

Introduction

- Higher education enrollment has increased in developing countries in recent decades
- The increasing diversity of the student population, as well as of higher education institutions and programmes, has **encouraged the diversification of trajectories**
 - dropping out, stopping out for a time, transferring across programmes or institutions, enrolling part-time, and taking longer to conclude the degree programme
- In this study, we focus our analysis on **students with a complex trajectory**, namely those who have **transferred to a different programme** from the one in which they enrolled at university.

Objectives

- To propose a method that can assist programme managers, counselling and tutoring services in **determining the time to degree completion** for each student
- Having identified those likely to take longer, higher education institutions can **design policies to prevent longer pathways**

STUDENTS' COMPLEX TRAJECTORIES: EXPLORING DEGREE CHANGE AND TIME TO DEGREE

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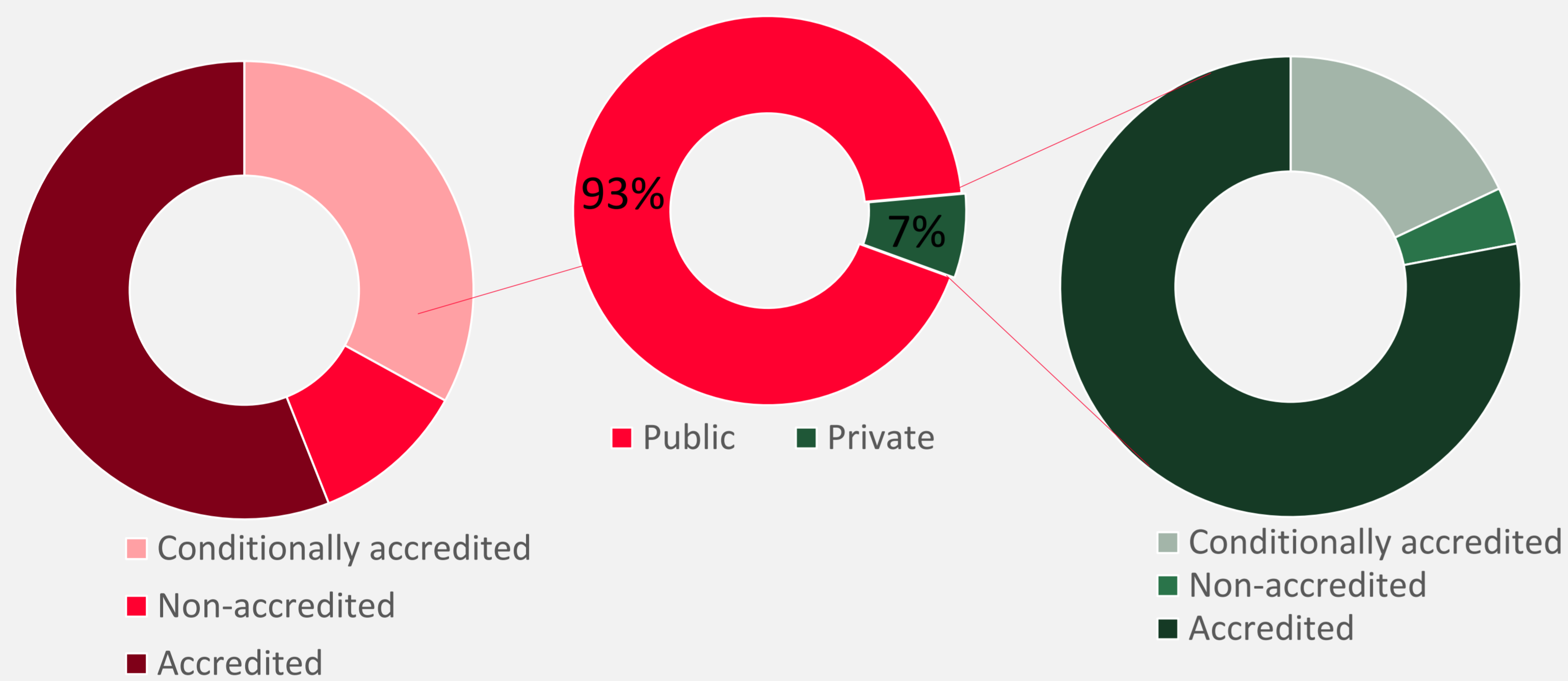
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Data and methodology

- Machine learning approach:
- The reasons justifying non-accreditation substantially replicate the conditions for conditional accreditation

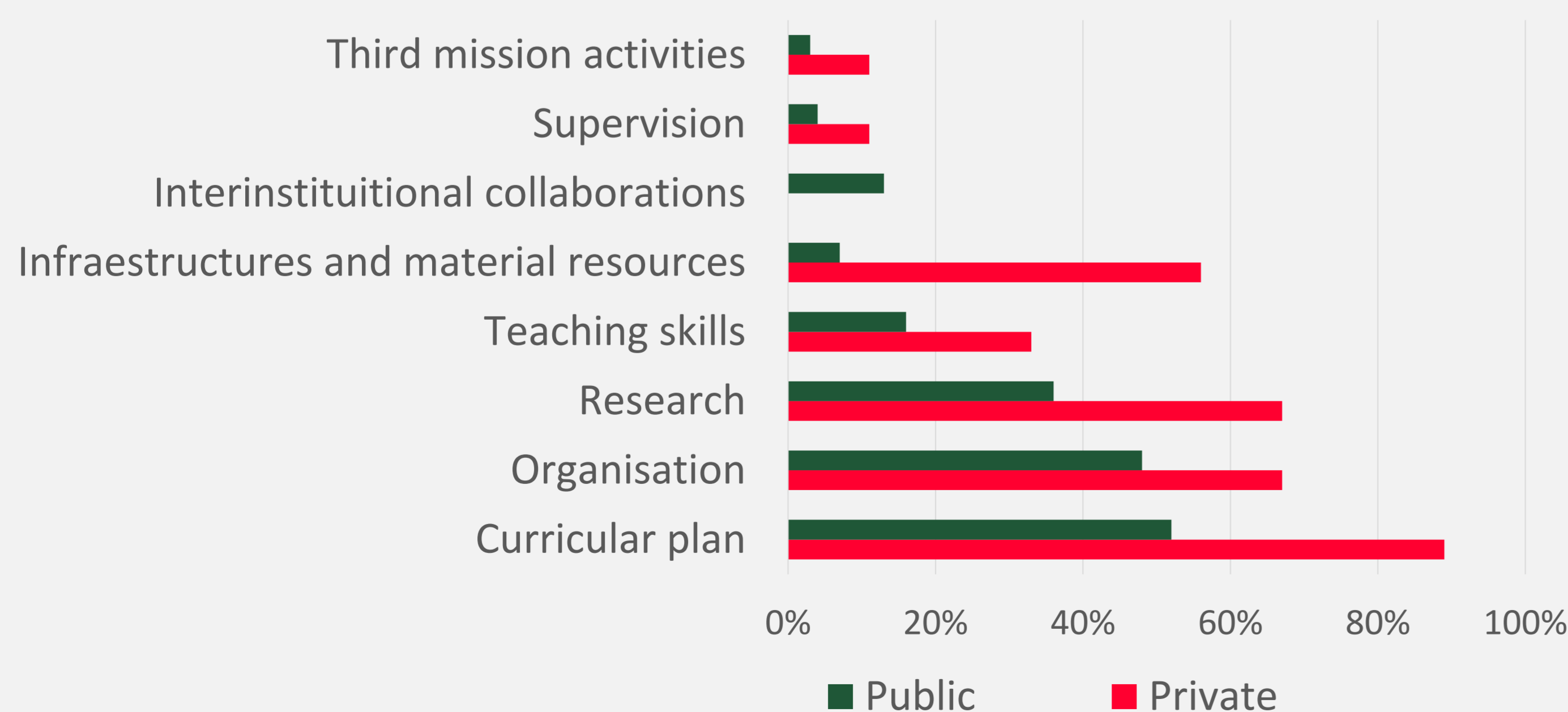
Results

Education sector



	Accreditation	Conditional accreditation	Non-accreditation		Accreditation	Conditional accreditation	Non-accreditation
Education	7	5	4	Eng., manuf. and construction industry	84	11	1
Arts and humanities	46	23	2	Agriculture	11	0	0
Social sciences, commerce and law	62	16	6	Health and social care	15	4	0
Science, math and computing	75	14	4	Services	11	3	1
				Total	311	76	18

Accreditation conditions



- Practically any condition was more often pointed out for doctoral programmes in private universities than in public ones
- In both sectors, the doctoral programmes' curricular plan, organisation and research were the aspects mostly addressed by the conditions

Conclusions

- Portuguese QA system in operation since 2009 has indeed been contributing to the reorganisation of doctoral education
 - Close down of doctoral programmes
 - Identification of conditions aiming programmes' improvement
- Accreditation had more impact on the doctoral education offer of private universities than of the public ones

Most Impacted areas: Social Sciences, Commerce and Law; Educ., Arts and Humanities; Health and Social Care

- There is an overlap between the reasons justifying programmes' non-accreditation and the conditions put forward for their conditional accreditation
- The external QA system implemented in Portugal indeed affected the quality of doctoral education

