

Quality assessment of study programme groups in Estonia

Liia Lauri

2020

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)

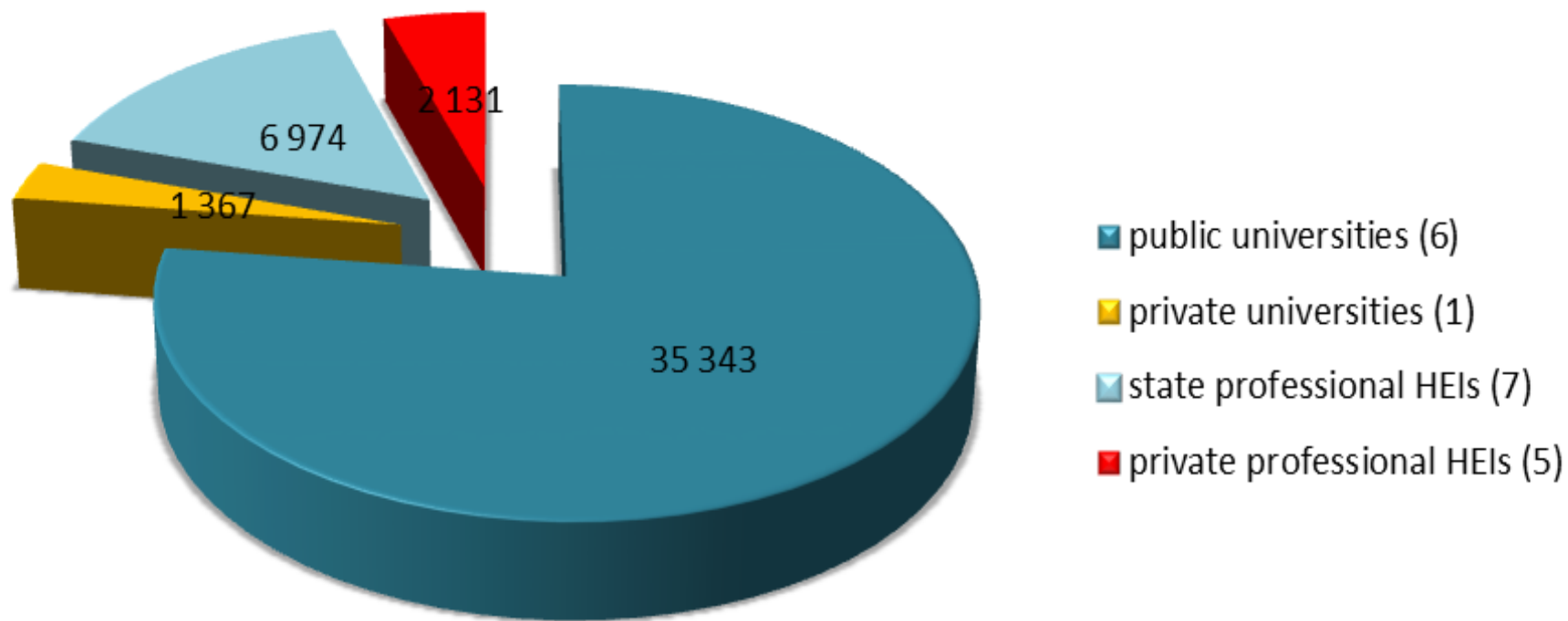
Professional higher education programmes

180-270 ECTS credits

(3 to 4.5 years)

Secondary education

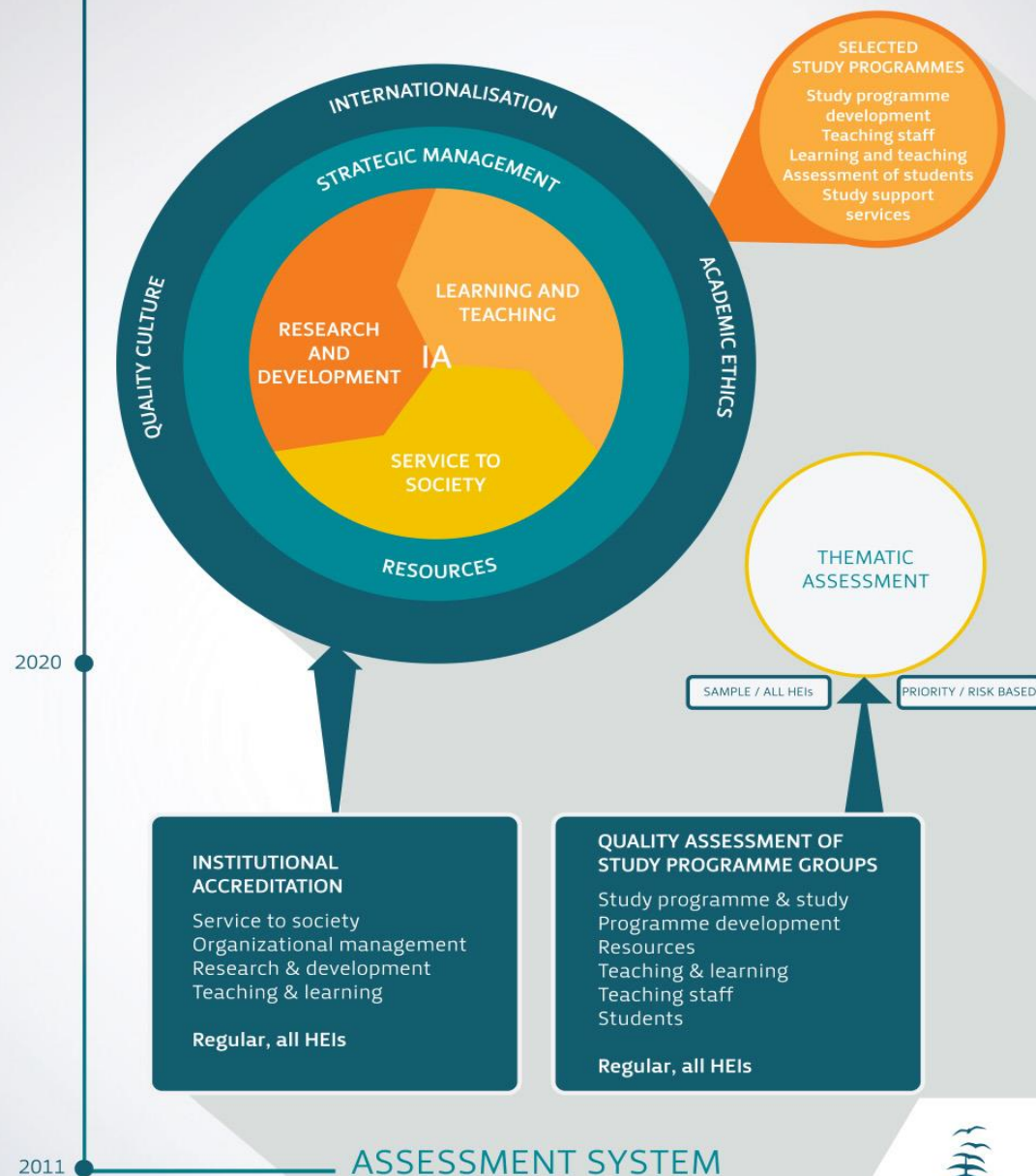
Types of HEI-s and student numbers 2019



Higher education study programmes 2018/2019

	Professional HE	Bachelor	Master	Integrated	Doctoral	
Study programmes	156	190	269	16	72	703 (536 with admission)
Students	12 601	15 830	11 783	3 189	2 412	45 815

EQA IN ESTONIA 2020



Quality assessment of study programme groups

<http://ekka.archimedes.ee/en/universities/quality-assessment-study-programme-group/>

Focuses on study programmes, the content and organisation of studies and on instruction-related development activities within a study programme group.

These aspects were not evaluated in the course of institutional accreditation.

Assessment areas:

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

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. Physical sciences
18. Informatics and information technology
19. Mathematics and statistics
20. Architecture and building
21. Engineering, manufacturing and technology
22. Agriculture, forestry and fishery
23. Veterinary
24. Medicine (*including dental services*)
25. Health care
26. Sports
27. Transport services

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.

1. Study programme and study programme development

- The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

2. Resources

- Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- Resource development is sustainable.

3. Teaching and learning

- The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture. Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

4. Teaching staff

- There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
- Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility

5. Students

- Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- Employment rate of alumni is high. Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

Reports and Decisions

- EKKA QAC makes the final decision: next assessment will take place in 7 years or less. Secondary condition may be set.

<http://ekka.archimedes.ee/en/universities/quality-assessment-study-programme-group/assessment-decisions-reports/>

- Decision for the **whole SPG in one HEI**, strengths and areas for improvement are outlined by programme
 - Example decision: http://ekka.archimedes.ee/wp-content/uploads/UT_Journalism_SPG_decision.pdf
 - Report: http://ekka.archimedes.ee/wp-content/uploads/Evaluation_report_Information_Journalism_FINAL_2016.pdf
- Assessment report can be written for several institutions with the same SPG
- **Self-evaluation report** involves several study programmes within the same HEI. Outlining the differences in the study programmes where necessary.

Impact of the decisions

- EKKA carries out follow-up activities (seminar, back-report)
- MoER takes the results of QA into account by financing HEI-s, making decisions for further development
- Substantial shortcomings – MoER may start the process of delicensing



ARCHIMEDES

Strengths

- ✓ Feedback to the mid-management
 - ✓ Development of study programmes and the delivery of studies at the grassroot level
 - ✓ Implementation of strategic objectives in academic units
- ✓ Recommendations for developments – SERs are openly self-critical
- ✓ Spreading of a culture of self-analysis at different levels in HEI

Challenges

- Overlappings of IA and SPG assessment for smaller HEIs
- Administrative burden can be high for bigger HEIs
- Too little time for discussions at the level of study programme
- Perceived benefits for members of teaching staff are sometimes negligible

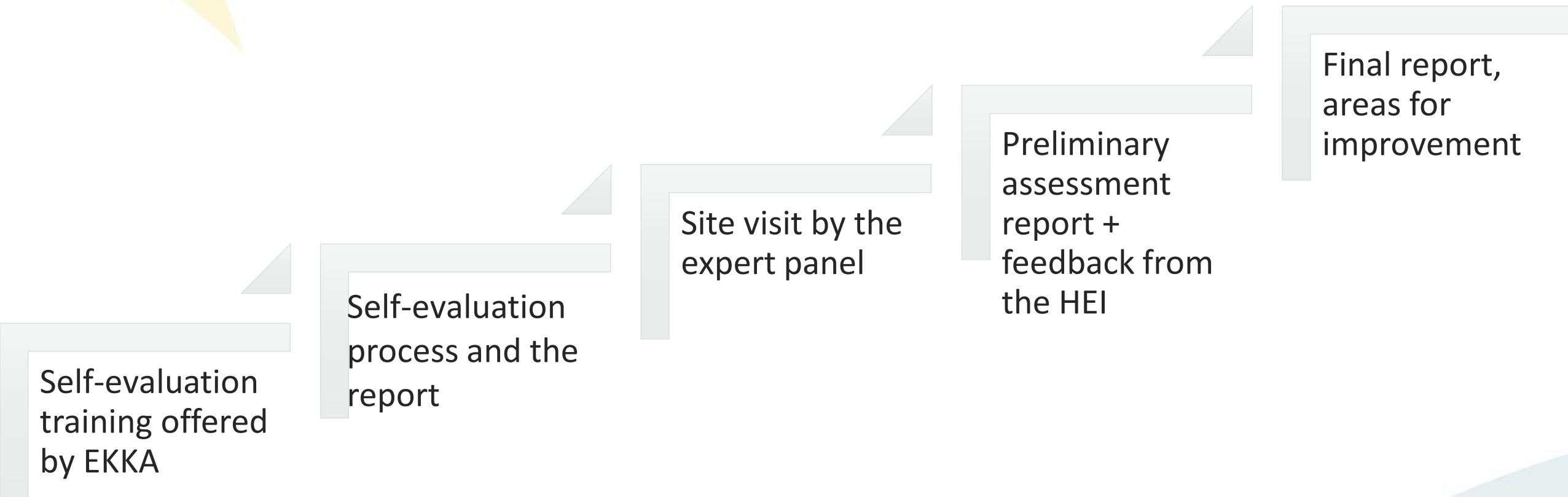
Opportunities

- ✓ Combining different assessments (VET, IA and SPG)
- ✓ Allows comparison between HEIs
- ✓ Encourages peer-learning within institutions and between HEIs

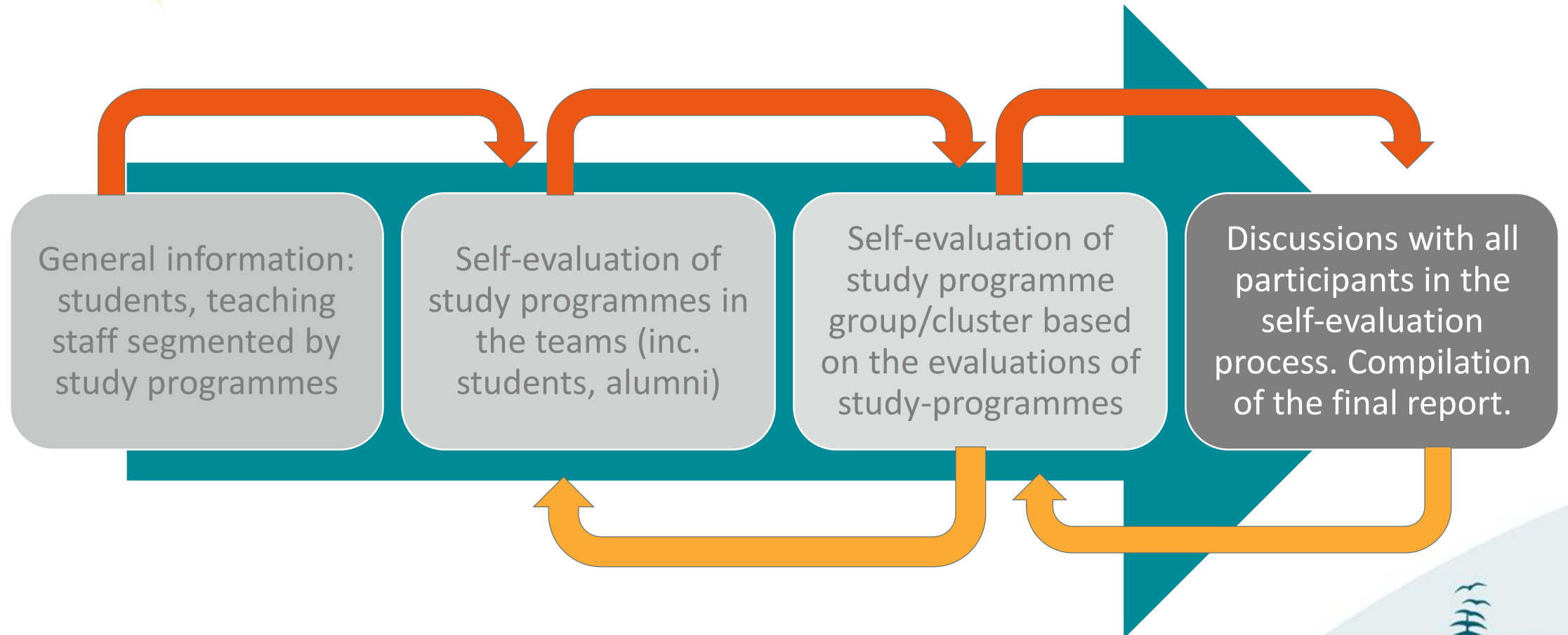
Challenges

- Some HEIs focus more on survival than developments
- Organisational structure of HEI may be different from the logic of SPG. Artificial units of assessment. Do not support interdisciplinary solutions

Accreditation model



Process of self-evaluation



Main changes in the format of SER in case of cluster accreditation

- Part A GENERAL INFORMATION ON CLUSTER LEVEL CHARACTERISTICS
- Description and evaluation under each standard:
 - *Please, describe, analyse and evaluate educational **programme's/cluster of study programmes**` compliance with the requirements of a given component.*
- Strengths and areas for improvement:
 - The strenghts and areas for improvement can be brought out by **each study programme or on the level of the cluster of study programmes** outlining the differences on the level of cluster of study programmes where appropriate.
- Part C SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF THE CLUSTER OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

Good luck!

liia.lauri@archimedes.ee

