

Higher Education Quality Assurance System in Estonia

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24.08.2016



EESTI KÕRG- JA KUTSEHARIDUSE
KVALITEEDIAGENTUUR

Estonia – some indicators



Population: 1,3 million

45 000 sq km

1500 islands

Forests 52,3 % of land area

Average monthly salary 1030 EUR

Unemployment rate 8,1 %

GDP per capita at current prices 18 415 mil EUR





Founded	January 2009 on the basis of Estonian HE Accreditation Center
Two councils	Quality Assessment Council for HE Quality Assessment Council for VET
Staff	9 staff members



EKKA's mission is,
in cooperation with its partners,
to promote quality in the field of education
and thereby increase the competitiveness
of the Estonian society.



Main activities

- Development of principles and procedures of external evaluation
- **Assessment of the quality of a study program group (SPG) in HE**
- **Institutional accreditation (IA) in HE**
- **Accreditation of study program groups in VET**
- Training and counseling
- Publications
- International cooperation

EKKA - Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency

Eesti Kõrghariduse Kvaliteediagentuur

Admission valid until: 2018-03-31 (listed since 2013-10-23)

Based in*: Estonia

Agency operates in**: Estonia

Reports by the agency: <http://www.ekka.archimedes.ee/universities/quality-assessment-of-study-programme-groups/assessment-decisions-and-reports>

External review report: [EKKA External Review Report 2013.pdf](#)
[2013_03_EKKA_ApprovalDecision.pdf](#)

Shared responsibilities for QA

The Government or MoE	Institutions	EKKA
<p>Granting the right to conduct studies in study programme groups, based on the results of the assessments of SPGs, carried out by EKKA, checking whether the minimum standards set in the law are met.</p> <p>Financing partly based on quality assessment results</p>	<p>Main responsibility for the quality and continuous improvement of the education provided.</p> <p>Strategic management (including quality management)</p> <p>Regular internal evaluation and benchmarking</p>	<p>Promoting the quality in cooperation with HE and VET institutions through external assessments.</p> <p>Institutional accreditation (IA)</p> <p>Quality assessment /Accreditation of study programme groups (SPG)</p> <p>Initial assessment of SPGs in HE</p>

HE QA COUNCIL

13 members

In 2015: 10 from HEI-s
2 employers
1 student representative

VET QA COUNCIL

max 13 members

In 2015: 8 representatives
of employers, 2 from MoE,
2 from partner
organisations

**DIRECTOR OF
EKKA
&
EKKA BUREAU**

- selects the Director of EKKA
- approves the composition of the EKKA QAC
- approves the statutes of EKKA QAC

FOUNDATION ARCHIMEDES SUPERVISORY BOARD

- A foundation (governed by private law) may be authorized to perform the functions of the agency
- QA decisions of the QAC are final
- No representatives of the MOE, no rectors, no vice rectors
- Fixed roles of submitting candidates to the EKKA QAC
- Functions of the HE quality agency (EKKA)

UNIVERSITIES ACT

Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education

EKKA QUALITY ASSESSMENT

COUNCILS for HE and VET

- approving the quality assessment regulations
- adopting assessment decisions
- approving EKKA's development and action plans (joint sessions)

Director of EKKA

- EKKA's general management
- ensuring the compliance of EKKA's activities with legislation and regulations for evaluations
- staff development
- management of financial matters
- reporting

EKKA Office

Assessment Director (IA): institutional accreditation, international cooperation, development activities; feedback system, periodical reviews.

Assessment Director (SPG): initial assessment, re-evaluation, and quality assessment of study programme groups; Secretary of the EKKA HE Quality Assessment Council;

Assessment Director (VET): accreditation of study programme groups min VET; Secretary of the Quality Assessment Council for VET;

Director for International Cooperation: international networks and projects

Information Manager: communications, feedback, administration of evaluation platforms; coordination of review panels

Lawyer: regulations, contracts, drafts of assessment decisions, appeals

Assessment Coordinator (HE): coordination of review panels, document management, correspondence

Assessment Coordinator (VET): coordination of review panels, document management, project management

Accountant: accounting, financial reporting

Financing of EQA activities



- Long-term plan agreed with HEI-s and MoE (till 2017)
- Appropriations from the state budget cover both
 - the costs directly associated with the external evaluations and
 - the costs connected with a broader quality development of higher education (trainings, conferences, seminars, publications of results, analyses)
- Budget based on the number of assessment units and basic funding + development activities agreed for the next year

ESTONIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Doctoral programmes

180-240 ECTS credits

(3 to 4 years)

Integrated Bachelor's and Master's programmes

300-360 ECTS or
(5 to 6 years)

Master's programmes

60-120 ECTS credits

(1 to 2 years)

Bachelor's programmes

180-240 ECTS credits

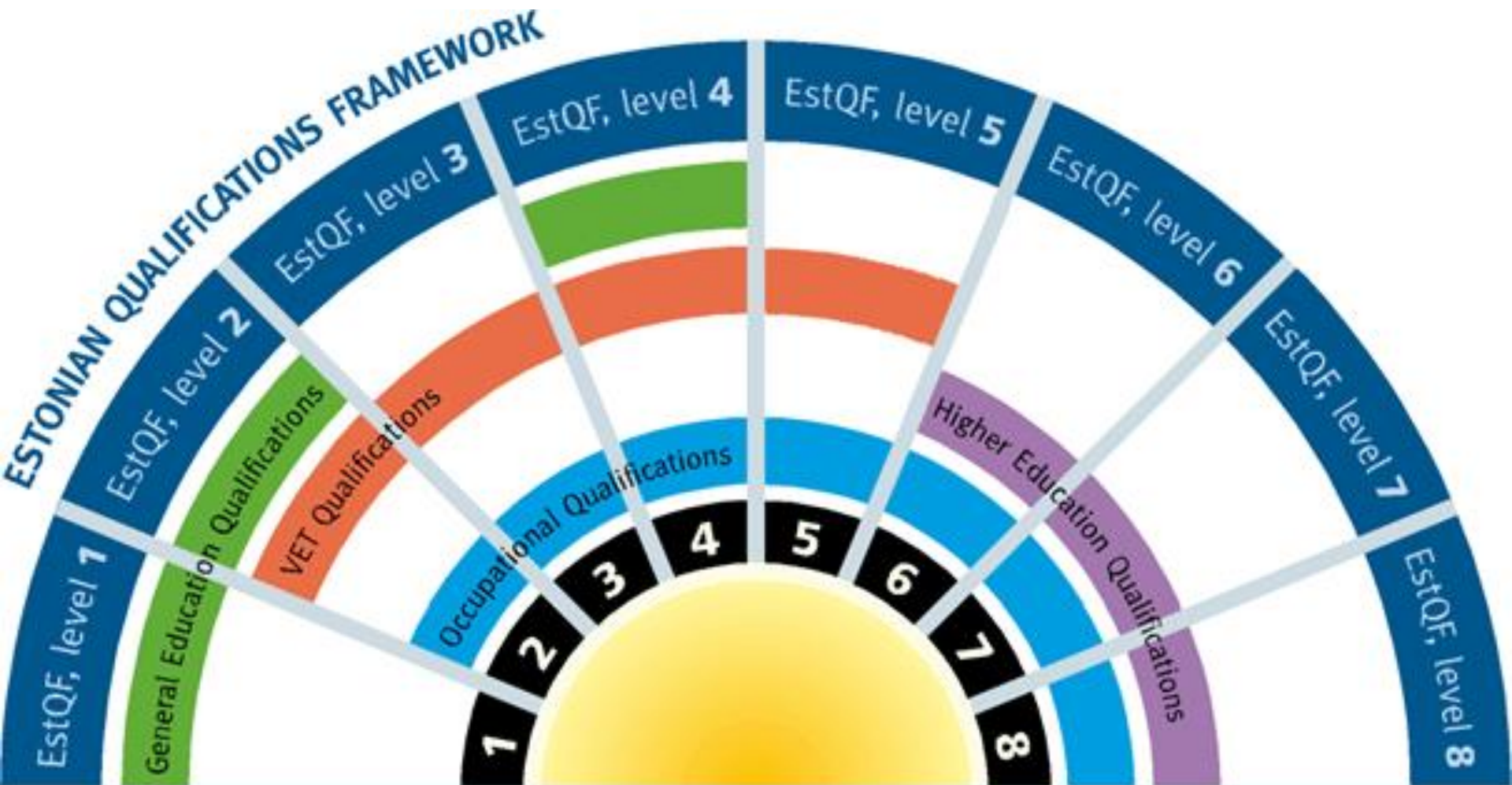
(3 to 4 years)

Professional higher education programmes

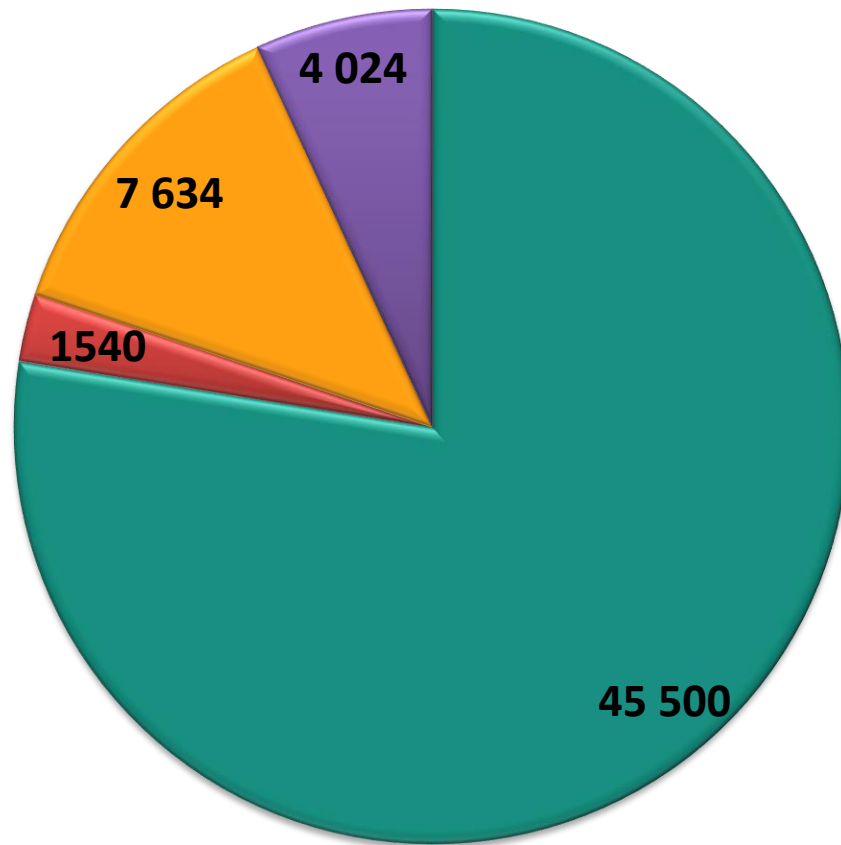
180-270 ECTS credits

(3 to 4.5 years)

Estonian Qualifications Framework



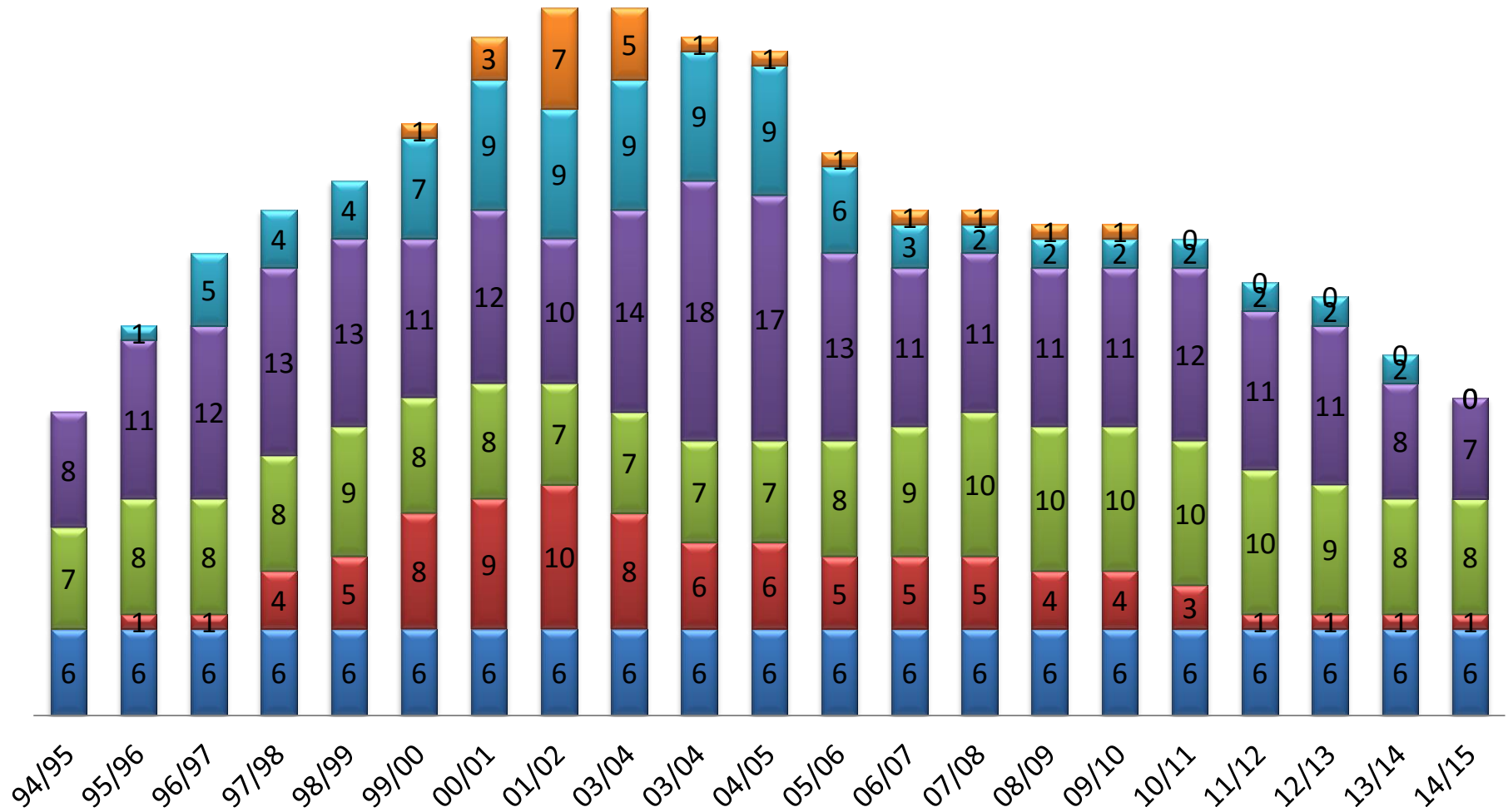
Types of HEI-s and student numbers 2015



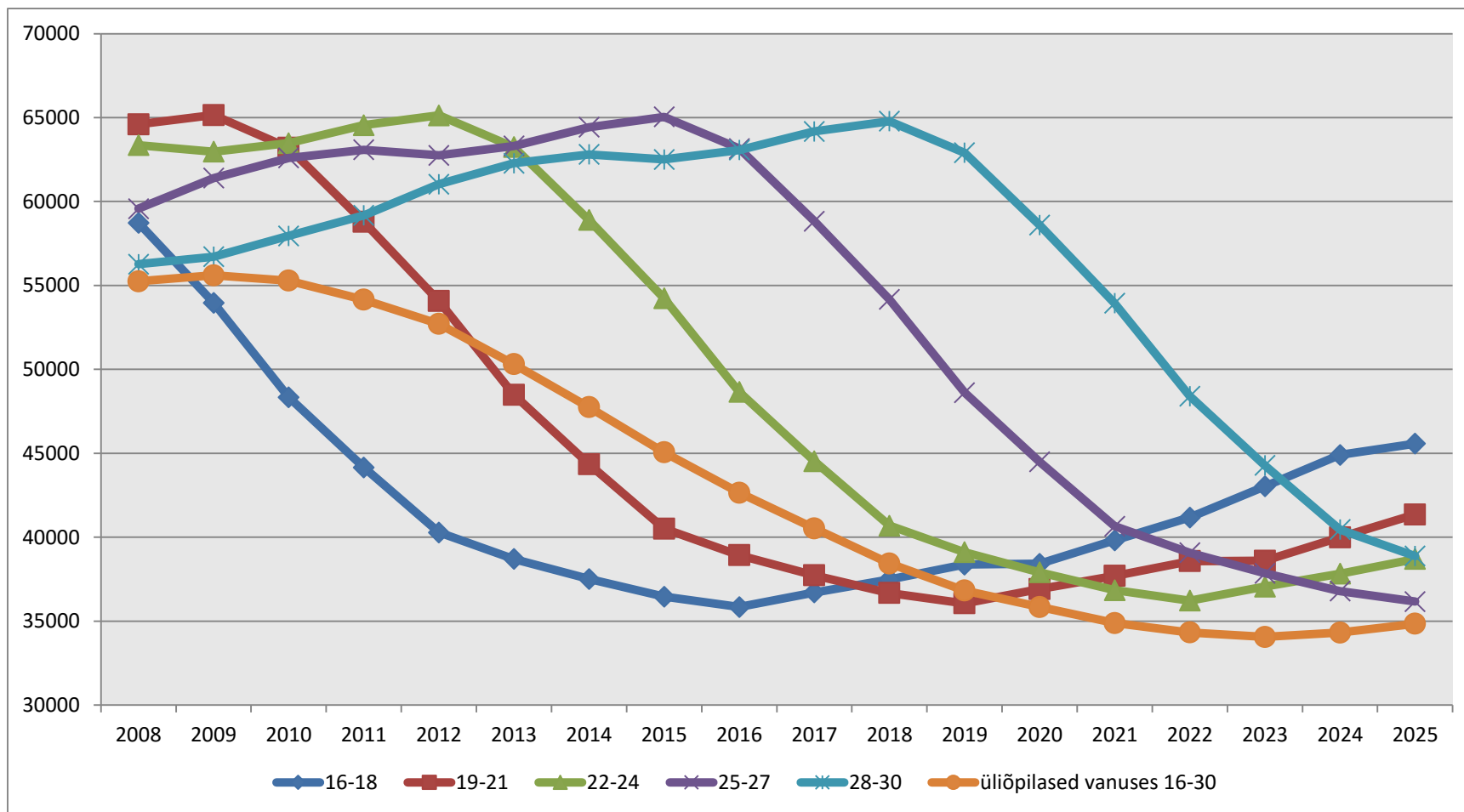
- 6 public universities
- 1 private university
- 8 state institutions of prof HE
- 7 private institutions of prof HE

Higher Education Institutions in Estonia 1994-2015

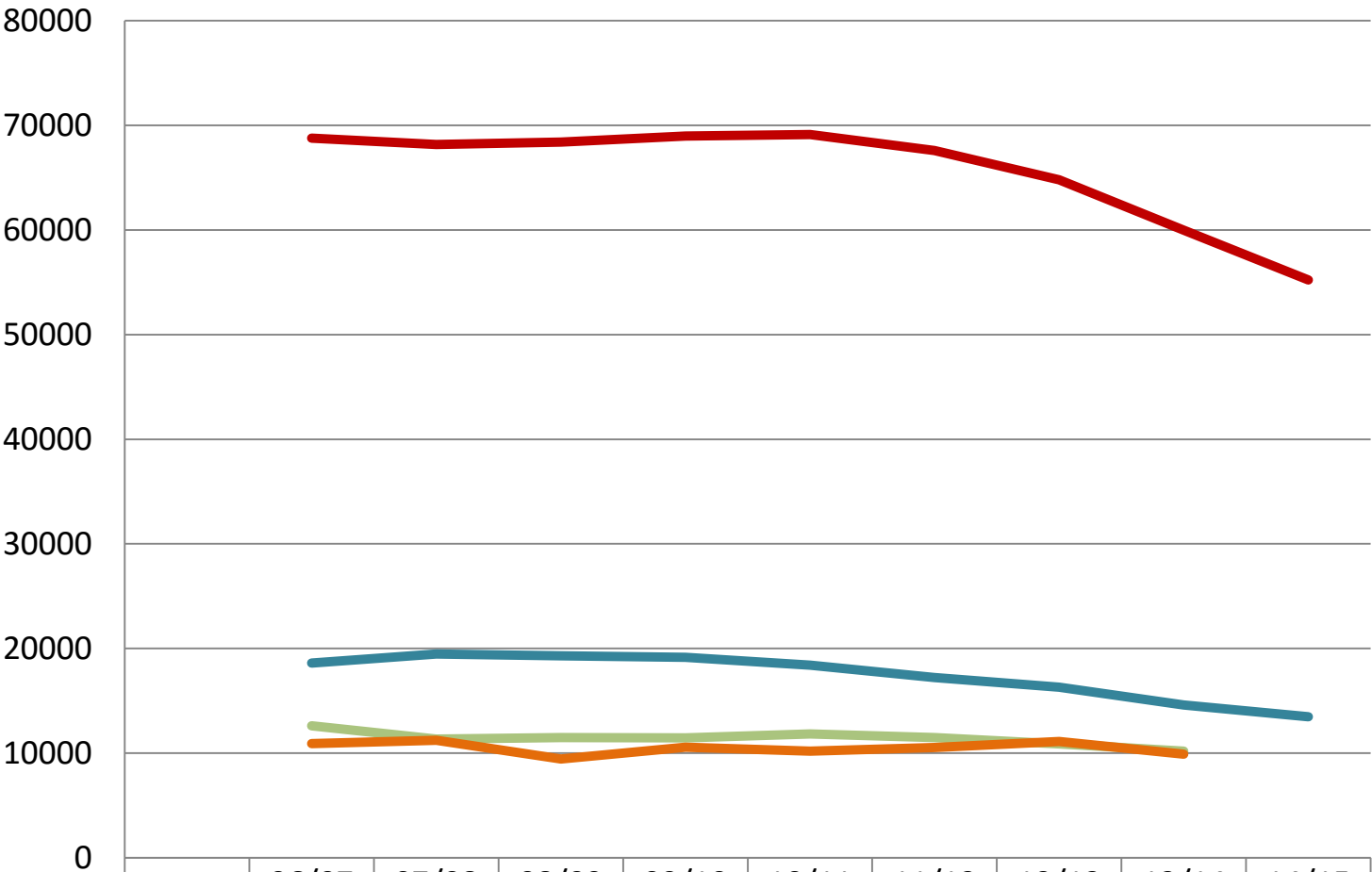
■ Public University ■ Private University ■ State Prof HEI
■ Private Prof HEI ■ State VET Institutions ■ Private VET Institution



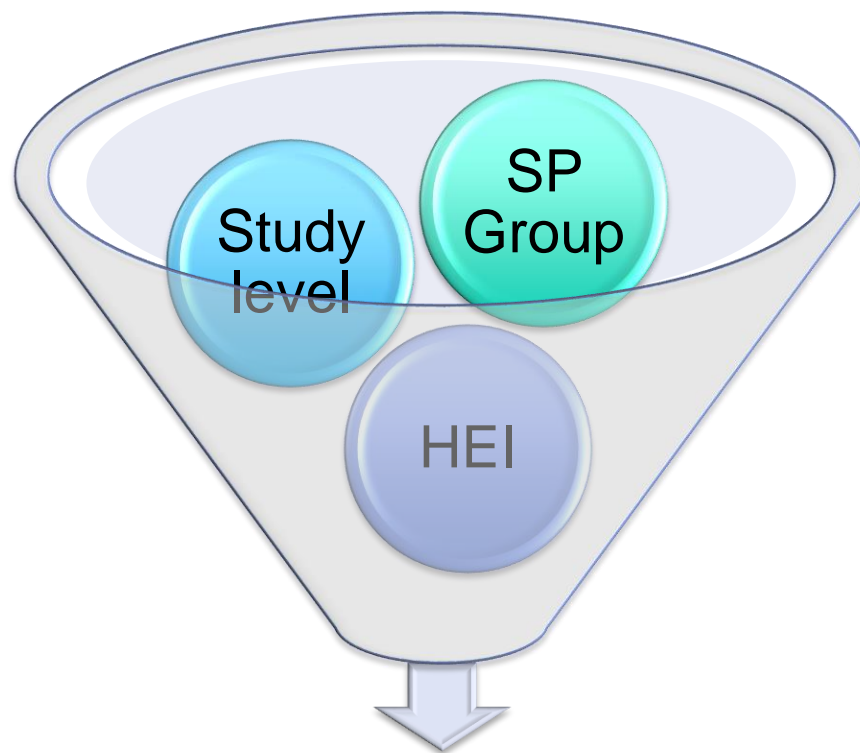
Inhabitants of Estonia aged 16-30, and the estimated number of students



Dynamics in Student Numbers in Estonia



	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Number of admitted students	18597	19482	19292	19167	18404	17233	16305	14606	13477
Number of students	68767	68168	68399	68985	69113	67607	64806	59998	55214
Number of graduates	12612	11345	11489	11450	11828	11497	10867	10190	
Number of interruption cases	10922	11218	9423	10570	10189	10542	11109	9912	



Assessment unit

Study programme groups in HE

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Teacher training and educational science | 15. Public security |
| 2. Humanities (<i>excluding theology</i>) | 16. Life sciences |
| 3. Languages and cultures | 17. Environmental protection |
| 4. Arts (<i>fine arts, graphic and audiovisual arts, design, craft skills</i>) | 18. Physical sciences |
| 5. Performing arts | 19. Informatics and information technology |
| 6. Theology | 20. Mathematics and statistics |
| 7. Journalism and information | 21. Architecture and building |
| 8. Psychology | 22. Engineering, manufacturing and technology |
| 9. Social science (<i>excluding psychology</i>) | 23. Agriculture, forestry and fishery |
| 10. Law | 24. Veterinary |
| 11. Business and administration | 25. Medicine (<i>including dental services</i>) |
| 12. Social services | 26. Health care |
| 13. Personal services | 27. Sports |
| 14. National defence | 28. Transport services |

Financing of higher education



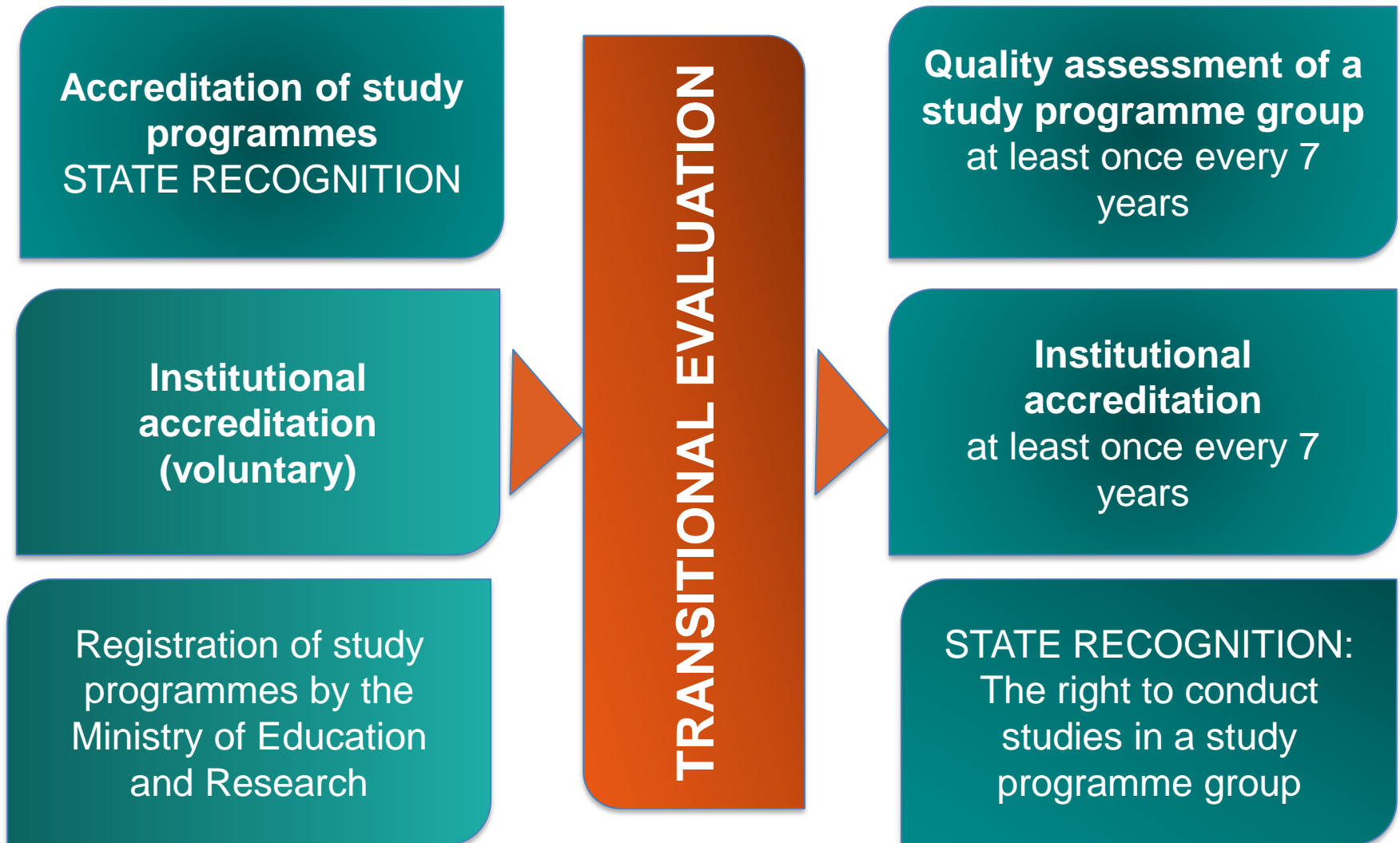
- Full-time study in Estonian language is free of charge for the students in public universities and state professional higher education institutions.
- Public universities and state professional HEI's receive **performance support** from the state budget for providing higher education in the fields based on their profile and function. Should the state have a specific shortage of graduates in a certain field, it can establish its needs through performance contracts. Otherwise there is no *numerus clausus* set by MOE.
- **70–75%** of funds shall be calculated on the basis of the extent, quality and efficiency of provision
- **25–30%** of funds shall be calculated for the support of activities which provide instruction of national importance

Higher Education Quality Assessment System in Estonia

1997-2009

2009-2011

2011 ...



Accountability vs Enhancement



Focused on accountability	Focused on enhancement
<u>Transitional evaluation and re-evaluation</u>	<u>Institutional accreditation</u>
<u>Initial assessment of a study programme group</u>	<u>Quality assessment of study programme groups</u>
Assessment of joint programmes	

Transitional evaluation in figures



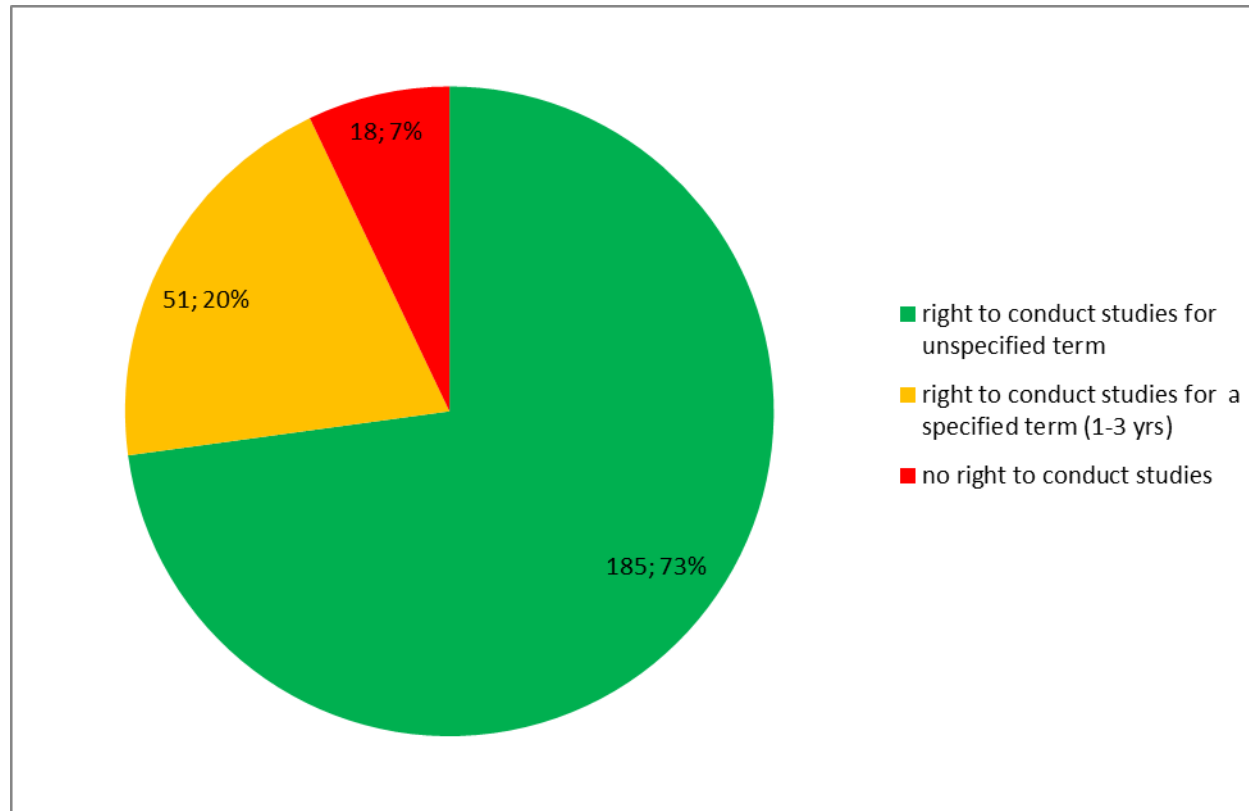
- conducted during the period from autumn 2009 to autumn 2011
- 33 higher education institutions participated
- 28 study programme groups (670 study programmes) were evaluated
- 158 Estonian experts took part in the evaluation process
- 254 assessments – 130 standard proceedings and 124 simplified
- Results: 185 open-ended education licences, 51 fixed-term education licences, 18 negative decisions
- cost of 640,000 euros that counts for 2520 euros per proceeding and 955 euros per study programme
- 89% of the representatives of HEI agreed that TE has increased the reliability of Estonian higher education

What was evaluated?

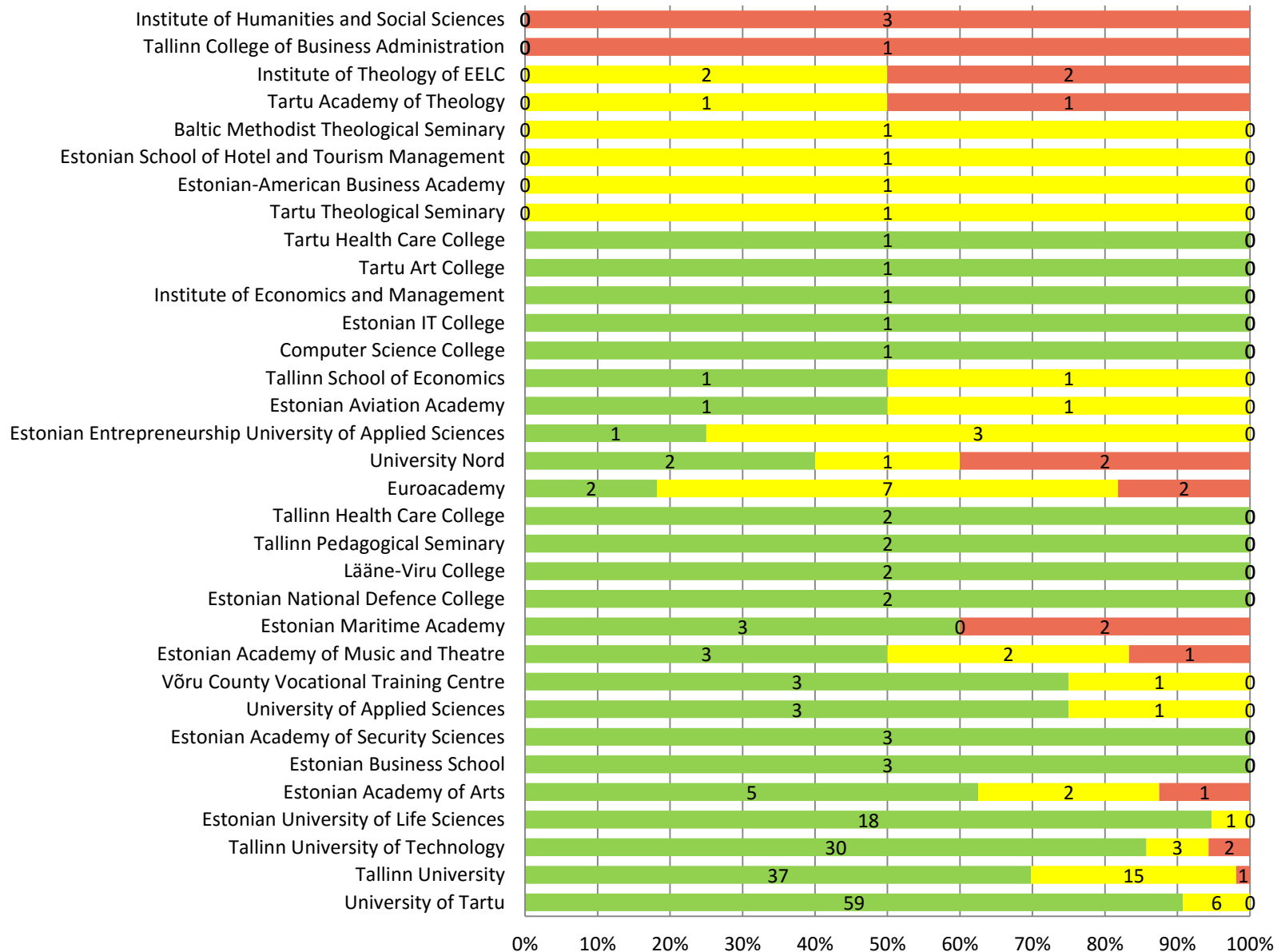


- **the quality of conducting studies** – the learning outcomes, study programme development, organization of work practice, qualifications of the teaching staff, student counselling, etc.
- **the resources necessary for conducting studies** – the availability of ordinary qualified teaching staff, adequacy of financial resources, suitability of infrastructure for the needs of the study programme group, etc.
- **the sustainability of conducting studies** – trends in the number of students and graduates and the finances, planning for development, etc.

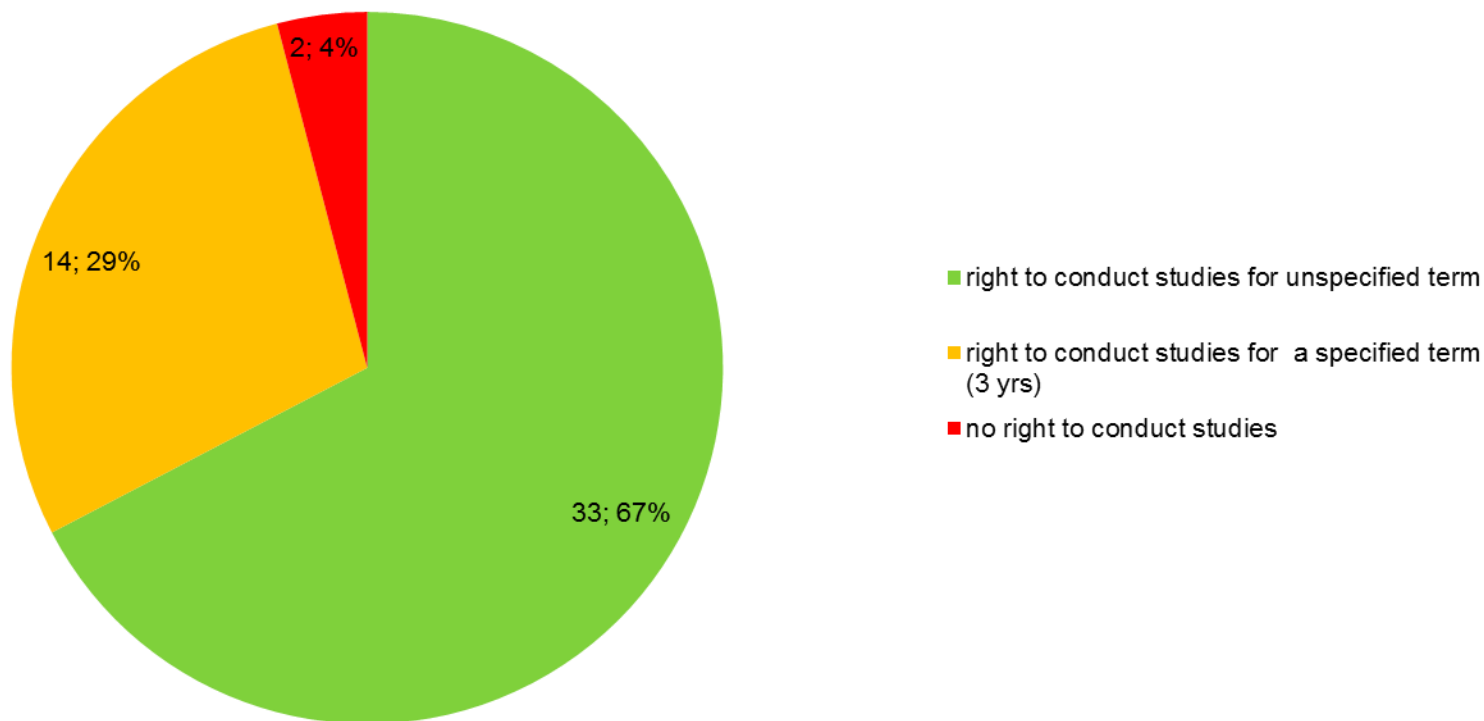
Decisions of TE



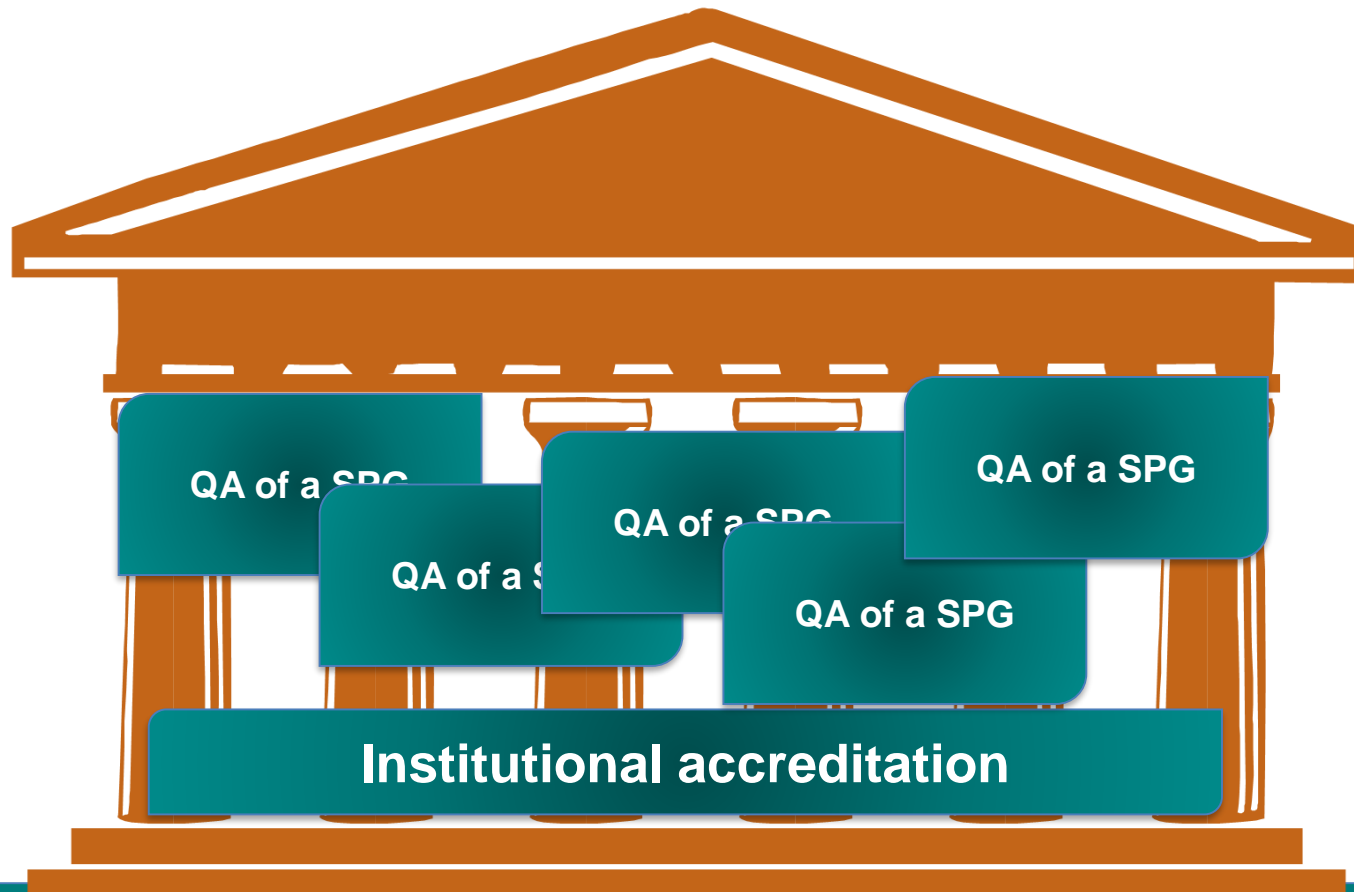
Transitional evaluation: decisions by all HEIs



Re-evaluations 2013-2014: results



External Quality Assurance 2014



Initial assessment → Right to conduct studies in a study program group



The purpose of IA is to support the development of strategic management and culture of quality in HEIs, inform stakeholders of the outcomes of the main activities thereof, and enhance the reliability and competitiveness of Estonian higher education.

Areas of assessment:

- organisational management and performance
- teaching and learning
- research, development and/or other creative activity
- service to society.



Quality assessment of SPGs focuses on study programmes, the content and organisation of studies and on instruction-related development activities within a study programme group. These aspects are not evaluated in the course of institutional accreditation.

Assessment areas:

- study programme and study programme development
- resources
- teaching and learning
- teaching staff
- students

Main purpose of the QA of SPG



- Quality assessment of a SPG involves the assessment of the **conformity** of study programmes and the studies and development activities that take place on their basis to legislation, national and international standards and developmental directions
with the purpose of supporting the self-development of HEI and providing recommendations to improve the quality of studies.
- QA of SPG is not followed by sanctions – expert assessments should be considered recommendations.

Evaluation model

