

Transit towards quality in times of crisis. Institutional indicators for careers in social sciences at the University of La Serena, 2018 -2022

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Abstract. The institutional indicators for the careers of Journalism and Pedagogy in History and Geography of the University of La Serena are analyzed during 2018-2022. Period characterized by socio-political and economic crises and the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, the latter has been considered by recent studies as a factor of inequalities and adverse effects on teachers and students. Through the use of the institutional dashboard, which considered the admission, retention and performance profile, it is noted that there were no major variations except for the improvement in grades and Internet use in both study programs and a decrease in enrollment in Pedagogy in History and Geography. The proposed work opens a question about the relevance of the findings obtained at a quantitative level but shows the need to complement from qualitative methods in the direction of obtaining inputs for decision-making at the level of curricular administration, management of teaching and self-assessment and accreditation processes.

Keywords: quality of education, university, social sciences, decision making, social change.

1 Introduction

Quality assurance processes in higher education in Chile were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is considered that it negatively affected the institutional indicators; with implications for self-assessment and accreditation processes. It is logical to assume that the pandemic generated anomalies in the educational provision; but, in the careers of social sciences, temporary irregularity has been the norm. During 2018 and 2019 there were student strikes at the University of La Serena (ULS). Between 2020 and 2022, remote teaching was adopted due to a pandemic, understood as a factor of social inequality (Mateus & Andrada, 2021) and detrimental to teachers and students (Avendaño, Luna & Rueda, 2021; Garrido, 2020; Cea-Leiva, Pascual Hoyuelos, Sanhueza-Jara, & Cristi-González, 2022). In addition, the return to face-to-face and the economic and political crisis.

2 Theoretical Framework

There is a growing scientific productivity on the quality of education (Ara-ya-Pizarro & Verelst, 2023); In this case, the legal framework 20,129, 21,091, 21,186 and the definitions of the CNA-Chile (2022) are considered. State supervision of universities and coherent self-perception in training procedures and processes are understood (Pérez & Catalán, 2022). However, it is possible to find in the literature critical views on the effectiveness of the current measurements, to fully understand the quality assurance processes in higher education (Molina & Letelier, 2020; Espinoza & González, 2012).

3 Methods

Through an exploratory-descriptive study, the period 2018 and 2022 is studied, through indicators of admission, retention and performance of two social science careers, Journalism (PER) and Pedagogy in History and Geography (PHG), under conditions before and after COVID 19. The data was obtained from the institutional dashboards, which allow questions to be asked for curricular administration and, in this case, for teaching research linked to social and cultural processes.

4 Results

Both careers have a quota of 50 students. Between 2018 and 2019, PHG had full enrollment, but decreased to 31 from 2020 to 2022. PER covered the total and used oversubscriptions from 2019 to 2021; in 2022, it reached 98%. Between 2018 and 2022, admission scores fluctuated between 562 (PER, 2021) and 605 (PHG, 2018). The students of both careers come mostly from subsidized private establishments.

On average, between 2018 and 2022, 51.7% of PHG students and 46.1% of PER students planned to work the first year. The financing of the studies, on average, falls on parents (46.9% in PHG and 40.2% in PER) and scholarships (35.1% in PHG and 31.1% in PER). To a lesser extent in student work, in only one of the parents or in credits. 75% had access to computer resources and, in the management of computer software, PHG students declare a basic level of Microsoft Office and PER, medium level. In Internet domain, university students have an advanced level between 2020 and 2022 indistinctly.

The pass rate at PHG increased 5.8 points (84% to 89.8%). Better performance is observed in women, except in 2021 (Fig. 1). In PER, approval rose 4.9 points, from 88.9% in 2018 to 93.1% in 2022. Throughout the period, women scored better (Fig. 2). Finally, retention in the first year experienced an inverse effect in the years of remote teaching. PHG had a better index in 2020 (87.2%) and PER, in 2021 (94.4%). In general, PER remained stable in the analyzed period; instead PHG rose from 65.5% in 2018 to 90.3% in 2022 (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4).

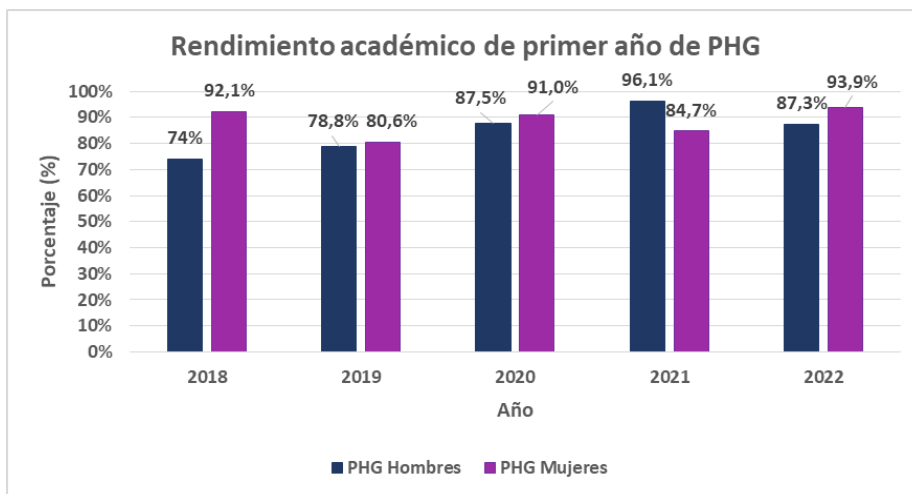


Fig. 1. 1st year PHG approval.

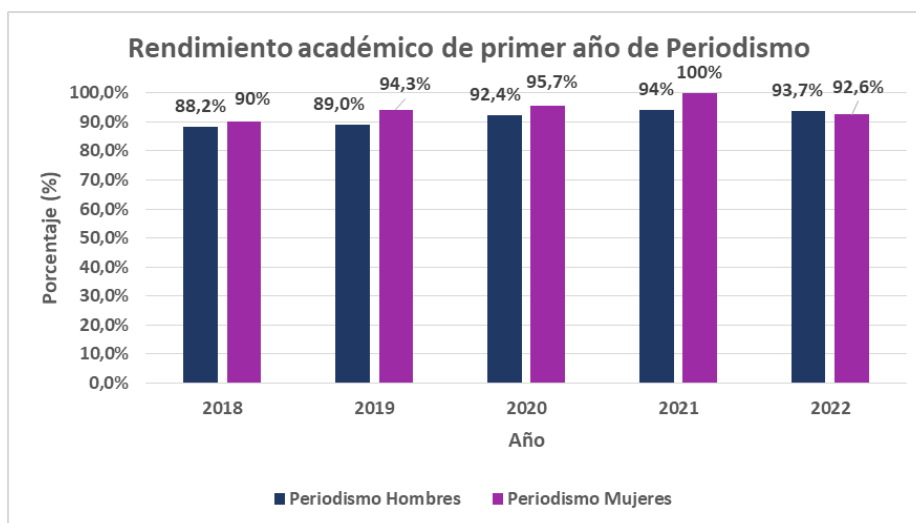


Fig. 2. 1st year PER approval.

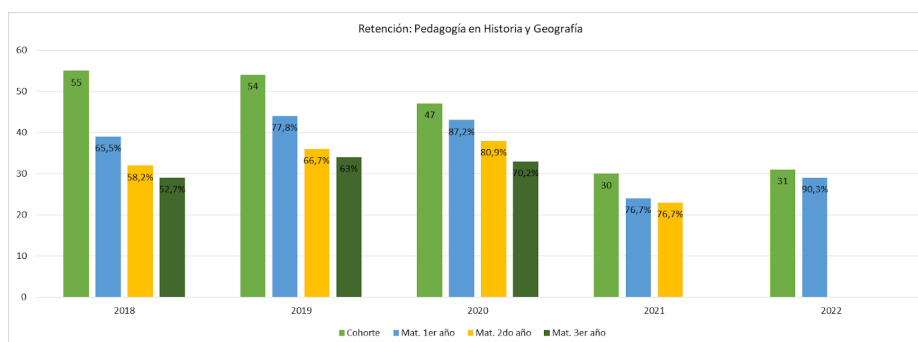


Fig. 3. PHG retention rate.

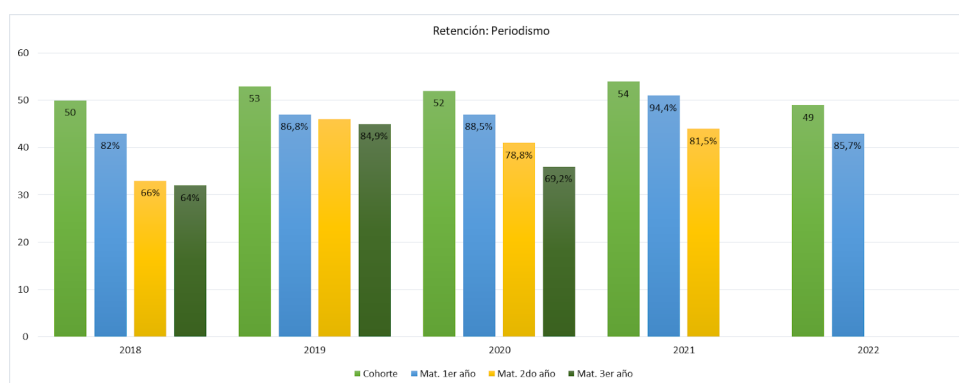


Fig. 4. PER retention rate

5 Discussion

It must be taken into account that the educational context during the last five years has been affected by a multiplicity of factors, apparently destabilizing, in terms of the effectiveness of teaching. The information provided by the dashboards provides a reference, but it is necessary to include diagnoses and perceptions to understand the effects of the crisis on university teaching.

6 Conclusions

In the context of crisis, no significant differences are observed in any of the indicators analysed; except for the increase in income and Internet management during remote teaching and the ostensible drop in PHG enrollments between 2020 and 2021. Therefore, the evidence suggests that the pandemic did not affect them to a greater extent.

7 Limitations and Future Research

This analysis does not consider the curricular adjustments made in the period of remote teaching nor. Therefore, it is still possible to integrate the indicated data with qualitative elements that make it possible to characterize in depth the effects of the crises that have occurred during the last 5 years.

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