

International seminar

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EESTI KÕRG- JA KUTSEHARIDUSE
KVALITEEDIAGENTUUR

Estonia – some indicators



Population: 1,317 million

45 000 km²

2222 islands

Forests 52 % of land area

Average monthly salary 1242 EUR

Unemployment rate 6,8 %

In 2016, GDP at current prices was 20,9
billion EUR



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)

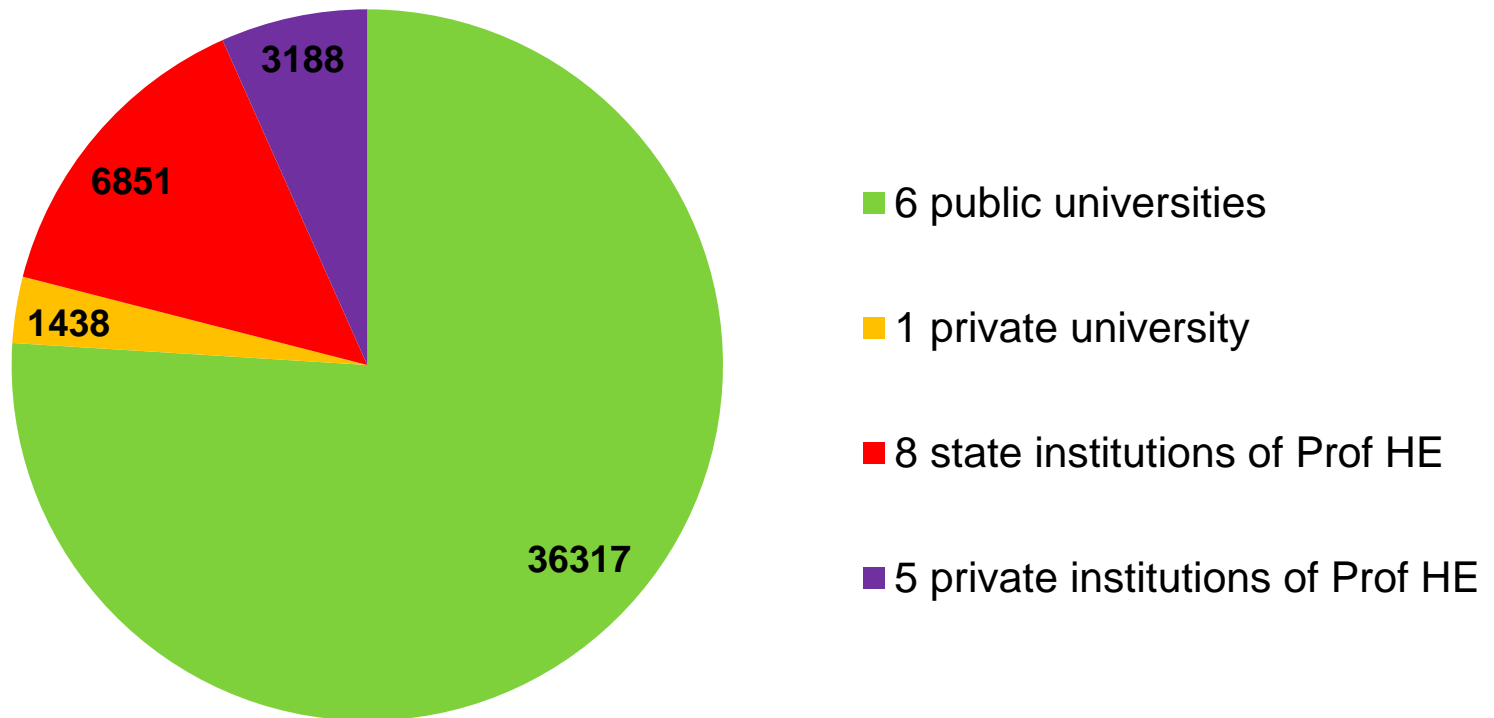
Professional higher education programmes

180-270 ECTS credits

(3 to 4.5 years)

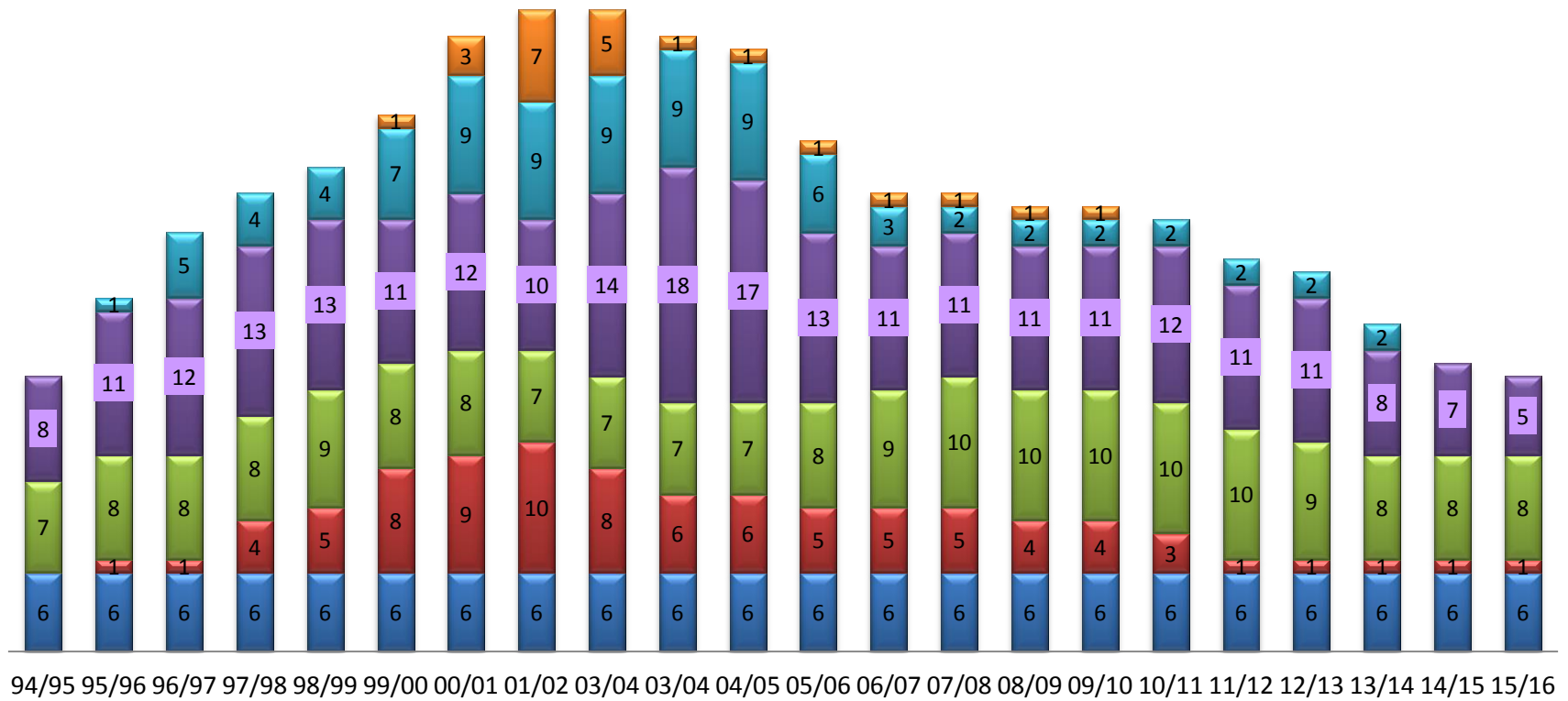
Secondary education

Types of HEI-s and student numbers 2017

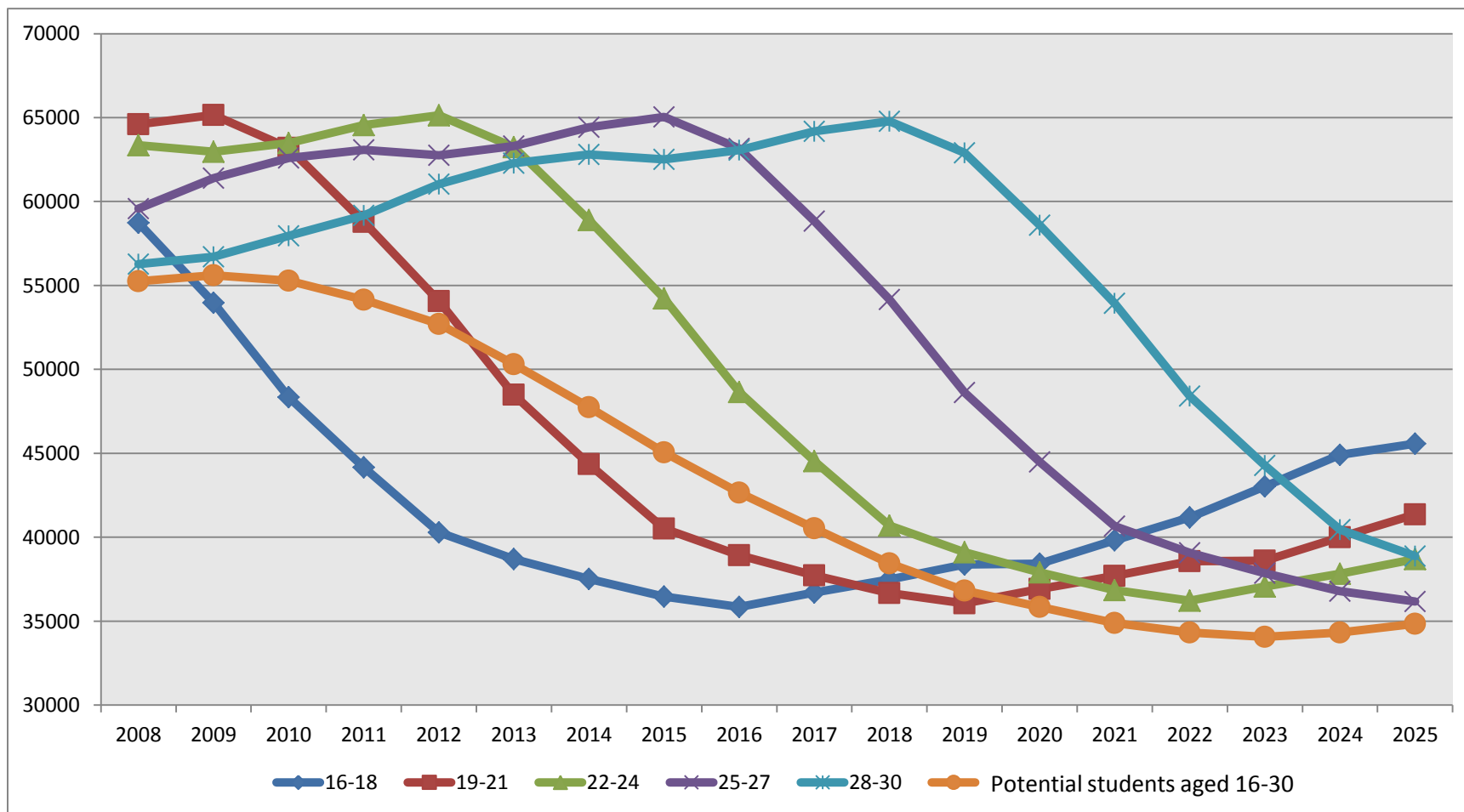


Higher Education Institutions 1994-2017

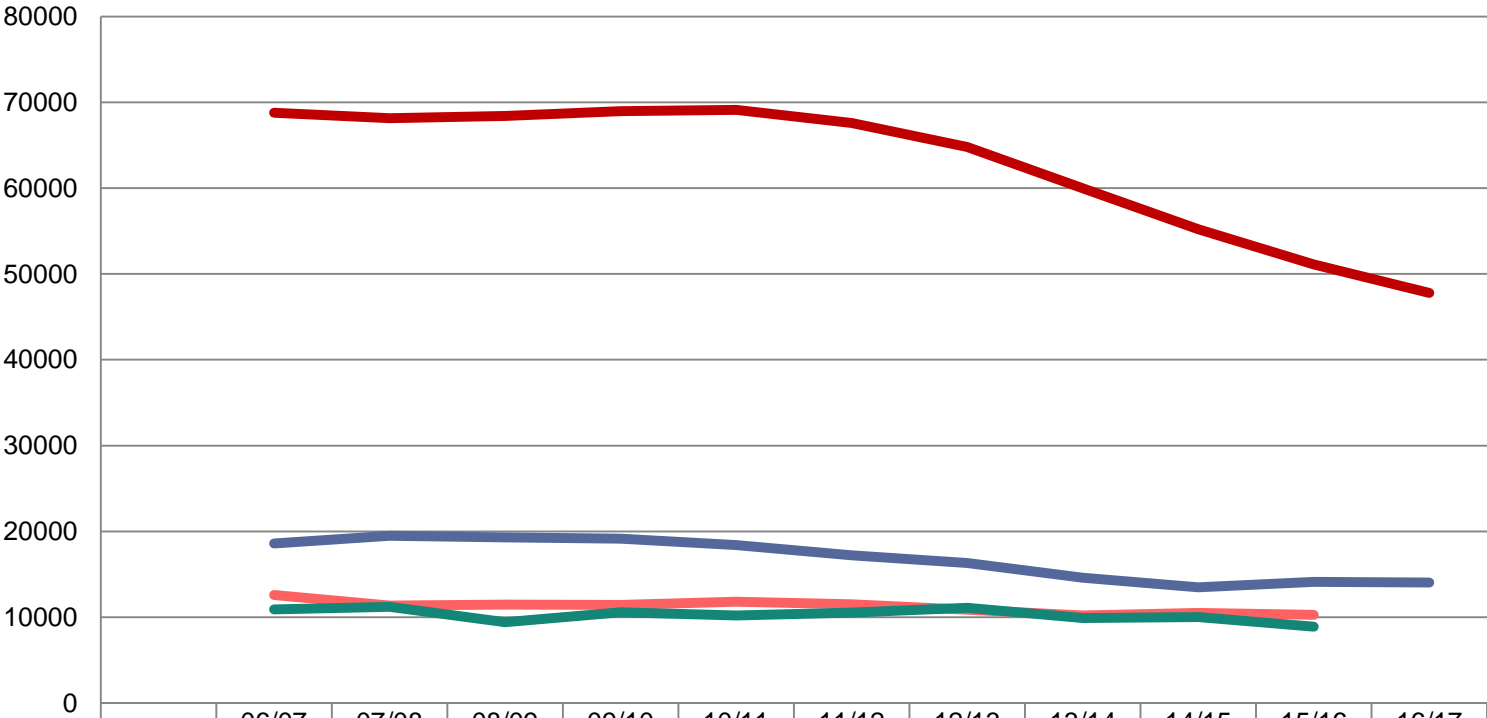
- Public University
- State Prof HEI
- Private University
- Private Prof HEI



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



Dynamics in Student Numbers in Estonia



Number of admitted students		06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
Number of students		68767	68168	68399	68985	69113	67607	64806	59998	55214	51092	47794
Number of graduates		12612	11345	11489	11450	11828	11497	10867	10190	10491	10277	
Number of interruption cases		10922	11218	9423	10570	10189	10542	11109	9912	10014	8899	

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



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



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

HE QA COUNCIL

13 members

In 2016: 8 from HEI-s
4 employers'
representatives
1 student representative

VET QA COUNCIL

13 members

In 2016: 8 employers'
representatives, 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 Higher Education Quality Agency

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

Development Manager: institutional accreditation, international cooperation, development activities

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

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

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

Analyst: compiling periodical reviews, carrying out surveys; coordination of review panels

Accountant: accounting, financial reporting

Other support services: Insourcing of IT; central Records Management System

Shared responsibilities for QA

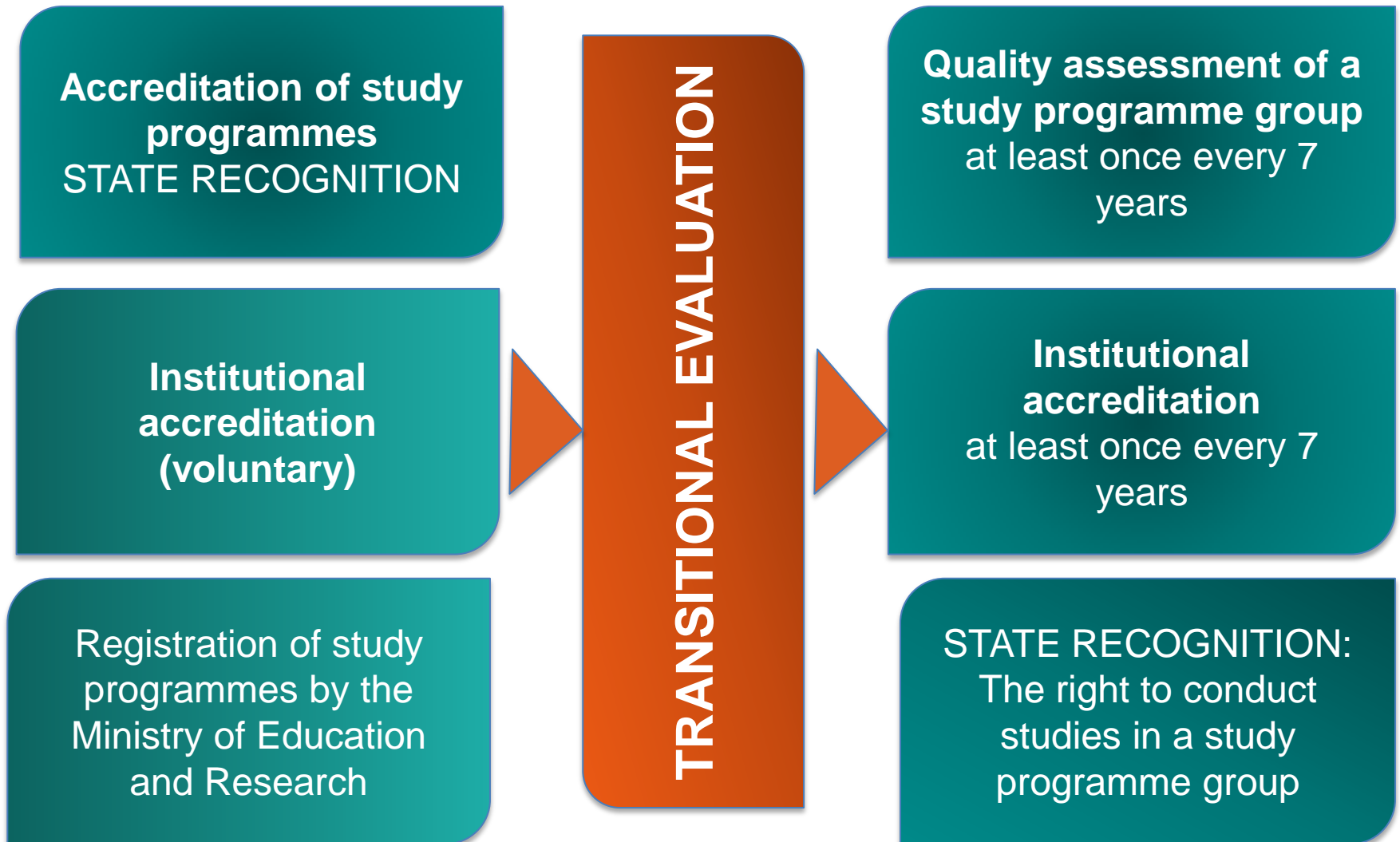
The Government or MoE	Institutions	EKKA
<p>Granting the right to conduct studies in study programme groups, based on the results of the assessments of SPGs, carried out by EKKA, checking whether the minimum standards set in the law are met.</p> <p>Financing partly based on quality assessment results</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>

Higher Education Quality Assessment System in Estonia

1997-2009

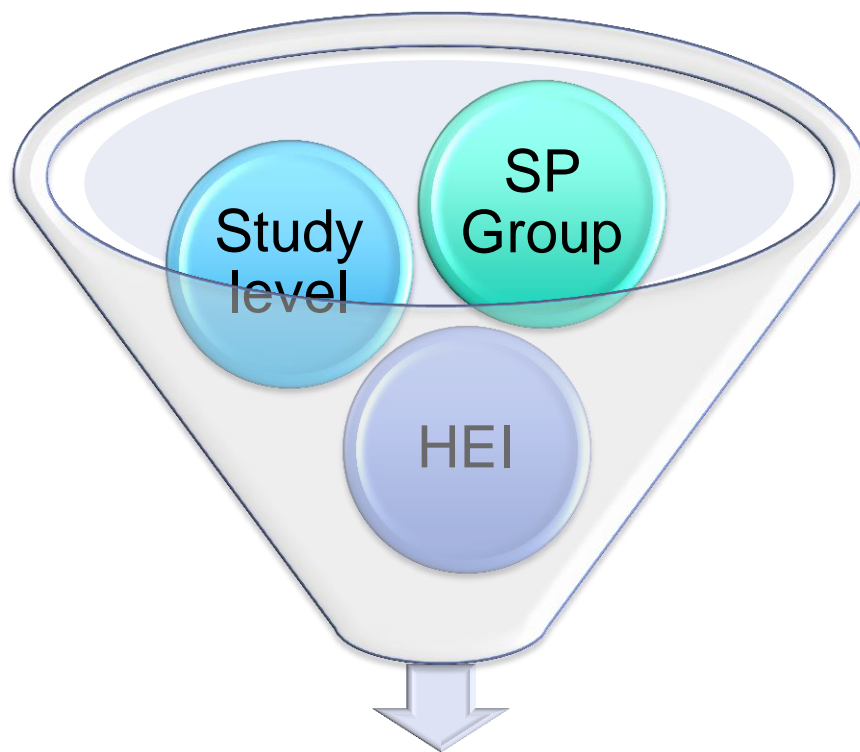
2009-2011

2011 ...



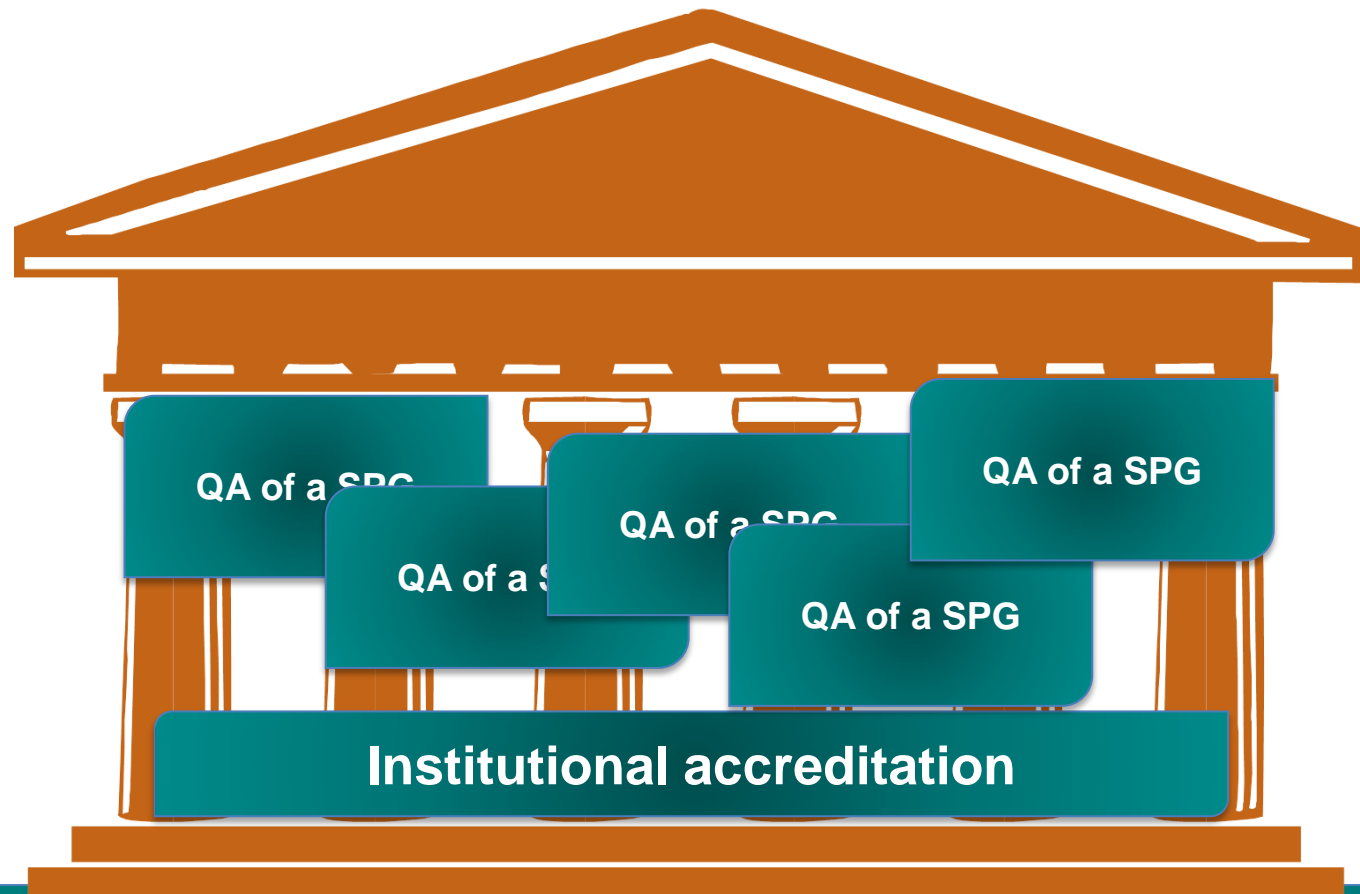
Study programme groups in Estonia

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



Assessment unit

External Quality Assurance 2014



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

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	

Assessment of joint programmes



- The Ministry of Education and Research (MER) **may involve** EKKA in assessing joint study programmes if expert assessment is required in order to meet a specific requirement – for example, whether the quality of studies conducted under the programme is sufficient and whether the learning outcomes described in the programme are achievable with the study programme.
- The MER specifies in the initial task provided to the EKKA which of the requirements require the EKKA's expert assessment. The MER also sends a copy of the initial task to the institution of higher education that submitted the application.

Assessment of regulated study programmes



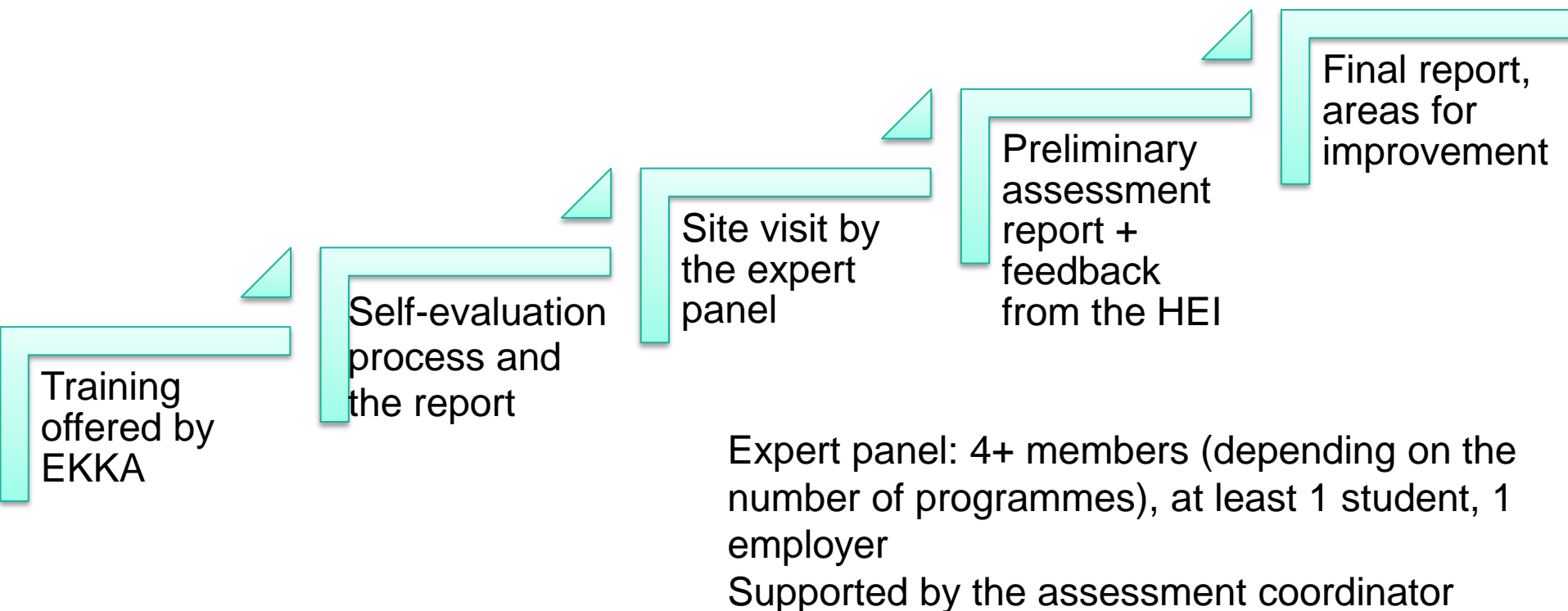
- Assessed in the framework of study programme groups based on international (e.g. Architecture) and national standards (e.g. Teacher education) + expertise of review panel members
- Learning outcomes described in corresponding vocational standards shall be covered by study programmes

Assessment of e-learning?



- No separate assessment criteria for e-learning, as it is an integrated part of the learning process
- No study programmes provided only via e-learning, blended learning used more and more often

QA of SPG: evaluation model

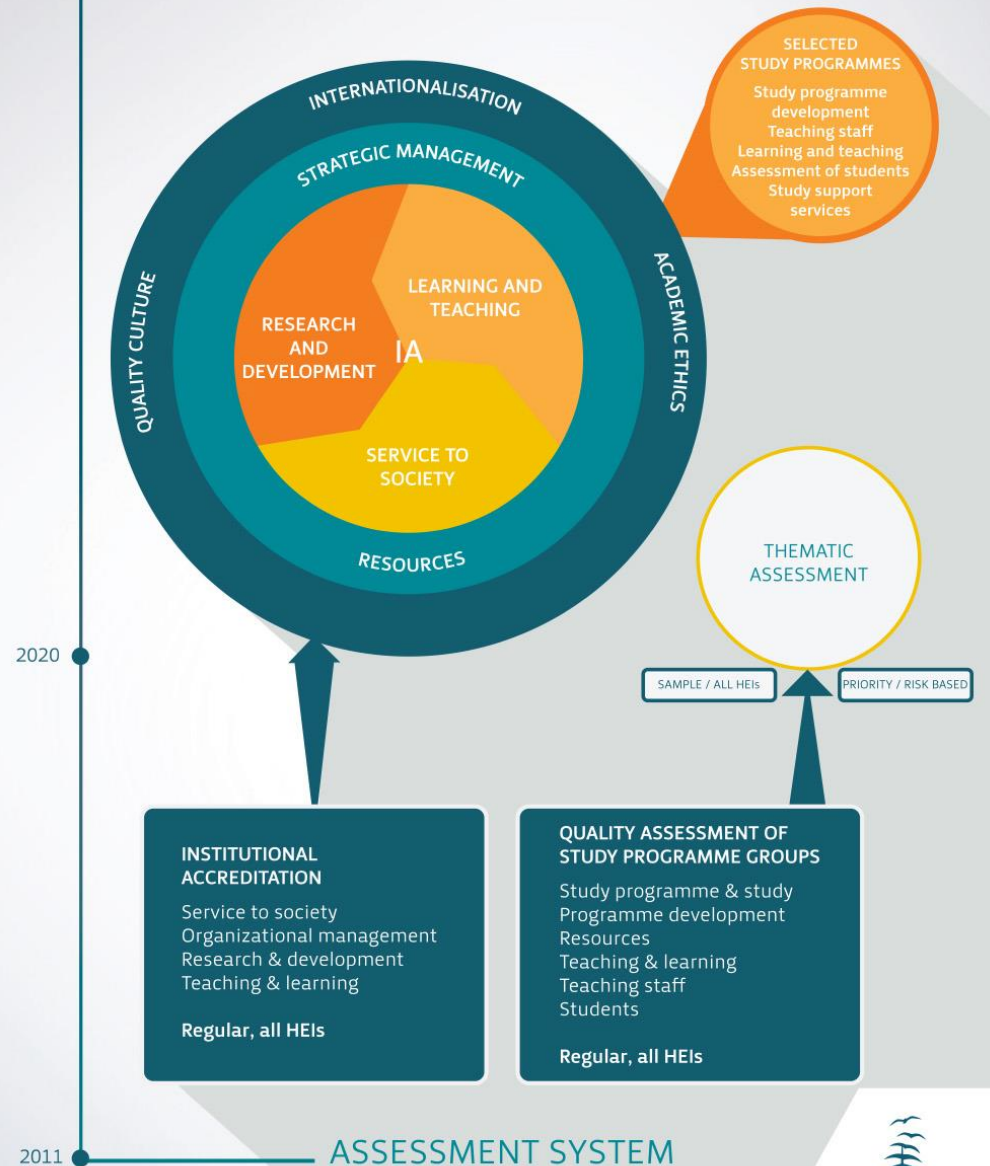


Follow-up activities



- Feedback seminar at institutions
- Round table discussion with stakeholders
- Back-report after 1-2 years
- Feedback to the back-report
- Meetings with vice rectors twice a year
- Sharing best practices and discussing main areas for improvement on seminars and conferences

EQA IN ESTONIA 2020



Leading ideas behind the changes



- 1) To achieve the best possible result with optimal resources by reducing the volume of various assessments (no time to apply the recommendations)
- 2) To FOCUS on the areas that are most critical/essential/basic, so called CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS (quality culture, internationalisation, learning centred approach)
- 3) To maintain continuity – to perfect the existing system by way of further developing its strengths, eliminating weaknesses and mitigating risks.

International activities (1)



- Member of ENQA, INQAAHE, EQAVET, CEENQA
- ENQA project: Quality assurance and e-learning
- EQAR project: Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR)
- Twinning experts in Kosovo and Armenia
- Junior partner in Finland-Estonia Twinning project
"Support to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Further Adherence of the Higher Education System to the European Higher Education Area (AZ-ad-EHEA)" (2015-2017)

International activities (2)



- Board members of QA agencies in Kazakhstan and Russia
- Board director at INQAAHE (2015-2018)
- Annual work shadowing project for ASEM countries
- World Bank and Council of Europe expertise in Tajikistan and Georgia
- Capacity building projects in Moldova (2014-2016)
- Capacity building project in Tajikistan (2018-2020)
- Annual Baltic seminars
- Biannual Nordic-Baltic seminars



- Accreditation of study programmes in Law in Moldovan universities : 26 programmes in 13 HEIs (2015)
- Accreditation of a 1-year blended learning programme “Border Security and Management for Senior Leadership Course” at OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, Tajikistan (2017)

International evaluations: subcontracting other agencies



The Universities Act



EKKA's regulations foresee procedures for the cases when HEIs want a competent foreign authority to conduct the external assessment (see regulations)

International evaluations: subcontracting other agencies



Prerequisite: the **approval** of suitability of foreign agency **by the EKKA Quality Assessment Council for HE**



The Council must make sure that the assessment report produced by the agency allows them to make a final decision consistent with Estonian legislation

International evaluations: subcontracting other agencies



With the approval
of the Council



A **tripartite contract** is concluded between EKKA, HEI and the foreign agency stipulating the rights and responsibilities of the parties and the procedure for reimbursement of expenses

International evaluations: subcontracting other agencies



- In 2013 – 2017, there have been two cases of HEIs requesting an assessment by a foreign assessment agency
- Both requests were granted by the Council

International evaluations: subcontracting other agencies



- In 2013 - 2016, the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) conducted the quality assessment of Veterinary study programme group at the Estonian University of Life Sciences. The assessment decision was adopted by the Council in June, 2016.
- The Council has also approved for another foreign agency (MusiQuE) to conduct the quality assessment of Performing Arts study programme group at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre in 2017 – 2018 (going on now).



Challenges?

- EAEVE didn't gain full membership of ENQA
 - Otherwise, too early to say...



Lawyer's main tasks in EKKA:

- Drafting and updating EKKA's regulations
- Drafting assessment decisions for the Council
- Preparing contracts and other necessary legally binding documents
- Interacting with the Ministry of Education and Research
- Participating in international cooperation projects
- ...etc.



EKKA has introduced an appeals procedure for all external assessment processes, the exact nature of which depends on the outcome of the concrete process



Challenges and other complaints on all assessment decisions, regardless of their nature, by the Council will be first forwarded to the Appeals Committee of the Council



- The Appeals Committee operates under EKKA as an **independent body** elected for a fixed period of three years by the Supervisory Board of the Archimedes Foundation.
- The task of the Appeals Committee is to **provide the Assessment Council with an unbiased opinion** regarding the validity of the complaints or challenges filed upon the decisions taken by the Council.



- It is the task of the Council to adjudicate the challenges filed against the assessment decisions made by the Council.
- Upon deciding whether to satisfy or dismiss the challenge, the Council will take into consideration the opinion of the Appeals Committee.
- After the challenge proceedings (pre-trial proceedings), final **administrative** assessment decisions by the Council can also be challenged/appealed in court.
- Assessment procedures conducted by EKKA can also be disputed.



So far, two challenges have been filed against the decisions taken by the Council:

- In 2015, the University of Tartu filed a challenge against the quality assessment decision in the Medicine study programme group
- In 2016, the Estonian Business School filed a challenge against the quality assessment decision in the Business and Administration study programme group

Both challenges were adjudicated by the Council, **no court proceedings** were initiated.

Legal questions: continuing studies in case of a negative institutional accreditation decision



Clause 12 (1) 3) of the Universities Act:

In the case of a negative decision, the minister responsible for the area shall initiate, if possible, the transfer of the right to provide instruction in study programme groups and to issue the respective academic degrees or diplomas to another educational institution with the obligation to ensure the quality and resources necessary for the provision of instruction in the study programme group and the possibility to continue their studies to as many of the students of the study programme group as possible.

