THE SELF-EVALUATION OF THE PPGE/UERN: CONCEPTION, CONSTRUCTION AND EXECUTION OF THE PROPOSAL

A AUTOAVALIAÇÃO DO PPGE/UERN: CONCEPÇÃO, CONSTRUÇÃO E EXECUÇÃO DA PROPOSTA

LA AUTOEVALUACIÓN DEL PPGE/UERN: CONCEPCIÓN, CONSTRUCCIÓN Y EJECUCIÓN DE LA PROPUESTA

Simone Cabral Marinho dos SANTOS1
e-mail: simonecabral@uern.br

José Cezinaldo Rocha BESSA2
e-mail: cezinaldobessa@uern.br

How to reference this paper:


Submitted: 11/01/2023
Revisions required: 08/03/2023
Approved: 16/07/2023
Published: 22/11/2023

Editors: Prof. Dr. Margarete May Berkenbrock Rosito
Prof. Dr. Aleksandro do Nascimento Santos
Prof. Dr. Ecleide Cunico Furlanetto
Prof. Dr. Maria Conceição Passeggi
Prof. Dr. Maria do Carmo Meirelles Toledo Cruz

Deputy Executive Editor: Prof. Dr. José Anderson Santos Cruz

1 University of the State of Rio Grande do Norte (UERN), Pau dos Ferros – RN – Brazil. Doctoral degree Professor at the Department of Education, the Postgraduate Program in Teaching (PPGE) and the Program for Planning and Territorial Dynamics in the Semi-Arid (PLANDITES).

2 University of the State of Rio Grande do Norte (UERN), Pau dos Ferros – RN – Brazil. Doctoral degree Professor of the Postgraduate Program in Teaching (PPGE) and the Postgraduate Program in Literature. (PPGL).
ABSTRACT: The work aims to describe the experience of conception, construction, and execution of the self-assessment in the Postgraduation Program in Education - PPGE/UERN. Thus, the present study is an investigation of a descriptive and reflective nature focused on socialization and reflection on the work carried out by the program's self-evaluation committee, contemplating the focus on fundamental stages of this process, from the elaboration of an action plan to socialization and discussion of the results. Within its central aspects, the text presents the principles and actions that guided the PPGE's self-assessment and describes how the self-assessment experience undertaken in the program was operationalized. It ends by pointing out the challenge of consolidating a culture of self-assessment.

Introduction

In the second half of 2018, the Assessment Board of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) established the Self-Evaluation Working Group of Postgraduate Programs, through CAPES Ordinance 148, of July 4, 2018, to form a committee with “the mission of implementing a self-evaluation system within the scope of postgraduate programs, which can also be a relevant component for the evaluation carried out by CAPES” (2019, p. 4). The work of this Commission resulted in the publication, in 2019, of a report that presents a systematic proposal for self-evaluation within the scope of *stricto sensu* postgraduate programs across the country, aiming to make it a relevant component for the evaluation conducted by CAPES.

Until then, CAPES had been adopting external evaluation of programs as an instrument for regulating, monitoring, and maintaining basic quality standards. From the 2017-2020 quadrennial, CAPES expanded the focus of evaluation, taking the systematic self-evaluation of postgraduate programs as one of its indicators. Faced with the challenge of systematizing the actions developed in search of a diagnosis that would enable the identification of strengths and weaknesses and the proposition of improvements, the Postgraduate Program in Teaching (PPGE), at the State University of *Rio Grande do Norte* (UERN), *Pau dos Ferros* Advanced Campus (CAPF), presented its Self-Assessment Action Plan for the four years (2017-2020).

Considering, therefore, the relevance of sharing the process of conception and implementation of a self-assessment proposal in the context of Brazilian postgraduate studies, it is intended, in this work, to describe the experience of conception, construction, and execution of self-assessment within the scope of PPGE/UERN/CAPF. In this sense, this text is centered on the socialization of the work conducted by the Commission, focusing on fundamental stages of this process, such as: elaboration of an action plan, construction of research instruments, data collection, treatment and analysis, preparation of the final report, socialization, and discussion of results.

The self-assessment process in postgraduate studies: theoretical anchors and institutional guidelines

Going through the paths that make it possible to build an understanding of the self-assessment process inevitably requires crossing the path of assessment. Thus, before delving into the intricacies of self-assessment itself, the understanding of assessment that was assumed was revisited here.
The line of understanding assumed is based on the idea that the evaluation presents itself as a quality judgment on relevant data for decision-making, as highlighted by Luckesi (2011). It is not, in these terms, a definitive judgment about something, or even, according to the author, that the evaluation is full of conceptual emptiness, exercised naively and unconsciously, “[...] as if it were not in service of a theoretical model of society and education, as if it were a neutral activity” (LUCKESI, 2011, p. 28, our translation). It is therefore based on the understanding that it is human beings' characteristic to evaluate, to take a stand, so that evaluation is situated in pedagogical models that can serve both conservation and transformation, as highlighted by Luckesi (2011).

Even though Luckesi (2011) deals more specifically with the assessment of school learning, using the concepts of verification and negative or positive valuation of the object evaluated, these two parts of his understanding were borrowed for these purposes.

The fundamental principle is that the evaluation does not end with obtaining the data or information, that is, with the verification itself, but requires taking a favorable or unfavorable position regarding the object evaluated, because of a decision to take action.

Therefore, evaluating is an action that involves a desire to know, to take off the mask; an act that demands delivery from those who participate in it, without imposition (SORDI, 2002). From this perspective, evaluation processes are governed by voluntary adherence, as they signal commitment from those involved with the results obtained (SORDI, 2002).

In the context of stricto sensu postgraduate studies, the CAPES assessment influences verification, classification, and ranking production, as shown by Netto (2018) and Leite et al. (2020). The objectives of the evaluation are to increase the quality of training for doctors and masters and to ensure the excellence of Brazilian postgraduate studies. With a more quantitative focus, it observes established criteria and maintains the programs with the expectation of increasing the previous assessment rating or maintaining it. When the result is not what was expected, the risk of disqualification is imminent. This is because the performance evaluation of the programs based on the productions and indicators inserted into the sucupira platform did not meet the required metrics. Therefore, de-accreditation is always, in a way, around the evaluation period when there is no clarity about its purposes.

It is important to emphasize that the Brazilian postgraduate system was implemented in the mid-1960s. According to Kuenzer and Moraes (2005), it was conceived to train teachers and researchers to meet the expansion of higher education and pave the way for the development of scientific research. However, the relevance of research in this scenario only
occurred at the end of the 1990s, already in the III National Postgraduate Plan (PNPG 1986-1989). Since then, research has gained centrality in relation to teaching and, consequently, the evaluation model has continued, over the years, to prioritize scientific production (KUENZER; MORAES, 2005).

Still, in 2003, Gatti et al. warned that the CAPES evaluation should assume a formative nature and should not "[...] be used to discredit programs, but to detect any problems that may exist and to define appropriate measures for their improvement" (GATTI et al., 2003, p. 138, our translation). At the heart of concerns, such as the one expressed by the authors, was the fact that CAPES' external evaluation had always imposed a standardizing model for programs without considering their specificities, their contexts, and their locations. In other words, it was an assessment model that adopted a punitive rather than a formative character.

To follow a more formative path of evaluation, to be implemented in the 2017-2020 quadrennium, there was a movement provoked in the CAPES evaluation bodies that pointed to the valorization of the vocation of each program. It was about outlining a way of evaluating that would focus on a more qualitative bias, so that evaluation would come to be conceived as the act through which the program would decide where to follow. This increases the possibility of evaluating the program, which includes its ability to plan. In the evaluation form itself, for example, aspects such as self-assessment, strategic planning, and monitoring of graduates were highlighted.

This look inside the program was accompanied by an effort to value more qualitative aspects, observing how the subjects involved in the program identify, in a shared way, positive and negative points. When evaluating, pay attention to what is done, at the same time as paying attention to the result of the evaluation that is carried out. This concern with what is done with the result of the evaluation is accompanied by the self-evaluation process. Looking inside the program therefore implies reflecting in depth both on the points that strengthen the program and on those that prevent it from improving its quality.

As can be seen, in addition to a verification nature, the formative and continuous aspect of the proposed self-assessment is considered appropriate, as argued by Sousa and Gatti (2015) and Netto (2018). The words of Sousa and Gatti (2015, p. 31), when dealing with institutional self-assessment, reinforce this formative nature of postgraduate self-assessment:

 [...] internal assessment – self-assessment –, unlike external assessments, has a formative objective in process and aims to offer the institution conditions to reflect on its perspectives and planning for the future, based on the context
The self-evaluation of the PPGE/UERN: Conception, construction and execution of the proposal

and current situation in which it finds itself (GATTI et al., 2015, p. 31, our translation).

According to these authors' understanding, there is a feeling of responsibility for the evaluation process, but also of trust in who and how the self-evaluation is carried out. Added to this is the perspective that legitimacy and its recognition as a valuable process “[...] will come from the facts and their relevant contribution and not from authoritarian stances” (SOUSA; GATTI, 2015, p. 32, our translation)

The involvement and legitimacy of the university community require a favorable institutional climate for self-evaluation, as Sousa and Gatti (2015) point out. In this sense, as the authors point out, providing an environment for dialogue about weaknesses, expectations and positions taken requires preparation, engagement, and awareness of everyone involved. All of this, added to a participatory work perspective of the entire community involved, contributes to making the result of the self-assessment more appropriate.

In a challenging scenario for higher institutions, it is also known that the continuous improvement of postgraduate studies is due to evaluation. For Rocha (2006), the evaluation of courses and programs is a quality benchmark, an indicator of investments, development actions, scholarships, recognition of courses, and validity of diplomas. This author proposes that the self-assessment of Postgraduate Centers will be “[...] an instrument of self-knowledge and raising levels of quality and institutional performance, seeking to identify talents, value and enhance opportunities and decide to maintain or change institutional actions” (ROCHA, 2006, p. 489, our translation). In this way, there are two purposes in: personal improvement (teachers, students, technical-administrative staff) and institutional, since self-assessment allows the identification of aspects that hinder and/or facilitate academic work and the implementation of strategies of intervention.

Although it is a certain novelty for the postgraduate context, it is important to remember that the adoption of self-assessment of striceto sensu postgraduate programs by CAPES is a consequence of its use in Brazilian higher education: initially with the Universities Institutional Assessment Program Brasileiras (PAIUB), at the beginning of the 1990s, followed by the National Higher Education Assessment System (SINAES) and its Institutional Self-Assessment component, in the 2000s.

As stated in the foundation document, “by adopting self-assessment, CAPES is bringing its conception closer to that already adopted by undergraduate evaluation, contributing to
reducing the gap that currently exists between the two national evaluation processes” (BRASIL, 2019, p. 06).

In this document, it is assumed that evaluation has moved away from features linked to measures to be understood as a constructed and preferably negotiated process resulting from its socio-historical context. In the same direction, self-assessment is defined as follows:

Self-assessment is evaluating oneself, sometimes called internal or institutional assessment, when referring to organizations. Its main objective is formative learning. Since it is planned, conducted, implemented, and analyzed by people who are themselves formulators and agents of the actions to be evaluated, self-assessment enables reflection on the context and policies adopted, in addition to the systematization of data that leads to decision-making (BRASIL, 2019, p. 7, our translation).

Through this quote, the document explains that self-assessment takes on a formative nature and points out that the program’s academic community has the responsibility and ownership of the assessment and self-assessment. Therefore, emphasis is placed on decision-making that involves all subjects involved in the process.

Thus, based on the understanding of assessment and self-assessment reported in this section and the guidelines expressed in this CAPES document (2019), the self-assessment process of the Postgraduate Program in Teaching (PPGE) was guided by the experience described below. However, before describing it, the following section briefly contextualizes the PPGE.

The UERN/CAPF Postgraduate Program in Teaching: A Brief Contextualization

The Postgraduate Program in Teaching (PPGE), at the State University of Rio Grande do Norte, offers the academic master’s degree in teaching, at the Advanced Campus of Pau dos Ferros, in partnership with the Federal Rural University of the Semiarid (UFERSA) and the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN). The Program is in the interior of the state of Rio Grande do Norte, in the municipality of Pau dos Ferros.

Created in 2014, PPGE is approaching its 10th anniversary. During this period, the course, which is registered in the CAPES Teaching area³, went through the evaluation process in 2017, referring to the four years 2013-2016, and in 2021, referring to the four years 2017-

³ The CAPES Teaching area corresponds to area 46, which is part of the Large Multidisciplinary Area of the College of Exact, Technological and Multidisciplinary Sciences.
The self-evaluation of the PPGE/UErn: Conception, construction and execution of the proposal

2020. In the evaluations, the program maintained a grade of 3, the same as it had obtained when it was approved for operation.

According to the PPGE's internal regulations, the general objective of the academic master's degree in teaching is to train human resources in research and teaching, focusing on teaching and learning processes in basic education, aiming to improve the teacher's performance in the classroom. Class, as well as in the development of learning techniques and products.

Considering the objective, PPGE is committed to improving education in the Alto Oeste Potiguar region, in which it is located, and its surroundings (which includes, especially, municipalities in the interior of Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba and of Ceará). In this sense, its target audience is mainly education professionals, more precisely teachers who work in public schools in the region, as well as graduates of undergraduate courses at UERN and other public and private HEIs (Higher Education Institutions).

To meet its general objective, the PPGE curricular proposal was designed and structured in an area of concentration, called Basic Education, and three lines of research, namely: i) teaching of exact and natural sciences; ii) teaching human and social sciences; and iii) language teaching. Its configuration in these three lines of research meets the perspective of interdisciplinary training proposed by the program, bringing together different fields of knowledge and human resources training: mathematics, physics, chemistry, pedagogy, English language, Portuguese language, literature, social sciences, and geography, among others.

Based on this multi and interdisciplinary education perspective, the program's activities (subjects, orientations, scientific productions) are designed to lead to the problematization of teaching and its interfaces with basic education. With this, it is expected to contribute to the PPGE graduate becoming a professional capable of understanding the teaching-learning process and intervening in it, in an effective interaction and articulation with the areas of knowledge and different levels and modalities of Basic Education.

To conclude this contextualization, it is highlighted that, in 2023, the PPGE reaches the number of 6 completed classes, currently registering more than 200 master's degree holders, which therefore indicates the prospect of a strong contribution that the program has provided professional qualification in the region in which it is located.

---

4 In the initial proposal to create the program, when the APCN was submitted, line 1 of the PPGE was called Teaching Exact and Environmental Sciences. In 2019, because of updates approved by the program's Collegiate, line 1 began to have the name it currently has.
The PPGE/UERN/CAPF self-assessment proposal: guiding principles and initial actions

The PPGE self-evaluation proposal is centrally anchored in the program's search for social quality. In addition to the parameters that regulate the quality of education, from an economic point of view, such as usefulness, practicality and comparability, the social quality assumed here is revealed in collaborative work, management, a healthy environment, the organization of pedagogical work, practices effective functioning of the collegiate bodies, in the inclusion policy and in the dialogue between the different institutional segments and society as a basic premise.

Furthermore, this conception of quality that supports the evaluation and self-evaluation proposal is referenced in the perspective of sharing, in which quality in education becomes, according to Enguita (1994, p. 95, our translation), “a shared goal, in what everyone says search”.

Based on this understanding, we can say that the guiding principle of PPGE evaluation and self-evaluation is democratic management, capable of directing strategies and connections necessary for the social quality of the program.

Therefore, it is necessary to think about how it organizes its activities, providing it with an administrative and pedagogical structure that favors, in its management, the participation of different and relevant groups and people involved in the activities.

Participation, dialogue, legitimacy, and visibility were also chosen as principles. Participation is an achievement, not a gift and concession (DEMO, 2001). Its exercise involves being part (organization), taking part (activity), and having a part (negotiation). The materiality of the exercise of participation lies in dialogue as an instrument for negotiating conflicts in an environment of pluralism of ideas and thoughts.

This construction of ideas requires reliable indicators, so as not to cause possible value judgments and, therefore, obtain the legitimacy of the group. In effect, the principle of visibility considers evaluation to be a system of communication between those involved, through a systematic process of collecting and exchanging information.

We sought to implement a performance self-assessment proposal for the PPGE sectors and segments that highlights significant weaknesses and potential, to establish strategic planning, in the short, medium, and long term, in which goals and strategies will be defined. In this sense, it was understood that self-assessment requires regularity, continuous monitoring, and participation of everyone involved in defining these paths.
It is, therefore, about making evaluation an instrument of institutional improvement, in all instances of the PPGE, following what is stated in the UERN Institutional Development Plan (PDI) (2016/2026): “continuous evaluation and incorporation of results into the Institution’s academic and administrative routines must be assumed as an essential practice for institutional improvement” (2016, p. 97, our translation). In this way, what is proposed is a continuous evaluation with the creation of processes that allow the involvement of the internal and external Community (graduates) in decision-making.

Guided by these principles, some actions were conceived that were decisive for the implementation and development of the PPGE self-assessment activities, namely: i) Incorporation into the PPGE regulations, of self-assessment as one of the responsibilities of the program's collegiate; ii) Constitution of the program self-assessment committee; iii) Preparation of a program self-assessment plan; iv) Institutionalization, within the scope of UERN, of a research project on self-assessment; v) Preparation of a schedule of regular meetings of the Self-Assessment Committee; vi) Carrying out socialization seminars and discussion of the results of the self-assessment with the program’s collegiate and academic Community.

**Incorporation, into the PPGE regulations, of self-assessment as one of the responsibilities of the program’s collegiate**

For self-assessment to become a practical and cultural practice in the daily life of the PPGE, supporting its institutional planning, one of the first initiatives forwarded was the proposal to incorporate it into the Program's regulations as one of the collegiate's responsibilities.

In this sense, the proposal to incorporate self-assessment into the Program's regulations was assessed and approved at a collegiate meeting held on April 16, 2019. Thus, the PPGE regulations, in its article 5, which deals with the duties of the collegiate, passed to have the following wording in its section V: systematically and continuously promote self-evaluation of the Program.

With this legal provision, the PPGE therefore established, as a standardizing purpose, the imperative of guiding the decisions necessary for the proper functioning of the Program through a self-assessment designed to be carried out systematically and continuously.
Constitution of the program's Self-Assessment Committee

In its journey of implementing and systematizing the self-assessment process, the PPGE's essential initiative was the creation of the self-assessment committee. So, shortly after the first guidelines from CAPES regarding adopting self-assessment in the country's postgraduate assessment system, the program established, in a collegiate meeting held on May 9, 2019, its Self-Assessment Committee comprised of professors, students, graduates, and administrative technicians. In this sense, the composition of the PPGE self-evaluation committee was established through an ordinance, formed by 4 permanent teaching members of the program, 3 student members, the secretary as technical-administrative representative, and 1 graduate.

Established with the mission of conducting the program's self-evaluation process, this committee was assigned activities such as preparing the action plan, defining methodological procedures, and coordinating and executing field research (through collection, tabulation, and analysis), as well as publicizing the data collected in the form of scientific reports and publications.

In this sense, the Commission's work was conducted considering the following stages of the self-evaluation methodology proposed by CAPES: preparation, implementation, dissemination, use of results, and evaluation of the evaluation system (meta-evaluation).

Preparation of a program Self-Assessment Plan

The development of an Action Plan was, without a doubt, a guiding point in carrying out the PPGE self-assessment. Based on readings of specialized scientific productions, CAPES documents, the UERN PDI, and the program's internal regulations, the commission outlined a PPGE Self-Assessment Action Plan, which was structured as follows: presentation, contextualization; goals; concepts, principles and dimensions; procedures and instruments for implementing the Self-Assessment Plan; timeline; references; appendix and annex.

In this Action Plan, prepared by the commission, the principles that would structure the PPGE's self-assessment were established: democratic management, participation, dialogue, legitimacy, and visibility. The proposed evaluation dimensions cover: Formation, Production

---

5 The first ordinance issued by the program was dated May 9, 2019. A new ordinance, dated September 24, 2019, would be instituted later to update and incorporate new members into the commission. The Commission's last update was made on October 18, 2022, leaving it with 12 members, 05 teachers, 02 students, 01 technician and 04 graduates.
and Professional performance (teacher, student, graduate, technical-administrative), Management, and Infrastructure.

One of the guiding principles of the PPGE Action Plan, therefore, consists of democratic management. This principle seeks participation that acts in the face of reality, driven by collective experience, the creation of knowledge, and a cooperative attitude. Such participation requires commitment: those who do not participate are less committed and distance themselves from the group’s decision-making. Furthermore, while there are conditions that limit participation, there are those that favor it. It is a learning process formed through constant practice (BORDENAVE, 1994; PATEMAN, 1992). It is, therefore, time to establish a culture of participation in the PPGE, and the practice of evaluation and self-assessment requires us to direct our gaze on the program and our performance.

To outline this plan, the committee started from the understanding that the self-evaluation thus conceived would allow teachers, students, graduates, and administrative technicians to individually evaluate such dimensions while they self-evaluate themselves in this process. Furthermore, the understanding was that the information collected in the self-assessment process designed in that plan would allow reflection on the results obtained and generate an operational repertoire that could subsequently lead to decision-making for the program.

Institutionalization, within the scope of UERN, of a research project on self-assessment

With the execution of the action plan in 2020, which culminated in the preparation of the final report, the challenge was to maintain the continuity of the Commission’s actions. The next step was to submit and approve, institutionally at UERN, a research project on self-assessment in the context of PPGE.

Thus, in 2021, the action plan was systematized into a research project. Submitted in a continuous flow notice at this institution, the project became linked to the Education Studies Center (NEEd), responding to the challenge of ensuring the continuity of the Commission’s actions, both for the improvement of its work and for adjustments to the process itself. self-assessment.

Systematically, the project followed a defined methodology, with objectives, goals, and steps to be carried out, as well as establishing those responsible for developing each to achieve

---

6 Research project "Self-evaluation of the postgraduate teaching program – PPGE/UERN: diagnosis and planning - Process nº 04410211.000063/2021-05 (05/26/2021) - PROPEG/UERN.

Revista @mbienteeducação, São Paulo, v. 16, n. 00, e023017, 2023. e-ISSN: 1982-8632
DOI: https://doi.org/10.26843/ae.v16i00.1201
the best results. The research proposed to cover teachers, students, graduates, and administrative technicians of the PPGE, focusing on the dimensions: training, production and professional performance, management, and infrastructure. In the project's design, the idea was established to individually monitor and evaluate teachers, students, graduates, and administrative technicians while the respective segments evaluate themselves in this process.

In addition to the continuity and institutionalization of the Commission's work, ensuring the accounting of workload for the teachers who participate in it, we have the relevance of using the results of the evaluation and self-evaluation as a source of strategic information for planning and promoting the improvement of the PPGE.

Although the proposal for evaluation and self-evaluation of the program initially emerged intending to meet CAPES evaluation requirements, the strategy of formalizing it into a project would fulfill, in the commission's understanding, the commitment to establish, in a more effective way, a culture permanent self-assessment in PPGE.

Preparation of a schedule of regular meetings of the Self-Assessment Committee

Given the novelty of carrying out a Self-Assessment process for the subjects involved, the PPGE Self-Assessment Committee understood that establishing a meeting schedule would be a crucial step towards achieving the planning of actions and activities within the established deadlines. In this sense, a schedule of regular meetings was proposed by the Commission's coordination and drawn up with the other members.

As of July 2019, the commission began holding meetings every two months, with several purposes: selecting texts and documents to understand the conception and proposal for self-assessment better, preparing an action plan, planning and discussing the preparation of questionnaires, and creating a report, among other activities. These meetings were also fundamental for planning socialization and culmination seminars to share and discuss the results of the self-evaluation with the program's board.

With the approval and institutionalization of the research project, the committee meetings began, especially from 2021 onwards, to be even more regular, taking place every 15 or 30 days, a fact that has allowed for greater effectiveness of the actions carried out.
Holding socialization seminars and discussion of the results of the self-assessment with the program’s collegiate and academic community

Following the understanding that the self-evaluation process must involve the entire academic community of the program and based on the principle of democratic management assumed in the Action Plan prepared, the PPGE Self-Evaluation Committee proposed holding seminars to socialize and discuss the results obtained.

After completing the data collection and systematizing the results of 2020, the commission held, in a remote format, on the 21st and 25th of August 2020, the 1st PPGE Self-Assessment Seminar, which included the participation of teachers, students, technicians, and program graduates.

At the seminar, it was possible to present the results of the self-assessment and discuss them, as well as prepare a strategic planning proposal for the PPGE for the new four-year period, highlighting specificities, potentialities, and points to be improved through short, medium, and long-term goals, for an interval of 05 (five) years (2021-2025). The strategic planning was presented at the 8th PPGE Integration and Socialization Seminar, held remotely on December 22, 2022.

The findings shared in these moments of interaction between all program segments allowed joint reflection and the collective construction of an operational repertoire materialized in the strategic planning prepared and presented in the CAPES report for the four years 2017-2020.

Once the principles developed and the initial actions triggered in conducting the PPGE self-assessment process were known, the following section described its implementation.

Operationalization of the PPGE/CAPF/UFPR self-assessment

In this section, it was proposed to describe how the PPGE self-assessment was operationalized with a focus on carrying out the research activity undertaken and its socialization. To this end, the following stand out: i) research conception and outlining of the methodological path; ii) data collection instrument; iii) data collection, processing, and analysis; iv) dissemination of results; v) meta-evaluation.

Research design and methodological path outline

It is pleasurable to discover the world, the other, the interactive experience of everyday life. The researcher's commitment and interest translate scientific rigor, inseparable from the
formal and systematic process of developing investigative practice. We started with what was not known by recognizing the art of investigating as a purpose. Scientific research is a source of clarification in the production of knowledge and a challenge for new learning, especially when it allows a greater degree of participation and involvement of everyone in the decision-making process. As a starting point, teamwork suggests the shared creation of knowledge.

It is in this sense that the commitment to doing research combines shared, collective, and creative work with daily learning about reality. The first step is to accept research as a means of improvement. In this case, unveiling the PPGE through self-assessment is not just an object of work, but the purpose of learning resulting from interaction between people. Assessment and self-assessment work is essentially an investigation exercise, therefore, research. The design of the set of activities involves methodological procedures: a literature review (bibliographic and documentary), choice of instruments, form of data collection, treatment, analysis, and dissemination.

In the research process, we adopted a qualitative approach. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1994), this way of investigation has peculiar characteristics, such as: the relevance of the environment and/or place/field of study, the description, the interest in the process more than the product, the investigator's deduction and the meaning and meanings that subjects give to the phenomenon under study. In this research, the descriptive bias was also appropriate, in the search to analyze the data “[...] respecting, as much as possible, how they were recorded or transcribed” (BOGDAN, BIKLEN, 1994, p. 49, our translation). Therefore, in this type of procedure, the characteristics of the subjects and the phenomenon investigated are described using recording, interpretation, and analysis.

To compose the research subjects, teachers, students, graduates, and the PPGE technical-administrative employee participated so that it was possible to obtain evaluation and self-evaluation results that are intended to support the strategic planning of the program in search of quality. Under the premise of everyone's participation and commitment to this process, self-assessment is an instrument that enhances planning.

The first step was preparing the activities. A literature review was carried out to guide the evaluation and self-assessment. Next, a study was made of the documents Application for New Course Proposals (APCN) from PPGE, PDI from UERN, Institutional Assessment Instruments from UERN (Teacher and Student), Institutional Plan for the Development of Stricto sensu Postgraduate Studies from UERN (2019-2026), Proposal report for a self-
evaluation system within the scope of CAPES postgraduate programs (2019), Teaching area document (2019) and evaluation form for CAPES postgraduate programs.

Still in this preparation stage, the process of preparing the plan (project), choosing the subjects, and defining and systematizing the data collection instrument was carried out. At first, all teachers, students, graduates, and technical-administrative employees of the PPGE were defined as research subjects.

Data Collection Instrument

The collection instrument was the online questionnaire, prepared from Google Docs and applied in March, July, and August 2020, covering all the subjects. The questionnaire was chosen because it made it possible to reach a greater number of informants and guarantee their anonymity and responses.

Although it is an instrument that normally has a low response rate from respondents as a limit, it was possible to minimize this risk by monitoring and controlling respondents via email, direct contact, and/or WhatsApp groups. Except for the technical-administrative one, all other questionnaires were subjected to a pre-test, which validated the questionnaires, provided essential suggestions for improvement, and confirmed acceptance to participate in the research.

When the definitive questionnaires were applied in 2020, 100% of the response was obtained from respondents in the teaching, student, and technical segments. The graduate questionnaire had participation of 108 respondents, out of a total of 109 graduates, until the period in which the research was carried out. It is worth noting that this questionnaire was prepared as a product of Silva's (2020) dissertation, defended in the same year at the PPGE, in line with the self-evaluation committee.

To better understand the questionnaire application process, the following table presents a detail of the application schedule and questionnaire return for each segment surveyed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Application period</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Total respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egress</td>
<td>03/09/2020 to 03/19/2020</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>07/25/2020 to 07/31/2020</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative technician</td>
<td>07/31/2020</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>08/05/2020 a 08/08/2020</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from the PPGE self-assessment report (Authors of the paper, 2021)
The questionnaires were prepared containing closed and open questions. The closed questions allowed the distribution of frequencies, with definitions of conceptualization and scores as: Yes, No, Insufficient, Sufficient, Very good, Excellent, Not applicable. The open questions allowed the understanding and inference of the reality investigated based on the descriptive analysis of the perceptions of the responding subjects.

The questions were organized into teacher, student, graduate, and technical-administrative questionnaires, observing the following dimensions: 1. Training, production, and professional performance (teacher, student, graduate, technical-administrative); 2. Management/program; 3. Infrastructure; 4. Self-assessment.

The Training, production, and professional performance dimension focused on teachers, students, graduates, and administrative technicians. The teacher's questionnaire included information on intellectual production, relationship with primary education, professional qualifications and performance, and social insertion. The student questionnaire, in turn, involved information regarding production, scientific publication, and professional performance. The graduate questionnaire focused on aspects such as profile, relationship with basic education, social insertion, professional performance, and intellectual production. Finally, the technical-administrative server's questionnaire covered factors such as involvement with the set of actions and activities that contribute to the excellent performance of the program.

In the Management/program dimension, teachers evaluated the pedagogical activities, student performance, and management and program actions. The students and graduates, in turn, evaluated the teachers (discipline teacher and advisor), the management, and the program. In the Infrastructure dimension, teachers, graduates, students, and technicians evaluated the physical conditions and financial resources of PPGE and UERN (and, at times, the partner HEIs UFERSA and IFRN). In the Self-Assessment dimension, all segments evaluated themselves in the actions they conducted in the program.

Regarding the periodicity of the application of the instrument, the planning foresees that, in future moments, the questionnaires will be applied annually, with the possibility of changes in the frequency and how the target audience is covered.

**Data collection, processing, and analysis**

In the second stage, data collection, processing, and descriptive analysis were carried out. In the collection phase, we sought, through the questionnaire, to record data to gather
quantitative and qualitative information on the evaluation and self-assessment of performance of the teaching, student, graduate, and technical segments of the PPGE.

Regarding the treatment, a database was built in Excel, whose closed questions were tabulated based on the frequency of responses, and the open questions, in turn, were transcribed and categorized according to the dimensions already mentioned. The data was organized into tables, graphs, and charts considering the distribution of data by segment researched.

In systematizing the data, descriptive analysis was used, aiming to describe the characteristics of the subjects and contexts researched with the purpose of highlighting weaknesses, potentialities, strategic challenges, improvements, and the program's future perspective. As a way of structuring the writing of results by segment, the systematization was organized by paying attention to the following aspects:

a) insertion of all collected data;
b) adoption of sequence and division of questionnaire topics;
c) transformation of the question (questionnaire question) into an affirmative;
d) insertion of quantitative data in the form of graphs and tables;
e) insertion of qualitative data into tables (inclusion of all responses);
f) writing a synthesis of the data, that is, presenting a discussion of the results punctually and objectively.

The questionnaire was applied to teachers, students, graduates, and the program's technical administrative staff in March, July, and August 2020. The subjects to whom the questionnaires were directed corresponded, therefore, to teachers, students, technicians, and PPGE graduates in the 2017-2020 quadrennium, whose number was as follows: 23 teachers, 19 permanent, 03 collaborators, and 01 visiting professor; 93 students; and 1 administrative technician. The number of graduates until December 2020 comprised 147, including those who completed in 2016, which was the first group of graduates from the program.

Given CAPES' guidance on monitoring graduates up to five years after the defense, graduates from the period 2016 to 2019 were considered. Thus, until March 2020, when the research was carried out, the PPGE had 109 graduates. The number of responses obtained in the survey corresponded to the total population that made up the PPGE academic community, except for graduates, as out of a total of 109, there were 108 responses.

As the research was carried out using a questionnaire with open and closed questions, it was possible to detail the questions and answers by sub-items, related to Formation, production, and professional performance (teacher, student, graduate, technical-administrative);
Management/program; Infrastructure; Self-Assessment. For each question, a graph and/or table with objective data was presented in the final research report, as well as tables with subjective answers, which were followed by a descriptive analysis in the final report.

The Teacher questionnaire was applied to 23 PPGE teachers, from the 25th to the 31st of July 2020. Composed of 98 questions divided into objective and subjective, this questionnaire covered the following topics: 1. Training of the teacher-researcher; 2. Program/Management Assessment; 3. Infrastructure (UERN/CAPF, in exceptional cases UFERSA and IFRN); 4. Self-assessment. Teachers were identified using an individual code, ensuring anonymity.

The student questionnaire was applied from August 5th to August 8th, 2020, with a total of 93 students, which corresponds to 100% of regular master's students enrolled in that period, distributed as follows: 38 (thirty-eight) students from 2018, 29 (twenty-nine) from the class of 2019 and 26 (twenty-six) from the class of 2020. Like the teachers, the students were identified using an individual code.

This questionnaire, semi-structured in nature, containing open and closed questions, totaling 66 (sixty-six), 63 (sixty-three) closed, and 3 (three) open, was divided into the following topics: 1. Physical and pedagogical infrastructure; 2. Teaching was structured in two groups, the first of which included questions directed to course teachers in general, focusing on aspects related to professional performance and the PPGE curricular components, and the second included questions focused on the orientation training processes; 3. Program Management; 4. Self-assessment.

Using the questionnaire, the research among graduates who defended their dissertations in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 took place from March 9 to 19, 2020. Of the 109 graduates, 108 responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaire had the following organization of topics: 1. Graduate profile; 2. Academic training and professional performance; 3. Intellectual production; 4. Teacher evaluation; 5. Program evaluation; 6. Self-assessment. Regarding identification, the responding graduate was not identified with an individual code. When constructing this questionnaire, the premise was the monitoring of graduates and, therefore, the need for closer knowledge of the profile and scope of the training offered at PPGE.

Finally, the research with the administrative segment of the PPGE was carried out on July 31, 2020, using a questionnaire with objective and subjective questions, with the following organization of topics: 1. Personal data and academic background; 2. Routine and service; 3.
Relationship; 4. Planning. The questionnaire, with 16 questions, was answered by the PPGE secretary, the only administrative technician assigned to the program.

Disclosure of results

The third stage was disseminating the results at the 1st PPGE Self-Assessment Seminar to present, assess, and qualify the data the PPGE academic community (teachers, students, graduates, and technicians) achieved. The Seminar was held on August 21st and 25th, 2020, via Google Meet to share the data obtained on the first day with the teaching and student segments and, on the second, with the graduates and technical-administrative segments. The results were submitted for consideration by teachers, students, graduates, and technicians for reflection, adjustments, and approval of measures to be taken for institutional improvement, proposals for actions, and future goals.

This Seminar served as a stimulus for reflection and problematization regarding the diagnosis made and the aspects to be qualified, focusing on the CAPES assessment (2017-2020 four-year period) and the PPGE strategic planning (2021-2024 four-year period). This strategic planning was the theme of the 8th PPGE Integration and Socialization Seminar, held on December 22, 2020, via Google Meet, with the Board and the Self-Assessment Committee, focusing on the presentation and discussion of potential, points for improvement and short, medium and long-term goals of the program, arising from the evaluation and self-evaluation carried out.

He also participated in the dissemination stage and the preparation of the Report. The self-assessment committee worked from preparing, implementing, and coordinating the assessment and self-assessment to preparing the Report with the results obtained (SANTOS et al., 2021).

In this document, the program's strengths and weaknesses are described based on the perception of its academic community and future actions resulting from evaluation and self-evaluation to support the program's strategic planning for the next four-year period (2021-2024).

Furthermore, the Commission has invested efforts in producing articles, aiming to build a deeper understanding and socialization of research results, having already published 01 articles (SALDANHA et al., 2022) in a specialized journal and submitted more than 02, which are in the evaluation or editing process.
The use of the results is centered on improving the Program, in the sense of serving as an instrument for decision-making through planning, presented in the CAPES quadrennial evaluation report. Together with the management of the PPGE, this Commission is also responsible for evaluating the evaluation system (meta-evaluation), establishing Self-Assessment within the program calendar, and promoting moments for review and looking from the outside through a guest, external to the PPGE and the UERN, to analyze the methodological procedures and reports produced by the Commission and the Program.

**Meta-evaluation**

Regarding aspects relevant to evaluating the quality of the instruments applied, we highlight the satisfactory consistency and systematic preparation, application, collection, and data processing. The awareness-raising strategy carried out by the committee, the committed action of the coordination and members of the committee, the collaboration of the subjects involved, and the carrying out of a pre-test were fundamental for the research work to respond well to the objectives initially outlined by the team that created the project proposal.

Of the weaknesses found, we highlight the scope of the Technical-Administrative questionnaire, which did not include, in the same way as questionnaires from other segments, the evaluation of management, the program, teachers, students, graduates, and infrastructure since this questionnaire was focused on aspects of self-assessment.

Another aspect observed and worthy of improvement in future actions concerns the adjustment and standardization in the scores established for some answers to closed questions in the questionnaires. In the Graduate questionnaire, for objective questions, the following scores were used: Yes, Always, Most of the Time, Few Times, No, Never, None of the Answers.

In the Teacher and Student questionnaires, the scores used were: No, Insufficient, Sufficient, Very good, Excellent, and Not Applicable. This change is justified due to the quality of the interpretation of the information, although we were aware that it compromised the standardization of the questionnaires.

In addition to the points raised here, the large amount of data generated stands out, which resulted in difficulty systematizing them more objectively, requiring the team to spend more time than expected, especially when systematizing and preparing the final report.

However, it is known that the range of information generated will be used for the construction of scientific articles or even for the development of future research work, with the Final Report as a data source.
As a perspective for future adjustments to data collection instruments, the Commission assessed the need to optimize the questionnaires applied and the scope of the subjects, establishing, as far as possible, a comparative view between the years the research was carried out.

Final considerations

Considered a novelty for the Brazilian stricto sensu postgraduate context in the last four years (2017-2020), self-assessment initially proved to be a challenging experience for most coordinators and teachers of postgraduate programs in the country.

The understanding that it would be an additional activity to be demanded among many others that we were already involved in and that there was not much clarity on how to proceed in carrying out a process of such a nature were arousing concerns and provocations within the agendas and discussions of collegiate bodies, seminars, and program meetings.

However, the initial uncertainty of where to start and where we wanted and could get to was, little by little, giving way to a movement of searches, discoveries, and construction of possible routes and horizons, which, later, would result in the collective structure of proposal for self-assessment of our program, which was shared here. At the same time as it implemented the self-assessment, the Commission has operationalized the process of monitoring PPGE graduates, students, teachers, and technicians.

We are aware that, despite the uncertainties and challenges faced, we ended up preparing a proposal considered satisfactory and consistent with the reality of the PPGE, a proposal that allowed us to look at the set of our practices and activities to build a better understanding of our potential and areas for improvement, as well as to develop a strategic plan that reflected the possibilities and goals of the program.

Although we have a positive evaluation of the self-evaluation proposal described in this work, we know it is not finished. On the contrary, our meta-evaluation shows the need for some adjustments and continuous improvements, especially concerning the data collection methodology.

Finally, we must point out that a process of this nature only became possible in the case of PPGE because it included well-constructed planning, the involvement of its academic community, cooperative work between the program's committee and collegiate body, as well as because it resulted from an articulated action between the committee and course management. After a moment of conception and implementation, the challenge that arises, at
the moment, is the consolidation of a culture of self-assessment, not only to meet a CAPES requirement but, above all, to constitute a practice that must be part of the everyday life of the program, allowing, continuously and collaboratively and collectively, to see potential, (re)think practices, improve actions and set goals that effectively contribute to its strengthening and growth.

REFERENCES


CRediT Author Statement

Acknowledgements: We would like to thank the PPGE academic community for their involvement and commitment to the program's self-assessment committee.

Funding: Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) for financial support to PPGE/UEMN/CAPF.

Conflicts of interest: We did not identify any conflict of interest.

Ethical approval: The work respected ethics during the research, and informed consent was requested from the research subjects.

Data and material availability: The data and materials used in the work are available for access on the PPGE website in the Self-Assessment tab.

Authors' contributions: Simone Cabral Marinho dos Santos: Contributed to the conception and preparation of the manuscript; Data collection and analysis; Discussion of results. José Cezinaldo Rocha Bessa: Contributed to the source and preparation of the manuscript, Data collection and analysis, and Discussion of results.

Processing and editing: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação.
Proofreading, formatting, normalization and translation.