Institutional theory usually refers to a broad group of perspectives that interpret the relationship between institutions and human behaviour, assuming that not only human actions (i.e. behaviour, perceptions, power, policy preferences, decision-making processes) shape institutions, but these are also influenced by them. More specifically, institutionalism focuses on the need of organizations to adapt to their institutional environment, such as norms, rules and understandings about what is an acceptable or normal behaviour and that cannot be changed easily and/or instantaneously (March and Olsen, 1984; Meyer and Rowan, 1977). It argues that organizations take rules and norms for granted because they seem obvious or natural. Failure to act in accordance with norms and expectations may lead to conflict and illegitimacy. Changes occurring at the institutional field of higher education (HE) are said to increasingly constrain higher education institutions (HEIs). Given this, it is increasingly relevant to analyse the development of institutionalist theories and the way they have been adapted to the HE field.