

An analysis of topics addressed by recommendations in the reports of the Institutional Evaluation Programme

23 November 2019
Elena Cirlan
Anna Gover

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP)

EUA's quality assurance agency

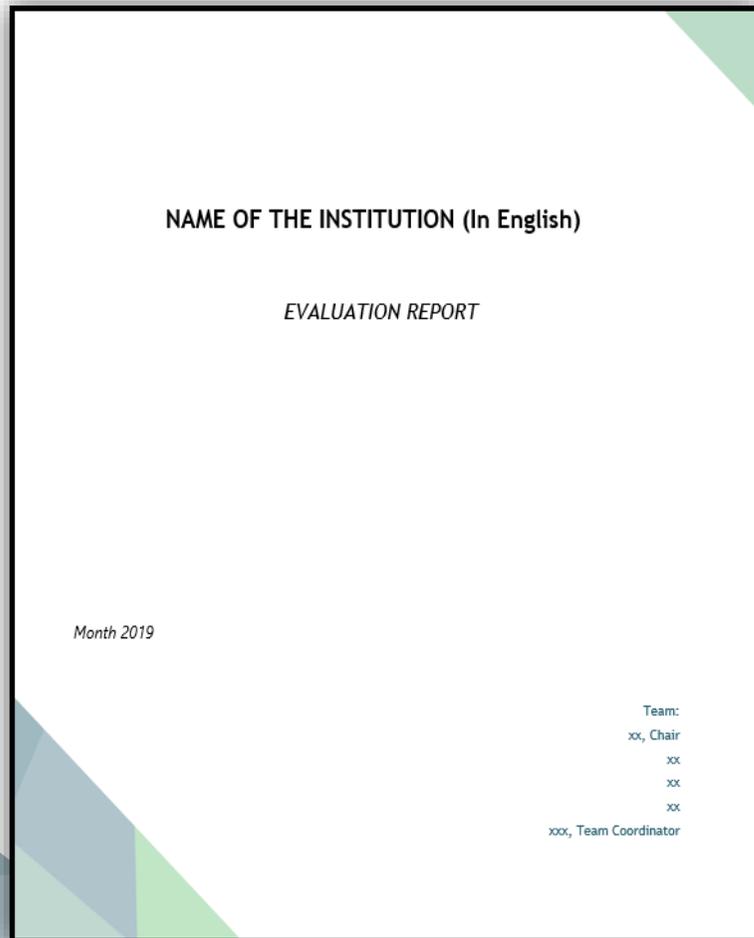


- ➔ Listed on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)
- ➔ Full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
- ➔ Founded in 1994
- ➔ Conducted over 430 evaluations in 50 different countries

IEP methodology

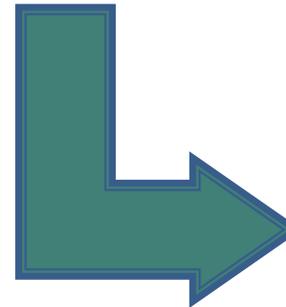


IEP Report



A
R
E
A
S

1. Governance and decision-making
2. Quality Culture
3. Teaching and learning
4. Research
5. Service to Society
6. Internationalisation



Set of
Recommendations

Research question

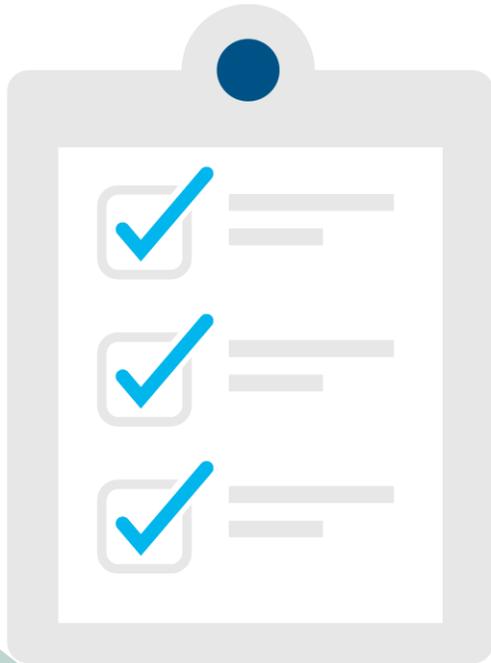


What are the topics most frequently addressed by recommendations in the reports of the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP)?

an insight into the areas in which evaluated institutions face challenges and are advised to make changes

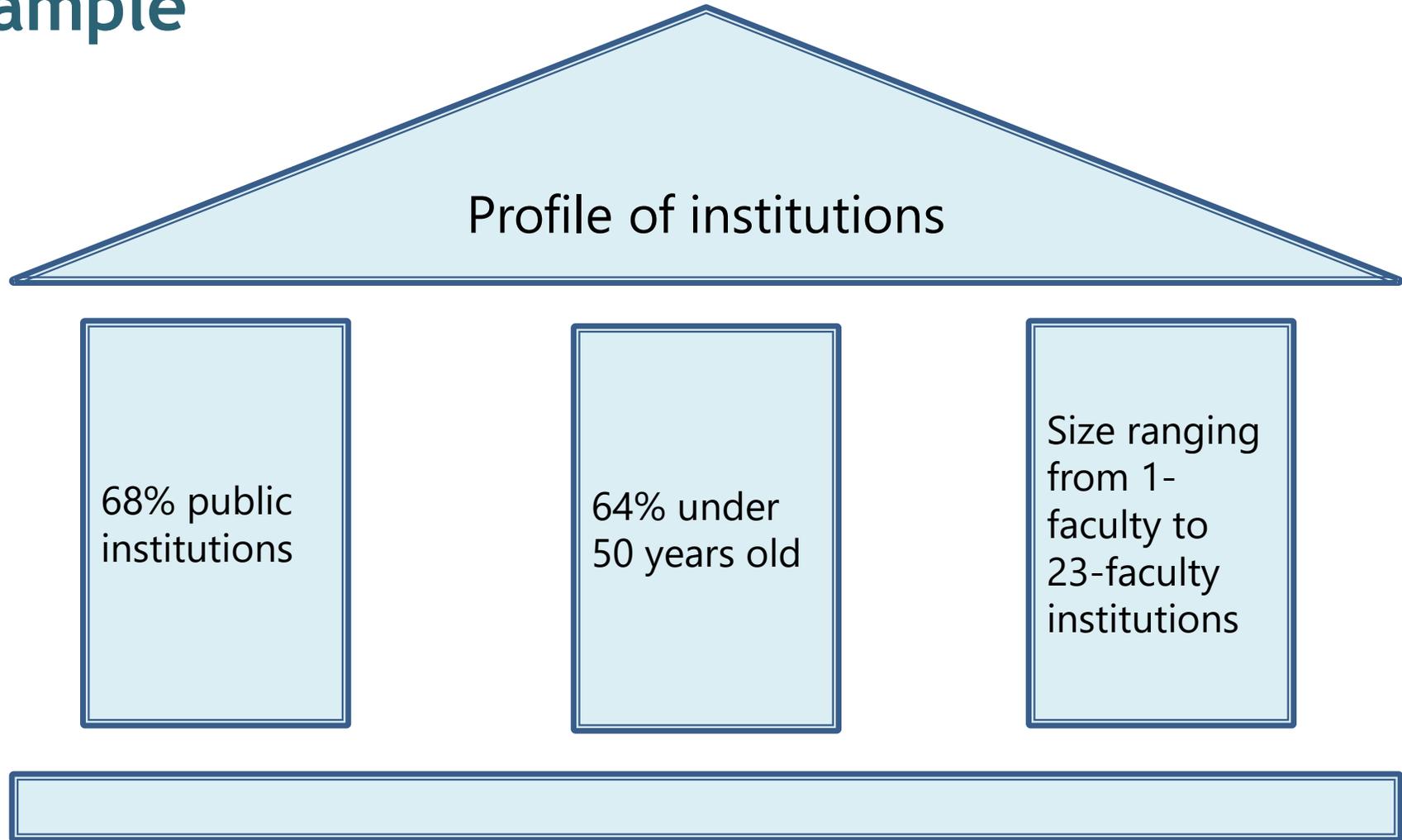
Sample

Recommendations

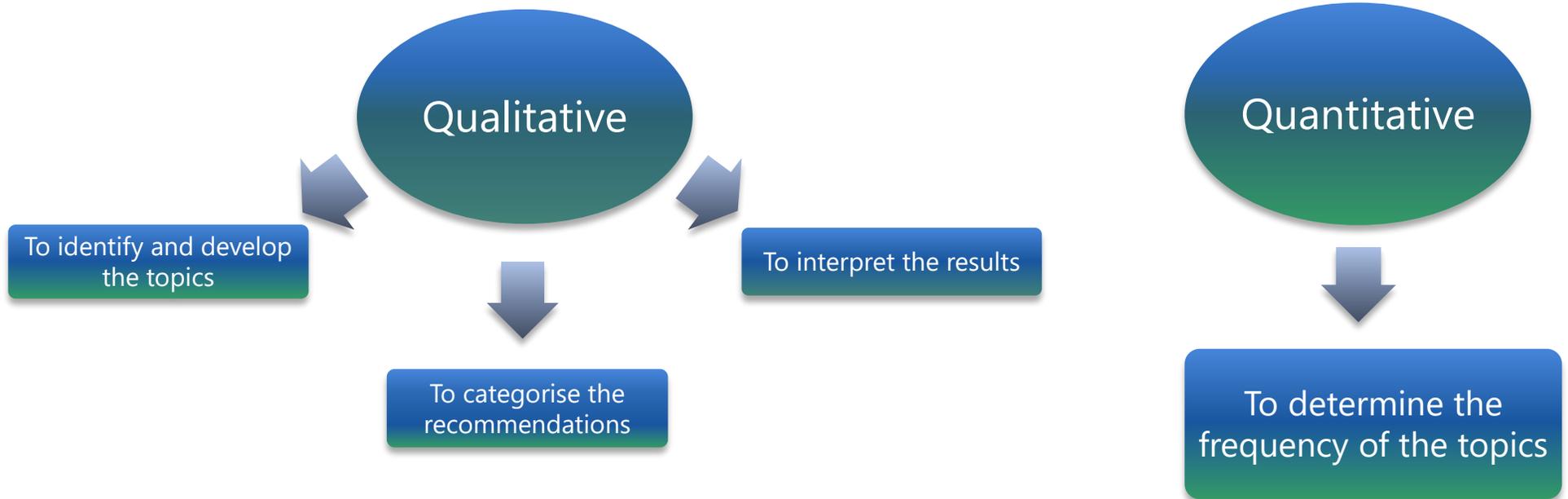


- ➔ Recommendations from 25 most recent reports
- ➔ 19 first initial evaluations
- ➔ 6 second initial evaluations
- ➔ 2 special focus evaluations
- ➔ 13 different countries (including 3 non-EHEA)
- ➔ Total number of recommendation: 580
- ➔ Number of recommendations per report ranged from 11 to 44 (average: 23)
- ➔ Significant variation in style of recommendations

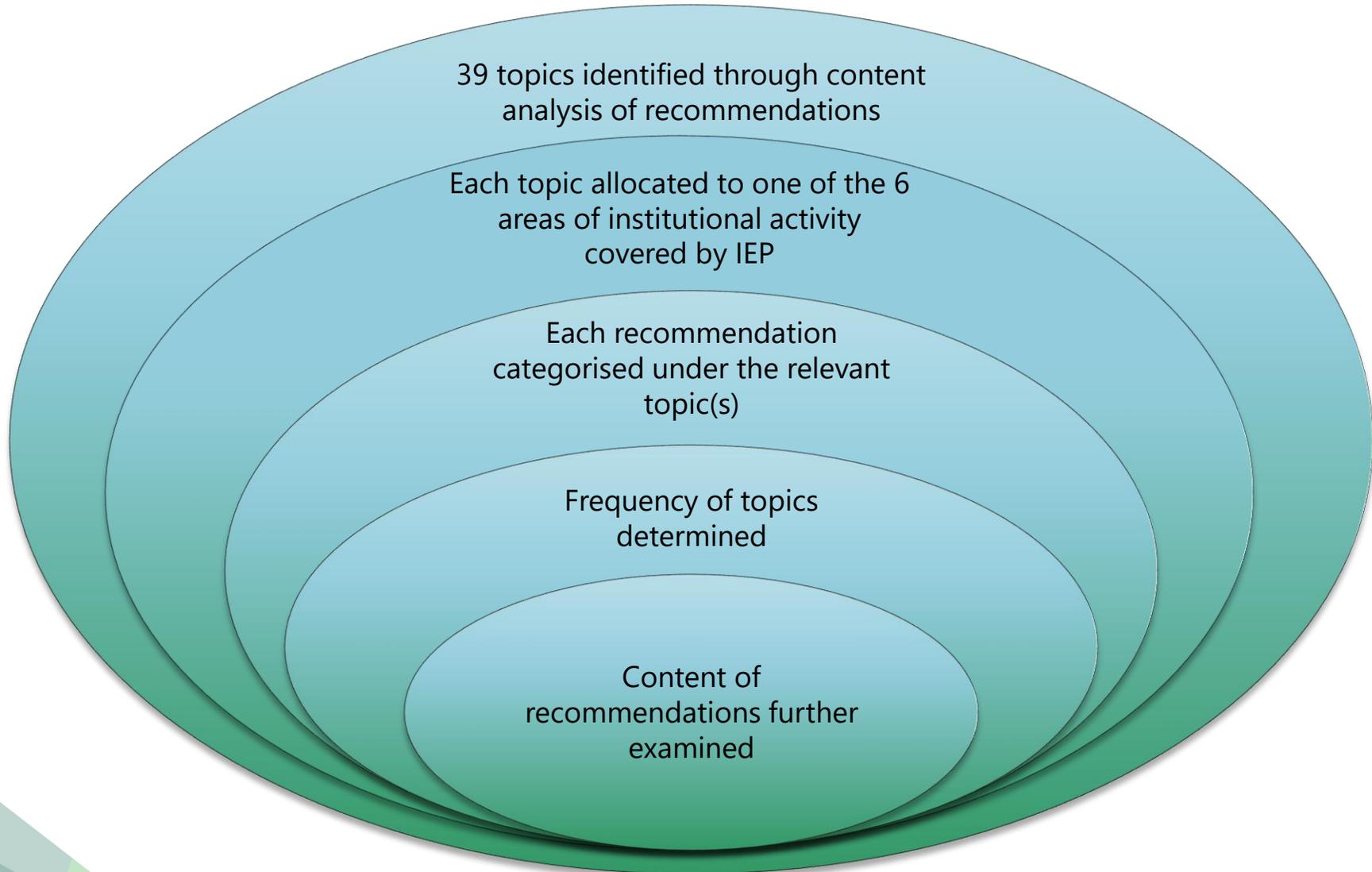
Sample



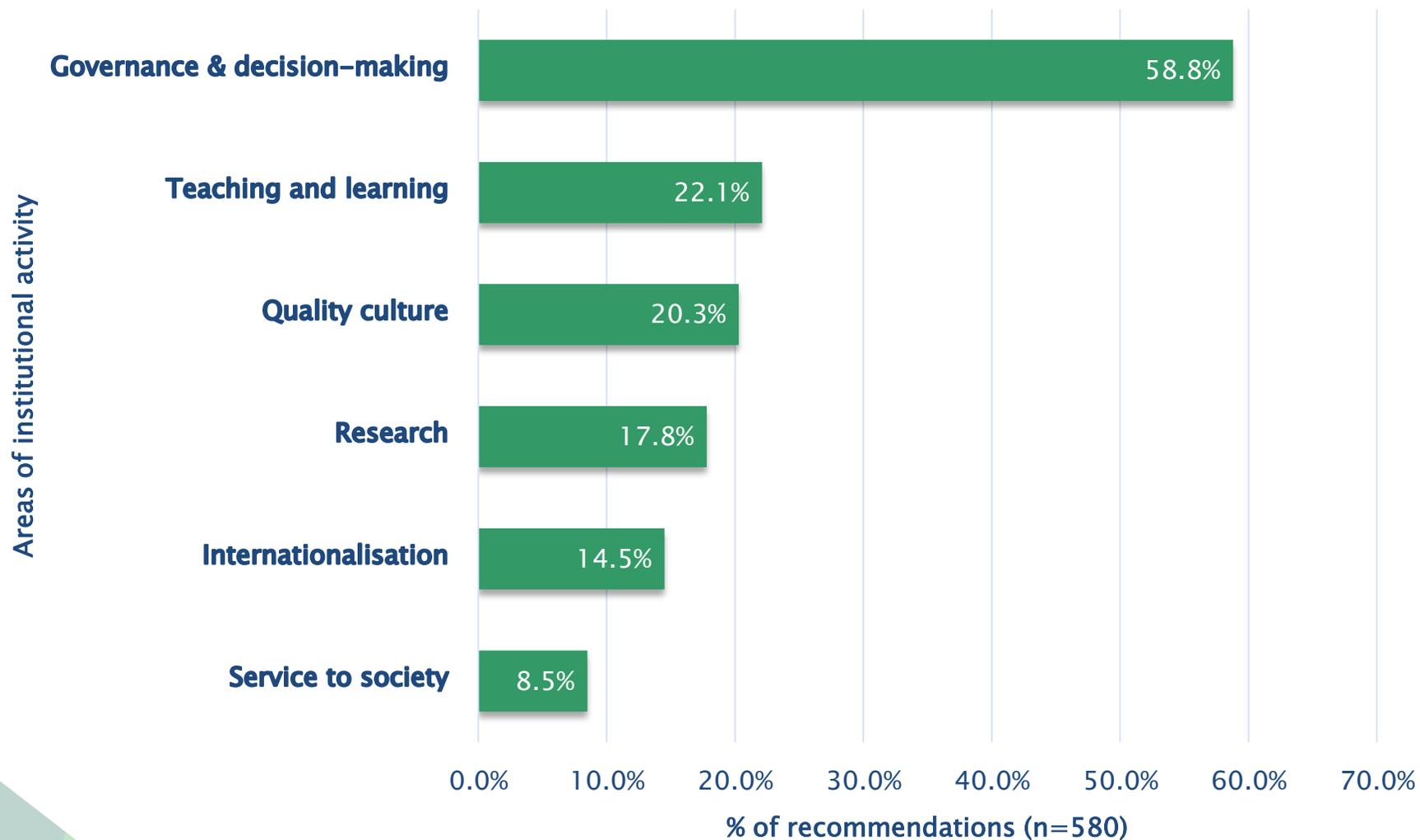
Methodology



Data analysis



Overview of findings



Cross-cutting theme 1

Focus on strategy



Topics covered:

- ➔ Bringing existing plans/activities into one coherent strategy
- ➔ Elements of a successful strategy and implementation plan
- ➔ How to develop a strategy

Why?

- ➔ IEP's methodological focus on strategic leadership, whole institution, and institutional goals
- ➔ Profile of evaluation teams
- ➔ Motivation of the institution

Cross-cutting theme 2

Bologna Process policies



Topics covered:

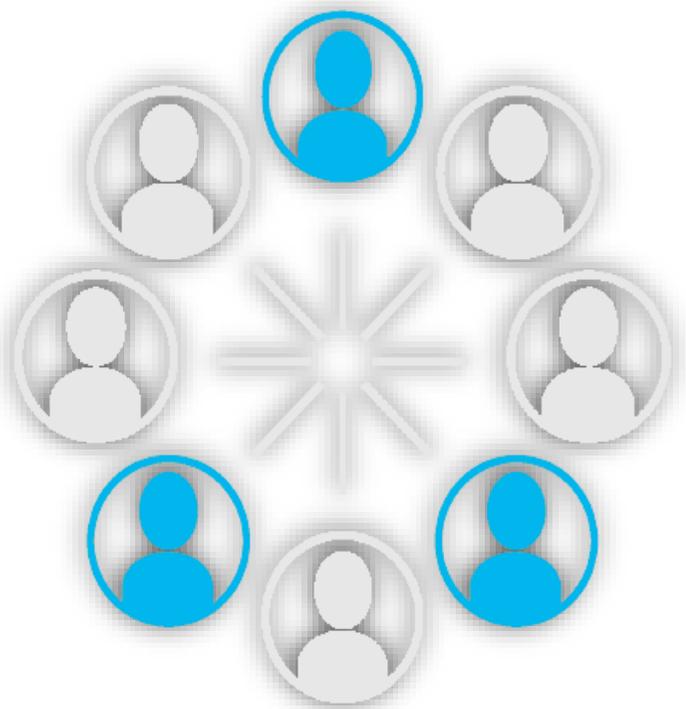
- ➡ Student-centred learning and teaching
- ➡ Recognition of qualifications
- ➡ Quality assurance in line with the ESG
- ➡ Employability and internationalisation

Why?

- ➡ IEP as a European quality assurance agency
- ➡ Experience of the evaluation teams
- ➡ Specific European policies

Cross-cutting theme 3

Stakeholder collaboration



Topics covered:

- ➔ In particular strategy development, research, service to society and curriculum development
- ➔ When to use input from external stakeholders
- ➔ How to get input from external stakeholders
- ➔ Monitor and review partnerships

Why?

- ➔ Interviews with external stakeholders during site visits
- ➔ Collaboration not as goal in itself, but essential for institutional development

Governance and decision-making

Most frequently addressed topics:

- Academic staff (47)
- Strategy and implementation (42)
- Communication/marketing (27)
- Financial matters (27)
- Student involvement in decision making process (21)
- Governance structure (21)



Observations:

- Very broad area
- Reflects IEP's mission and methodology
- Academic staff recommendations overlap with learning and teaching, research and curriculum development

Teaching and learning

Most frequently addressed topics:

- Curriculum development and delivery (78)
- Strategy (11)
- Teaching-Research links and balance (11)



Observations:

- References (explicit and implicit) to Bologna Process policies
- No recommendations about programme content (except for interdisciplinarity and transversal skills)

Research

Most frequently addressed topics:

- Strategy and implementation (48)
- Collaboration (internal and external) (27)



Observations:

- Appropriateness of goals (more than in any other area)
- Focus on capacity building and reaching critical mass

Service to society

Most frequently addressed topics:

- Strategy and implementation (30)



Observations:

- Two types of recommendation:
 - Related to service that the institution can offer to society
 - Related to harnessing the benefits that offering these services can bring back to the institution
- Fewer topics due to:
 - Area most closely linked with local context
 - Broad understanding of what constitutes service to society

Quality culture

Most frequently addressed topics:

- Tools and processes (collecting feedback, KPIs, information systems, quality standards and handbooks) (51)
- Follow-up (closing the feedback loop) (27)
- Strategy (one coherent approach, covering all institutional activities) (26)



Observations:

- Quality culture as cross-cutting theme: reducing bureaucracy, balancing the need for monitoring with risk of evaluation fatigue, stakeholder engagement
- Very practical recommendations

Internationalisation

Most frequently addressed topics:

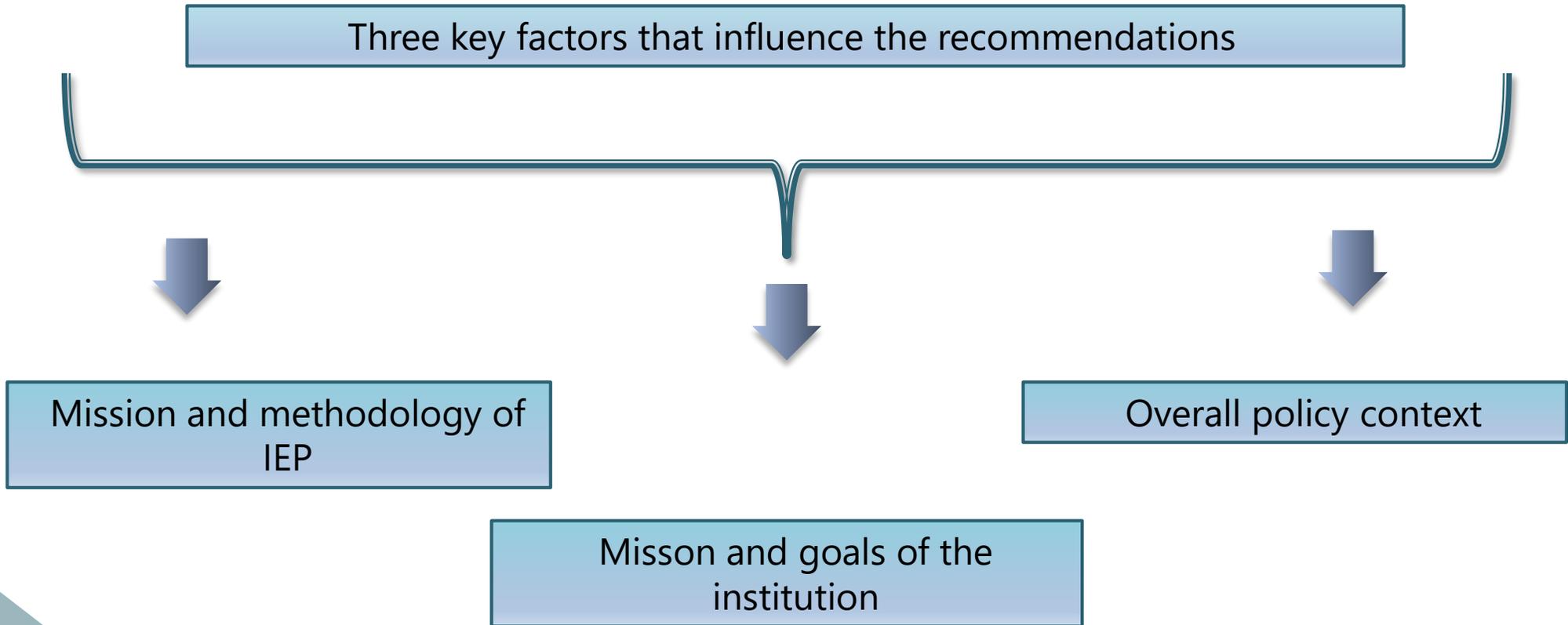
- Strategy (strategic approach instead of ad hoc activities) (24)
- Mobility (staff/student, incoming/outgoing, long term/short term) (23)
- Foreign language provision (language skills, programme delivery in foreign language) (22)



Observations:

- Internationalisation not as a goal in itself
- Mainstreaming internationalisation in other institutional activities

Conclusion





Questions Comments

More information

Full paper: <https://bit.ly/35fexhh>

IEP website: <https://iep-qaq.org>

