

## Experience of expanding accreditation in a region – the case of South America

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The South American Regional Careers Accreditation System (Arcu-Sur) was created in 2008 at the Mercosur Meeting of the National Education Ministers, and includes representatives from the members and associated States. A Mercosur educational accreditation policy was defined and an accreditation system established during the meeting. The system, which includes veterinary education establishments (VEE) involves a voluntary institutional application, followed by external evaluation. Successful educational establishments receive regional recognition of academic career quality. External evaluation became the central core component of the accreditation process by Arcu-Sur and focuses on a veterinarian profile very similar to the OIE Guidelines for Day 1 Competencies. A total of 27 universities have been currently accredited by this system in South America: 10 in Brazil, 8 in Argentina, 3 in Chile, 3 in Venezuela, one in Uruguay, one in Paraguay and one in Bolivia. The Pan American Association of Veterinary Sciences (PANVET), supported by FAO, has produced two consensus statement publications to date with very similar requirements to the ARCU-Sur and OIE; these are the veterinary professional profile (2012) and the minimum veterinary competencies (2013).

Relative to veterinary licensure, the Brazilian Federal Council of Veterinary Medicine (CFMV) applied a compulsory examination for individual professional certification for six consecutive years (2002-2007); however, this examination process was later banned by the Brazilian National Congress.

Overall the ARCU-Sur has generated an international evaluation culture in South America and the accreditation process should be expanded, consolidated and continuously evaluated. National veterinary statutory bodies and regional Veterinary Associations, such as PANVET, may further develop comprehensive accreditation mechanisms focused on OIE basic and advanced competencies, associated to individual professional certification.

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