

## Evaluation and accreditation of study programmes in Portugal

Mónica Vieira

[monica@sc.ipp.pt](mailto:monica@sc.ipp.pt)

Cristina Pinto da Silva

[csilva@sc.ipp.pt](mailto:csilva@sc.ipp.pt)

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## **The process of evaluation and accreditation of study programmes in Portugal:**

**I. A3ES (Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education in Portugal)**

**II. The current evaluation and accreditation process (2011-2016)**

**III. Phases of the evaluation and accreditation process**

**IV. Lessons learned at IPP**



**Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education in Portugal:**

***The mission of A3ES is to contribute to improving the quality of Portuguese higher education, through the assessment and accreditation of higher education institutions and their study programmes, and to ensure the integration of Portugal in the European quality assurance system of higher education.***

**NB: All documentation, including guidelines, available in English at [www.a3es.pt](http://www.a3es.pt)**

**Main *principles* of the evaluation and accreditation process:**

1. **Specificity** of the HEI and the type of teaching/learning they offer are taken into consideration
2. **All stakeholders** are asked to participate and their contribution is taken on board
3. **Self-evaluation** is a key element in the process

**Main *objects* of the evaluation and accreditation process:**

1. All **new** study programmes
2. Two **current one-off** processes of evaluation and accreditation:
  - 2.1 All **existing** study programmes – 2011-2016
  - 2.2 Internal **QA systems** of all HEI – 2012-2016

**Main goals of the process are to assess:**

1. The quality of the **performance** of the HEI
2. The quality of **all study programmes** (1st, 2nd and 3rd cycles)
3. The effectiness of the **internal QA procedures** of the HEI

**Procedures:**

1. The whole process, including communication, is **digital** and **paperless**
2. Decisions and refutations have to be made **public**
3. HEI have the **right of appeal** according to Portuguese law

## II. Evaluation and accreditation process (2011-2016)

1. Evaluation and accreditation is **compulsory** for **all** study programmes of **all** HEI (universities, polytechnic institutes, public and private)
2. Study programmes are grouped according to **main scientific area**
3. Study programmes can be
  - 3.1 **Fully accredited** (for a 5-year period)
  - 3.2 Accredited **conditionally** (for 1, 2 or 3 years) with recommendations whose fulfilment is monitored by the agency
  - 3.3 **Not accredited**, and therefore **discontinued** (with legal safeguards for existing students)

### III. Phases of the evaluation and accreditation process

#### 1. Self-evaluation

SE committee:

- Gathers Data
  - Consults stakeholders
  - Makes SWOT analysis
  - Writes up SER
  - Disseminates SER
- 
- IPP Central Services

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#### 1. Self-evaluation

##### SE committee:

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[A3ES Criteria Self-evaluation Study Programmes.pdf](#)



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#### 2. External evaluation

Panel of experts:

- Analyses SER
- Visits school
- Writes preliminary report
- Proposes decision
- Makes recommendations for enhancement
- Analyses refutations, when applicable

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#### 3. Accreditation

Agency Board:

- Appoints and trains external evaluation panels
- Sets guidelines and deadlines
- Analyses whole process
- Makes final decision

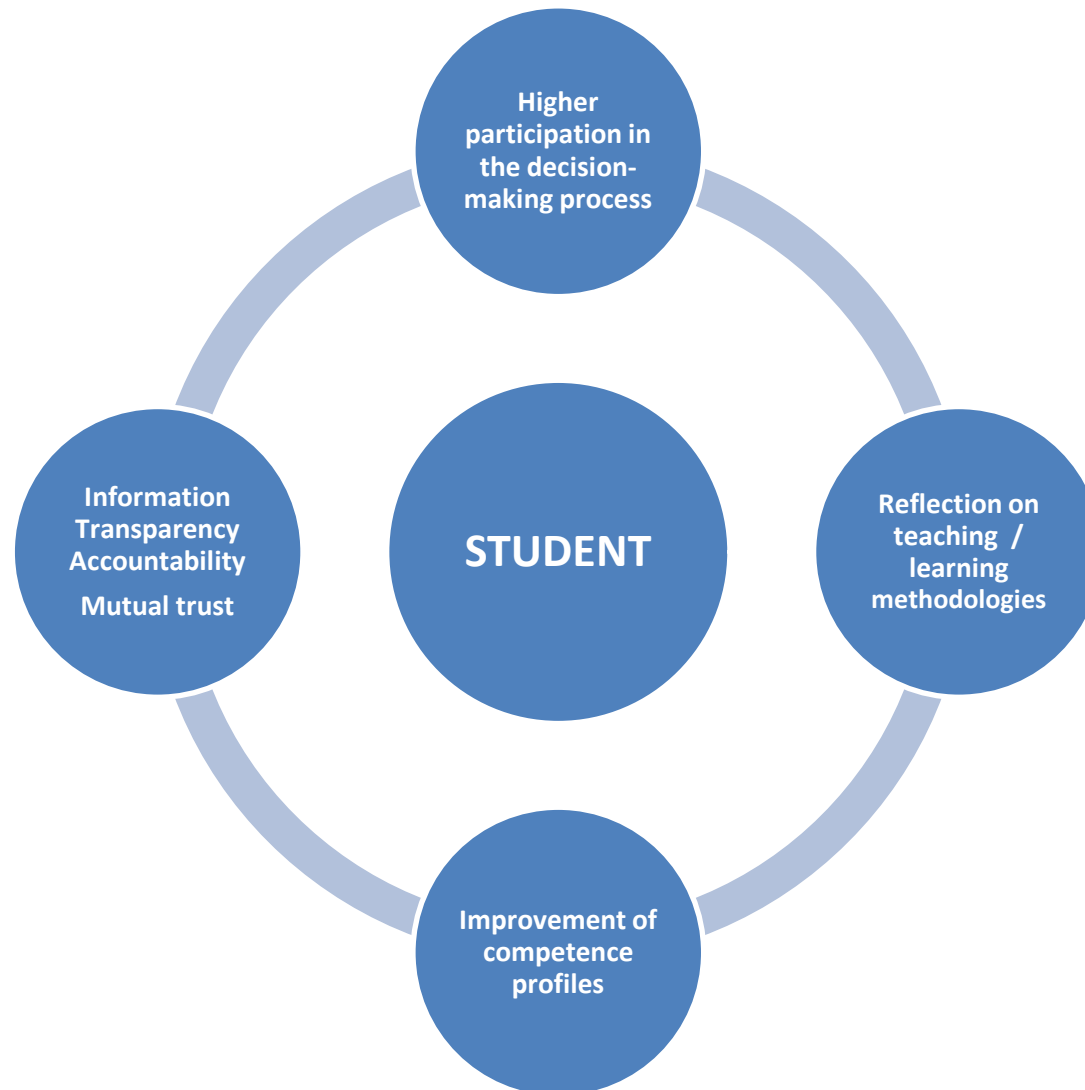
## IV. Lessons learned at IPP

Lesson 1: **Students are key**

Lesson 2: **Internal clarification of responsibilities and division of labour**

Lesson 3: **The overall *washback* effect of the evaluation and accreditation process**

## Lesson 1: Students are key



## Internal clarification of responsibilities and division of labour

Central Services

- Set up general guidelines, harmonize procedures and draw up templates
- Brief schools and self-evaluation teams
- Check, validate and submit self-evaluation reports
- Liaise with and report to National Agency



## Internal clarification of responsibilities and division of labour

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### School governing bodies

- Set up guidelines at school level
- Appoint self-evaluation committees
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### School QA structures

- Coordinate self-evaluation committees
- Liaise with school governing bodies and IPP
- Provide common school data
- Help with logistics



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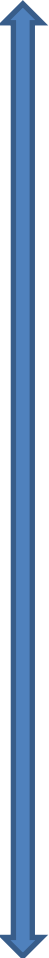
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- Consult stakeholders
- Conduct SWOT analysis
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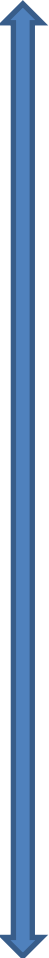
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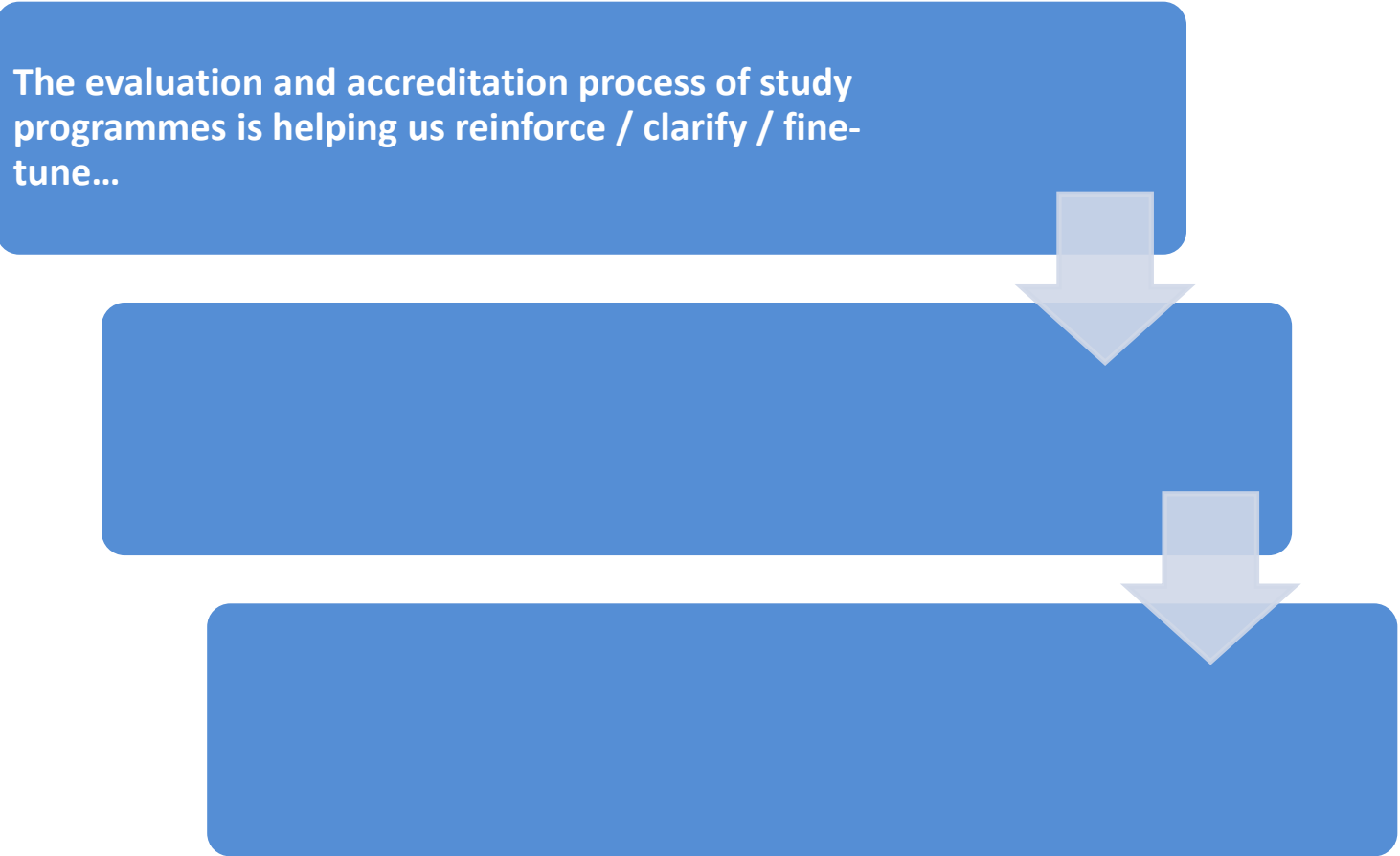
### Support systems

- Provide data
- Help disseminate self-evaluation reports
- Help with logistics



The overall *washback effect* of the evaluation process

The evaluation and accreditation process of study programmes is helping us reinforce / clarify / fine-tune...



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...the mission, the strategic planning and management, the internal organisation, the decision-making process, routines, procedures, tools, practices, which in turn result in...



The overall *washback effect* of the evaluation and accreditation process

The evaluation and accreditation process of study programmes is helping us reinforce / clarify / fine-tune...

...the mission, the strategic planning and management, the internal organisation, the decision-making process, routines, procedures, tools, practices, which in turn result in...

...the continuous enhancement of our educational offer and ultimately the quality of life of all stakeholders and the sustainable, intelligent and inclusive development of the community.

## Last words and a little warning



... or the absolute necessity of not mixing up the evaluation process, which is a representation,

... with *what* is being assessed (real people, real study programmes, real schools).

**Thank you.**

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