	4.36/5.00
Use of relations	5.00/5.00	3.74/5.00
Plan for handling of relations	8.00/10.00	7.47/10.00
International recognition of degrees	5.00/5.00	5.00/5.00

As can be seen from the chart below, there was a decrease in the score for the plan for handling relations, a significant decrease in the use of relations and a smaller decrease in the recognition of the institution.

Figure 13: Comparison of "Relations"



An International Relations office was created in 2004, and that is why an increase in score in 2007 can be seen in that part, however, according to two of the 2010 interviewees, it does not seem to be performing as well as expected. There was a plan for handling relations, but it was not well communicated to the academic community and this pushed the score down.

The small decrease in the recognition of the institution comes from a reduced score in the number of national and international relations. However, this seems to be a mistake because the number of agreements and partnership has significantly increased. Locally, the university has over 50 agreements, compared to less than half of those in 2002, and internationally it has 108 agreements, three times those it had in 2002.

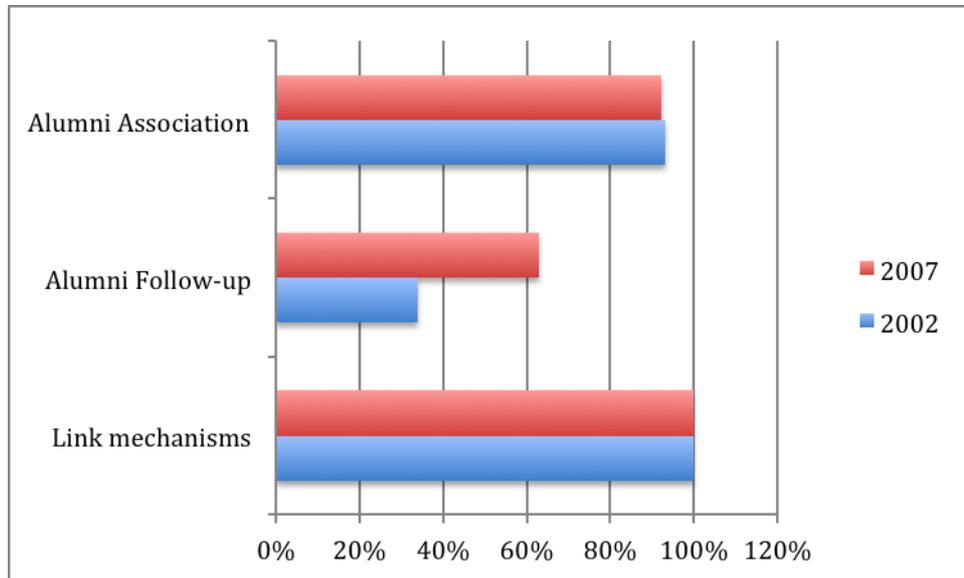
The apparent mistakes made in this Area show that self-evaluations are not error-free and therefore results must be questioned and used with caution.

4.1.27 Alumni

This area evaluates the contact the institution has with its alumni and the way alumni are included into the activities of the university. ADAAC assigned 30 points to this area and in 2002 it achieved 22.72 (76%). In 2007 it obtained 25.4 (85%) showing an increase of almost 12%.

Three main categories were used to measure results for this area: the link mechanisms with alumni, how alumni are followed and if there is an alumni association. Results for both self-evaluations were as follows:

Figure 14: Alumni



This area has full support of the university and in the 2007 results it was evident that a significant increase in alumni follow-up had taken place. However, among the recommendations in the 2007 report, a better instrument for follow-up was suggested, which would allow the institution to have continuous updates on where its alumni are and what they are doing at the moment.

4.2 Analysis of Interviews

The main purpose of the interviews conducted for this study in 2008 and 2010 was to determine the impact self-evaluations may have on stakeholders' perception of quality and/or evaluation culture and also on the overall quality assurance/improvement in a private university. Interviews were conducted with members of staff at different levels, including senior management, administrative staff and lecturers. The interviews were conducted in two different time periods, 8 of them in 2008 and 14 in 2010, that is, a total of 22 interviews. It is important to note that six members of staff interviewed in 2008 were interviewed again in 2010 using a very similar interview guide, and therefore, when discussing the results I mostly refer to 14 interviewees and not 22. Most of the members of staff interviewed have worked at Unibe for a significant period and time employed at the university ranged from 3 years to 21 years. It was also interesting to see that the answers from these six members of staff that were interviewed twice did not significantly change over time, making their opinions even more reliable.

As explained in the Methodology Chapter, patterns in the responses were then identified and categories were combined, integrated and merged in to three groups or larger categories as follows:

1. Usefulness, advantages and disadvantages of self-evaluation processes
2. Changes emerging from self-evaluation processes
3. Quality issues, perception and evaluation/quality culture

This part will present the results using these three categories. Theory used in the Literature Review Chapter was re-visited and linked to the analysis as well as information from the comparison of self-evaluation processes previously presented.

4.2.1 Usefulness, advantages and disadvantages of self-evaluation processes

Overall, interviewees found self-evaluation processes useful. Most of the interviewees participated directly in both processes (8/14), some did not participate in the first but did so in the second (4/14) and only 2 interviewees did not participate in any of the two processes, but stated they had been aware the processes were taking place.

The first self-evaluation process was felt to mark the beginning of the transformation the university went through in the last 10 years. Some interviewees defined it as *'the base'*, *'the spark'*, *'the platform everything else was built on'*, *'a diagnosis in order to then give the medicine'*, *'an awakening...'*. Others went further and stated that *'it was the foundation for the next set of evaluations and helped create the current quality culture'*. In particular, three senior members of staff, who had been interviewed both in 2008 and in 2010 felt that *'it was the starting point and from then on we started working with quality'* and also explained that it *'fixed the ground'* for the next evaluation processes. This was also evident in comments from stakeholders in the area of institutional transparency of the self-evaluation, as seen in the previous section.

Most of the people that were not involved in the first self-evaluation claimed they had heard about it and/or knew that it had taken place, however, and in one particular case, when I asked for more details they referred to other evaluation-type processes that took place with the Educational Reform (starting in 2004) of the institution and did not know about the 2002 self-evaluation. The fact that the results of the first self-evaluation were not widely distributed and only those who took part in the process knew details about it could indicate that the university had communication issues at the time. This was evident from the comparison of the two self-evaluations, where recommendations from different areas included improvement in internal communication. However, from information gathered in several of the interviews (6/14), it seemed that the main 'unofficial' reason why the results were not widely spread was because the senior management of the university felt it needed to improve certain aspects before submitting the self-evaluation report to the accreditation agency. They would have preferred a higher score; even if the score obtained in 2002 would have still granted them accreditation they believed that it did not match the reputation of the university at the time. Therefore, one could argue that indeed, the study served as an ignition tool to identify areas for improvement, especially for senior management. There was a long conversation with one of the interviewees where the issue of timing came up and whether the impact of the self-evaluation was perceived to be greater because the university and the higher education system as a whole was, as they expressed, *'ready for change'*. That is, we discussed whether the university would have engaged in change regardless of the self-evaluation results because it had achieved its maximum potential and there was a need for a different direction. The particular interviewee, who is in a very senior position in the university, after clearly expressing that the first self-evaluation worked because *'the time was right'*, added that it would have

not worked the other way around. That is, she concluded that the transformation started to happen when senior management '*got their eyes opened*' with the results of the first self-study and '*we (senior management) wouldn't have woken up if it hadn't been for those results*'. This is corroborated with the results of the comparison of the areas of the two self-evaluations, where specific 2002 recommendations were addressed resulting in an increase in score in the 2007 self-evaluation.

In their totality, interviewees expressed that the 2007 self-evaluation was also useful, one of them arguing that '*it promoted a reflection environment*' and acted as a '*compass pointing at its north, which is quality*'. One interviewee felt that it was easier to get better scores the second time around because the university was already aware of its weaknesses and therefore was able to '*correct them sooner*'. A point highlighted by one of the interviewees, who participated in both studies, was that the 2007 review was more participatory and got the whole academic and administrative community of the university involved and therefore '*everyone was working towards the same goal*'. Again, this can be triangulated with the increase in score from the one self-evaluation to the other in staff participation in different activities. This kind of view was supported by most of the interviewees (12/14); however, one interviewee felt that even more communication of results and feedback was necessary, in line with some of the recommendations of the 2007 self-evaluation report. Most of the interviewees felt that the 2007 results were significantly useful as a source of information for the Strategic Plan.

Overall, participants felt that both self-evaluations were useful one way or another and believed that both self-evaluations were successful. The following table is taken from the Literature Review chapter and includes details on how the answers from interviewees relate to the elements of successful self-evaluations presented by Kells (1995a), Espinoza et al. (1994), Landi and Palacios (2010), Ritchie and Dale (2000) and Tari (2010):

Table 26: Relationship between theoretical benefits of SE and answers from the interviews

Elements that promote successful self-evaluation (theory re-arranged)	Comments made at interviews at Unibe
Clear purpose of the self-study	Some interviewees (3/14) were not aware of the purpose of the self-evaluations and some (2/14) of them did not take any part in the processes. However, most of the staff that participated was clearly aware of its purpose and explained that it was made clear from the start to all participants the reasons why the self-evaluation was taking place.
Institutional compromise and willingness from senior management to engage in the process Commitment and compromise of all actors involved Positive internal motivation and employee involvement Adequate participation of stakeholders (psychological ownership of the results)	Most of the interviewees (11/14) agreed that there was a clear compromise and willingness from senior management as well as from all the other actors involved in the process. However, some (3/14) mentioned that results were not known or made available to the entire academic community.
Construction of a participation culture Open communication The ability of leaders to establish a climate of trust	Participation culture was built according to most of the participants as a result of the self-evaluation (9/14). They highlighted a climate of team-work and information-sharing which was not in place before the first self-evaluation. Overall, there was a positive climate during these processes.
Appropriate design	The self-evaluation processes were designed based on criteria from ADAAC and some of the interviewees (2/14) highlighted that these could have been designed differently if the university was not constrained to use the ADAAC criteria. However, these two interviewees (who were paramount in the design and implementation of the processes) believe that regardless of the limitation using an external model may have, they were properly designed and conducted at Unibe.
Use of relevant information and viable access to information	Information was available and access was granted to those who needed to obtain more sensitive information
Include external collaboration	External consultants were hired at different stages from CINDA (Chile) and UNAM (Mexico). The Dominican Ministry of Higher Education assigned independent committees to visit after the second self-evaluation had taken place and they confirmed the information provided in the self-evaluation report.
Focus on important areas and problems. Developing a framework for performance monitoring. Development of an improvement plan and follow-up process based on	It was mentioned by several interviewees (6/14) that results from the self-evaluations were fed on to the strategic plan of the university. Unibe has also developed several internal evaluation procedures and has started to use Balance Score Cards. Some interviewees (4/14) felt that the university needed to do a better job in the follow-up and feedback stage.

results of self-assessment. Follow-up and feedback.	
Not allowing the process to be 'added on' to employees' existing workload Use of appropriate incentives	This was mentioned by 5 interviewees, with one of them in particular worrying about the impact of this process in her already 'very heavy' workload. None of the interviewees mentioned incentives to participate in the process
The extent to which resources can be made available to fund the process	Since Unibe is a private university and the self-evaluation was something that senior management wanted, funding the process was not an issue
Actions being taken from previous self-assessment Establishment of periodical cycles of self-evaluation	Actions being taken from previous self-evaluations were discussed in the previous sections when the two processes were compared. The university has established periodical cycles of 5 years for self-evaluations as part of the preparations for the external evaluation conducted every 5 years by the ministry of Higher Education

As can be seen from the above table, respondents overall subscribed to the benefits of self-evaluations presented in the literature review, which is a significant contribution of this study since, as mentioned before, there are not many empirical studies that actually confirm base on practical information of a specific case in developing countries such as the Dominican Republic.

Two very interesting metaphors came out of asking for the advantages of self-evaluations. One is that self-evaluation *'is like a mirror that helps you compare yourself against yourself'*. This metaphor is useful to highlight points of improvements and one could argue, as one of the interviewees did, that *'nobody knows you better than yourself and therefore no one but "the man in the mirror" can really identify his faults'*. This metaphor has its own faults as clearly there may be some level of bias when examining yourself and that is why robust self-evaluation methodology needs to be in place in order to achieve reliable results. Some recommendations on the design of self-evaluations are made in the conclusion chapter to address these issues. The second metaphor was that of *'a picture/photograph of the university being taken that remains in history as a record of how the university was at a particular moment'*. This is a useful metaphor for comparability and identification of change.

When asked about the advantages self-evaluations a number of interesting points came out. The following table presents a summary of what the interviewees thought.

Table 27: Advantages of Self-Evaluation processes

Advantages of self-evaluation processes according to interviewees
Identifies areas for improvement
Helps create and shape an evaluation culture
Puts things in perspective
Helps create a quality culture
Acts as a ‘thermometer’ that indicates just how ill you are
Gathers information from the root of the problem
Makes you stop and reflect and creates a reflection culture
Results are used in the strategic plan
It gives a sense of unity and team work
Makes people feel a part of the system
It is a dynamic tool to be used for just about anything

Some disadvantages were also highlighted and are summarised in the table below.

Table 28: Disadvantages of Self-Evaluation processes

Disadvantages of self-evaluation processes
May be seen as an obligation imposed by an external body
No self-evaluation alone can guarantee change, it needs to be used with other tools
Some people may feel uncomfortable when being evaluated
May be time consuming and in some cases the data may be obsolete by the time it is actually used
Results may be inaccurate as respondents may not answer correctly
May not receive the necessary support from senior management and loose its value to the rest of the community
Some stakeholders may not want to participate and may show resistance to change
People may feel they are being checked
People may feel overloaded as the process is an extra burden to their everyday activities
People at lower levels may not understand its purpose
If there is no compromise then the process will fail
Some areas may not be so relevant to the needs of the institution
May be too bureaucratic

Many agreed that self-evaluation processes may take up important time from the everyday work of the participants and if the senior management does not send a clear message of the importance of the process in some cases participants may not get so involved. Resistance and fear of change was mentioned in some of the interviews, with one member of staff in particular highlighting that *‘there are always people that like things how they are and do not want to change the status*

quo, a self-evaluation can then be seen as a threat'. Another interviewee affirmed that *'people are now more open after the self-evaluations, but there still are some inflexible people, or those who do not have a wider vision or the educational background to understand'*.

When comparing these results to what the literature review presents as advantages and disadvantages/difficulties of self-evaluations, in particular relating them to Table 7 in the literature review which was adapted from Tari (2010), Espinoza et al. (1994) and Stake (2010), it seems that the results of this study were quite close to what the literature suggests, as can be seen in the next table.

Table 29: Theory on SE compared to Interview Results

ADVANTAGES		DISADVANTAGES/DIFFICULTIES	
Theory	Interview results	Theory	Interview results
Contributes to identify strengths and areas for improvement in order to develop an improvement plan.	Identifies areas for improvement.	Lack of commitment and enthusiasm among management and employees.	May be seen as an obligation imposed by an external body. Some stakeholders may not want to participate and may show resistance to change. People may feel they are being checked. If there is no compromise then the process will fail.
The rationality of decisions that aim for improvement are strengthened.	Helps create and shape an evaluation culture Helps create a quality culture.	Time-consuming nature of the process. Not knowing where to start.	May be time consuming and in some cases the data may be obsolete by the time it is actually used. Some areas may not be so relevant to the needs of the institution. People may feel overloaded as the process is an extra burden to their everyday activities.
There is an increment in the awareness of what the institution has and does.	Puts things in perspective.	Difficulty in implementing the improvement actions.	No self-evaluation alone can guarantee change, it needs to be used with other tools. Some people may feel uncomfortable when being evaluated.
Can be linked to strategic planning.	Results are used in the strategic plan.	Lack of resources; time, manpower, finance. Lack of support by the quality department.	Results may be inaccurate as respondents may not answer correctly . May not receive the necessary support from senior management and loose its value to the rest of the community.
Objectivity is favoured in the revision of goals and purposes of all the activities the institution undergoes.	Acts as a 'thermometer' that indicates just how ill you are.	Can be seen as self-serving, self-protecting, promotional, advocating the home point of view by people from the outside.	People at lower levels may not understand its purpose.

<p>Effective communication increases in the university community. Measures performance.</p>	<p>It is a dynamic tool to be used for just about anything.</p>	<p>Getting the assessment done in time to link into the business plan.</p>	<p>May be too bureaucratic.</p>
<p>Involves people in developing a process improvement approach to quality. Facilitates the integration of quality factors in all day-to-day practices.</p>	<p>Makes you stop and reflect and creates a reflection culture.</p>		
<p>Raises the understanding and awareness of quality-related issues.</p>	<p>It gives a sense of unity and team work. Makes people feel a part of the system.</p>		
<p>A better organization of information is achieved.</p>	<p>Gathers information from the root of the problem.</p>		

Also compared to what the literature discusses, some of the stakeholders (5/14) commented on two of the risks presented by Landi and Palacios (2010) that the plans for actions may just stay as plans and that the actions for improvement will never be implemented. The interviewees said, that up to a certain point, there is always this fear, but that it has been evident from the amount of change as a result of the processes that had taken place at the university that this has not been the case at Unibe.

To conclude, most interviewees (12/14) agreed that self-evaluation processes had more significant advantages than disadvantages. One in particular expressed '*I wouldn't say disadvantages, I would call them challenges to overcome*'. Overall, respondents were positive towards self-evaluation processes and believed they were useful tools.

4.2.2 Changes emerging from self-evaluation processes

In the previous part 4.1 some of the major changes Unibe has gone through were presented and discussed by comparing results from the two self-evaluation processes. In this part, I will focus on analysing the views of the people interviewed on the changes emerging from the two self-evaluation processes.

The literature review argues that self-evaluation processes may trigger changes in an institution. Particularly for Unibe, all of the staff interviewed agreed that these changes were positive. For example, one interviewee expressed: '*There are two 'Unibes', the one before the self-evaluation and the one after. The university has changed drastically and I believe that it is due to these evaluation processes*'.

The following table summarised the views of staff interviewed on which were the major changes the university went through after the self-evaluation processes.

Table 30: Major changes perceived by Unibe staff

Major changes perceived by the staff interviewed
Academic quality improvement through the Academic Reform
Teachers are evaluated more thoroughly
A new culture of evaluation – evaluation is embedded in the culture
Staff development for administrative and teaching staff
Change in leadership
Increased teamwork
Systematization of procedures
Understanding of the purpose of self-evaluations and evaluations in general
Decisions are made after consultation with Strategic Planning Department and hard evidence from surveys
Use of Balance Score Cards and Quality Indicators
Staff are formally accountable of their actions
Re-definition of Strategic Plan
A shift from ‘having’ to do evaluations to ‘wanting’ to do evaluations

Most of the people interviewed made reference to the Academic Reform and its implications. This included better training for teaching staff, reliable evaluation of teachers coming from different stakeholders, revised and updated academic programmes, which, in turn, results in better teaching quality. As mentioned before, senior management interviewed confirmed that this Academic Reform was triggered by the results of the first self-evaluation and therefore these changes could also be attributed to this self-evaluation process.

It is interesting to see that from the three areas of the self-evaluation that showed a higher percentage increase in change in the analysis conducted in the previous section, the interviewees only mentioned the evaluation of teaching staff as showing drastic changes. The other two areas ‘Permanent Education’ and ‘Artistic Creation’ were hardly mentioned during the interviews and were only referred to when the interviewees were shown the tables with the results of the two self-evaluations. This may be because ‘Teacher evaluation’ may be considered closer to quality issues than permanent education or artistic creation.

Almost all interviewees (12/14) mentioned the issue of change in leadership, not necessarily as a consequence of the self-evaluation procedures, but as a factor that has significantly contributed to positive change and innovation. They mentioned that the new leadership - headed by the current Rector - ‘*promotes teamwork, encourages action, demands quality and evaluation and endorses creativity*’. Staff

interviewed in 2010 felt that they are part of a bigger picture where their actions count towards a new goal for constant quality and where they know that they are accountable for their actions, through different evaluation procedures. They also mentioned that because of the self-evaluations and their results, and the meaning and use the new leadership has invested upon them, they can better understand the importance of evaluation processes in an academic institution.

The importance of institutional leadership in creating a quality culture was highlighted by EUA (2006) and Loukkola and Zhang (2010) in the literature review. Muijs (2011) also argues that leadership has been seen as essential when looking at organisational effectiveness. Harvey (2007) talks about leaders being inspirational rather than dictatorial in quality assurance processes in higher education and most interviewees (9/14) highlighted the words '*inspiration*' and '*inspirational*' when referring to the new Rector and his team and argued that having him as a leader made a '*significant difference*' and words such as '*fundamental*', '*transcendental*' and '*preponderant*' were used to describe his role in the success of the process and the changes made. These findings are in line with the importance of leadership for effective self-evaluation processes the literature presents (EFQM and Malcolm Baldrige models all put leadership as a top ingredient, see section 2.3.2 in literature review).

After the self-evaluation processes, interviewees affirmed that '*the need for evidence to support their actions and requests*' was incorporated into their activities. The Strategic Planning Department was re-structured to service the whole university community regarding evaluation mechanisms and the use of surveys to gather information to support their decision-making processes. This need for evidence has made most employees thirsty for evaluation, and, as one interviewee put it: '*self-evaluations have made us comfortable with being evaluated and doing evaluations and have helped us shift from 'having to do' evaluations to 'wanting to do' evaluations.*'

Finally, one of the interviewees when asked if the self-evaluation had an impact on change affirmed '*Obviously it has had an excellent impact. I love this university because I studied here and spent some of the best moments of my life here, I made a bet/gamble by studying here since it was the first cohort back then, and I have certainly seen it change thanks to these self-evaluation processes – the university is now consolidating itself!*'.

4.2.3 Quality issues, perception and evaluation/quality culture

The purpose of this study was to determine the use of self-evaluation processes in terms of quality improvement. Therefore issues of quality were widely discussed during the interviews.

The literature showed that 'Quality' is a difficult concept to define and perceptions of quality easily vary according to the person being asked. Some of the definitions of quality given by the respondents of the interviews are grouped in the following table:

Table 31: Definition of quality given by interviewees

Definition of quality – stakeholders' perspectives
<i>'academic excellence'</i>
<i>'good service and ranking of the university'</i>
<i>'something that is worthwhile'</i>
<i>'to have an adequate vision'</i>
<i>'getting closer to your objectives'</i>
<i>'relevance of programmes, actions, projects, innovation capacity and service'</i>
<i>'service'</i>
<i>'the alumni'</i>
<i>'maintaining yourself within the standards'</i>
<i>'relevance of the academic offer to the needs of society'</i>
<i>'to give the students, the employees and the teachers what they need in the less time possible and being efficient and effective'</i>
<i>'it is service, efficacy and compromise'</i>
<i>'the satisfaction of an expectation the institution can give'</i>
<i>'a process that follows national and international standards'</i>

Very different perceptions of what quality means (again, in line with the literature), but overall, quality was seen by the interviewees as a positive attribute to have and certainly all of them believed the university operates 'with quality'.

Comparing some of the definitions given by the respondents to what was discussed in the literature, the following table shows how the answers relate to theory.

Table 32: Definition of quality in higher education - Comparison of responses from interviewees to theory

Interviewee's answer	Theory in literature review
'Academic excellence'	Quality as excellence – Peters and Waterman (1982), Harvey and Green (1993), Aguila Cabrera (2002), Bogue and Hall (2003), Doherty (2009)
'Service', 'good service and ranking of the university', 'it is service, efficacy and compromise'	Deming (1986)a in Liston 1999 (product or service that enjoys good sustainable markets)
'The satisfaction of an expectation the institution can give'	Wayne 1983 in Ho and Wearn, 1996 – customer satisfaction
'Maintaining yourself within the standards', 'a process that follows national and international standards'	Crosby 1979 – conformance to requirements
'Relevance of programmes, actions, projects, innovation capacity and service', 'relevance of the academic offer to the needs of society'	Parasuraman, et al. 1985 in Cheng and Tam 1997 – meeting and/or exceeding customer's needs
'To give the students, the employees and the teachers what they need in the less time possible and being efficient and effective', 'Getting closer to your objectives', 'to have an adequate vision'	Juran and Gryna 1988 – fitness for use Royero's (2002) interpretation of fitness for purpose in higher education

Again it can be seen from the table above that responses were in agreement with what the theory presents regarding quality in higher education.

When specifically asked if self-evaluations were useful for quality improvement all the respondents answered yes. Self-evaluations were seen as a *'tool for feedback'* that made everyone accountable and therefore had an impact on the way everyone works. They are also seen as an instrument for control that used more reliable information to make decisions. Most interviewees felt that the self-evaluation process had promoted participation and integration of staff at all levels, helping improve quality by working towards the same goals. One particular interviewee mentioned that *'self-evaluations act as a complement for quality processes, permitting the university to see if it is going in the right track'*. Another interviewee affirmed *'there is no quality without evaluation'*.

Regarding the impact self-evaluation processes have on quality perception, most of the interviewees (12/14) agreed that evaluation processes in general helped shape an improved quality perception. Many (9/14) concluded that *'when you evaluate you determine the relevance of what you are doing and therefore you measure quality'*. Since most believe that there is now an evaluation culture in place at the university,

evaluations have a positive impact on people's perception of quality improvement. One senior member of staff in particular mentioned: *'we have now created a university which focuses on evaluation, control and feedback, to see if people are working with quality. So YES, self-evaluation have had an impact on how we perceive quality'*.

Many interviewees (8/14) made reference to the 'new' evaluation culture, where evaluation was seen as an integral part of every-day activities. Members of staff talked about *'mini'* and *'regular'* evaluations that were constantly being done at the university and that *'it now feels normal to be constantly evaluated'*. Some felt that was in part due to the first self-evaluation process where people started to take part in evaluation procedures. It was evident from the conversation with two interviewees in particular (in lower management positions), that they could not easily differentiate the constant evaluation procedures from the more formal self-evaluations. That is, evaluation is now so embedded in their activities that they could not easily point out the differences. Staff at higher managerial levels were fully aware of the differences and argued that thanks to the evaluation culture now in place at Unibe people are no longer surprised when a more formal evaluation procedure takes place and are happy and willing to participate.

Culture identification was at the heart of this study, and the theories presented in the literature review helped identify the different characteristics that make up certain types of culture. Based on the results of the interview analysis and using table 4: Values of Quality, which presents the cultural typology defined by McNay (1995) and Handy and Aitken (1986) and how each of these types value and define quality, as well as the cultural types in Douglas's Grid Group theory (1982) and the Competing Values Framework created by Quinn and Rorbaugh (1983), I categorised the different comments made by interviewees which could be 'ticked' against each cultural type and found a very interesting shift in culture from the first self-evaluation in 2002 to the period when the last set of interviews were conducted (2010). Unibe seemed to have moved from the cultural type Bureaucracy (McNay, 1995) – Role (Handy and Aitken, 1986) – Hierarchy/collectivism (Douglas, 1982) – Hierarchy (Quinn and Rorbaugh (1983) to a more people focused culture which can be identified in the cultural types Enterprise (McNay, 1995) – Task (Handy and Aitken, 1986) – Egalitarian/hierarchy (Douglas, 1982) – Clan/adhocracy (Quinn and Rorbaugh (1983). These cultural types all have in common an increase of participation and are people oriented, all factors which are needed in order to promote a quality culture.

In the literature review, Harvey (2007) presents a list of features that indicate a quality culture and, from the conversations with the interviewees, most of the issues he mentions are present at Unibe. In particular, the following table highlights which ones were found at Unibe according to the interviewees.

Table 33: Quality culture at Unibe

Features indicative of a quality culture (Harvey, 2007)	Present at Unibe according to interviewees
There is academic ownership of quality.	YES
There is a recognition by academics and administrators of need for a system of quality monitoring to ensure accountability (and compliance where required) and to facilitate improvement. However, this should not be a 'bureaucratic' system.	YES
Quality culture is primarily about the behaviour of stakeholders rather than the operation of a quality system.	Not discussed
The quality system needs to have a clear purpose, which articulates with the quality culture.	Not discussed
A quality culture places students at the centre.	YES
A quality culture is about partnership and co-operation, sharing of experiences and team working.	YES
A quality culture is about supporting the individual as an autonomous scholar but not at the expense of the learning community; there is a symbiotic relationship between individual and community.	Not discussed
in a quality culture is inspirational rather than dictatorial. Leadership is at all levels in the institution and does not refer to just senior managers.	YES
A quality culture welcomes external critical evaluation from a variety of sources including formal external evaluations, external peers acting as critical friends, and internal peer review and support.	YES
At heart a quality culture is about facilitating and encouraging reflexivity and praxis; self-reflection, developing improvement initiatives and implementing them.'	YES

Some other respondents believed (3/14) that there is an evaluation culture, but that it is in its early stages. One in particular called it '*information-gathering*' culture instead of an evaluation culture. Others affirm this evaluation culture is present only at senior levels and within the academic community. One in particular commented that there is a build-up towards an evaluation culture, but that the evaluation processes need revision as information sometimes gets lost along the way.

Even those who felt that the evaluation culture was at its early stages still believed it was a positive feature of the institution. They believed the challenge the university now faces is to make this grow deeper roots into the way things operate at the institution. One interviewee used the tree metaphor as follows: *'I believe the culture has been planted and it is now slowly growing, but it needs lots of sun, water and care to survive'*.

4.3 Summary discussion of findings

This part will focus on further relating and highlighting, as well as summarising the most important findings of the two previous sections: comparison of self-evaluation processes (2002 and 2007) and analysis of interviews (2008 and 2010).

The comparison of the two self-evaluations shows that for most of the areas, the official recommendations from the first self-evaluation were taken into consideration and used as initiators of positive change, providing an answer to one of the main research questions of this study: whether self-evaluation processes are useful and can be used as instruments of change. It could be argued that these changes would have probably not taken place if they had not been officially identified as recommendations from the self-study since many of the interviewees in the 2008 and 2010 interviews expressed that the self-evaluation process and its results acted as an *'eye-opener'* for the university.

Most of the areas compared (23/27) had an increase in score from the one process to the other, 12 of them having an increase of more than 10% and 6 of them having a significant increase of over 20%. 4 areas presented a perfect score in 2007 compared to no areas with a perfect score in 2002. Only one area remained with its same score in both processes.

Furthermore, only three areas presented a decrease in score, and it seems to be that the decrease may not in fact be significant or even real, since some of the interviewees felt that some of the questions regarding those areas were not properly or correctly answered in the 2002 self-evaluation. However, the significant increase in student population has had an impact in the use of space, even if for most of the interviewees the decrease in score of the infrastructure area was a surprise. The area with the highest decrease in score was scientific and cultural divulgation, almost 28%, which many of the interviewed during 2008 and 2010 also

found hard to believe. The argument here was not that it should have had a higher score but certainly not such a large reduction.

These issues highlight some inconsistencies in the gathering and analysis of data for the self-evaluation process. Throughout the comparison of the areas in section 4.1, it was evident that using the particular guidelines from ADAAC in the type of questions and instruments to be used for the self-evaluation presented some inconveniences for the institution as follows:

- in some cases questions did not dig deep enough to find the source of the problems
- some areas were assigned a higher or lower overall weight which may not be in line with the importance those areas may have to the particular institution
- some questions were asked to certain stakeholders and not to others who could verify the opinion of the first
- some instruments such as interviews would have provided more accurate data in some areas.

In the next chapter I will argue that universities in developing countries may benefit from designing their own self-evaluation models, based on a set of principles I have grouped as a result from this study, and trying to avoid the issues mentioned above.

Overall, based on the comparison of these 27 areas, the impact of a self-evaluation process is positive. 85% of the Areas involved in the self-evaluation process showed an increase in score, most of them by following the recommendations put forward in the first self-evaluation. These results are in agreement with the views of all interviewees in 2008 and 2010 regarding the positive impact of these processes.

In more detail, the 27 areas of the ADAAC self-evaluation guidelines could be grouped into 8 more general categories, according to the nature of each area. As can be seen below each of these general categories include 2-5 Areas (except from infrastructure which was considered as a category of its own). The score of each area was added to determine the final score of the category for both self-evaluations and then presented below as a percentage of the total score.

Table 34: Areas grouped in general categories

CATEGORY	AREA	SCORE IN 2002	SCORE IN 2007	PERCENTAGE INCR/DECR
Institutional issues	01. Purposes	85%	94%	11%
	02. Philosophy			
	03. Government			
Functioning of the institution	04. Organisation	84%	92%	10%
	05. Planning			
	06. Financial Administration			
	07. Rules and Regulations			
Academic administration	08. Admissions	89%	99.65%	12%
	09. Registrars			
	10. Curricular Content and Structure			
	11. Curricular Administration			
Teaching staff	12. Teacher Selection	71%	86%	17%
	13. Academic Staff Organisation			
	14. Teacher Responsibility			
	15. Support Services for Academic Activities			
	16. Teacher Evaluation			
Research and extension	17. Research development, promotion, adm	71%	73%	3%
	18. Artistic Creation development, promotion, adm			
	19. Scientific and Cultural Divulgation			
	20. Permanent Education Relevance and Adm			
	21. Extension			
Student affairs	22. Student Support	90%	97%	8%
	23. Student Evaluation			
Infrastructure	24. Infrastructure	86%	84%	-2%
Integrity and positioning of the institution	25. Institutional Transparency	80%	88%	10%
	26. Relations			
	27. Alumni			

This table presents change in score when the 27 areas are grouped into 8 major categories. It can be seen above that 7 of the 8 categories presented a positive change in score, with the highest positive change being in the teaching staff section of 17% increase in score (this was corroborated in the 2008 and 2010 interviews, with the view of some participants that this was the area that benefited the most from the self-evaluation recommendations). Again, the positive change in score may be attributed to following recommendations from the self-evaluation report.

It is important to note, however, that one of the issues picked up in the analysis of the interviews and the comparison of the two self-evaluation processes was that in some cases it was not easy to determine whether the changes that took place were

directly related to the recommendations made or if they would have taken place regardless of the recommendations from the self-evaluation, as part of the normal growth of the institution. The 5-year gap between self-evaluations may be too long of a period to accurately measure if changes are a consequence of recommendations made. In order to address these issues, the conclusion chapter recommends having more periodic self-evaluation processes and/or mini self-evaluation processes in each department. This will also contribute to the creation and maintenance of a quality/evaluation culture through a possible Permanent Programme of Self-evaluation (PPS), which will be further discussed in the next section.

To conclude, it is important to highlight some of the main contributions to knowledge as mentioned in previous sections, which will also be further discussed in the conclusions. The fact that no other study has been conducted for universities in developing countries that looks at different periods of time at two self-evaluation processes makes this study significantly unique, in particular for universities in the Dominican Republic. The study enriches the literature available as can be seen in more details in the next section, where its contributions to the literature on self-evaluations are clearly explained. Furthermore, it provides a useful framework which offer guidelines on using self-evaluations as processes that promote positive change and a model of quality culture development using self-evaluations as central tools for achieving this, both very relevant to the higher education system in the Dominican Republic. As a conceptual contribution, it further develops the link between self-evaluations and quality improvement. It also provides much needed empirical evidence on the benefits and constraints of self-evaluations in developing nations, highlighting the fact that self-evaluations should be considered as a quality assurance tool in its own right. Because of the fact that it focuses on processes which took place in different points in time it provides an interesting account of actual changes taking place as a consequence of self-evaluations.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study intended to look at the case of a private university in a developing country in order to see if/how self-evaluation mechanisms helped create quality awareness and improvement and positive change in the institution. In more detail, the specific objectives of this study were:

1. To analyse the underlying principles of self-evaluation processes and how they relate to quality improvement and change.
2. To analyse and compare the results of two self-evaluation processes conducted at the same university and determine:
 - g. the impact self-evaluations may have on stakeholders' perception of quality and/or evaluation culture
 - h. the impact self-evaluations may have and on overall quality assurance/improvement in a private university
 - i. the usefulness they may have for university management and if they can act as triggers of positive change

To achieve these objectives, the following research questions were asked:

1. How do the principles of self-evaluation relate to quality improvement?
2. What is the use and impact of self-evaluation techniques:
 - a) on stakeholder's quality perception?
 - b) for university quality improvement?
 - c) for university management and change?

This final chapter will attempt to summarise, from the literature review and the findings, how the study was able to answer these research questions. The chapter will be divided into two parts: the first part will present the two research questions along with the possible answers as a result of the study. The second part will try to present the wider implications and consequences of the results of this study and will provide recommendations for the development of quality assurance and self-evaluation systems for universities in developing countries.

5.1 Research Questions answered

5.1.1 How do the principles of self-evaluation relate to quality improvement?

Unibe prides itself in forming capable professionals that will contribute to the transformation of the Dominican society into a more fair and equal society through the academic programmes it offers. At the heart of these programmes is a mix of quality indicators such as the level of academic preparation of its teaching staff and an effective and innovative management team. This was evident in the document review as well as in the ethos of most of those interviewed. They felt that continuous evaluation procedures were at the centre of quality improvement as these mechanisms promote a reflection climate, in search of quality and academic excellence and positive change for the institution.

Self-evaluation was defined in the literature review as an opportunity to re-think the sense of purpose of the university (Landi and Palacios, 2010). Many of the interviewees characterised the process as an opportunity for reflection and a chance to stop and review what is going on which otherwise would not have been done if not for the self-evaluation process, due to pressures of the day-to-day operation of the institution. Self-evaluations, according to ADAAC (2003), evaluate the missions and purpose of the institution, the resources needed to achieve this mission, the developments in teaching, research and support services according to the characteristics and priorities of the university, the achievements and results derived from the administration, quality and impact and the proposed changes. These are all activities that, if done in a truly critical way, will positively impact quality levels at the university.

As per the literature review, Frazer (1995, p14) states that an essential part of quality assurance is for a university to demonstrate that it is

a self-critical academic community striving to enhance the quality of all its work. Self-evaluation is not easy and in some universities will require a change in culture as well as training of the staff.

For Unibe, and according to comments made in the interviews, the first self-evaluation was more difficult, because when it started people could not understand what its purposes were and why their '*own people*' were asking questions and looking into documents and processes. It was difficult to get people to willingly

participate, and, as mentioned in the literature review for accreditation processes, some people felt that it was just adding more work to their already heavy workload (van Kemmenade, et al. 2011). This view was maintained, in a lighter tone, by two of the staff members interviewed in 2010, who argued that they felt overworked during the first process.

However, most of the participants (including the two previously mentioned) confirmed that by the time the first process concluded and they started seeing the changes as a result of the process, they felt somewhat more comfortable with being evaluated. They also argued that the fact that they were involved in the process also helped in achieving a better sense of ownership. The inclusion of continuous smaller evaluation activities, using in some ways information from the first self-study, also helped to slowly build a culture of evaluation. This will be further explored in the recommendation section. By the time the second self-evaluation process took place, people were more open to these types of activities, knew what to expect and therefore were more willing to contribute. One of the newer members of staff interviewed mentioned that he felt that in a way, evaluation was '*part of the university's DNA*', as most of the members of staff request evaluations to take place if they need important information to make decisions and they use the results of these evaluations to make more informed choices.

The literature also shows that self-evaluations are considered to be quality assurance mechanisms (Osseo-Assare and Longbottom, 2000; Ritchie and Dale 2000; Landi and Palacios, 2010; EFQM, 2011; Dias Sobrino, 2006; Tres and Sanyal, 2007; McAdams and Welch, 2000, Hides et al., 2004; Davies, 2001c), as part of the larger process of external review or accreditation used in well-know processes such as the EFQM and the Malcolm Baldrige Award. These processes, the literature argues (see for example Osseo-Assare and Longbottom (2002)), are seen as means for securing the confidence of external stakeholders and help institutions to create an appropriate organisation and quality improvement systems. Whether they are used as part of a larger process or independently as an internal tool, these processes clearly aim at improving quality and therefore clearly relate to quality improvement. In developing countries, where evaluation and quality culture is still '*in dippers*' as one of the interviewees mentioned, these processes of participatory self-evaluation can be used as an alternative way of promoting quality improvement than the traditional top-down approach of imposing quality assurance mechanisms only for accreditation purposes, without promoting a better understanding of the need to embed of these processes in the university's DNA. The recommendation section will explore these issues further. Using the results from this study and from

the analysis of the literature review, self-evaluations should be guided by the following principles:

Table 35: Principles of self-evaluations

Voluntary	The university makes the decision to start the self-evaluation process
Participative	Involves all the stakeholders in the analysis and reflection process
Evaluative	Goes beyond description of the information to offer valuable judgments
Transparent	Explicit in all its operations
Flexible	Adjustments are permitted during the process
Integral	Considers the factors as well as the relationship between factors
Pertinent	Is relevant to the needs of the institution
Self-regulating	Promotes the cyclical process of planning and execution of self-evaluation, followed by an improvement plan based on the results from the self-evaluation and after a pre-determined period of time a next self-evaluation process begins (see figure 15 in recommendations and PPS model proposed)

Results showed that these principles directly relate to quality improvement. The literature review presented a list of advantages (see Tables 7 and 8 based on the works of Ritchie and Dale, 2000, Tari 2010, Espinoza, 1994 and Stake 2010), including the fact that it helps maintain a quality image and that it provides a disciplined approach to quality which were in line with the opinion of the staff interviewed (see table 31 in the results chapter). They all agreed that self-evaluations were overall positive activities which highlight important actions to be taken for improvement. The literature review (Ritchie and Dale, 2000; McAdams and Welch, 2000; Tari 2010, Tari and Juana-Espinosa, 2007; EFQM, 2003; ADAAC, 2003; Frazer, 1995) and the results (see Tables 26, 27, 29 and 30) seem to point towards self-evaluation being very relevant to quality improvement, based on the critical role they play in identifying areas of improvement.

Part of this study focused on comparing the results from the two self-evaluation processes conducted at Unibe and tried to identify if there were any changes as consequences of the processes. The analysis showed (see part 4.1 with comparison of areas and table 30 with the views of the interviewees) that there were significant changes as a result of the self-evaluation processes, including a more robust system of teacher evaluation and a significant increase in cultural and artistic activities, and most of these positive changes were linked to quality improvement. As the processes were conducted using the guide produced by ADAAC in partnership with external consultants, which included quality indicators and variables, it may be appropriate to conclude that an increase in score meant an increase in quality,

based on those pre-determined standards (even with the limitations of using a pre-determined guide). In turn, it can be concluded that the effective use of self-evaluations using quality indicators and variables may lead to quality improvement, since one of the aims of the process is to obtain the highest score possible.

The comparison of the self-evaluation results (see part 4.1 for more details) shows that the university has had positive change in scores (increase was evident in 23 of the 27 areas, remained the same in one area and decreased in 3 areas, 2 of those 3 having only a very minor decrease in score). It can be argued that these positive changes may have been triggered by the results of the first self-evaluation process, since it seems the university used the recommendations from the first self-evaluation to feed its strategic plan and educational reform and to guide actions for change. These findings are in line with and confirm a comment made by McAdams and Welch (2000) that a considerable change agenda is generated after a first self-evaluation process.

It was also evident both from review of documents and interview discussions that the areas that significantly improved had followed closely the recommendations made in the first self-evaluation. It can be also argued, based on the discussions of the findings, that results that did not significantly change towards the better, those which remained the same and those which showed a decrease in score, may indeed have achieved those scores because recommendations from the self-evaluation were not properly followed.

The issue of time spam between self-evaluation was seen as crucial. It was argued within this study that in some cases it was more difficult to confirm whether the changes were implemented due to the recommendations directly or whether they would have taken place any way due to the natural growth of the institution. The reason for this may indeed be an issue of time difference and the more continuous self-evaluations take place in shorter periods of time of each other may help determine sooner what triggers change. It may also be that the particular instruments created by ADAAC for the self-evaluations were not appropriately designed to dig deeper and provide the reasons for some of the things that were actually happening. More on these issues in the recommendation section.

The literature also highlighted some difficulties in self-evaluation processes (see tables 7 and 8 summarising ideas from Tari, 2010; Espinosa, 1994; Stake, 2010; Landi and Palacios, 2010; and Kells, 1995) that were evident in some parts of the first self-evaluation process at Unibe. The process was successfully completed, and

overcame the difficulties that come about from being the first time such a process was conducted with participation of different stakeholder groups in Unibe, however, it was not submitted for accreditation. The main reason given by 3 of the interviewees who had access to this information was that the results were not as positive as they would have wanted (even if they were good enough for the university to receive accreditation from ADAAC). This is in line with what was discussed in the literature that self-studies can be seen as self-serving, self-protecting, promotional and advocating for the home point of view (see table 8), because, in the case of Unibe, the senior management had a specific idea of what the final report should be like (in confidence, several interviewees in 2008 commented during the interviews that some members of the senior management had a particular view on the making of the final report). That is, the final report for the 2002 process, in the eyes of a few senior managers, should have presented an inflated reality so that the university would be protected from criticism, keeping its limitations hidden, so that no one would be able to point their fingers at the institution. Jackson (2001), in the literature review argues that the report is not the key element in a self-evaluation, however, Ritchie and Dale (2000, p245) found some managers in their interviews on self-assessment that suggested that “a successful self-assessment process was one that produced higher scores for the organization”. If senior management adopt this latter view, then the process may not be as beneficial as it could be for quality improvement, since the focus is then shifted to the results and not the process itself. This statement, unlike Jackson (2001), does not intend to undermine the importance of the report itself, since this study argues that the actual report can be seen as a picture of the university at a specific point in time and its recommendations can be used as triggers for positive change and quality improvement. In effect, one of the contributions this study offers to the literature is that it highlights the effective use of the self-evaluation report as a quality assurance mechanism in its own right, if used properly (more details in part 5.2.1).

To conclude, this study contributed to highlighting the relationship between self-evaluation and quality improvement using a longitudinal case study of a university in a developing country. The fact that empirical data was used to highlight this relationship from results of two different periods in time represents a significant contribution to self-evaluation theory, since a study of this nature has not been conducted in the past for universities in developing nations. Even in universities in developed countries, studies analysing data from two different self-evaluation processes in order to highlight the relationship of the processes with quality improvement were not found. The theory available presents self-evaluations tools as

positive quality instruments; however, a lack of empirical evidence, not just showing results from the self-studies but comparing them over time was not available at the time this research was conducted. Only EUA in their website present results from follow-up visits after the self-evaluation has been conducted, but they do not present actual comparison of 2 or more self-evaluations from the same university.

5.1.2 What is the use and impact of self-evaluation techniques: on stakeholder's quality perceptions and for university quality improvement and change?

Overall, the interview results showed that staff found the self-evaluation processes useful. It can be argued that one of the main 'uses' interviewees gave to the process was that it acted as a **wake-up call**, identifying the areas in need of improvement. It was also viewed as promoting a **reflective environment** where people can stop the activities of their busy schedules and reflect on issues relating to quality improvement and on how the university is addressing these issues. Its results can be fed into the plans for improvement and interviewees found them useful as **tools for gathering important information**. One interviewee characterised the self-evaluation as a '*photograph*' full of real, useful, descriptive information about the university and argued that if one looked closely at the picture, with critical eyes, then areas for improvement would be evident. He argued that this picture would also serve as historical document, with the true information of the institution at that particular moment in time being recorded forever.

As mentioned before, for self-evaluation purposes, it is important that university management is able to clearly understand from the results the views of its different stakeholders and how they felt during the process. From the results of the first self-evaluation the University understood that further participation and communication from its different stakeholders was needed in order to truly establish a mission and a vision that people could relate to (in line with Elhers, 2009).

After the first self-evaluation concluded, the university moved to prepare an Academic Reform, entirely changing its academic programmes and teaching styles. This reform triggered most of the changes that took place in the institution, but it was argued by most of the interviewees that the idea of the reform came from most of the findings of the first participatory self-evaluation process at Unibe.

The importance of a quality culture for successful self-evaluation processes was discussed in the literature review (Elhers, 2009; EUA, 2006; Vlăsceanu et al., 2004; Tabatoni et al., 2004; Davies, 2004; Harvey 2007). The literature review also shows that Ehlers (2009, p358) believes that the quality culture

can be perceived, but not directly and mechanistically installed in an organisation; it is the result of individual and collective involvement and interaction against the background of an existing quality system. Quality culture as an artefact cannot be transferred directly to other organisations but it can be studied and learned from.

Many of the interviewees believed the university has a quality/evaluation culture or that it is starting to build such a culture (see table 33). It can be argued that it is the sum of all the activities Unibe went through after the first self-evaluation process that has significantly changed the perception of a quality culture inside the university, not just the self-evaluation process. However, interviewees argued that the sense of ownership was built during this process, coming directly from the leader of the institution, and this, along with the trust he inspired, helped make the process successful in starting to develop a quality and evaluation culture.

The new Rector has actively promoted this quality culture. Through his leadership many staff members have identified with his vision and have positively engaged in evaluation activities (in line with Davies, 2001c). The Rector and his team have promoted a participation and communication climate, where members of staff feel they can express their views and that their opinion counts. Some members of staff expressed that evaluation is part of their day-to-day activities and that they have learned that it is a necessary function in order to be able to work well. This study recommends in the next section that continuous mini self-evaluations take place in order to take full advantages of these processes. They also highlighted that the participatory approach, which promotes teamwork, is a positive impact of self-evaluation processes. They were arranged in groups to collect and analyse data and understood the benefits of working as a team towards a common goal. The meaning of accountability was also better understood, because with empowerment from the new leadership also came stronger accountability, all necessary aspects of self-evaluation processes.

A comment from one of the interviewees serves to sum up the impact self-evaluations have had on quality perception and quality improvement at Unibe. He argued that there was a significant shift from *'having'* to do evaluations to *'wanting'* to do evaluations, which means that people, due to self-evaluation processes, are

now more motivated as they can see that results and recommendations from these processes are used for quality improvement purposes.

The actual uses of self-evaluations were explored in more detail in the previous section where I argue that self-evaluations can be used as triggers of positive change and therefore as quality improvement mechanisms. The fact that these processes are used within quality assurance procedures is not new and this is clearly documented in the existing literature. What this study is further arguing with its results is that self-evaluations should not only be seen as part of formal quality assurance processes but as change mechanisms on their own which promote a quality and participation culture and lead to more significant quality improvement and change than if only seen as a piece of a larger movement for accreditation purposes. Of course, this is not to argue that accreditation procedures are not beneficial (see their positive impacts as discussed in the literature review). However, what I am trying to present is a different way of using participatory self-evaluations as part of the daily routine of the institution through a Permanent Programme of Self-evaluation (PPS). More details on the recommendations section.

Developing nations, in particular the Dominican Republic, have a tradition of seeing any form of external evaluation as either unnecessary or intrusive. This was ratified by views of some of the interviewees and also from the comparison of the results from the two self-evaluations. Senior management at universities may find useful to implement a Permanent Programme of Self-evaluation (PPS) to create and maintain an evaluation culture. These practices could be promoted by the Dominican Ministry of Education and included within the higher education policies of the country, without their results necessarily being formally fed back to the Ministry, but more as an internal tool of universities for quality improvement.

5.2 Implications and Recommendations

The main objective of this research was to analyse the underlying principles of self-evaluation processes and how they relate to quality improvement and change in order to determine the impact and usefulness of such processes on quality perception and improvement as well as their impact on building an evaluation culture within the university.

This part of the conclusion chapter will explore the wider consequences of this research for existing theories of self-evaluation and for quality development in universities and provide a list of recommendations for university management. It will draw from information analysed in the literature review to demonstrate how this study has contributed to existing theories of self-evaluation in several ways. First, by confirming and expanding on what authors like Tari (2010), Landi and Palacios (2010) and Ritchie and Dale (2000) present as benefits and barriers of self-evaluations and then by building on what McAdams and Welch (2000) suggested about change after self-evaluation and finally building on what authors like Harvey (2006), Loukkola and Zhang (2010) and Elhers (2009) present on quality culture, and again Harvey (2002) on why universities should evaluate.

Furthermore, it will explain the implications for different stakeholders and expand on the limitations of the study and areas for further development. Finally, it will present a list of recommendations for universities looking for ways to develop an evaluation culture and embed quality into their day-to-day activities by conducting self-evaluation processes. It will also provide a model designed for this research based on the theories discussed in the literature review and the findings presented in Chapter 4 and recommendations on how to design tailor-made self-evaluations and implement PPS.

5.2.1 Relationship of results with existing theories

As seen in the analysis and discussion of the results of the interviews, in their majority results support the existing theories of self-evaluation, and confirm most of the benefits and barriers which can be found in those processes, as presented in table 29 in Chapter 4, where the answers of the interview were positively mapped against what was reviewed in the theory. This is a significant contribution of this study which gives empirical information from a longitudinal case study to further support existing theories. Based on the information presented in table 7 and 8 in the literature review and table 27 in chapter 4, the next table presents an updated list of the advantages or benefits of conducting self-evaluation processes to include the results from this study.

Table 36: Advantages of Self-evaluation processes

Advantages of self-evaluation processes
Identifies and highlights both strengths and areas for improvement, during the process as well as in the final report, in order to improve the overall quality of the institution and promote change
<i>Helps create and shape an evaluation and quality culture by involving staff in the process and raising the understanding and awareness of quality-related issues</i>
<i>Facilitates the integration of quality factors in all day-to-day practices by providing clear evaluation guidelines based on the characteristics of each area within the university and providing recommendations</i>
Effective communication increases in the university, giving a sense of unity and making people feel a part of the system
<i>Report results can be fed into the strategic plans of the university and can be used to promote positive change</i>
Increases awareness of what the institution has and does, through the openness and reflection of the actors involved, putting things in perspective
Gathers information from the root of the problem, measuring performance and improving the way information is organised
The rationality of decisions that aim for improvement are strengthened, promoting change based on results

The advantages presented above are a mixture of the results of this study and what has been discussed in the literature review. However, the table also provides unique issues which have not been explicitly included in the past as part of the lists of the advantages of self-evaluation processes. For example, in the past, the effective use of the self-evaluation “Report” as a tool for improving quality and promoting change has been identified as a result or consequence of self-evaluations but it has not been included as a **clear** and **significant** advantage and its use in promoting change by acting in its recommendations has not been highlighted enough. Furthermore, the fact that self-evaluation processes may help create an evaluation and quality culture has not been **explicitly** included in the existing lists of advantages of such processes. Its significance in quality assurance has been expressed in the theory but the fact that it may **clearly create and promote an evaluation culture** has not been stated as a direct advantage. Finally, the fact that by providing clear evaluation guidelines one helps integrate quality factors into day-to-day practices has not been emphasised enough as an advantage of these processes. That is, by actively and constantly using and integrating these tools within the day-to-day activities, these become embedded in the system of ensuring the university acts based on its quality standards.

In the area of disadvantages of self-evaluation processes, the following table merges what is presented in the literature review on this topic with the results of this study.

Table 37: Disadvantages of self-evaluation processes from mixing theory and results

Disadvantages of self-evaluation processes
<i>May be seen as an obligation imposed by an external body and therefore stakeholders may not commit</i>
<i>May be time consuming and in some cases the data may be obsolete by the time it is actually used or it may not be done in time to link into the business plan</i>
<i>Can be seen as self-serving, self-protecting, promotional, advocating the home point of view by people from the outside or advocating the point of view of the senior management by the other members of staff</i>
Some people may feel uncomfortable when being evaluated, like they are being 'checked', especially if an evaluation culture is not in place
May not receive the necessary support from senior management and lose its value to the rest of the community; If there is no compromise then the process may fail
Results may be inaccurate if the process is not conducted with methodological rigour
<i>People may feel overloaded as the process will probably be an extra burden to their everyday activities</i>
Some stakeholders may not want to participate due to lack of commitment and enthusiasm and may show resistance to change
Lack of resources; time, manpower, finance to conduct the processes accurately and also for implementing the improvement actions
People at lower levels may not understand its purpose if they are not clearly explained
May be too bureaucratic
May need to be used with other quality assurance tools in order to guarantee change
<i>Some areas to be evaluated may not be so relevant to the needs of the institution at the particular point in time</i>

In the case of the disadvantages or barriers to the process, this study actually offers more than what is available in the existing theories, by adding important details that came out of the results. For example, it underlines the fact that if the self-evaluation is seen as being imposed by an external body, stakeholders may not commit. This has been previously discussed in the theory, but it had not been stressed enough and since this is very relevant to the case of universities in developing countries should be included as a clear disadvantage or difficulty. In many cases these processes are started because they are requested by external

agents, in particular in the Dominican Republic where none of the universities use these types of tools for internal quality assurance purpose and only conduct them because of the requirements from accreditation agencies or reviews from the Ministry of Education. Also, the fact that the data might be obsolete if the process is too long or takes too much time had not been clearly pinpointed before this study. In the next section the idea of performing more frequent mini self-evaluations is presented and discussed. The issue of people feeling they are being checked was presented in the literature when talking about accreditation (van Kemenade, 2011) but had not been highlighted as a direct disadvantage of self-evaluation processes. These differences may also be due to the fact that since self-evaluations is generally seen as an internal process, stakeholders participating – in theory – should not feel like they are being watched or pressured, however – in practice – and as the results from this study highlight, some feel they are being ‘watched’ by senior management.

van Kemenade, (2011) highlighted that accreditation can be seen as a burden, but self-evaluation theory had not explicitly presented staff feeling overloaded as a clear disadvantage. These differences may also be due to the fact that accreditation processes are many times seen as more formal processes than self-evaluation, with greater implications if results are negative and appear in this particular study since self-evaluation processes have not been so widely studied on their own as accreditation processes have been. This is one of the limitations this study has identified of the literature relating to self-evaluation, where this process is mainly presented as part of larger quality assurance mechanisms, and its value on its own right has not been researched enough, at least in the context of developing nations.

Furthermore, the fact that self-evaluations can be seen as self-serving, self-protecting, promotional, advocating the home point of view by people from the outside has been previously discussed in the literature review (see table 8), however, the issue that it can also be seen this way internally, that is, by lower level members of staff thinking that the process will only serve the interest of the owners or senior management, as discussed in the interviews conducted for this study. This is a sensitive topic, one that if not address properly from the start of the processes may lead to stakeholders not wanting to cooperate or get involved in the self-evaluation and therefore hindering the results. That is why it is important that the purpose of the process is clearly discussed and presented, that there is trust between the participants, that there is effective leadership in place and excellent communication at all levels. This is further discussed in the Recommendation part where a model for effective self-evaluation is presented.

One last disadvantage is that if the self-evaluation is designed focusing on particular areas, some areas to be evaluated may not be so relevant to the needs of the institution at the particular point in time. This disadvantage was also not presented in the literature. Therefore it is important that the self-evaluation design is one that is relevant to the needs of the institution and not one that is just taken ready from an external agency. This is not to say that those self-evaluations are not useful, on the contrary, they may be extremely useful as was seen in the results from this study. However, if the institution adapts or expands the guidelines given by the external agency, or even better, incorporates tailor-made self-evaluations the process as part of their culture results can be even more positive. This is a matter of finding the right balance between external accountability and internal needs and fitting them into the goals of the process, which of course, is not easy. These issues are addressed in the recommendation section of this study.

Moving to the impact self-evaluations have on change, as mentioned in the result's chapter, the study confirmed that mainly positive change took place as a result of the self-evaluation process. The only clear link to change directly caused by self-evaluations found in the literature was commented by McAdams and Welch (2000) where they argue that after a first self-evaluation is concluded a considerable agenda for change is generated. Their statement was very general and was not linked to the conclusions of their study since their research objectives focused on a different aspect of self-evaluation, however, it is an appropriate comment which supports the findings of this study.

Some of the most salient changes were presented in table 30 in the result's chapter, including 'A new culture of evaluation - evaluation is embedded in the culture', 'Increased teamwork', 'Systematization of procedures', 'Staff are formally accountable of their actions' and very interestingly 'A shift from 'having' to do evaluations to 'wanting' to do evaluations'. Some of these have been previously presented in the theory as advantages of conducting self-evaluation processes, but this study also highlights them as actual changes as a consequence of the process, a clear contribution of this study adding to the theories of self-evaluation.

Kells (1995, p458) writes about why universities usually resist change and argues that "the usual absence of useful and timely information about the organization and how it does or does not work, and the lack of mechanisms to gather and use such information" may be a reason for resistance to change. This was also confirmed in the study, because what the self-evaluation process does is to effectively gather

information about the university by involving its stakeholders and uses this information to promote change. This was possibly one of the reasons why, even if there was some resistance to change at the start of the first self-evaluation, by the time the process ended and when the second one started there resistance to change was evident.

Some of the interviewees confirmed that the self-evaluation process promoted a quality culture for the university and actually helped in starting to build one. The results also confirm theories of quality culture inside universities and mainly agree with what was presented by EUA (2006) and Bollaert (2007) in the results of their quality culture project. In particular, their argument that a success factor for effectively embedding a quality culture is “to include the capacity of the institutional leadership to provide room for a grass-roots approach to quality (wide consultation and discussion) and to avoid the risk of over-bureaucratisation” (EUA 2006, p32) was confirmed by the results of the interviews, when the role of the Rector and his senior team was highlighted as one of the factors that inspired people to participate and work towards positive change. Loukkola and Zhang, (2010) also argue that the majority of their respondents identified the importance of the role of senior leadership in building a quality culture as was confirmed in this study.

Results also show an agreement with what Harvey (2007) presents as features indicative of a quality culture in the sense that all the points he presents were mentioned in one way or another by the interviewees when they were referring to the self-evaluation process. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a direct link between quality culture and self-evaluation processes where the ‘quality system’ that will be used to build on the quality culture could be the self-evaluation process, as can be seen in the following table.

Table 38: Link of self-evaluation processes to features of quality culture

Features of a quality culture Harvey (2007)	Self-evaluation process benefits as per results
There is a recognition by academics and administrators of need for a system of quality monitoring to ensure accountability (and compliance where required) and to facilitate improvement. However, this should not be a 'bureaucratic' system.	Interviewees commented that the SE positively increased their accountability and compliance and also highlighted that one of the barriers of SE is that it may be seen as bureaucratic if the purpose is not clearly articulated by the leaders and if the process is not planned effectively.
The quality system needs to have a clear purpose, which articulates with the quality culture	Interviewees argued that the purpose of the process needs to be made clear to the university community and some added that the process should be presented as a quality assurance tool
A quality culture is about partnership and co-operation, sharing of experiences and team working.	All the interviewees confirmed that being part of the process made them feel part of the team and increased communication among them
A quality culture is inspirational rather than dictatorial. Leadership is at all levels in the institution and does not refer to just senior managers.	Interviewees highlighted the role of the Rector and his close team as inspirational leaders, promoting leadership at all levels through their actions
A quality culture welcomes external critical evaluation from a variety of sources including formal external evaluations, external peers acting as critical friends, and internal peer review and support.	Self-evaluations may be used in accreditation processes which include external evaluation. At Unibe several external critical evaluations took place from the Ministry of Education. By nature it includes internal peer review and support.
At heart a quality culture is about facilitating and encouraging reflexivity and praxis; self-reflection, developing improvement initiatives and implementing them.'	This is also at the heart of self-evaluation and was confirmed by what was mentioned by most of the interviewees.

In the interview results it was mentioned that the use of the different cultural typologies presented by different authors in the literature review helped identify the cultural type of Unibe. Results showed that Unibe had an interesting shift in culture as follows:

Figure 15: Cultural shift at Unibe using Cultural Type Theories



In more detail, the following table, adapted from table 4, presents the details of the two cultural types and relates them to quality. It is important to highlight what was mentioned in the literature review regarding cultural typologies. This is, cultural typologies are not meant to constrain or to 'box' into categories and they are not clear-cut, which means that the typologies presented below do not exist in their pure form within Unibe (hence the mixture of two types from the same author during the same period). The cultural typologies are used as guidelines in understanding how stakeholders may behave under different circumstances.

It seems that Unibe, based on the cultural typologies and their relationship to quality concepts, is at a stage where quality may be seen as 'customer satisfaction'. Seen from an academic point of view this might be one of the reasons there has been a great focus on improving the quality of teaching staff and the evident thirst for quality improvement.

Table 39: Details of cultural typologies

Type	Cultural type		Characteristics	Authority	Quality Definition
Previous Cultural type	Bureaucracy	McNay (1995)	Concerned about procedures and structures, relative little direct focus on academic matters. Reactive adaptation	Managerial authority	Quality as fitness for purpose
	Role	Handy and Aitken (1986)			
	Hierarchy/Collectivism	Douglas (1982)			
	Hierarchy	Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983)			
Current Cultural type	Enterprise	McNay (1995)	Devolved leadership. Production of good graduates, standards and learning outcomes, looks at both subject specific and core characteristics, employers are the customer Provides a sense of family with shared values and common goals and at the same time a commitment to thinking differently is evident. Flexibility is also evident.	Employment/professional authority	Quality as customer satisfaction
	Task	Handy and Aitken (1986)			
	Egalitarian/Hierarchy	Douglas (1982)			
	Clan/adhocracy	Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983)			

Furthermore, this shift in culture could have helped in being more open to change and willing to take on board recommendations from the self-evaluation processes. EUA (2005, p10) argue that “stressing the self-evaluation stage as a collective exercise for the unit under review to ensure the implementation of appropriate change (this includes academic and administrative staff and students)” is key for embedding a quality culture, and this was again confirmed in part by this study, where interviewees affirmed that the first self-evaluation process marked the beginning of a quality and evaluation culture and was the trigger for change.

This study also supports the quality culture model created by Ehlers (2009) and contributes to quality culture theories by adding certain aspects as per results of this study to his model. In his onion-like model he argues that at the heart of a quality culture are structures such as quality management systems and tools and uses ‘communication, participation and trust’ as key transversal elements that move across all components. The staff interviewed presented self-evaluation processes as quality management/improvement/assurance systems that build and improve ‘communication, participation and trust’ within the institution. The results from this study suggest that ‘leadership’ can be added as a fourth key transversal element because of the key role the Rector and his team played in developing and

supporting the process. As seen in the case of Unibe, leaders played an important role in promoting ownership of the process and safeguarding its success. The following is an adaptation of figure 1, the quality culture model for universities created by Ehlers (2009), based on the results of this study.

Figure 16: Quality Culture Model for HE based on Ehlers (2009) and results of this study



This figure was based on Ehlers’ (2009) model, but I adapted it to include leadership as a fourth key transversal element. At the heart of the onion I placed the self-evaluation process as an example of a quality management tool and added ‘reflection’, ‘ownership’, ‘accountability’, ‘evaluation’ and ‘teamwork’ as enabling factors, as per the results of this study. The changes/additions I made contribute to building self-evaluation theories which can then be used when performing self-evaluations in developing countries. The range of theories available in this area which are based on empirical results of longitudinal case studies such as this one is very limited, and I would go as far as arguing that almost non-existent for universities in developing nations.

The results of this study can also be used to build on Harvey’s (2002) reasons for evaluating by adding as another good reason for evaluating: ‘to build and promote a quality and evaluation culture’, which was not stated in his list and can be confirmed by the results of this study.

Furthermore, it is important to also highlight that no study of this kind to this date has been conducted in a developing country before and therefore, as just mentioned, its results are useful in building and enriching the limited literature in university management in developing countries. It was mentioned before that literature on university management in developing countries such as the Dominican Republic is very limited and that hardly any research is conducted on the management of such institutions. This may be in part due to the fact that there are very few universities that offer PhD programmes in countries such as the Dominican Republic to begin with and therefore in-country research in general (not just university management) is limited.

Empirical longitudinal case studies such as this one present practical results of self-evaluations compared over time providing food-for-thought to the very 'hungry' higher education system in the Dominican Republic.

Results from this study are not only relevant to universities in developing countries, but also contribute to building the overall literature on usefulness of self-evaluation processes, which lacks deeper insights on how these processes help increase quality assurance and awareness and promote positive change and their value as independent quality assurance mechanisms and not just part of more general processes of quality assurance. The only other somewhat similar study based on particular case studies on the impact of self-evaluation processes was that of Tari (2010) in Spanish universities, however, even if his work involved a single case study like this one, it was not a longitudinal case study showing longer term results and comparing them over time. The longitudinal study of the case of Unibe provides specific insights on changes occurred as a direct consequence of self-evaluation processes, such as the perception of an increase in quality and evaluation culture, something that up to this date has not been analysed in the same manner. Furthermore, even if self-evaluation are considered to be established processes that have been widely applied, specially by universities in the United States, not enough empirical research has been conducted to highlight their usefulness and impact on change – which was the purpose of this study and is supported by its findings.

Finally, as a consequence of this research, self-evaluation processes may now be presented as an even more important mechanism for triggering positive change and developing a quality and evaluation culture for universities interested in quality development.

5.2.2 Implication of results to different stakeholders

The results of the study have significant use for senior managers of universities looking for ways to improve quality within their institutions. The study has shown that if used correctly, results from self-evaluation process may trigger positive changes in an institution, may increase ownership of staff and improve performance leading to an increase in quality.

The results of the study also impact academic and administrative staff, and students, by showing how important they are for the success of the process and overall to quality improvement. Results also highlight that good communication, trust, leadership, ownership and reflection may help create a quality culture through self-evaluation processes and the willingness of students, academic and administrative staff to get on board is essential for success.

Finally, for higher education systems in developing countries and in particular in the Dominican Republic the results have highlighted the usefulness of self-evaluation processes. Higher education system could benefit from formalising the use of self-evaluation, not just for accreditation purposes but as tools for quality improvement, by including these processes in their higher education policies as an alternative to other top-down quality assurance processes which may seem more intruding.

5.2.3 Limitations and areas for further research

Most of the limitations of the study had to do with using the single case study methodology. Limitations attached to using single case study strategies are presented in the methodology chapter, including generalisation of results. However, it was previously argued that the purpose of this study was not to generalise but to provide better understanding of the impact of self-evaluation processes and to offer transferability to readers seeking insights on these processes.

Even so, it is important to note that the study would have benefited from further exploring the views of students and alumni and possible other stakeholders through in-depth interviews to explore their perceptions regarding the impact self-evaluations have on quality improvement. One of the main research questions wanted to explore the views of the different stakeholders and the conclusions of the

study would have been more accurate if interviews such as those conducted on senior management, staff and lecturers, were conducted on the remaining stakeholders of the university. The study would have also benefited from mixing methods even more, to include, apart from in-depth interviews, a survey to students and alumni in order to reach a greater number of them.

Another imitation was the use of the ADAAC guide for self-evaluation. The instruments proposed by the guide have faults in gathering deeper level information by asking more penetrating questions. It also limited the range of stakeholders who responded to different aspects, making it difficult to triangulate or verify certain responses. The guide and instruments were used as per guidelines from the Ministry of Education in order to be able to apply for accreditation, so it was not my choice or the university's choice to use that specific criteria. However, the university could have adapted the instruments by adding more questions that would provide useful information in the areas believed by the university that needed further details. The use of tailor-made instruments are further explored in the recommendations.

The results of the study also open up several areas for further research. A comparison of self-evaluation processes across several universities in the Dominican Republic that have completed such processes would enrich the literature and help in the understanding of how self-evaluation process may help improve quality in universities. Since the self-evaluation process is not the same for each university, it would be useful to compare how different stakeholders perceive the value of the process and if this perception is different from university to university. A comparison of how the processes were conducted in the different universities, identifying best practice may help create a guide for conducting self-evaluation processes in universities in developing countries. Also, a comparison of the results of this study with new results from the self-evaluation conducted in 2012 at Unibe would increase the validity of the findings of this study.

Another area worth exploring is the role of the leaders in quality improvement and development and in promoting change in universities. This study identified that the role of the leader (the Rector) and his team was paramount in the success of the self-evaluation process and it would be interesting to see what types of leaders are needed in higher education management and which types of leaders would encourage better results in evaluation processes.

With regard to building/sustaining a quality culture, it would be extremely interesting if a study was conducted that would carry out the survey made for the EUA Culture Project to examine quality culture and quality assurance processes in higher education in universities in the Dominican Republic. The results could then be compared to the results obtained by the “Examining Quality Culture in European Higher Education Institutions” project, in Loukkula and Zhang (2010), from European universities and similarities, differences and best practices could be used to improve quality issues in the higher education system in the Dominican Republic, always keeping in mind the different contexts in which they operate.

5.2.4 Recommendations

After reviewing the relationship of the results with the existing literature there are two main areas of recommendations as follows:

1. Recommendations to do with the design and development and implementation of self-evaluations
 - a. Tailor-made self-evaluations
 - b. Mini self-evaluations
 - c. Permanent Programme of Self-evaluation
2. Recommendations to do with building commitment to the self-evaluation processes through a quality and evaluation culture in order to achieve quality improvement and more effective results and positive change.
 - a. Self-evaluation Quality Culture Model (based on Ehlers, 2009)
 - b. Proposal for Ministry of Education for including policies of self-evaluation as quality assurance tools in their own right
 - c. Model for successful self-evaluation as trigger of positive change

The first area has to do with the nature of the self-evaluation processes and how they are applied in universities. It was evident from the results of this study that using pre-determined self-evaluation instruments may help achieve accreditation but may not give significant information in areas of particular interest to each institution. That is, universities should seek to design their own self-evaluation mechanisms, and if self-evaluations are also needed for accreditation purposes then add to the existing instruments the requirements of the accreditation bodies. Universities should design a methodologically robust self-evaluation process where results are reliable and present the true picture of the institution and make sure staff understand the importance of results being reliable. Questions need to include the opinion of all stakeholders and should be able to offer results that go deep into

the root of the problems. To universities new to this process, the role of the Ministry of Education in developing countries in providing support for the design of such models is of great importance as universities may benefit from using the experience in accreditation of the Ministry of Education and may be able to benefit from the already existing guidelines. However, the universities should exercise caution and should adapt instruments to their own situation and needs. An analysis of the needs of each institution should be conducted as a pre-stage to the design of the tailor-made model. A self-evaluation process designed under the 'fitness for purpose' definition of quality, that is, made to fit the needs of the institution may be able to offer results that will help achieve quality improvement easier than a ready-made model, which members of staff may not be able to relate to.

Results of this study also indicated that the time span between self-evaluation may be an issue in determining whether the changes that take place are a result of the self-studies. If too much time goes by in between processes, 'ticking off' the recommendations in the self-evaluation report may be more difficult. That is why this research proposes the idea of mini self-evaluation processes, of a lower scale than institutional self-evaluation processes, where particular key areas of the institution conduct shorter self-evaluations within a closer time span. This is a difficult task for a university with no evaluation culture, and the models presented later on in this part may help institutions achieve a quality and evaluation culture by following a specific set of principles, in turn making it easier to apply mini self-evaluation processes. These mini evaluations should be conducted in a simple non-invasive manner, avoiding too much bureaucracy and overloading staff, as this will hamper the results and instead of contributing to quality improvement may be a reason for dissatisfaction and cause negative effects. Therefore, mini self-evaluations should be in place once the institution is in a more mature stage, having conducted at least one full institutional self-evaluation.

This study also suggests that universities will benefit from introducing a Permanent Programme of Self-evaluation (PPS), again at a stage where the university has already been through at least one self-evaluation process. The PPS in principle sets the base for a permanent evaluation climate within the institution, which will promote constant quality improvement. The following figure illustrates the cyclical processes:

Figure 17: Permanent Programme of Self-evaluation

As mentioned before, in order for such a programme to be successful, a quality and evaluation culture is considered a key component. Senior management of the university need to develop high commitment to the processes from top to bottom by making known the purpose of the processes and linking it to quality improvement, in order for stakeholders to understand the positive impact the process may have and that their role is paramount in guaranteeing its success. Furthermore, commitment from the leaders to reflect a vision for quality and change by inspiring trust, and promoting ownership, communication and reflection at all levels is an important feature. The leaders will need to develop effective communication and a sense of teamwork through empowerment and ownership of the actors involved, actively encouraging participation and inspiring stakeholders to ‘want’ to participate instead of feeling they ‘have’ to participate.

The results of the study along with the analysis of the literature review set the base for the Self-evaluation Quality Culture Model presented in the previous section. I adapted the Quality Culture Model created by Elhers (2009) to include self-evaluation processes at the centre of the model and added a fourth key transversal element of leadership, as presented in figure 14. I also added other enabling factors such as commitment, accountability, teamwork, evaluation and ownership.

Figure 18: Self-evaluation Quality Culture Model



Using this model, senior management at universities can keep track of the different enabling factors for creating and maintaining a quality culture, using the four key transversal elements of leadership, trust, participation and communication as factors that hold and support self-evaluation at the heart of this quality culture.

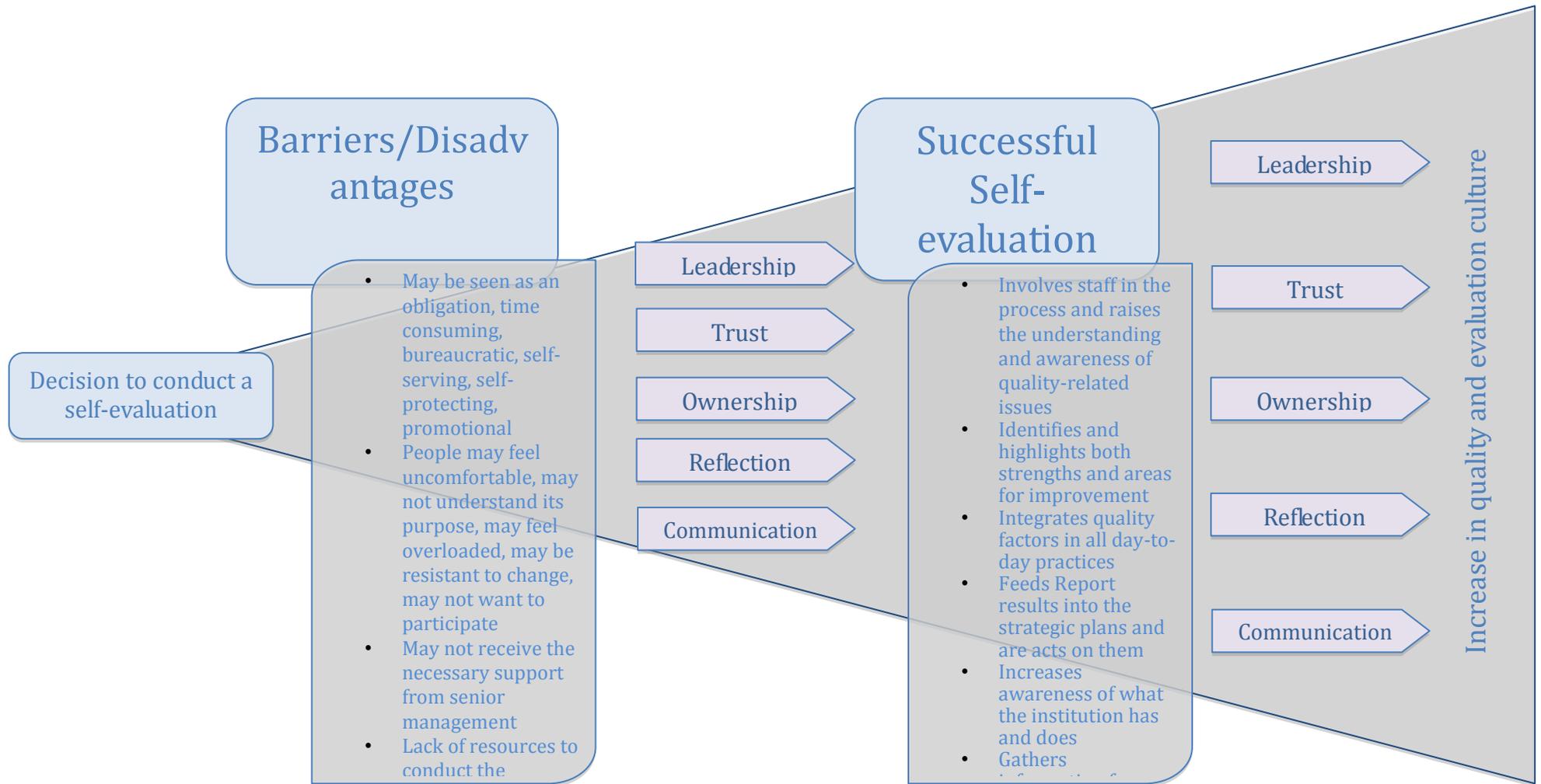
Overall, one of the keys to successful self-evaluation processes, as was seen from the results of this study, lies in engaging stakeholders in the process by promoting communication, empowerment, ownership, trust and leadership and making sure results are used (and it is made known that they are used) as a positive trigger for change. It is important to highlight the importance of the proper use of the final report and ensure that results are fed into the strategic plan and into the day-to-day activities so that they are indeed used as a positive trigger for change.

These recommendations may help university management to better prepare for a robust, truly participative, self-evaluation process, ensuring communication and commitment at all levels.

Before moving to presenting the model for successful self-evaluation processes as triggers of positive change and development of quality and evaluation cultures it is important to note that another more general value this study may have for national policy and systems is that since it highlights its importance as a tool that triggers positive change the Ministry of Higher Education in the Dominican Republic may consider suggesting in a more formal way that universities engage in such practices, regardless of whether they aim to achieve accreditation from some particular body and may consider including self-evaluation processes as part of higher education policies for promoting quality assurance within universities.

To conclude, the following is the model for self-evaluation as a tool for developing and/or increasing a quality and evaluation culture and for triggering positive change. It is based on the review of the existing literature plus the results from the study. It presents a movement throughout four periods as can be seen below.

Figure 19: Model for successful self-evaluation as trigger of positive change



The first moment it shows is when the decision to self-evaluate is taken, regardless of the initial reasons or purposes for choosing to conduct such a process. Then, the period before the self-evaluation is conducted, where several disadvantages or barriers may be in place, especially if it is the first time the process is being conducted. After the barriers are overcome, comes the period the successful process takes place, by developing trust, leadership, ownership, reflection and empowerment. Finally the model presents the period after the process is completed, where there is an improvement in the quality and evaluation culture of the university after having conducted a successful self-evaluation process and having embedded evaluation processes into the day-to-day activities through trust, leadership, ownership, reflection and empowerment and by using the results of the self-evaluation to trigger changes.

The model highlights some of the recommendations of this study, based on the findings and the literature review and may be used as a visual guide for those in university management searching for a useful tool, in this case self-evaluation processes, for increasing the quality and evaluation culture.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

ADAAC guidelines: Description of instruments used for self-evaluation processes at Unibe

Designing a self-study process relevant to the Dominican private university culture was not an easy task. As explained before, one of the main reasons UNIBE was conducting a self-study is to obtain local accreditation from ADAAC. This agency, had its own parameters by which it was going to decide which universities were at the level of accreditation. However, because ADAAC was a relatively new institution (re-opened in the year 2000 after being closed for almost 20 years), many of the procedures for accreditation were not 100% determined back in 2001. When the accreditation process started, the only material available was a self-study guide adapted from Chile's experience. Although the guide had serious mistakes and did not consider some important areas was the tool universities had to follow in order to effectively conduct their self-evaluation and be considered for accreditation. The guide provided numeric values to 27 areas of interest (as previously seen on in the results chapter table 21), and based on the final score institutions were granted pre-institutional accreditation. ADAAC was flexible on the way each university conducted the self-study as long as the data provided information on the areas and issues they present on their guide.

In order to determine if the universities participating in the initial part of the accreditation process were on the right track, ADAAC invited an expert from Chile's CINDA that had extensive experience on accreditation and self-evaluation processes. The seven universities paid for the consultancy and received high quality advice on conducting effective self-evaluation processes each of the five visits during a period of eight months. It was a rewarding experience to participate in these meetings and be able to learn from CINDA's experience.

After carefully studying the ADAAC guide, another member of the strategic planning department and I concluded that in order to make the best out of the process, we needed to compare what other guides offered and based on that mixture come up with our own process, always complying with the guidelines given by ADAAC. At that point, many of the other universities that were participating themselves for the process were concerned with the way forward. They felt lost and did not know on how to conduct such processes. ADAAC decided then to give some support and conducted ten meetings with members of the seven universities involved in the first stage of the accreditation process and I was the assigned representative for Unibe.

Each meeting lasted an average of six hours, with intense discussions on how to create a unified process for all the universities. Unification of processes was a big concern, especially for ADAAC, because the more unified processes were, the easier it would be to conduct the external evaluation.

At that time, out of all the universities, Unibe was the only one assigning human resources to work solely on the accreditation process and therefore it was the university that always provided ideas and solutions to the problems. The meetings were very useful because I got a chance to understand how other universities worked and the level of importance each of those universities gave to the self-evaluation process. However, none of the staff from the other universities spent significant time (apart from the 6hrs of the meetings) on designing effective process.

However valuable the meetings were on matters of useful insights on the different views and perspectives of other universities, they also proved to be somewhat time consuming because the universities could not come to a unified view on how the process should be conducted. After serious discussions with the president of ADAAC we decided to create a committee that was going to work for the benefit of all 7 universities and would be in charge of creating a Register Guide, based on ADAAC's guide for self-study. This committee was composed by the president of ADAAC, two other members of my strategic planning department and me. Membership to the committee was opened for any person from the 7 universities involved in the process, however, none of them showed real interest and preferred to be given the final result and not be a part of its creation. It seemed that the view of most of the other universities was that this was a process that they had to go through, and that they would only put the minimum effort required for its completion.

The committee met for 6 intensive workshops and created the Register Guide. This guide was an effective tool designed for easier application of ADAAC's guide. To better explain the process of collecting the data an example from a specific area is presented.

The Table below presents the area of Admissions (one of 27 areas presented by ADAAC) exactly like it appears in the manual ADAAC created in order for the reader to compare the 'original' to other tools created to facilitate the process.

Table 40: ADAAC'S ORIGINAL MODEL FOR THE AREA OF ADMISSIONS

Admissions	Value
The requirements and procedures for admissions of new students are approved by the institution. The requirements and procedures for admissions establish all the documents required by law, the official dispositions and the rules of the university.	10
The authorities and members of the admissions committee know the requirements and procedures that govern the admission process and act according to the requirements established by the admission process	7
Apart from what is required by law, the official dispositions and the internal rules, the university applies diagnostic tests to the aspiring students and takes into account for the admission of aspiring students the results from the diagnostic tests.	5
The staff in charge of the admission process applies rigorously the established criteria taking onto account the institutional philosophy	8

The table below is the adaptation of the information given by ADAAC in their guide to the Matrix my team and I created for Unibe. The Integrative Matrix integrates the elements we needed to consider for gathering the information. It constituted an important tool to guide the elaboration of instruments for gathering As can be seen below the Integrated Matrix contains four columns, the code of the question, the actual question, the sources and techniques used to gather the answers for each question. data and as reference during the phase of analysis.

Table 41: INTEGRATED MATRIX (CREATED BY UNIBE) - AREA: ADMISSIONS

Code	ADMISSIONS	SOURCE	TECHNIQUES
III8-1a	The requirements and procedures for admissions of new students are approved by the institution.	I, K	2
III8-1b	The requirements and procedures for admissions establish all the documents required by law, the official dispositions and the rules of the university.	I, K	2
III8-2a	The authorities and members of the admissions committee know the requirements and procedures that govern the admission process.	I, K	2
III8-2b	The authorities and members of the admissions committee act according to the requirements established by the admission process	I, K	2
III8-3a	Apart from what is required by law, the official dispositions and the internal rules, the university applies diagnostic tests to the aspiring students.	I, K	2
III8-3b	The institution takes into account for the admission of aspiring students the results from the diagnostic tests.	I, K	2
III8-4	The staff in charge of the admission process applies rigorously the established criteria taking onto account the institutional philosophy.	I, K	2

As seen in the first column of the table above, along with my team I crated a coding system that identifies each item with the category, area and question number it should have, as well as a letter at the end indicating the different parts the original question from ADAAC was broken down into. It should be noted that the original table had only four questions, while the Matrix has seven. This is because in the original table several issues were presented in only one question, which made it difficult to address when gathering the data, so we decided to break some of the questions down in order to obtain more specific answers. For example, the first point in the admissions table (Table 6) was broken down into two: III8-1a and III8-1b and the meaning of the code is as follows:

- ‘III’ stands for the third category “Academic Administration”
- ‘8’ stands for the number of the area, which is the eight out of twenty-seven
- ‘1’ stands for the order it is presented in the original table from ADAAC
- ‘a’ stands for the first part of the question

The sources were grouped and alphabetically assigned a letter to the different stakeholders that were going to be answering questions, from A to R as follows:

Table 42: Sources

A	All the academic community
B	Students
C	Teachers
D	Deans, Directors and Coordinators of Programs
E	Accounting
F	Public Relations
G	Registrar Department
H	Administrative staff
I	Academic Vice-rector
J	Human Resources
K	Admissions
L	Strategic Planning
M	Library
N	Research
ñ	Student Affairs
O	Alumni
P	Computer Lab
Q	Senior Management
R	Counselling

Finally, a number from 1 to 3 was give to the different techniques that were used to gather the data as follows:

- 1 - Interviews

2 - Questionnaires

3 - Document review

Instruments for the registration of the data were prepared based on the information of the Integrated Matrix. These instruments facilitated the registration of the data and guarantee that the scores assigned correspond with what was established in the guide of ADAAC. Such instruments were questionnaires, observation guides and lists, and interviews. The questionnaires contained closed questions, properly codified and grouped by areas. In each questionnaire the source to be consulted was identified and a section for comments and observations was included. The observation lists and guides were properly codified and grouped by area. The interviews were composed by items that needed more clarification from the questionnaires.

In order to properly measure each answer of the instrument, and to conduct the process in a more organised matter, as mentioned above, we created a Register Guide (see example below). The assigned weight of each question was given in the original guide from ADAAC. The Register Guide we designed divides the original weight according to the amount of times the question was broken down in the matrix. Then the assigned weight was distributed according to the possible answer as seen in the table below. This model was designed with some similarities to the format Kells (1995) proposes for questionnaires in self-evaluation, giving options of answers in the same way.

Table 43 REGISTER GUIDE (CREATED BY UNIBE WITH ADAAC)

Assigned Weight	Code	ADMISSIONS <i>30=100%</i>	Yes Always Totally Excellent	Almost always In their majority Good Associate	Sometimes Partially Regular More or less associate	Rarely Very little Insufficiently	No Never Nothing
5.0	III8-1a	The requirements and procedures for admissions of new students are approved by the institution.	5.0	3.75	2.50	1.25	0.0
5.0	III8-1b	The requirements and procedures for admissions establish all the documents required by law, the official dispositions and the rules of the university.	5.0	3.75	2.50	1.25	0.0
4.0	III8-2a	The authorities and members of the admissions committee know the requirements and procedures that govern the admission process.	4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	0.0
3.0	III8-2b	The authorities and members of the admissions committee act according to the requirements established by the admission process	3.0	2.25	1.50	0.75	0.0
3.0	III8-3a	Apart from what is required by law, the official dispositions and the internal rules, the university applies diagnostic tests to the aspiring students.	3.0	2.25	1.50	0.75	0.0
2.0	III8-3b	The institution takes into account for the admission of aspiring students the results from the diagnostic tests.	2.0	1.50	1.0	0.50	0.0
8.0	III8-4	The staff in charge of the admission process applies rigorously the established criteria taking onto account the institutional philosophy.	8.0	6.0	4.0	2.0	0.0

The same process was followed with all 27 areas. That is, a matrix and register guide were created for all 27 areas and are available upon request.

When all the relevant instruments were ready I led a meeting with all the participants of the self-evaluation process to explain how the process of collecting the data would be done. People were divided into 5 groups, each of which had a group leader. The first step was to divide the instruments into the different sources of information and assign each of the 5 groups a set of sources of information (stakeholders) to address. For example, Group A would have to apply the instruments to the planning department, the senior management, student affairs department, research department, staff and the computing department. Of course,

the instruments that were going to be applied were previously prepared and only the information relevant to each source was included. The instruments were prepared in such a way that I could identify immediately which source it had to be applied to and which area of ADAAC it was covering. I made sure to separate the questions of each area by putting them in different pages. So, for example, if from the area of admissions the author was only going to ask one question to the senior management, then it would put only that question in that page and the continue with another area in another page. This made sense for the later part of re-grouping the questionnaires by Area and not by Source, because the final analysis and report to ADAAC needed to be presented by Area. For example, after Group A gathered all the information from the sources it was assigned, it had to return the completed questionnaires to the strategic planning department so that this office could mix with them with the results of the other sources assigned to other groups and then, all together, be re-arranged by Areas.

Once all the data was gathered and arranged by Areas the tabulation and quantification of the results began to take place. When the processes were completed each Working group analysed their results and prepared a draft report for the areas they were in charge of. These reports were then submitted to my department in order to prepare the final self-evaluation report.

These same instruments were then used in the 2007 self-evaluation and similar processes were followed in order to gather the information and write the final report.

Appendix 2

Unibe Documents used

Original name (Spanish)	English translation
Anteproyecto de Autoevaluación Institucional 2007	Self-evaluation pre-project 2007
Auto-evaluación Quinquenal 2008	5-year self-evaluation 2008
Carpetas profesores (Depto. De Recursos Humanos)	Lecturer's files (HRM department)
Comentarios cuestionarios autoevaluación 2002	Self-evaluation questionnaires - comments
Competencias en el Plan de Estudios de Medicina	Competencies of the study plan in the School of Medicine
Consultas sobre Visión y Misión a través de Grupos Focales	Consultations on vision and misión through focus groups
Cuestionario para Consulta Interna sobre la Nueva Misión de Unibe 2006	Questionnaire for the internal consultation of the new misión for Unibe 2006
Documento Base para el Proceso de Reforma Institucional 2005	Base document for the Institutional Reform Process
Estudio: Mejoras que nacen de nuestros Alumnos: Grupos Focales y Encuestas direccionadas a Estudiantes de Unibe Graduandos 2008	Study: Improvements that come from our students: focus groups and surveys to students graduating from Unibe in 2008
Evaluaciones Escuela de Medicina	School of Medicine Evaluations
Grupos Focales - transcripción de reuniones	Focus groups - transcription of meetings
Guía de Discusión De Grupos Focales	Discussion guides of focus groups
Informe "Consulta Proceso de Reforma Institucional, 2005" (Grupos Focales)	Report "Consultation process for the Institutional Reform, 2005" Focus Groups
Informe de Auto-Evaluación Institucional Quinquenal 2007	Institutional Self-evaluation Report (5-year 2007)
Informe de Autoevaluación Institucional - Plan de Mejora - 2008	Institutional Self-evaluation Report - Improvement Plan 2008
Informe de Autoevaluación Institucional 2004 (De acuerdo a los criterios de la Asociación Dominicana para el Autoestudio y la Acreditación, ADAAC)	Institutional Self-evaluation Report 2004 (based on Criteria from ADAAC)
Informe de Autoevaluación Institucional De acuerdo a los	Institutional Self-evaluation Report 2008 (based on Criteria

critérios de la Asociación Dominicana Para el Autoestudio y la Acreditación, ADAAC) 2008	from ADAAC)
Informe de Evaluación Externa 2008	External Evaluation Report 2008
Informe sobre el Proceso de Autoevaluación Unibe 2002	Report on the Self-evaluation process 2002
Instrumento de Autoevaluación Docente	Teacher self-evaluation instrument
Lista de actividades culturales 2002	Cultural Activities list 2002
Manual para el análisis y presentación de información por áreas del Autoestudio y Acreditación ADAAC 2007	Manual for the analysis and presentation of information arranged by areas of the self-evaluation ADAAC 2007
Manuales de descripción de trabajo Depto. de Recursos Humanos	Job description manuals (HRM dept)
Discursos de Graduaciones de Unibe	Graduation Speeches Unibe
Matrix Integrada (adaptada de la guía ADAAC)	Integrated Matrix (adapted from ADAAC guide)
Misión, visión y objetivos Unibe	Mision, vision and objectives of Unibe
Objetivos Planteados por las Comisiones de Trabajo Planificación Estratégica presentación ppt 2006	Objectives put forward by the strategic planning work groups, ppt presentation 2006
Organigrama Unibe	Unibe Organisational Chart
Proceso de Planificación Institucional 2006	Institutional Planning Process 2006
Proceso de Reforma Institucional "Propuesta Operativa Para La Realización de grupos focales"	Institutional Reform Process "Operational proposal for focus groups"
Propósito de los Grupos Culturales y records de reuniones	Purpose of Cultural Groups and records of meetings
Propuesta Estructura del Departamento de Comunicaciones	Proposal for the structure of the communications Department
Propuesta para Sistema de Evaluación Docente presentación ppt 2006	Proposal for Teacher Evaluation System – ppt presentation 2006
Proyecto de Autoevaluación Institucional	Institutional Self-evaluation Project
Proyecto: Auditoría Académica Resumen	Academic Audit Project - Summary
Proyecto: Revisión Curricular Escuela de Medicina Cuestionario	Curricular Revision Project – School of Medicine

Versión: Estudiantes	questionnaire version: students
Proyecto: Revisión Curricular Escuela de Medicina Cuestionario Versión: Docentes	Curricular Revision Project – School of Medicine questionnaire version: teachers
Reporte Revisión Institucional Laila E. Denoya, Ph.D Fulbright Scholar Mayo-Octubre 2004	Institutions revision report Institucional Laila E. Denoya, Ph.D Fulbright Scholar, May- October 2004
Respuesta al Informe de Evaluación Externa Seescyt	Answer to the external evaluation report Seescyt
Respuestas de informantes ADAAC 2007	Informant Answers ADAAC 2007
Resumen Ejecutivo “Consulta Proceso De Reforma Institucional, 2005” (Grupos Focales)	Executive summary “Consultation of the institutional reform process 2005 – focus groups”
Reunión del Consejo Académico Ampliado Jueves 18 de Noviembre de 2010 ppt	Academic Council Meeting 18 November 2010, ppt presentation
Revisión de Documentos para la Recolección de la Información 2004	Document Revision for the collection of information 2004
Tablas resultados final autoestudio 2002	Tables with final results of self- evaluation 2002
Taller para revisión de instrumentos de Evaluación Docente	Workshop for the revision of instruments of teacher evaluation
Unibe Autoevaluación 1990	Self-evaluation Unibe 1990
Unibe Diagnostico Quinquenal 1989-1994	5-year diagnosis Unibe 1989- 1994
Unibe Diagnostico Quinquenal 1994-1998	5-year diagnosis Unibe 1994- 1998

Appendix 3:

Interview Guides

Interview guide 2008

1. Did you take part in the self-evaluation process in 2002? If so, what was your role?
2. What is your role in the current self-evaluation process?
3. Why do you think the 2002 self-evaluation was not completed and presented for accreditation?
4. Which parts of the 2002 process do you think needed to be carried out differently and why?
5. Was the 2002 study of any use to the University? How? Why?
6. Have you seen any changes as a result of the 2002 self-evaluation? Which ones?
7. Please comment on the graph which compares results from both self-evaluation processes
8. How has the University managed change over the years? What do you think it could improve?
9. Do you think self-evaluation mechanisms are useful tools for effective management and quality improvement? Is the self-evaluation a useful tool for accreditation purposes?
10. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of conducting self-evaluation processes?
11. What impact did the process have on your perception of the University? Do you think it had an impact on the other stakeholders? In what way?
12. Which stakeholders do you believe should be involved in the process? How much do you think stakeholders should be involved?
13. Do you think that both self-evaluation processes have helped create an evaluation culture?
14. What are the main differences between the two self-evaluation processes? Do you think results are comparable and why?
15. What other mechanisms would you include for quality improvement?
16. Were the two university reform efforts of any use? How? (focus groups for vision and student satisfaction survey)
17. Do you think the ADAAC guide included all the areas which are important to the University? Why? If no, what other areas would you include?
18. Do you think Accreditation will benefit the University? In what ways?

Interview Guide November 2010

1. Did you take part in the self-evaluation process in 2002? If so, what was your role?
2. Did you take part in the self-evaluation process in 2007? If so, what was your role?
3. Why do you think the 2002 self-evaluation was not completed and presented for accreditation?
4. Was the 2002 study of any use to the University? How? Why?
5. Was the 2007 study of any use to the University? How? Why?
6. Which parts of the 2002 and the 2007 self-evaluation processes do you think needed to be carried out differently and why?
7. Do you think the ADAAC guide included all the areas which are important to the University? Why? If no, what other areas would you include?
8. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of conducting self-evaluation processes?
9. Have you seen any changes as a result of the both self-evaluation processes? Which ones?
10. How has the University managed change over the years? What and how do you think it could improve?
11. Please comment on the graph which compares results from both self-evaluation processes. What are the main differences between the two self-evaluation processes? Do you think results are comparable and why?
12. What is your definition of quality in a university?
13. Do you think self-evaluation mechanisms are useful tools for effective management and quality improvement?
14. In what way do you think the principles of self-evaluation relate to quality improvement?
15. What impact did the process have on your perception of quality in the University? Do you think it had an impact on the other stakeholders? In what way?
16. Which stakeholders do you believe should have been involved in the process? How much do you think stakeholders should be involved?
17. Do you think that both self-evaluation processes have helped create an evaluation culture? What about a quality culture?
18. What other mechanisms would you include for quality improvement?

Appendix 4

Categorisation (Codes) of interviews

The following are the categories used when analysing the data from both sets of interviews:

2002 SE (Q1)

2007 SE (Q2)

2002 SE Useful (Q4)

2007 SE Useful (Q5)

Advantages SE (Q8)

Disadvantages SE (Q8)

Changes emerging from SE (Q9,10)

Define quality (Q12)

SE useful for quality (Q13,14)

Impact of SE on your quality perception (Q15)

Quality/evaluation culture (Q17)

Strategic Plan

Change leadership