

# **The process of evaluation and accreditation of higher education courses in Portugal - analysis of the impacts arising from the preliminary accreditation**

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## **Abstract**

Quality assurance in higher education emerged in a significant way around the nineties, following the developments in assessment systems in Europe, in a context of internationalization of evaluation.

Recommendation of the Council of the European Union and the creation of ENQA were decisive factors for the increased quality assurance.

In Portugal was created A3es - Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education, is responsible for evaluation and accreditation of courses of study in Portugal. To keep running their courses from the end of the 2009-2010 school year higher education institutions should proceed with the preliminary accreditation of courses of studies that have and intend to keep. Regarding the performance of schools will be taken into consideration in assessing, among other things, the teaching, the qualifications of faculty, international cooperation, facilities and educational materials and scientific.

In addition to a system of self-evaluation of institutions, they must undergo a mandatory external evaluation, independent perspective of accuracy, impartiality and separation between evaluators and evaluated.

The overall objective of the study is to present the concept of quality assurance in higher education. To facilitate understanding of the theme, we intend to conduct a general review of relevant literature on the subject, in business, management, education and social sciences that relate to the quality of the HEIs.

For existing data we will make a survey of A3es, where numbers will be collected on applications for accreditation made and its current status, both institutions of higher education

as a polytechnic university. Through the results will be given the necessary conclusions of the exploratory study, which aim to contribute to social discourse between academics, administration staff and services, politicians, among others.

Key words: accreditation, higher education, evaluation, course

## **Introduction**

The technological, social, economic and political, along with the organizational changes observed, can cause significant changes in the business environment of higher education institutions (HEIs). Consequently, information needs have changed, so it is necessary to introduce mechanisms to protect and assist HEIs to defend themselves from these potential threats.

The creation of a quality assurance system capable of international recognition is among the designs of the recent adoption of the legal assessment of higher education. With this scheme, the Government intends to establish parameters for quality assessment, which includes instruction, the qualifications of the faculty, the strategy adopted to ensure the quality of education, to scientific, technological and artistic, appropriate to the institution's mission and international cooperation.

The adoption of these measures is to achieve improvements in the quality of higher education institutions, provide information based society on the performance of institutions, as well as the development of an institutional culture of internal quality assurance.

This evaluation is mandatory and takes place within the European system of quality assurance in higher education.

The agents are self-assessment evaluation, which is held by each institution of higher education and external evaluation that underpins the processes of accreditation, which is conducted by the agency for evaluation and accreditation for quality assurance in higher education. The Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education, was legally established in November 2007.

The accreditation of higher education institutions and their courses of study, is mandatory and can be initiated by the Agency or from their own higher education institutions, that may be interested.

It is clear that this is an opportunity for interesting research, which can become a prime source of enrichment for the business management of the HEI.

In this study, we propose to introduce and develop the recent challenges faced by institutions of higher education, giving special focus to the stage in the implementation of these government measures are.

Implementation of this package on university evaluation is intended to remove various indicators, and other important information.

At the level of contribution of this work, one can say that focuses on enriching the theoretical and practical role of evaluation and accreditation of higher education and also provide support to managers of HEIs in understanding and improving the business, relevant information from and credible.

### 1. Evolution of higher education in Portugal

The Portuguese higher education has a history and a different structure from other EU countries. The higher education system in Portugal is binary, composed of universities and polytechnics, which can be public or private. In the view of the training, it is composed of the subsystems of university and polytechnic education. In the view of the nature of the founding body, the higher education consists of the subsystems of public higher education and private higher education and cooperative.

The composition of higher education in Portugal is in the table below:

**Table I - Evolution of higher education**

	Public		Cooperative and Private and Catholic University
	Universities	Polytechnics (1)	Universities
1989/90	13	13	5
1994/95	14	14	5
1999/00	14	17	9
(...)			
2010/2011	15	20	6

Source: Adapted from DGES

(1) Including the education component of the Polytechnic University of Algarve, in 1999/00, also included the ISCA Aveiro.

The universities are more research oriented, like what happens in other European countries, while the polytechnics have a more professional aspect and develop applied research.

The public universities and polytechnics are overseen by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (MCTES). In terms of autonomy, with the approval of the university autonomy law - Law No. 108/88, September 24 - saw these institutions strengthened powers and autonomy. Recently approved the Legal Institutions of Higher Education (RJIES) by Law 62/2007, which determine changes in the governance model for universities and polytechnics. Changes made by RJIES seek improvements in the governance of universities.

The expansion of higher education in Portugal, especially the private sector, affected the quality of higher education and the credibility of the system. In the early nineties, there was a general consensus that it was necessary to create a national system of quality assurance matters that develop in the next paragraph.

## **2. Quality evaluation**

### **2.1 Theoretical framework**

One of the objectives set out in the Lisbon European Council (March 2000) was to "make Europe the knowledge-based economy more dynamic and competitive in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" to achieve by the year 2010.

With regard to education and training, the objectives of the Lisbon strategy back: the balance between social and economic (growth and social cohesion); invest in people, education and training as a condition for the knowledge society, innovation, social cohesion.

In education and training, the objectives to be achieved by the year 2010, are to improve the quality and effectiveness of education and training in the EU, facilitating the access of all to education and training and open to the world outside the education and training.

The quality assessment is an essential means to ensure confidence in the credits and qualifications awarded by higher education institutions, both national and European levels. The development of this trust requires that the assessment procedures of each country are known, and its validity.

According to Marques (2010:121) "The assessment of universities is a common practice in European countries and has a long tradition in Anglo-Saxon. " To Michavila (1998:164), cited by Marques (2010:133) with the evaluation aims to:

- Know the quality of universities and detecting their weak points.

- To have objective and reliable information to users, students and companies willing to participate in research and development (R & D), and policy makers with responsibility in higher education.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) prepared at the request of the Government, an assessment report on the Portuguese system of higher education where, among other things, given the quality and excellence in higher education and science and technology.

According to the report, the Portuguese higher education system should aim to achieve higher levels of quality and excellence, especially in the polytechnic and private sectors. Failure at school, which is at levels comparable to those observed in other countries, should be particularly concerned about the institutions of higher education. All institutions of the education system will demonstrate levels of quality in terms of leadership, curriculum development, teaching performance, financial viability and ability to ensure access to existing resources. The accreditation of new programs should be subject to rigorous evaluations by independent authorities and external, as proposed by ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). External evaluations should be made regularly to all programs of study and all institutions.

The information obtainable from institutional assessment will be on the quality of universities (Parker, 2002:602), in accordance with a methodology for measuring quality, which establish procedures for evaluating the different courses from different departments and various services, result of them coming to a final evaluation report, which should cover four distinct objectives, namely (Norverto Laborda et al 2003:39):

- Be accountable to the organs of government and society of the evaluation program;
- To provide a reference for the preparation of comprehensive reports, both universities, as colleges, departments and courses;
- Generate future commitments from government for universities to implement the proposals in the report;
- Commit to quality committees to support universities in their improvement actions.

In the new European context of higher education, the emphasis is centered on quality courses. Institutional assessment for improvement is included in the plans of Quality Assessment in universities (Clark, 2003). These plans are prepared by governments with the explicit intention of fostering the establishment of quality systems in universities, with particular emphasis on transparency and information society, and opening a way for the accreditation of courses.

## 2.2 Assessment and Accreditation

Ko Scheele (quoted by Grilo, 2003:43) says that accreditation is defined in various ways in different parts of the world, although the processes that have been used to make the accreditation have some common divisor.

Grilo argues that accreditation is a system of external quality assurance which has several decades in the United States of America and has its origin in an external evaluation. For the American Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), accreditation is a process of external quality assessment used in higher education to examine Universities, Colleges and Programs of Higher Education, aiming to ensure quality and promote the same quality. For the same author "the evaluation and accreditation is one of the most important factors for the future of higher education in Portugal."

In the European context, the accreditation will require the Portuguese higher education institutions and their own political power, to put the matter as a challenge to which the answer will depend in large part, the credibility of European higher education and, above all, the ability to comply many of the objectives contained in the Bologna Declaration, which aims to create more uniformity between the systems, despite being completely different from Europe (Cornuel, 2004).

It is the responsibility of the University to establish systems of total quality through strategic plans that measure and drive quality in the institution (Díaz Zurro, 2001:22). Advocates are Plans for Quality plans dynamic and open. Increasingly, the society wants to be informed, with a right of customers and users of its services have that information.

Law No. 38/2007 of August 16 approved the legal regime of the evaluation of higher education. According to Article 17 of this Law, the competent institutions of higher education to adopt a policy of quality assurance as well as the procedures for pursuing (a) of paragraph 1); develop a culture of quality and its guarantee (b) of paragraph 1) and develop and implement a strategy for continuous quality improvement. Regarding the parameters to use in evaluating quality, Article 4 of that Act states "the strategy adopted to ensure the quality of teaching and how it is implemented" (c) of paragraph 1) and "the efficiency of the organization and management"(g) of paragraph 1). Article 19 stipulates that the procedures of external evaluation "should take into account the effectiveness of procedures for internal quality assurance" (No. 1).

Law Decree No. 369/2007, 5 November establishing the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3es), which in its preamble defines as essential point of the new system of evaluation and accreditation "The requirement for achievement, institutions of higher learning, dedicated systems for quality assurance, subject to certification."

The accreditation of higher education institutions and their courses of study is compulsory, racing to the board of the Agency, depending on the results of evaluation and compliance by higher education institutions interested in it, the requirements of Article 57. Law Decree 74/2006 of 24 March<sup>1</sup>, the accreditation decision. Such a decision may be favorable, but subject to a favorable decision by the institution of higher education, measures of perceived necessary by the Agency under the system of quality assurance, or unfavorably.

Therefore, the activity of A3es includes conducting quality audit activities to ensure the effectiveness of the internal institutional quality assurance, which culminates with the "certification" of higher education institutions and their cycles.

Lourtie (2002) argues that it should have made an effort to enhance public recognition of the value of the evaluation, stating that the Diploma Supplement would contain a reference to the processes of assessment or accreditation on which the course is included.

### **3. Accreditation of courses of studies**

Once completed the instruments for accreditation processes, the receipt of applications for accreditation of institutions by A3es for the first trial ended in late 2009, while receiving the details of the second trial ended in April 2010. The applications were then subject to review by external evaluation commission, which was followed by the evaluation process.

The accreditation process involved prior to accreditation of new courses of study and preliminary accreditation of courses of study in operation. On the first point-of-delivery of proposals for new courses of study was completed in 2009, it was found, according to data from A3es, delivery of 330 proposals, and 203 of the 127 university and polytechnic education.

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<sup>1</sup> Noteworthy are **the general** requirements for the accreditation of a course of study:

- a) An educational, scientific and cultural development, appropriate to the objectives for that course;
- b) A faculty itself, qualified in that area, and adequate in number;
- c) The human and material resources needed to achieve the level and quality of training, including teaching spaces, equipment, libraries and laboratories appropriate.

The nature of the new cycles, 45 proposals were for the first few cycles, 229 cycles and 56 seconds to third cycles.

On the preliminary accreditation of courses of study in operation, the process of receiving evidence relating to these courses of study ended in April 2010. According to data received from the Directorate General of Education (DGES) were recorded in 5262 cycles of studies carried out most recent count, according to (Table II).

	<b>1st cycle</b>	<b>Integrated Masters</b>	<b>2nd cycle</b>	<b>3rd cycle</b>	<b>Total</b>
Public Univ.	515	115	1370	612	<b>2612</b>
Private Univ.	459	15	544	85	<b>1103</b>
<b>Total Univ.</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>1914</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>3715</b>
Public Polytechn.	700	-	435	-	<b>1135</b>
Private Polytechn.	271	-	141	-	<b>412</b>
<b>Total Polytechn.</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1547</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1945</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>2490</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>5262</b>

Source: A3es - Business Plan 2010

However, according to data released by A3es after the data submission process is completed, it was found that the institutions undergoing accreditation fewer courses of study concerning the number of cycles recorded in the DGES. Tables III and IV show a decrease of nearly 900 courses, which means a considerable initiative on the part of institutions to reorganize its training offer.

	<b>1st cycle</b>	<b>Integrated Masters</b>	<b>2nd cycle</b>	<b>3rd cycle</b>	<b>Total</b>
Public Univ.	463	111	1096	502	<b>2172</b>
Private Univ.	367	27	391	66	<b>851</b>
<b>Total Univ.</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>1487</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>3023</b>
Public Polytechn.	591	-	386	-	<b>977</b>
Private Polytechn.	246	-	130	-	<b>376</b>
<b>Total Polytechn.</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1353</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1667</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>4376</b>

Source: A3es - Business Plan 2010

<b>Table IV - Changes between the proposed accreditation and recorded</b>					
	<b>1st cycle</b>	<b>Integrated Masters</b>	<b>2nd cycle</b>	<b>3rd cycle</b>	<b>Total</b>
Public Univ.	-52	-4	-274	-110	<b>-440</b>
Private Univ.	-92	12	-153	-19	<b>-252</b>
<b>Total Univ.</b>	<b>-144</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-427</b>	<b>-129</b>	<b>-692</b>
Public Polytechn.	-109	-	-49	-	<b>-158</b>
Private Polytechn.	-25	-	-11	-	<b>-36</b>
<b>Total Polytechn.</b>	<b>-134</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-60</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-194</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>-278</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-487</b>	<b>-129</b>	<b>-886</b>

Source: A3es - Business Plan 2010

After completion of the assessment of applications, the DGES A3es sent the lists of courses of study submitted for accreditation in order two immediate objectives. Firstly to show that the only courses of study in terms of operation and admission of new students after that date are those that appear on the list sent. Secondly, to verify that the DGES any discrepancies between the list produced by the Agency and the records of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (MCES). The screening process will proceed only after clearing up any discrepancies found.

In a next step, the courses of study will be organized into three groups. The first includes courses of study with preliminary accreditation by the entry into operation stabilized the system, from the beginning of the academic year 2011/2012. The second group included the education of less favorable indicators that will be an evaluation / accreditation detailed between October 2010 and October 2011. If the assessment is positive, will be accredited for a period of five years. A possible third group will relate to the cycles of studies that have very negative performance indicators, in which case it is advisable to adopt preventive measures to suspend the entry of new students.

The courses of study that during the preliminary accreditation indicate not possess the minimum quality standards will be subject to a formal assessment / accreditation by an External Evaluation Committee, which is composed of foreign experts, which will move the institution. It will then produce a report that will support the deliberations of the Board of Directors, favorable or not.

As a result of these actions, the process is one of the following conditions: "Accreditation for a period of five years" "conditional accreditation for a period less than 3 years" or "not accredited".

It was also produced by A3es a report on "Participation of Students in the Evaluation of Portuguese Higher Education Institutions: a contribution to their definition, "as support for discussion of the role to be played by students during the evaluation / accreditation.

Based on Paragraph 1 of Article 13 of Law no. 38/2007 of 16 August, in a) of paragraph 6 and paragraph 7 of Article 7 of Law Decree 369/2007 of 5 November, the A3es asked the professional orders to issue an opinion on the accreditation of prior courses of study in areas relevant to the scope of practice of the Order in question. Thus, the decision on accreditation to be given by the Agency Board will consider, where appropriate, two opinions, and the Order of the External Evaluation Committee.

#### **4. Performance indicators**

The management indicators are instruments through which they can express information on the objectives of an organization, their actions and resources obtained and consumed by it during its activity (Aibar Guzman, 2003c: 75). As a result, recipients of such information may make an assessment and periodic follow-up the situation and the entity's performance.

According to the Intervención General de la Administración del Estado (IGAE) (1997:113) referred to in Prieto Jano (2001:87), an indicator of management can be defined in a generic sense as "a form of measurement, a statistic, which provides relevant information about some aspect of a target, which provides timely, relevant and reliable information to responsible management of an organization". Under a more restricted point of view, López y Camps Gadea Carrera (1992) and Salvador Centelles (1994), quoted by the same author, consider that an indicator is "a quantity associated with an activity, a process, system, etc. . which allows, by comparison with standards, to periodically evaluate programming units".

Kanter and Summers (1994), cited by Aibar Guzmán (2003c: 76), argue that where public authorities, management indicators should support the fulfillment of the basic functions of public managers, under three aspects:

- Institutional - management indicators should reflect the political priorities and provide evidence of the degree to which the organization is achieving its objectives, thus giving legitimacy to the actions performed.

- Directive - the measure of income should be the information base on which rests the management of the entity responsible for its facilitating the completion of their work.
- Technical - the management indicators should provide information about the technical aspects associated with the transformation process developed by the organization.

Law No. 37/2003 of 22 August, laying the foundations of higher education funding in chapter II, section I, article 4, paragraph 3, states that "must include the following criteria, default values and performance indicators:

- a) The standard ratio of staff / student;
- b) The standard ratio of teachers / staff;
- c) Incentives for the qualification of teaching staff and other staff;
- d) Indicators of quality of teaching staff at each institution;
- e) The efficiency indicators of educational courses;
- f) The efficiency indicators of science master's and doctorate;
- g) The indicators of efficiency of management of institutions;
- h) The classification of merit from the evaluation of the course / institution;
- i) Budget structure, reflected in the relationship between personnel costs and other operating costs;
- j) The classification of merit of the research units.

It is therefore a synthesis of defined criteria / indicators for evaluating higher education institutions, where the presidents, managers, government universities and colleges estimate the cost / income and their assessment skills, school success, etc..

The A3es fostered a study titled "Performance Indicators for Supporting Process Assessment and Accreditation of courses of studies" to serve as a basis for discussion, in 2010, with the institutions, performance indicators and their standards to be used by the Agency in the process of evaluation / accreditation course.

However, conscious of the heterogeneity of the Portuguese higher education system, where there are scientific fields that have capital above the minimum standards set by law, and other areas in which existing resources do not provide access in most of the institutions and / or courses of study compliance with minimum legal requirements, was proposed by A3es the following:

1. "In relation to applications for accreditation of new courses of study, accreditation will not be awarded prior to applications that do not meet the legal minimums.
2. In relation to courses of study in operation subjected to preliminary accreditation, will be calculated the average values of indicators for each area. If the average is higher than the legal minimum, this will be adopted as the standard. If the average is below the legal minimum, this value will be adopted as the standard (eg, percentage of PhDs on the faculty).
3. The units and their courses of study with performance indicators well above the legal minimum (for example, in the case of universities, 75% of doctoral faculty, research centers rated as Very Good or Excellent, etc..) and an internal system Quality Assurance Agency have certified accreditation procedures simplified and a greater degree of autonomy, including for the creation of new cycles.
4. The education of indicators exceeded the standard value (the lower of: the statutory minimum or national average) but not near the level of excellence will have preliminary accreditation, but in the second case they have to commit to take a plan to eliminate weaknesses.
5. The education of indicators below the standard (the lower of: the statutory minimum or national average) but with a value equal to or greater than 60% of the standard will be referred to a detailed accreditation to be completed between October 2010 and October 2011.
6. The education of indices less than (hypothetical) 60% of the pattern (the lower of: the statutory minimum or national average) will not be accredited”.

The A3es discuss these issues, as well as their values, with higher education institutions and their representative bodies and with the Advisory Board.

For the study sponsored by A3es on performance indicators, coordinated by Sarrico, we present here some performance indicators proposed in this document for higher education, to be used in the medium term, based on literature review, but based on reality collection of data existing in Portugal.

In their study, beyond the indication of the analytical techniques available to interpret the performance indicators are given various statistics exist for the development of performance indicators in higher education. Indeed, the GPEARI (Office for Planning, Strategy, Evaluation and International Relations), collects information on higher education and science and technology. At the level of higher education compile:

- Statistics on teachers - database REBIDES - Biographical Record of Teachers of Higher Education, since 2000;
- Places, enrolled and graduates - database RAIDES - Survey and Registration of Students Enrolled Graduates of Higher Education, since 1995, and
- Job search - RAIDES and the IEPF (Employment Institute and Vocational Training) since 2007.

On the other hand, is referred to the DGES information on human resources (teaching and non teaching staff), by completing the survey INDEZ, held annually from institutions of higher education, with the aim of providing information for preparation of operating budget.

The completion of investigations, REBIDES, INDEZ and RAIDES is required as part of the national statistical system.

Some of the indicators proposed in the study of A3es are:

**Table V - 1st Cycle Indicators and Master**

<b>1st Cycle and Master</b>	
<b>Characteristics of students</b>	
1	Note of the minimum entry
2	Percentage of students enrolled in Option 1
3	Percentage of students agreed that the National Competition for Access
4	Percentage of students applying for scholarships from social work in higher education
5	Percentage of students displaced from their permanent residence
6	Percentage of students whose permanent residence is abroad
7	Number of students enrolled in 1st year for the 1st time on the number of vacancies
8	Percentage of part-time students
9	Percentage of students with student-worker status
10	Percentage of female students
11	Average of the academic year on the number of entries in the course
12	Average rating of graduates
13	Average number of entries until completion of the course

Source: Office Studies and Analysis of A3es

**Table VI - 2nd Cycle**

<b>2nd Cycle</b>	
<b>Characteristics of students</b>	
1	Note of the minimum entry
2	Percentage of students applying for scholarships from social work in higher education
3	Percentage of students displaced from their permanent residence
4	Percentage of students whose permanent residence is abroad
5	Number of students enrolled in 1st year for the 1st time on the number of vacancies
6	Percentage of part-time students
7	Percentage of students with student-worker status
8	Percentage of female students
9	Average of the academic year on the number of entries in the course
10	Average rating of graduates
11	Average number of entries until completion of the course

Source: Office Studies and Analysis of A3es

**Table VII - 3rd Cycle**

<b>3rd Cycle</b>	
<b>Characteristics of students</b>	
<b>Qualifications on entry (per course, for the training area)</b>	
1	Note of the minimum entry
2	Percentage of students with scholarship awarded by tender of merit
3	Average level of completed schooling of parents
4	Percentage of students displaced from their permanent residence
5	Percentage of students whose permanent residence is abroad
6	Number of students enrolled in 1st year for the 1st time on the number of vacancies
7	Percentage of part-time students
8	Percentage of students with student-worker status
9	Percentage of female students
10	Average number of entries until completion of the course

Source: Office Studies and Analysis of A3es

**Table VIII – Research**

<b>Research</b>	
<b>Activity level</b>	
1	Percentage of teachers in doctoral research units funded by FCT (FCT /REBIDES)
2	Percentage of teachers in doctoral research units funded by FCT and evaluated with excellent, very good or good (FCT / REBIDES)
3	Number of students enrolled in doctoral (RAIDES) for doctoral faculty ETI (REBIDES)
4	Current expenditure on R & D (IPCTN) for doctoral faculty ETI (REBIDES)
5	PhD completed (RAIDES) for doctoral faculty ETI (REBIDES)
6	Number of publications in the databases (GPEARI - Thomson Reuters) per faculty ETI Ph.D. (REBIDES)
7	Number of citations in databases (GPEARI - Thomson Reuters) per faculty ETI Ph.D. (REBIDES)
8	Impact of cited publications (GPEARI - Thomson Reuters)
9	Number of patents (INPI) for doctoral faculty FTE (REBIDES)

Source: Office Studies and Analysis of A3es

**Table IX – Resources Level**

<b>Level of Resources</b>	
<b>University</b>	
1	Number of doctoral faculty ETI / ETI number of teachers
2	Number of full-time doctoral faculty / Number of doctorates teachers
3	Number of teachers (professors + associates) / Total number of faculty PhD
4	Number of students in the 1st cycle, 2nd cycle and MI subscribers (RAIDES) / Number of ETI teachers (REBIDES)
5	Number of students in the 1st cycle, 2nd cycle and MI subscribers (RAIDES) / Number of doctoral faculty ETI (REBIDES)
<b>Polytechnic</b>	
6	Number of teachers (PhD + specialists) TSI / Number of ETI teachers
7	Number of doctoral faculty ETI / Number of teachers
8	Number of specialists / Number of teachers
9	Number of teachers / Number of teachers
10	Number of teachers coordinators / Number of teachers
11	Number of students enrolled in 1st and 2nd cycle (RAIDES) / Number of ETI teachers (REBIDES)
12	Number of students enrolled in 1st and 2nd cycle (RAIDES) / Number of teachers (PhD + specialists) ETI (REBIDES)
<b>University and Polytechnic</b>	
13	Number of students enrolled (RAIDES) / Number of non-teaching staff ETI (INDEZ)
14	Number of faculty ETI (REBIDES) / Number of non-teaching staff ETI (INDEZ)
15	Expenditure per student in a cycle
16	Expenditure per student for 2nd cycle
17	Expenditure per student of integrated Masters
18	Expenditure per student of 3 rd cycle

Source: Office Studies and Analysis of A3es

Notes:

MI - Integrated Master

ETI – Full-time

These indicators or only some of them, in accordance with the objectives, will be extremely useful in the evaluation and accreditation, but will also be of great interest for development of HEIs in the management process. Indeed, based on data provided by the indicators , the institutions will be able to identify trends, redefining strategic objectives, evaluate activities, etc..

## Conclusions

The higher education system in Portugal is binary, composed of universities and polytechnics, which can be public or private.

The development of higher education in Portugal, especially the private sector, affected the quality of higher education and the credibility of the system. In the early nineties, there was a general consensus that it was necessary to create a national system of quality assurance.

The quality assessment is a fundamental way to ensure confidence in the qualifications awarded by higher education institutions, both national and European levels. The increase in this trust requires that the assessment procedures of each country are known, and its validity.

With the approval of Law Decree No. 369/2007 of 5 November was created Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3es), which in its preamble defines as essential point of the new system of evaluation and accreditation "The requirement for higher education institutions the achievement of learning, dedicated systems for quality assurance, subject to certification".

The accreditation process involves in Portugal prior to accreditation of new courses of study and preliminary accreditation of courses of study in operation.

According to data from the General Directorate of Higher Education (DGES) were recorded in 5262 cycles of studies carried out before counting. However, according to data released by A3es after the data submission process is completed, it was found that the institutions undergoing accreditation fewer courses of study concerning the number of cycles recorded in the DGES.

As a result of the actions of A3es, the process is one of the following conditions: "Accreditation for a period of five years", "conditional accreditation for a period less than 3 years" or "not accredited".

Law No. 37/2003 of 22 August, laying the foundations of higher education funding, referenced a summary of criteria / indicators for evaluating higher education institutions, where the presidents, managers, government, universities and polytechnics estimate costs / income and their assessment skills, school success, etc..

For the evaluation / accreditation, A3es fostered a study titled "Performance Indicators for Supporting Process Assessment and Accreditation of courses of studies", to serve as a basis for discussion, in 2010, with institutions , performance indicators and related standards to be used by the Agency in the process of evaluation / accreditation in course.

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