



## **Orientations for the linkage with Society in Master's Programs in Educational Sciences**

**Orientaciones para la vinculación con la Sociedad en Programas de Maestrías en Ciencias de la Educación**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Orientations for the linkage with Society in Master's Programs in Educational Sciences constitutes a need for theoretical systematization for the Coordination of Graduate Studies of the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Educational Sciences, which is the focus of this article. It is not intended to regulate, nor to stipulate articulations that pretend to legalize a fundamental pedagogical process that needs methodologies and didactic-curricular views for its execution, more than articles and law designs, but to present a result of how to act and do in the Linking of Society for the postgraduate of the faculties of Educational Sciences. It is offered as a

methodological thought, from positions of the Pedagogy of Higher Education to try to guide the directors, teachers and students of the faculty in the process of Linkage with Society.

## RESUMEN

Las Orientaciones para la vinculación con la Sociedad en Programas de Maestrías en Ciencias de la Educación constituye una necesidad de sistematización teórica para la Coordinación de Posgrado de la Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación, en esto se enfoca el objetivo del presente artículo. No se pretende normar, ni estipular articulados que pretendan legalizar un proceso pedagógico fundamental que necesita de metodologías y miradas didáctico-curriculares para su ejecución, más que artículos y designios de ley, sino presentar un resultado del cómo actuar y hacer en la Vinculación de la Sociedad para el posgrado de las carreras de Ciencias de la Educación. Se ofrece en tanto un pensamiento metodológico, desde posiciones de la Pedagogía de la Educación Superior para tratar de orientar a los directivos, docentes y estudiantes de la facultad en el proceso de Vinculación con la Sociedad.

## Keywords / Palabras clave

University and Society, University Extension, University and Society Relationship

Universidad y Sociedad, Extensión Universitaria, Relación Universidad y sociedad

## Introduction

Thinking about human education requires a systemic view of the act that takes place, the subjects who teach, the subjects who learn and the culture (taught and learned). In its essence, each educational level is a complex reality, both at the level of its components and the relationships that follow one another. In the particular case of Postgraduate Education, the culture that is learned, starts from a reality that must be analyzed, explained and transformed, in its own sphere and in direct link with the society that generates the educational process of the fourth level.

The linkage with society in postgraduate programs, at present, at the University of Guayaquil in general and in particular in the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Educational Sciences are in a very early stage of design and implementation and are in need of theoretical-methodological reflections that facilitate their implementation through permanent regulations.

This is the intention of the work presented here as a paper: "Orientations for the link with Society in Master's Programs in Educational Sciences" written by the Postgraduate Coordination of the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Educational Sciences. It is not intended to regulate, nor to stipulate articulations that intend to legalize a fundamental pedagogical process that needs methodologies and didactic-curricular views for its execution, rather than articles and designs of law.

- 48 It is offered as a methodological thought, from positions of the Pedagogy of Higher Education to try to guide the directors, teachers and students of the faculty in the process of Linking with Society.

### **Fundamentals of the process of linking with society**

Postgraduate education is conceived as courses or research carried out in an institution of higher education after the completion of studies corresponding to the first cycle of that level. (UNESCO, n.d.). As an educational process, it is a continuation of the training improvement of professionals who wish to improve their knowledge, skills and modes of action in a given sphere of society.

The postgraduate as a university formative process has three substantive functions, namely: teaching, research and linkage with society. (CES, 2019) through which they generate processes that facilitate learning, the production of new knowledge and offers to the community of the main results generated.

Graduate studies disconnected from society are an empty process and alien to the reality in which the university is circumscribed. From the above, the processes of linkage with society stem as a necessity of Higher Education and each graduate program should conceive it as one of its substantive functions; that is why the Organic Law of Higher Education (Organic Law of Higher Education, 2010).stipulates:

The Academic Regulations shall regulate the programs and courses related to the linkage with society, as well as continuing education courses, taking into account the characteristics of the institution of higher education, its courses and programs and the needs of national, regional and local development. (Art. 17).

In line with the aforementioned article, it is ratified in a very pertinent way in the Regulations of the Academic Regime (Regulations of the Academic Regime, 2019) by stating that:

Higher education institutions must have a model of linkage with society that ensures the integration of the three substantive functions of higher education: teaching, research and linkage with society; for the management of knowledge based on their domains, lines of research, current academic offerings and community needs at the local, national and regional levels; responding to the principle of relevance (Art. 82).

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From both legal provisions, it is evident regarding the bonding process with society that:

Regulations are required for the process of linking with society in Ecuadorian universities.

The following should be considered: the type of institution, its courses, programs and the development needs of the context in which the university operates.

There is a full relationship between the processes of teaching, research, and links with society, expressed as a necessary synergy for the development of the university's educational process.

A necessary question then arises: How to understand the process of linking with society, the LOES itself specifies and determines that:

The link with society refers to the planning, execution and dissemination of activities that guarantee the effective participation in society and social responsibility of the institutions of the Higher Education System in order to contribute to the solution of the needs and problems of the environment from the academic and research fields. (CES, 2019)

As a process of educational management - planning, execution and dissemination - which concretizes one of the fundamental laws of Pedagogy (Pla Lopez & Et.Al, 2010) the relationship of the social

context with the educational process developed in the university, it is evident that the linkage is also a process inherent to the graduate program, which should be reflected, conceived and executed from a logic that facilitates its practices and results. This process reveals excellent dividends to all those involved in the educational act, within the university and beyond its borders, as stated by the (CES, 2019):

The linkage with society, as a substantive function, generates capacities and knowledge exchange according to the academic domains of the IES to guarantee the construction of effective responses to the needs and challenges of their environment. It contributes to the relevance of educational activities, improving the quality of life, the environment, productive development and the preservation, dissemination and enrichment of cultures and knowledge.

- 50 These arguments allow each university to conceive the link with society, in general and in particular in the postgraduate program, as a superior need and an urgent reality for its development.

From these elements that legislate the process of linkage with society, a question arises regarding the subject, which in some way becomes the problem that guides this paper: what are the relationships between the substantive functions of teaching and research and the linkage with society?

## Materials and Methods

It is proposed to carry out a research from an interpretative-hermeneutic position of the texts that regulate the processes of linkage with society in the University and the actions of those involved, their experiences and motivations that allow understanding how to transform such an important process or dimension of Higher Education that facilitates to take outside the campus walls the knowledge produced to society itself as a reliable consumer of the culture generated. All of the above will offer some suggestive views and perspectives on the way of linking with society, to the extent that as they said (Barrero Espinosa et al., 2011). Educational practice can be transformed if the way of understanding it is modified.

During the research process, we interacted with the teachers and students of the postgraduate Master's in Educational Sciences offered

at the University of Guayaquil, a population that is reduced in its study to a specific sample of 18 teachers of subjects and students (27) of the A1 parallel of the Master's program in Basic Education.

Attention to the bibliographic sources conceived in two groups should not be neglected: the normative documents of the process of Linkage with Society in the Ecuadorian University and the sources of information related to the subject that at national and foreign level have been written on the basis of studies and contributions that can be systematized in this article.

Within the research methods and techniques, the methods of information gathering related to the interview of teachers and students of the master's degree program and the documentary analysis of regulations and scientific articles on the link with society stand out.

- 51 The interview will facilitate the collection of information on the motivations of teachers and students about the process of linkage, as well as their interests and most relevant considerations that will allow understanding, planning and directing the interaction of the university with society (linkage).

Documentary analysis is a determining process in the research approach followed, as it will facilitate the collection of significant information (interpretation) on the linkage with society, embodied in regulations and research results that will allow its understanding (hermeneutics) to be able to transform from the offering of this article an innovative practice of the process of linkage with society.

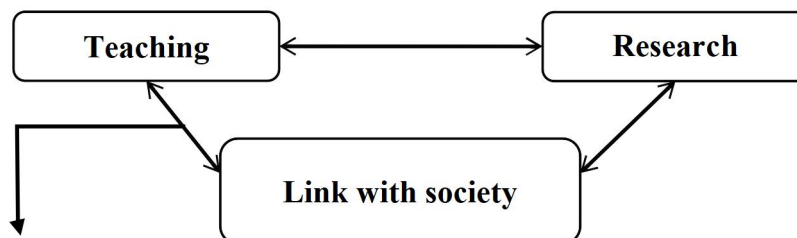
All of the above will lead to the triangulated analysis of the information and the writing of the research results that follow.

## Results

The (Regulations of the Academic Regime, 2019) and the (Model of External Evaluation of Universities and Polytechnics 2019, 2019) have been similarly projected by unveiling a systemic relationship between these substantive functions by referring: The linkage with society is articulated with the substantive function of teaching, for the comprehensive training of students, which complement theory with practice in the teaching-learning processes, promoting spaces for

experiential experience and critical reflection. (CES, 2019), (CACES, 2019, p. 19) This can be better understood by looking at Figure # 1.

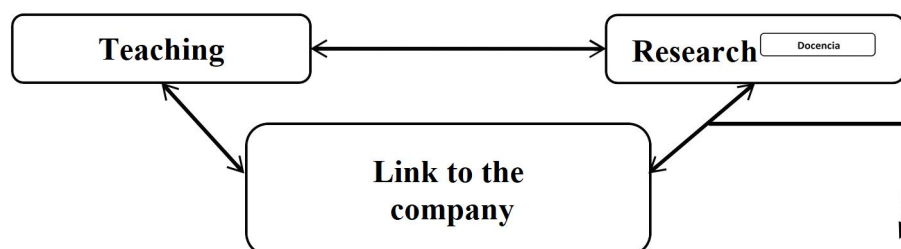
**Figure 1.** Relationship between teaching and society.



- Integral formation of the student body,
- It complements theory with practice in the teaching-learning process,
- Promotes spaces for experiential experience and critical reflection.

This teaching-society relationship expresses the complementarity between the culture learned through the curriculum and its retribution to the context where the student works, as ways of socializing what has been learned and as ways to generate new learning and educational practices.

Regarding the relationship of the substantive functions of research and linkage with society. (CES, 2019) , (CACES, 2019) they congruently refer that: it is articulated with research, by enabling the identification of needs and the formulation of questions that feed research lines, programs and projects; by propitiating the social use of scientific knowledge and knowledges; as summarized in Figure#2.

**Figure 2.** Relationship between research and society

- Identification of needs
- Questions arise that feed the research lines, programs and projects.
- Social use of scientific knowledge and knowledges

53 From this relationship flows the generation of knowledge and its socialization necessary to regulate scientific processes and forge new lines and areas of development in social research from the University.

In the analysis of these relationships, the necessary harmonization between what is taught and researched in the university and the products that can be delivered to society in the theoretical and practical work of the postgraduate as the maximum expression of relevance, as an essential quality principle of the university, expressed in the response of Higher Education to "the expectations and needs of society, national planning, and the development regime, the prospective of scientific, humanistic and technological development worldwide, and cultural diversity" is consummated. (National Assembly, 2010) and continues this article by stating that: higher education institutions will articulate their teaching, research and outreach activities with society as a compulsive and vital need in their development.

It is necessary to note that in the update of the Academic Regulations of the Academic Regime of the year (CES, 2019) five operational lines of linkage with society are proposed, which are presented in a general way, i.e., it does not specify what refers to the undergraduate and graduate, so it is assumed that it is valid for both, they are:

- Continuing education
- Pre-professional internships
- Specialized projects and services
- Research

- Dissemination and results of application of scientific knowledge
- Execution of innovation projects
- Execution of community or social service projects

For its part, in this regard, the (Model of External Evaluation of Universities and Polytechnics 2019, 2019). refers to the following: Community services, provision of specialized services, consultancies, continuing education, network management cooperation and development, dissemination and distribution of knowledge (p. 19).

As a starting point (CES, 2019) highlights that: The linkage with society promotes social transformation, dissemination and return of academic, scientific and artistic knowledge, from a focus on rights, equity and social responsibility, this is a generalizing approach; however, when making social linkage, each faculty must be clear that it can be  
 54 disseminated to society according to its objects of studies and acting curricula, therefore linkage actions must be particularized in their content, form and structure according to the university processes that are directed.

Since these are the general references that support the process of linkage with society at a meso level (IES), it is essential to specify and contextualize this process at a micro level, which corresponds to the functional structure of the Faculty, in which the regulations to develop the corresponding Programs of Linkage with Society are crystallized.

Thus, based on the analysis of the two legal references mentioned above, it is necessary to proceed to define which ones are related to the Faculty and what arguments exist for their determination as essential operational lines for the linkage of graduate programs in the area of Educational Sciences.

The question then arises: what are the essential ways in which the link with society can be developed, in the particular case of the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Educational Sciences.

In order to determine the operative lines of the linkage with society in the Faculty, the following should be considered: the academic domain, its mission and vision; indicators that will reveal the strengths and essential processes that are developed.

It is not idle to cite (Larrea De Granados, n.d.) that an academic domain consists of the scientific, technological, humanistic and artistic strengths demonstrated by an HEI, based on its academic and research trajectory, highly qualified academic staff, scientific infrastructure and relevant knowledge management.

The University of Guayaquil has determined that the School of Philosophy, Letters and Educational Sciences is linked to the Academic Domain: Integral and Inclusive Educational Models.

For its part, the Mission of the Faculty is directed to: Training, improvement of human resources of the national education system, (...) trained to generate science, technology and art in the field of education, (...); while the Vision demands: Comprehensive training of the education professional in function of the National Education System, (...) open to (...) the realities of their environment (...).

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The Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Educational Sciences, on the basis of its academic domain, its mission and vision, will be able to offer society: results of the educational action generated and actions for the improvement of human talent and the processes of the National Educational System.

The above are the operational lines of the social linkage of the postgraduate program for the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Educational Sciences (FLCE):

Continuing education courses.

Dissemination and application results of scientific knowledge.

Both operational lines can be developed as forms of linkage with society based on the consideration that: "the institutions of the Higher Education System will carry out programs and courses of linkage with society guided by the academic staff. In order to be a student in them, it will not be necessary to meet the requirements of a regular student". (National Assembly, 2010) This argument allows for training courses in educational institutions through agreements with the graduate program to improve a group of pedagogical and educational shortcomings that are diagnosed in the professional practices of the student or in his or her performance. (CES, 2019) practices or in their pedagogical performance.

Also the LOES (2010) states that: "Universities and polytechnic schools may carry out, within the framework of the link with the community, continuing education courses and issue the corresponding certificates". (National Assembly, 2010)

Therefore, the continuing education courses, as an operative line of the linkage with society, are presented as relevant for the development of the programs of linkage with society in the postgraduate programs of the Faculty.

In the case of the operational line: dissemination and results of the application of scientific knowledge, the current Academic Regulations are very pertinent when they state that:

Academic and scientific research generates results that can be used in proposals for linkage with society that benefit the quality of life and  
56 social development. In turn, the linkage with society identifies needs and generates relevant questions for research. (CES, 2019)

The above reveals the dual nature of this operational line of linkage with society as an enhancer of new research and as a facilitator of the communication of scientific results in which the masters, through publications, participation in scientific congresses, presentations of results can socialize the university work of the program and in turn contribute to the improvement of the educational processes of the country.

Within the framework of scientific research development of HEIs, scientific dissemination activities, contributions to the improvement and updating of local, regional and national development plans, and the transfer of knowledge and technology will be considered as linkage with society.(CES, 2019).

Scientific dissemination consists of transmitting results, advances, ideas, hypotheses, theories, concepts, and in general any scientific or technological activity to society; using the appropriate channels, resources and languages so that they can be understood and assimilated by society. (CES, 2019).

From the above, it is suggested that each graduate program of the Faculty of FLCE:

- Diagnose in the local context what are the shortcomings in the educational system that can be addressed by the program.

- Consider which operational lines will be developed in your relationship with the community.
- What inter-institutional agreements are needed for the development of the linkage with society.
- Elaborate the macro linkage project of the program that defines fundamental thematic lines that will generate linkage projects with society.

Each graduate program must define its thematic lines to develop linkage projects that depend on the academic domain (strengths of the institution that generates the linkage), needs of society (weaknesses of the environment that require linkage), academic content of the program (teaching that will be received), research projects that the graduate program will generate (scientific research and its socialization).

- 57 These lines must be argued in the program and constitute the essential content to be worked on in the operational lines of linkage with society that the master's student decides to include in his or her project.

On the basis of these arguments, the model ideas of the linkage with society in the Master's programs in Educational Sciences implemented in the faculty of FLCE can be put forward.

Model of linkage with society for Master's Programs in Educational Sciences.

Model of linkage with society for Master's Programs in Educational Sciences.

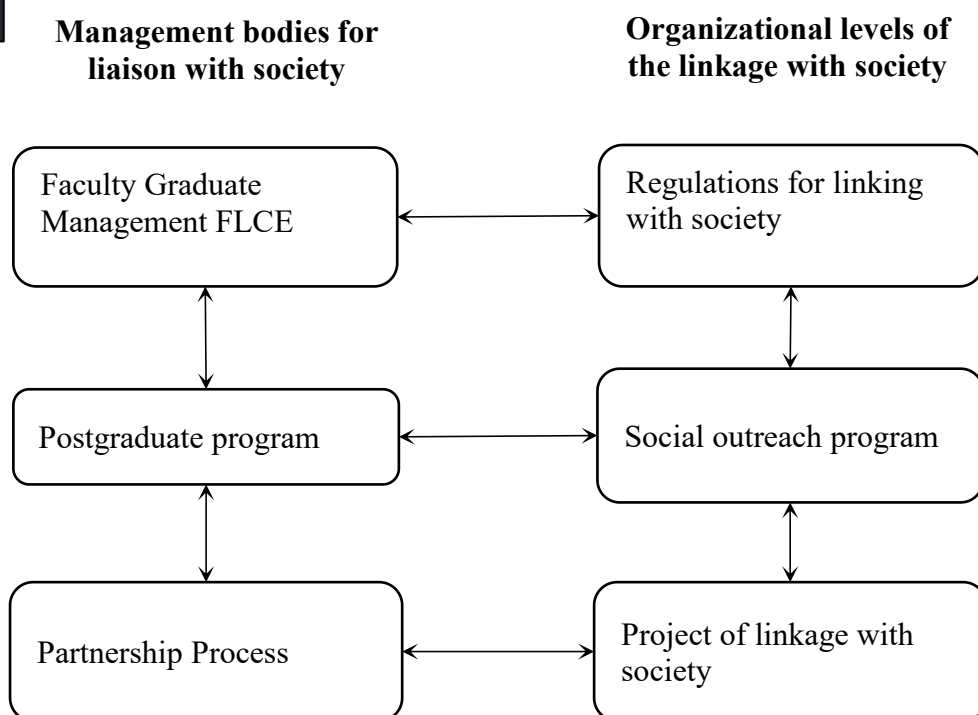
Thinking about the link with society entails modeling its organizational levels on which processes for its implementation and development must be generated. From a dialectical logic of the general, the particular and the singular, which is well explained in the Model of External Evaluation of Universities and Polytechnic Schools (2019), by outlining:

The institution has regulations and/or procedures, approved and in force and with responsible instances, to plan, follow up and evaluate the programs and/or projects of linkage with society, coherent with its educational model and that allow it to generate answers to the requirements and needs of the environment from its academic domains. (CACES, 2019)

From where a harmonic logic is inferred between the regulations of the linkage with society (general), the programs of linkage with society (particular) and the projects of linkage with society that these generate in the different master's degree programs in question (singular). This deductive derivation has its concretion in the instances of direction at faculty level, which can be assumed in general from the postgraduate coordination, in particular from the postgraduate program and in the singular from the projects that are generated within the latter (Cfr. Figure # 3).

**Figure 3.** Management bodies and organizational levels of the linkage with society.

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From the analysis of what is shown in this illustration, it is possible to infer the concrete responsibilities to be assumed as activities of linkage with society by the subjects that participate in it and that should be modeled, namely: by the FCLE Faculty Graduate Coordinator as the main responsible for determining the regulations, their implementation and regulation in practice, the Master's Program Coordinator as its manager and with the teachers who participate directly in the linkage.

From the Coordination of Postgraduate Studies of the School of Philosophy, Letters and Educational Sciences.

Determines from the legal and conceptual framework the norms that regulate the planning, execution and control of the relationship with society.

Develops methodological guidelines for the planning, execution and evaluation of the linkage with society.

Monitors in the master's degree programs the process of developing links with society in relation to the teaching and research functions.

Advises graduate program directors on methodological guidelines for the linkage with society and its implementation in the design and pedagogical practice of the graduate program.

- 59 Self-evaluates the process of linkage with society in postgraduate programs.

From the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Elaborates necessary guidelines for teachers and students regarding: actions of linkage with society, their planning, execution and evaluation.

Manages agreements and alliances with public and/or private institutions for the development of social outreach projects in its graduate program.

It carries out the call for linkage projects in the first semester of the postgraduate program.

Organizes the projects of linkage with society according to: operational lines to be developed, number of students, relationship with the subjects and lines of research to be developed.

Monitors compliance with the guidelines for the design of linkage projects and their fundamental characteristics in relation to the academic domain, the operational lines and the expected result as a contribution to society.

Systematically regulates the fulfillment of student assignments linked to graduate program projects.

Maintains the information of the projects of linkage with society that are executed.

Of the professor of liaison with society in the postgraduate program.

Manages with the direction of the graduate program the planning of the projects of linkage with society.

Decides with the students of the graduate program the operational lines of the linkage with society to work according to the needs of the environment, the number of students, the academic domains and the relevance of the actions to be carried out.

Assists students in the documentation, substantiation and development of the planning, execution and evaluation of the linkage with society.

60 Advises the graduate program director on the elements of the linkage that must be regulated to achieve the proposed objectives.

Compiles the information generated by the projects of linkage with society as evidence of the process carried out.

Of the students who participate in the linkage with society

Diagnose the needs and causal problems of linkage with society.

Select a project of linkage with society according to the operational line of the graduate program.

Conceives the actions to be carried out in the project of linking with society.

Executes the actions of linkage with society, according to the plan conceived and its execution times.

Fulfills the number of hours established for the linkage with society according to the graduate programs they study.

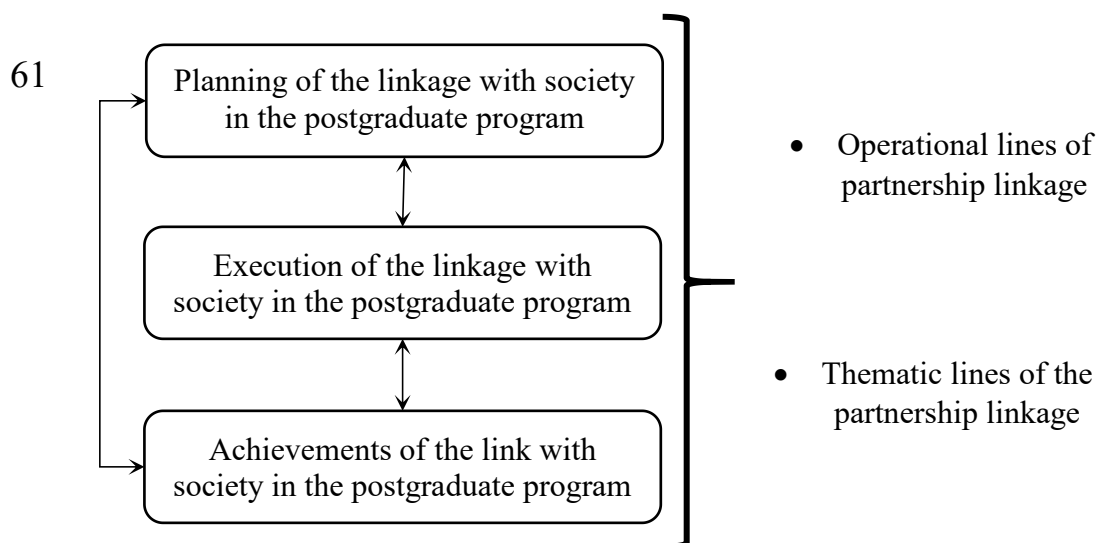
Deliver the documents generated by the process of engagement with society in its planning, execution and evaluation stages, as well as all the evidence needed to argue the logic of the development of the process.

The professional roles of the subjects that participate in the linkage with society interact in the postgraduate educational process from a

processual mode of action that has stages, through which the linkage is developed and this "is developed through a set of programs and/or projects planned, executed, monitored and evaluated systematically by the HEIs." (CACES, 2019)

From the previous reference, the stages of the process of linkage with society are assumed as planning, execution and evaluation of the achievements obtained, according to the operative lines (methods) and the thematic lines (contents) assumed in each graduate program to develop the programs and projects of linkage with society (Cfr. Figure # 4).

**Figure 4.** modeled representation of the process of linking with society in the postgraduate program.



## Society Outreach Planning

The linkage with society as an educational process and in accordance with its organizational levels (Cfr. Figure # 3) requires planning at the curricular design level the program of linkage with society, according to the details provided by the guide for the presentation of projects of graduate programs (CES, 2014) in section 3.6 of Curricular Planning (CES, 2014) Section 3.6.7 Community Outreach Component. (CES, 2014) . Here the coordinator of the graduate program and its collaborators must, according to the operational lines defined in these methodological guidelines and the thematic

lines conceived by their graduate program, coherently carry out the mesocurricular planning as stipulated by the CES for these programs.

As it expresses (Model of External Evaluation of Universities and Polytechnics 2019, 2019). Regarding the planning of the linkage with society:

The institution has regulations and/or procedures, approved and in force, and with responsible instances, to plan, follow up and evaluate the programs and/or projects of linkage with society, coherent with its educational model, and that allow it to generate answers to the requirements and needs of the environment from its academic domains.(CACES, 2019)

The planning process is the preconception prior to the development of the relationship with society and requires the logical organization of

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- Definition of the programs and/or projects of linkage with society to be executed according to the operational lines.
- Relationship of the program and/or linkage project with the educational model, academic domains, national, regional or local plans and cultural requirements of the environment.

The graduate program plans the monitoring and regulation of the programs and/or projects of linkage with society, in accordance with the subjects received and the lines and/or projects of research developed in the master's program.

Agreements are established with entities for the development of links with society, which may lead to the execution of postgraduate internships.

Teachers in charge, students by type of social outreach projects, economic, human and material resources necessary for their execution are designated.

The documentation that supports the planning process of the linkage with society consists of: agreements with institutions, documentation that supports the need for linkage with society, plans and methodologies for the linkage with society, projects of linkage with society in connection with the operational lines that support the graduate program, programmed budget. (adapted from CACES, 2019, p. 67) Annex 1 provides the forms for planning the linkage with

society; the rationale for the need of the project of linkage with the community and the proposed schedule of the project of linkage with society by objectives, tasks and expected results.

### Execution of the linkage with society

For the execution process of the linkage with society in the postgraduate program: "The institution executes the programs and/or projects of linkage with society articulated to its academic domains, with the participation of professors, students and stakeholders; it follows up and evaluates them, through responsible instances" (CACES, 2019). (CACES, 2019)

They constitute actions to be carried out during the period of execution of the linkage with society: (CACES, 2019)

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- The program and/or project of linkage with society is executed in relation to one of the two operational lines of the postgraduate linkage of the faculty of FLCE.
- The coordination of the graduate program systematically monitors the execution of community outreach projects and regulates actions to achieve the proposed objectives.
- If professional internships are conceived in the graduate program, they are developed in its outreach component within the framework of the projects conceived in the outreach program with society.
- The teachers involved in the programs and/or projects related to the relationship with society have the respective hourly load, according to the distribution of activities and the number of students to be monitored in the relationship projects.
- Control of allocated budgets and their optimal use.

In relation to the actions for the execution of the process for the implementation of the linkage with society, the following are conceived as essential document management for this stage: (see annex 2)

- Monitoring strategy
- Control of the time dedicated to social engagement
- Summary of activities of the project coordinator and participants in the planning and execution of the project.

Achievements of the linkage with society in the postgraduate program

For the development of this stage or process of the linkage with society in graduate programs, it is consistent with what is referred to by the (CACES, 2019) when stating that: The results obtained from the programs and/or projects of linkage with society, meet the planned objectives and have generated responses to the requirements and needs of the environment.

They constitute actions to be carried out during the period of evaluation of the achievements of the linkage with society: (CACES, 2019)

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- The evaluations of the projects of linkage with society make it possible to verify the fulfillment of the proposed objectives and to identify the achievements attained.
- Evidence of responses to the needs of the educational context that generated the linkage project is compiled, which is contrasted by external actors who receive the executed action.
- Evidence of the relationship between the link with society and the contents of the teaching-learning process of the graduate program and the research carried out therein.
- Contribution or recommendations offered by the linkage with society executed to the generation of new linkage projects, regeneration or continuity of the one carried out in its various thematic lines proposed by the postgraduate program for the linkage with society.

In relation to the actions for evaluating the achievements of the process of execution of the linkage with society, the following are conceived as essential document management for this stage: (see annex 3)

- Evaluation form for the fulfillment of objectives, verifiable products and impact of the project of linkage with society.
- Impact of the project of linkage with society
- Document of evidence of linkage with the teaching-learning process and research in the postgraduate program

- Evaluation form of students participating in the linkage with the society
- Summary of beneficiaries
- Proposals of topics or reformulation of continuity to projects of linkage with society in the postgraduate program.
- Final report of the linkage project and its evidences

These arguments for the development of the process of linkage with society can be adapted and regulated in each graduate program according to the characteristics of its own curricular design and the adjustment to the guidelines defined here, after coordination with the graduate direction of the faculty of FLCE, in order to permanently regulate these methodological guidelines.

## Conclusions

- 65 The normative documents reveal the intentions of the process of linking with society and establish the relationships with the rest of the university's formative processes. There is a theory that explains and guides these processes, contextualized in the Ecuadorian context. The process of linkage with society should rescue and evidence the results with which the master's students contribute to their processes, demonstrating the potential of the postgraduate program.

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