

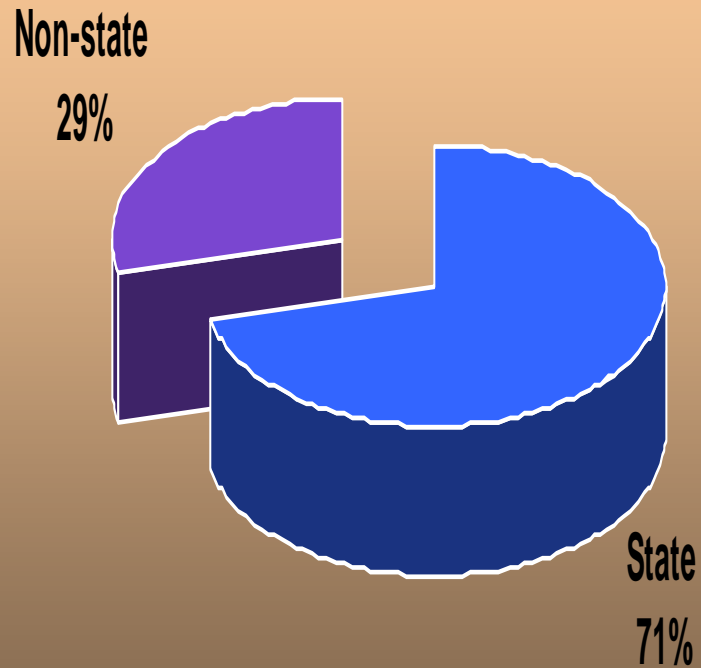


# The Polish State Accreditation Committee

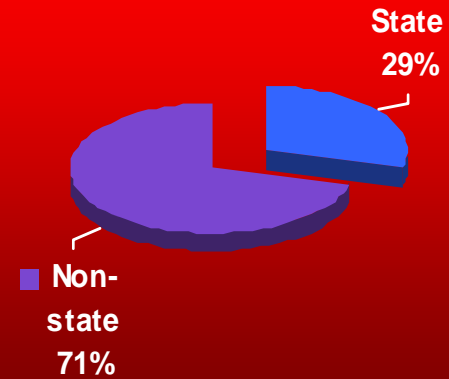
# 1. Legal basis

- The Act of 20th July 2001, amending the existing Higher Education Act, established the State Accreditation Committee as the legal body working for the quality of education, defined its tasks and its work procedure.
- The State Accreditation Committee is the only statutory institution covering the whole of higher education that works towards the evaluation of quality of education and whose evaluations and resolutions are legally binding.

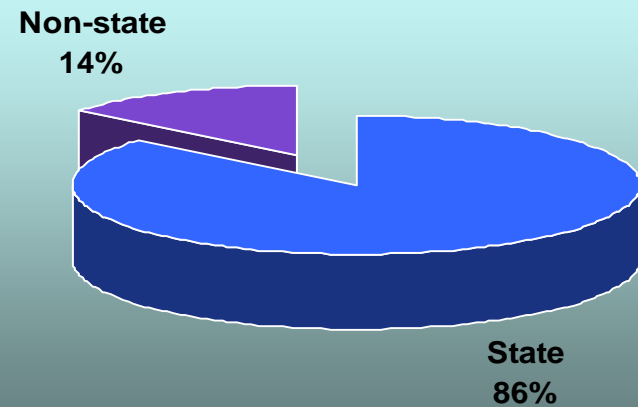
## The percentage of students in higher education institutions



## The relation between state and non-state higher education institution



## The percentage of academic staff in higher education institutions



# 2. Membership

- Members of Accreditation Committee are appointed by the Minister of Education from among candidates proposed by academic senates of schools, the Main Council of Higher Education, learned societies, professional and artists' associations and employers' organizations.
- The members of the Committee work in 10  following Sections

10 Chairs of the Sections for Degree Programme

Humanities

Fine Arts

Natural Sciences

Technical Sciences

Mathematics, Physics and  
Chemistry

Economics

Agricultural, Forestry and  
Veterinary Sciences

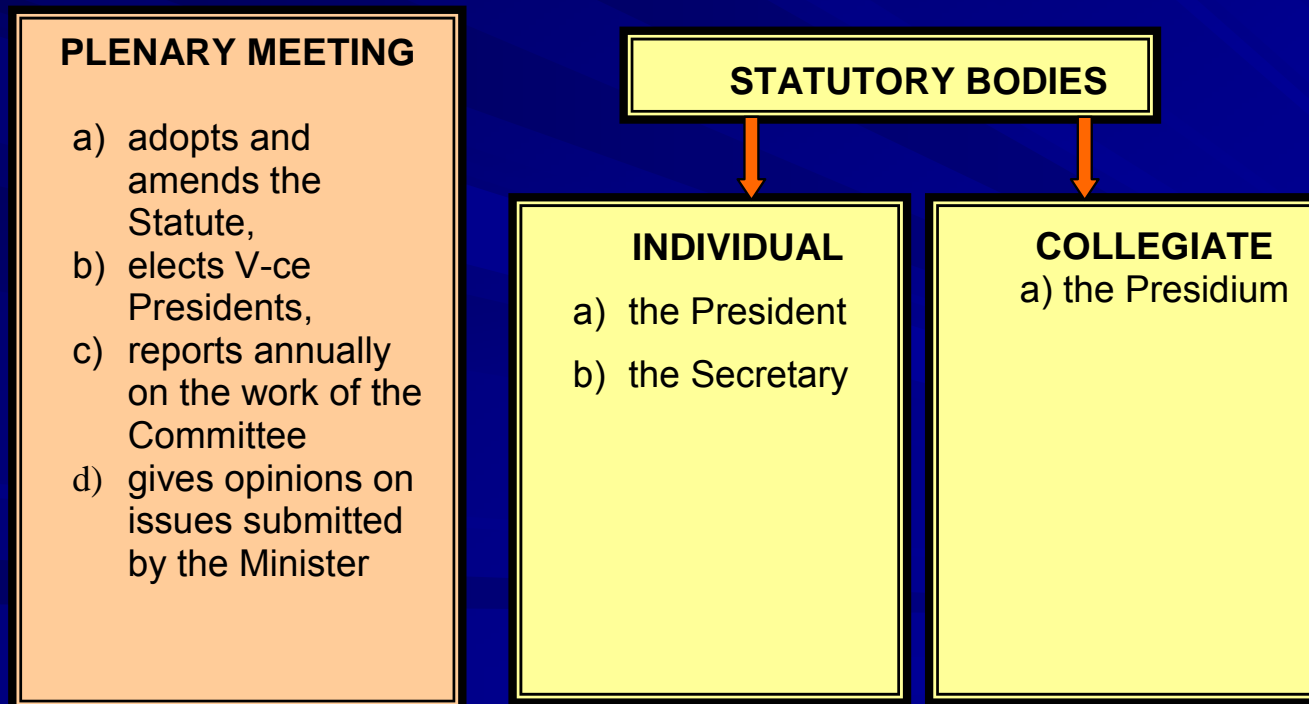
Social Sciences and Law

Medical Sciences

Physical Education

# 3. Structure of the Committee

- The Committee operates in plenary sessions and via its statutory bodies



# 4. Tasks

According to the article 38.2 of the Higher Education Act, the tasks of the Committee are the following:

- evaluating the quality of education as well as carrying out control of compliance with the requirements for offering areas of study in all Polish institutions of tertiary education,
- preparing evaluations of all applications to:
  - establish an institution of higher education,
  - establish a basic or external unit of an institution,
  - establish new areas of study in existing institutions,
  - assign specializations in higher vocational schools to appropriate areas of study (the responsibility with which PKA was burdened between 30 September 2002 and 30 September 2004), ,
- granting the right to establish and offer areas of study different from those specified in the regulation of Minister of National Education and Sports of 28th March 2002 on the requirements that an institution of higher education should meet to establish and run a study programme.

# 5. Quality evaluation

- The most important statutory task of the Committee is the **evaluation of education quality**. The Presidium of the Committee selects the areas of study and institution of higher education to be evaluated in a given calendar year annually on the basis of the proposals of individual Sections of the Committee. In individual cases the Committee additionally performs evaluation at the request of appropriate minister, and it also evaluates applications for changing the vocational studies into master's degree programmes.
- Evaluation of education institution made by the State Accreditation Committee **is obligatory**, and being awarded a negative rating entails certain legal consequences, such as e.g. the Minister of National Education and Sports' decision either to revoke or to suspend the right to offer programmes in the negatively rated field or level of study.
- The evaluation procedure consists of a number of stages (cf. diagram 1). This is mostly due to the fact that the consequences of an evaluation are of a paramount importance for the inspected institutions (e.g. there are also financial consequences).

# Diagram No. 1

## STAGES OF THE EDUCATION QUALITY EVALUATION PROCEDURE

The Presidium selects the area of studies and institutions of higher education to be evaluated in a given calendar year.



The institutions which are early informed about the start of the evaluation procedure submit a self-evaluation report to the Committee.



The Committee Secretary appoints the evaluation panel.



The evaluation panel inspects the institution.



The institution studies the report prepared by evaluation panel and sends its response to the State Accreditation Committee.



The Presidium of the Committee adopts a resolution by voting it on.



The resolution is presented to the institution and the Minister of National Education and Sports.



## 6. Quality evaluation */continuation/*

The evaluation of education is performed by evaluation panels composed of the members of individual Sections and experts. Under the provisions of the Statute of the State Accreditation Committee the chair of the evaluation panel can be only selected from among the members of the Committee. The evaluation panel, made up of up to five members, is appointed by the Secretary of the Committee in consultation with the Chair of given Section.

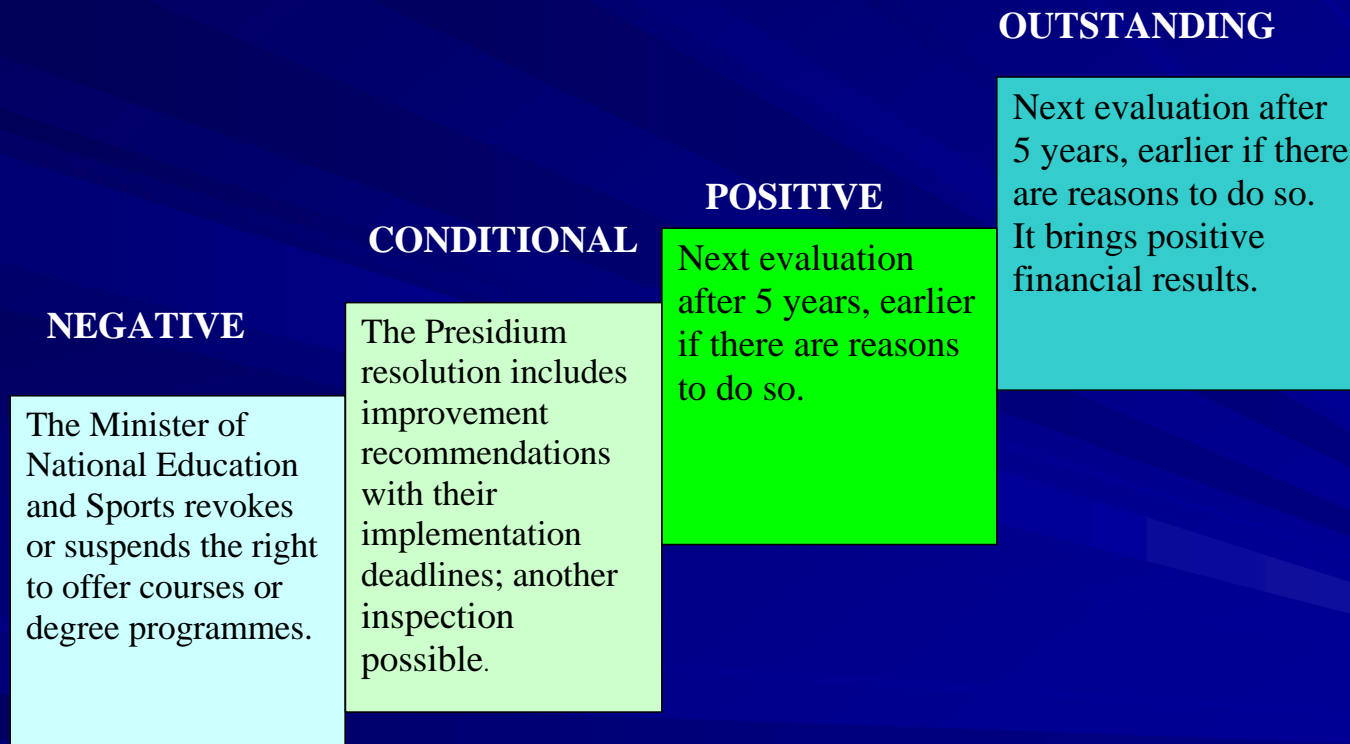
The State Accreditation Committee has adopted the following four-degree scale of ratings:

- outstanding,
- positive,
- conditional,
- negative

# 7. Quality evaluation */continuation/*

DIAGRAM No. 2

## RATING SCALE USED BY THE STATE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

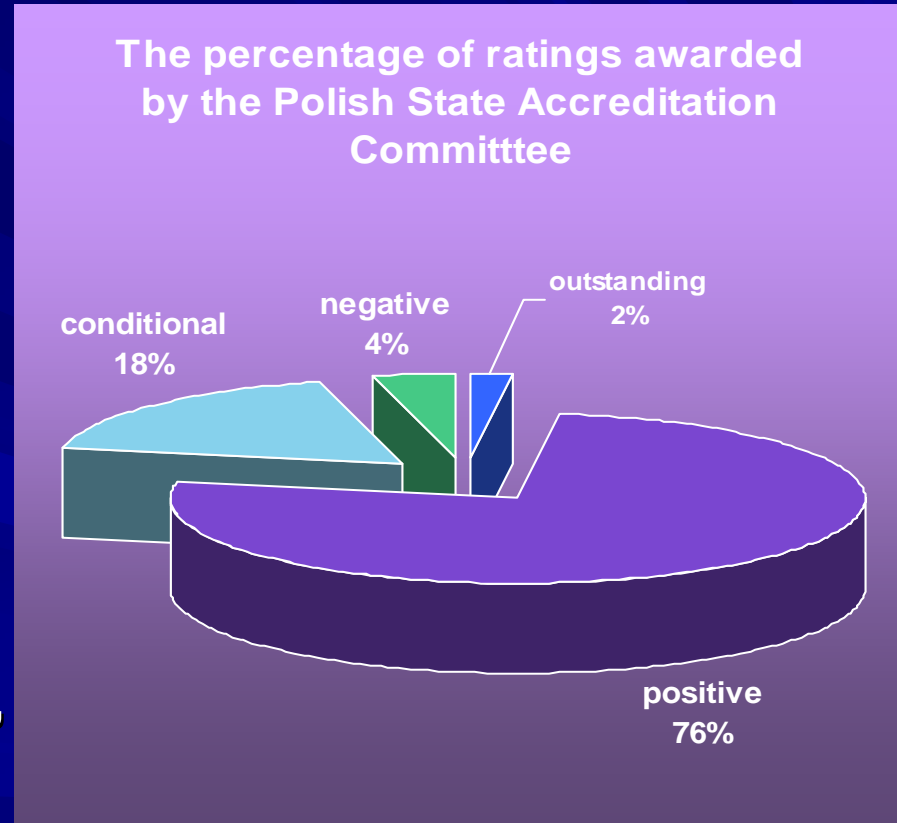


# 8. Quality evaluation */continuation/*

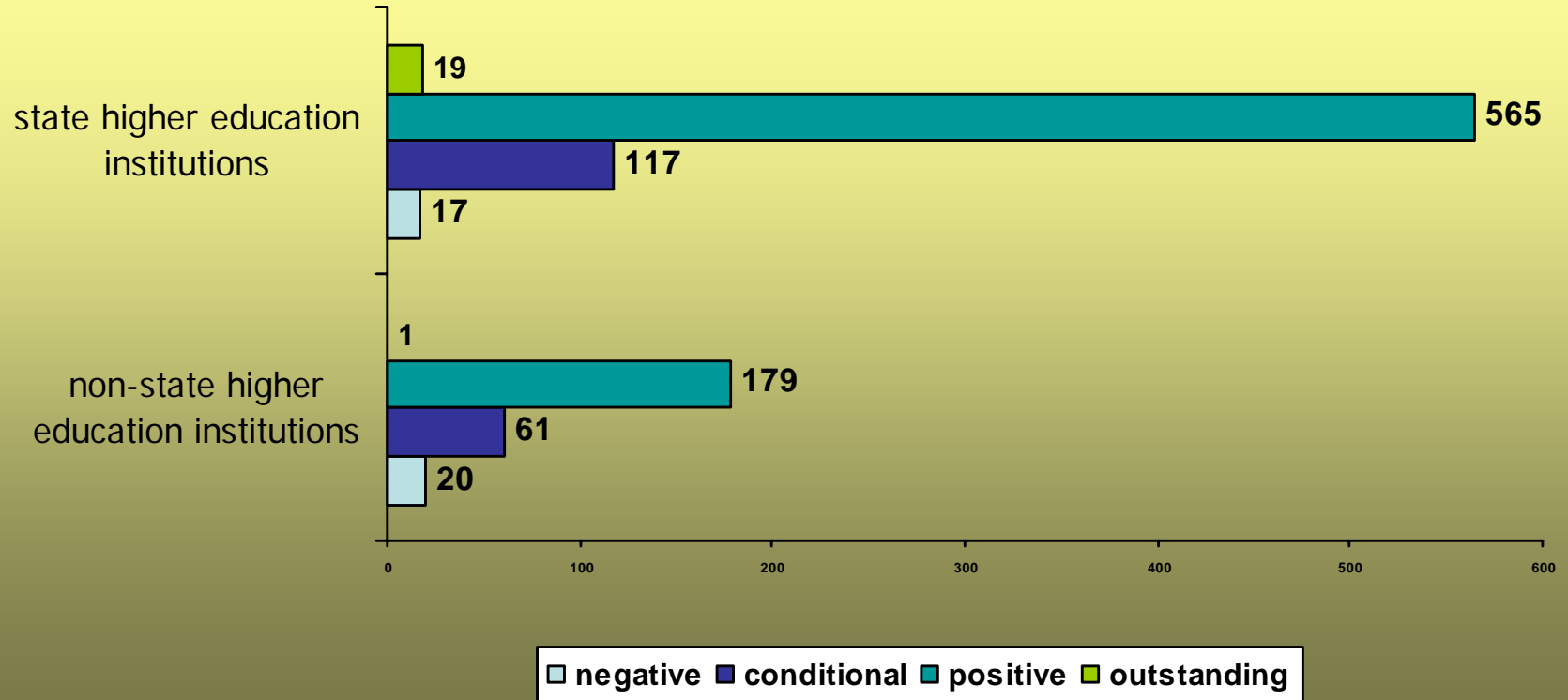
- During the panel's inspection the following issues are investigated:
  - the academic staff, including both the basic staff being precondition for existence of a given school or a programme, as well as extra staff,
  - academic achievements of the staff,
  - competence of the staff to teach given courses,
  - curricula and study programmes,
  - quality of theses (including both those at the lycenciate as well as master's level),
  - the scholarly activity of the inspected organizational unit,
  - cooperation between schools at the national and international level,
  - students' affairs,
  - teaching facilities, students' living conditions and recreation facilities,
  - legal aspects of education in the inspected area of studies.

# 9. Results of education quality evaluation

- In the years 2002-2004 the Committee awarded 979 ratings on the evaluation of education quality including: 20 outstanding ratings, 744 positive ratings, 178 conditional ratings, 37 negative ratings, amounting to c. 2%, 76%, 18% and 4% of the total of legally binding ratings.

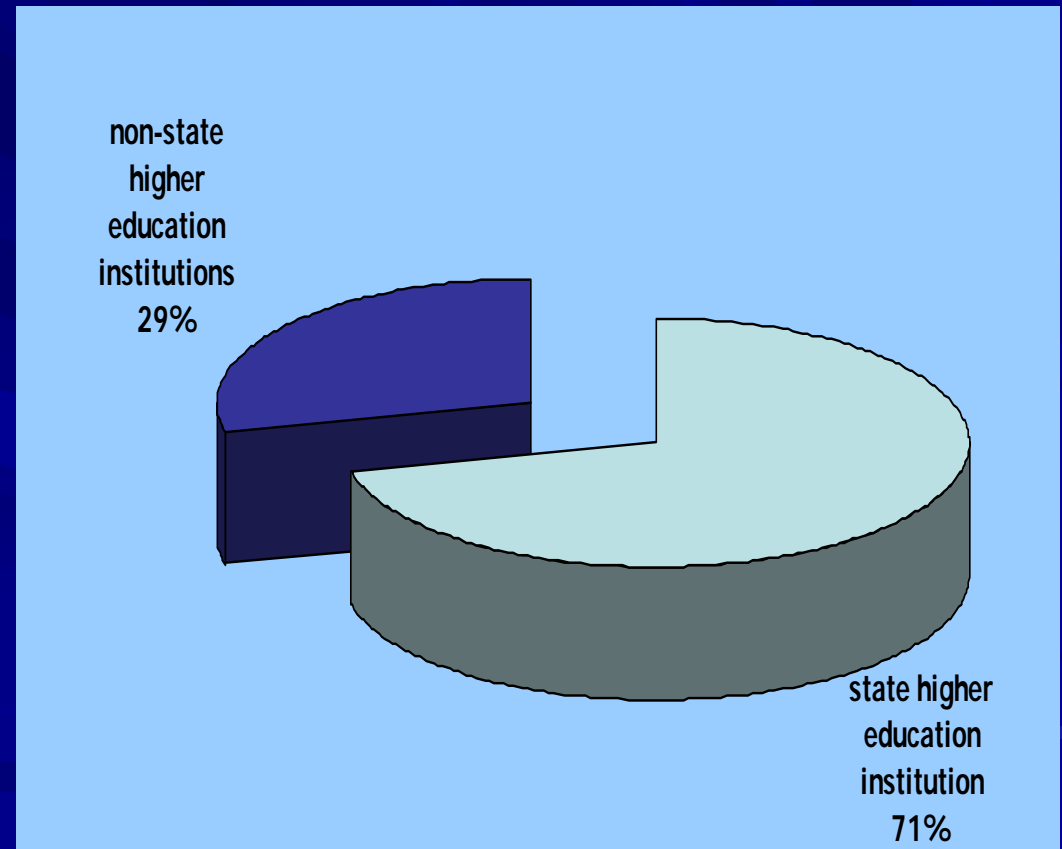


# Distribution of assessments in different school groups



# Resolutions adopted by the State Accreditation Committee on the quality of education

- 718 resolutions on the evaluation of the quality of education in areas of study offered by state higher education institutions
- 261 in areas of study offered by non-state higher education institutions



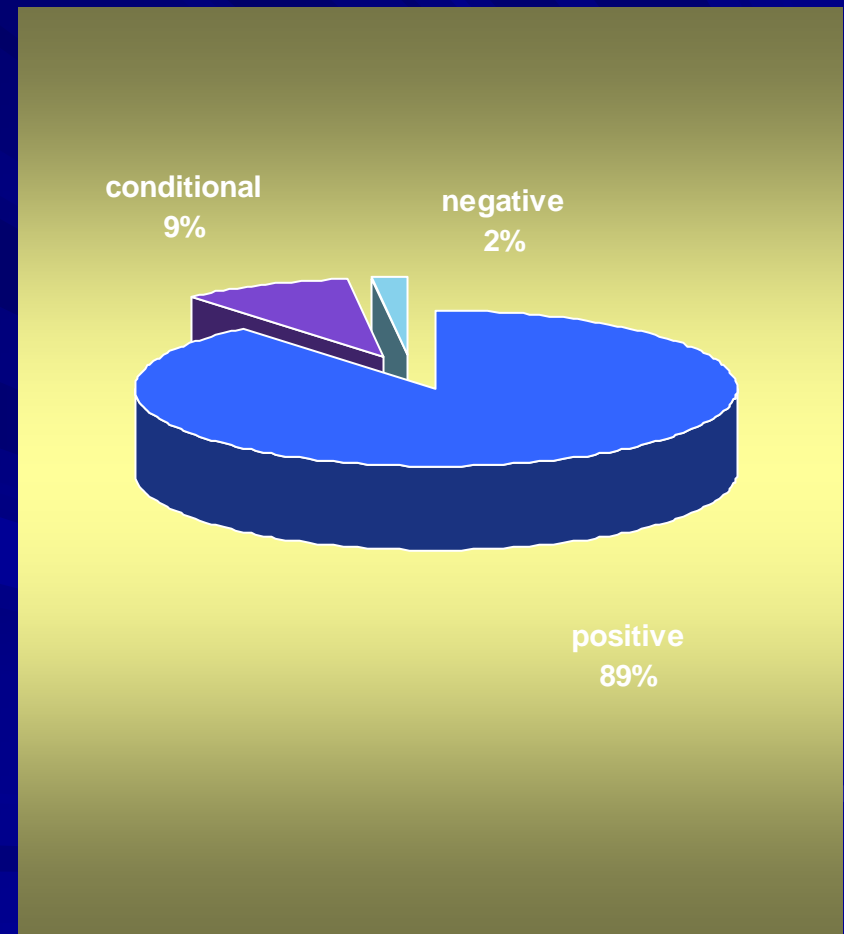
# 10. Conditional assessments

- In the period 2002-2004 the State Accreditation Commission awarded 178 conditional ratings.
- Pursuant to the Committee Statutes, when a conditional assessment has been made, in its resolution the Presidium indicates the shortcomings that have to be removed and sets the time for the follow-up assessment.

# Conditional assessments

/ revisits after the first conditional ratings/

- In 2002-2004 revisits were made at 100 higher education institution, resulting in 89 positive, 9 conditional and 2 negative assessments. This shows that the majority of the schools (approx. 89%) have improved the conditions and effects of education.



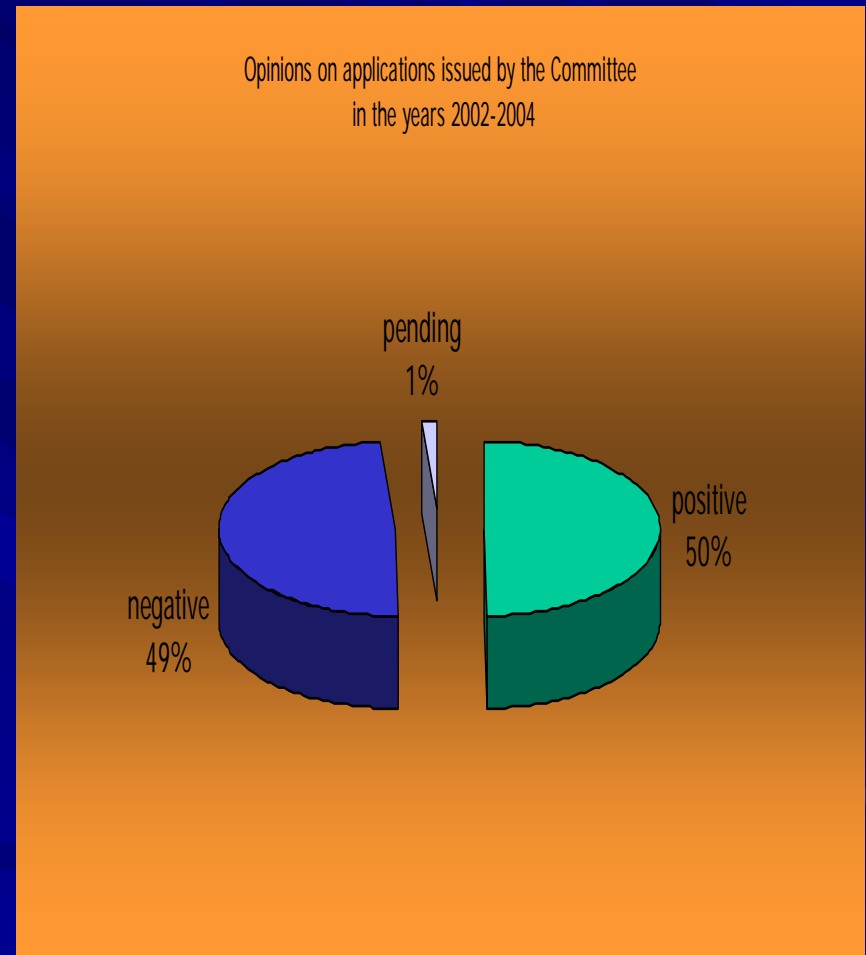


# 11. Reasons for negative ratings

- Negative assessment of the quality of education were made with respect to the organizational units, which opened an area of study or a field of vocational study in violation of the law or offered education at a level much lower than the necessary minimum, which was mainly due to the following reasons:
- there was not a sufficient number of academic teachers with appropriate formal qualifications,
- education was offered in line with the curricula and syllabi which did not meet the requirements stipulated in teaching standards, as result of which the graduates did not acquire the knowledge and skills that are expected to be acquired upon the completion of a given area of study,
- the principles and criteria governing the preparation and assessment of the diploma theses were defined or principles and criteria were adopted as a result of which theses did not meet the basic methodological requirements or their topics were not related to the area of study pursued by students,
- sufficient and appropriate resources and facilities were not available – there was no laboratory, equipment or library,
- research to the extent and at the level that guarantees education at the master's level was not conducted.

# 12. Opinions on Applications

- Out of 2078 application submitted to the Committee in 2002-2004 (1844 for the first time and 234 for the second time), the Polish State Accreditation Committee examined 2049 applications. The Committee gave a positive opinion on 1032 applications and a negative opinion on 1017 proposals.



# 13. Recognition of evaluation results

Results of evaluation made by the Committee have impact on:

■ **outstanding**

- extra financing of didactic activity

■ **conditional**

- financing of didactic activity,

■ **negative**

- financing of didactic activity,
- suspending enrolment for a given area of study ,
- revoking the rights to offer a given area of study

# 14. International Cooperation

- The Polish State Accreditation Committee, pursuant to art.. 38 section 5 of the Bill on Higher Education of 12 September 1990, is authorized to cooperate with international organizations, which specialize in the evaluation of quality of education and accreditation.
  
- In 2002-2004 the Committee established:
  - 1) multilateral cooperation,
  - 2) cooperation with international organizations,
  - 3) bilateral cooperation,

# Multilateral Cooperation

- The objectives of Bologna Declaration and the Berlin Communiqué have been reflected in the work of the Committee. In the year 2002-2004 the Committee took an active part in international work aimed at developing common quality assurance criteria and procedures. The representatives attended seminars and meetings of Bologna Follow-up Group.

# Cooperation with International Organizations

- **PKA ↔ ENQA – European Association for Quality Assurance** – in the 2002 the PKA applied for membership in ENQA. At the beginning of 2003, ENQA accorded the Committee status of observer member and invited the Committee to take part in the annual meetings of ENQA General Assembly and ENQA organized seminar and workshops. In view of the formalized structure of ENQA and revision of membership conditions, so far it has not been decided in the matter of membership for the Committee.
- **2) PKA ↔ UNESCO/CEPES, OECD, UNESCO**

# Bilateral Cooperation

- In November 2003 the agreement on cooperation between the State Accreditation Committee and the Spanish National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) was signed.
- Under the agreement both parties declare that since their responsibilities and objectives in the field of quality assessment and accreditation of higher education are similar, they have declared to strive for the development of cooperation and mutual recognition.

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