TEACHING QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Annual global report – Students' perception of curricular units' performance | Academic Year 2017-2018

NOVA University Lisbon

TEACHING QUALITY, ACCREDITATION AND EMPLOYABILITY OFFICE

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AU – Academic Unit

B – Bachelor

CU – Curricular Unit

IM – Integrated Master

M – Master

NOVA – Universidade NOVA de Lisboa

Q – Question

TQAS – Teaching Quality Assurance System

1. INTRODUCTION

NOVA's Teaching Quality Assurance System (TQAS) aims to contribute to the continuous improvement of the quality of teaching and learning at the University. The supervision and monitoring of the functioning of the TQAS are the responsibility of the Teaching Quality Council, with the support of the Teaching Quality, Accreditation and Employability Office, in conjunction with the Teaching Quality offices of the nine Academic Units (AU) of NOVA.

In 2017/2018, using the methodology approved for previous academic years, a survey was applied to Bachelor (B), Master (M) and Integrated Master's (IM) students, to better understand their perception regarding the curricular units (CU).

The students were asked to evaluate, using a scale 1-6 (1 being the lowest and 6 being the highest), the contents and objectives of the CU, the teaching and evaluation methodologies used, the available resources and, finally, the global satisfaction regarding each CU, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Questions included in students' satisfation survey

	Academic Year 2017/2018
a) Content and objectives	**Q1.** I understood the contents of curricular unit
	Q2. The obbjectives were clearly explained by the teacher(s)
	Q3. I think I have achieved the intended objectives
b) Teaching Methodology	**Q4.** The teaching methodologies used used contributed to my learning
c) Available Resourses	**Q5.** The resources available have contributed to my learning
d) Evaluation Methodology	**Q6.** I have been informed of the evaluation criteria
	Q7. The proposed evaluation criteria were respected
	Q8. Throught the semester I was informed about my progress
e) Global Satisfaction	**Q9.** Globally, this curricular unit satisfied me

The survey is applied at the end of each semester, anonymously, being in most cases of voluntary filling.

Table 2 summarizes the concepts used in the context of the survey.

Table 2. Classification of CU in the context of the student satisfaction survey

Active CU	CU offered at NOVA, in Bachelors, Masters and Integrated Masters, with students enrolled in the academic year under analysis
Surveyed CU	Active CU to which the student satisfaction survey was applied in the academicl year under analysis
Not surveyed CU	CU to which the student satisfaction survey has not been applied (may include dissertations, project work, etc.)
Qualified CU	Surveyed CU that meet the representativeness threshold criteria (≥5 students enrolled; from 5 to 24 students enrolled → ≥5 responses; ≥25 students enrolled → ≥20% of responses)
Not qualified CU	Surveyed CU that do not meet the criteria of the representativeness threshold
Inadequate CU	Qualified CU with an assessment ≤2.9 (average value), on at least one of the questions of the survey
Highly satisfactory CU	Qualified CU with an evaluation ≥5 (average value) in Q9 (global satisfaction)

Figure 1 represents the distribution of active CU in the academic year 2017/2018 according to table 2 classification.

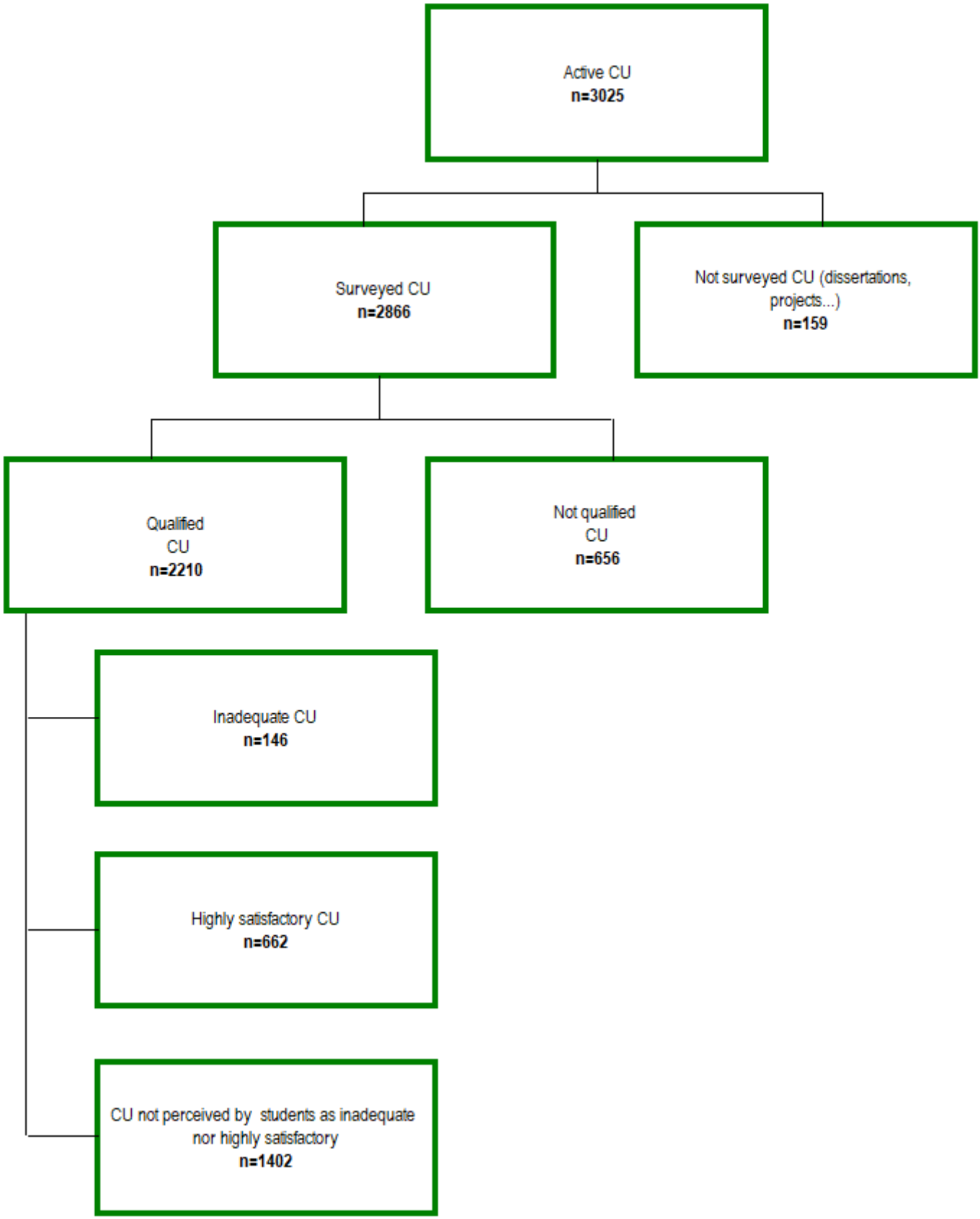

Figure 1. Distribution of active CU in the academic year 2017/2018

Figure 2 represents the percentual distribution of active CU in the academic year 2017/2018 (n=3025). According to the overall evaluation performed by the students, of these CU, 21.9% were considered of highly overall satisfaction (n=662), and only 4.8% (n=146) were considered inadequate. It should be noted that, within the qualified CU (n=2210, unaggregated area of the chart), 93.4% (n=2064, green areas) were considered adequate.

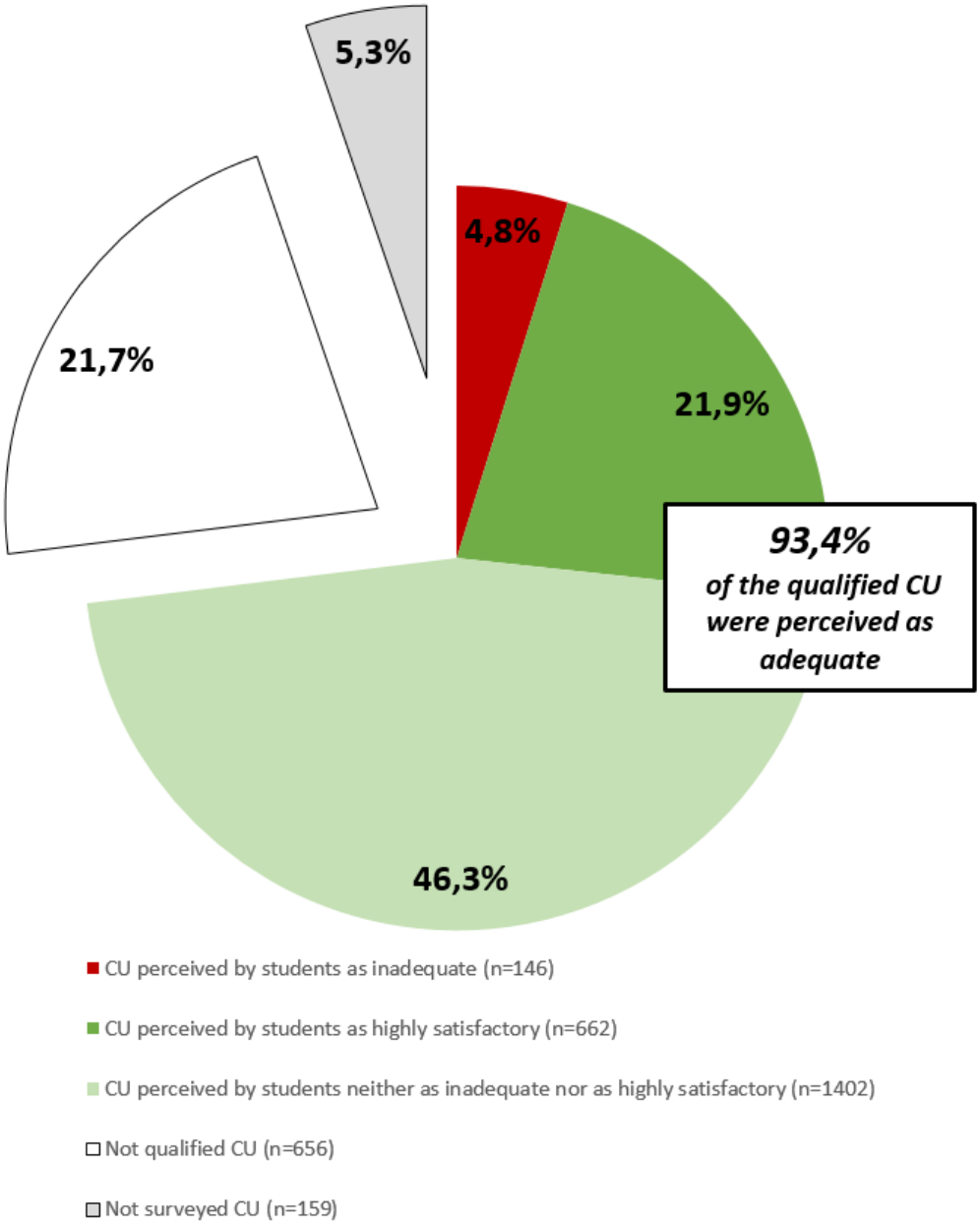

Figure 2. Percentual distribution of active CU in the academic year 2017/2018

2. CONTEXT

2.1. Students enrolled at NOVA in Bachelors, Masters and Integrated Masters

In the academic year 2017/2018, there was a slight increase in the number of students enrolled at NOVA in the study levels under analysis (Figure 3).

As can be seen in 2017/2018, most NOVA students were enrolled in IM (39%), with the rest divided by first (33%) and second cycles (28%). Note the consistency of the growth recorded in the Masters over the last three years, resulting in an increase of 10% from 2015/2016 to 2017/2018.

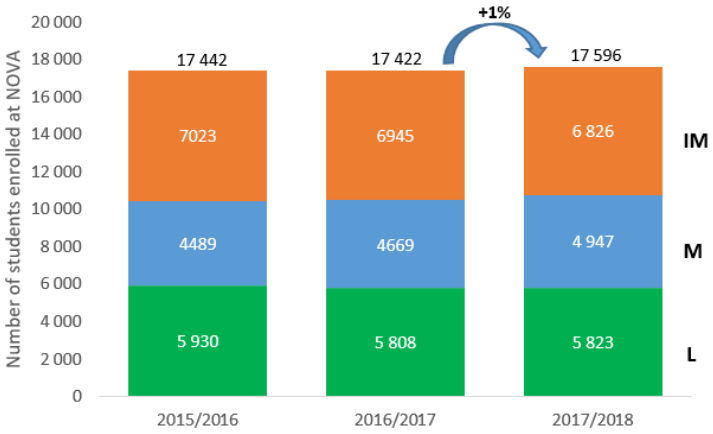

Figure 3. Students enrolled at NOVA in 1st cycle, 2nd cycle and IM

Sources: 2015-2016 - RAIDES 2015, Reference date: 31.dez.2015;
2016-2017 - RAIDES 2016, Reference date: 31.dez.2016;
2017-2018 - RAIDES 2017, Reference date: 31.dez.2017.

2.2. Curricular Units

2.2.1. Surveyed Curricular Units

Figure 4 shows the number of surveyed CU in 2017/2018 (n=2866) per study levels, corresponding to 95% of the total active CU (n=3025). The 100% is not reached because dissertations, project work and other individual exercises are not surveyed.

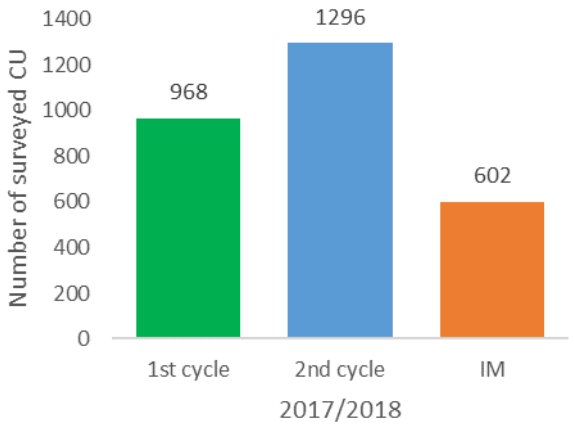

Figure 4. Number of surveyed CU per study levels (n=2866)

Regarding the response rate (number of effective answers to questions from survey Q1 to Q9 / total number of students enrolled in CU), in 2017/2018 IM again presented the highest percentage, followed by the first and second cycles. Compared to the previous year, the response rate increased at all study levels, with emphasis on the eight percentage points of the first cycles, followed by IM with four points, and the second cycles with only one, as is the case in Figure 5.

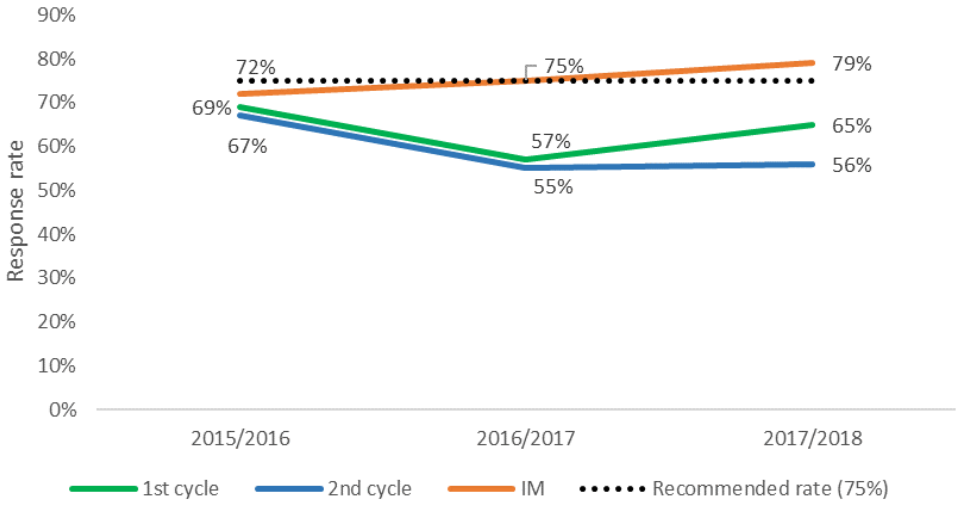

Figure 5. Response rate at NOVA per study levels

2.2.2. Qualified Curricular Units

In 2017/2018, the highest number of qualified CU (n= 846) belongs to the second cycle, followed by the first cycle with 821 and, finally, the IM with 543, according to Figure 6. This figure shows the variations recorded in the last three academic years, reflecting an increase in the total number of qualified CU at NOVA (from 2024 to 2210), mainly due to the increase in qualified CU in the second cycle.

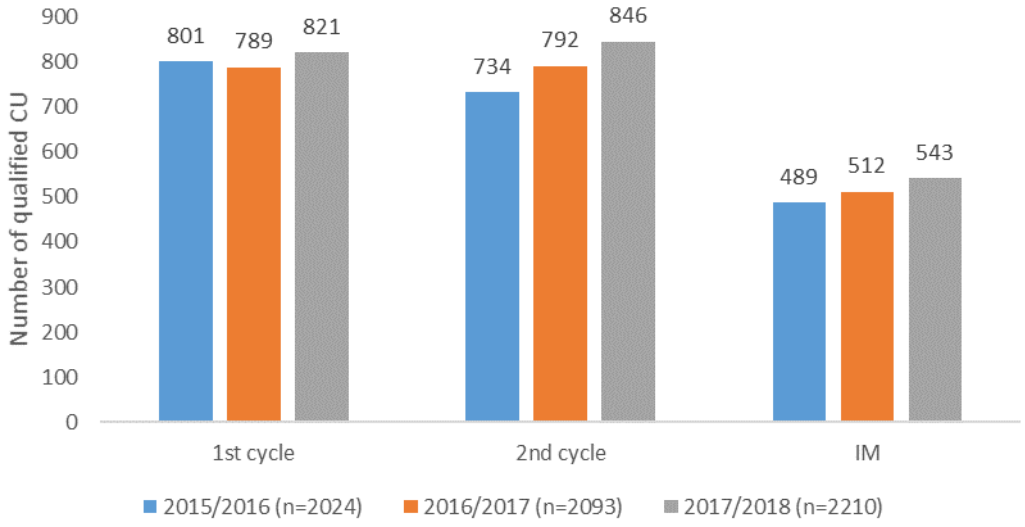

Figure 6. Number of qualified CU at NOVA per study levels

3. RESULTS

3.1. Inadequate Curricular Units

Figure 7 represents the evolution (in absolute values), by study levels, of the percentage of CU perceived by students as inadequate in the last three academic years, compared to the number of qualified CU. This percentage remained, for the total of the three study levels, practically constant between the academic years 2015/2016 (6.2%) and 2016/2017 (6.1%), increasing slightly in the academic year 2017/2018 to 6.6%. The percentage of inadequate CU in 2017/2018, which also was in 2016/2017, is higher in IM (28.2%), followed by the 1st cycles (20.4%) and the 2nd cycles (7.5%).

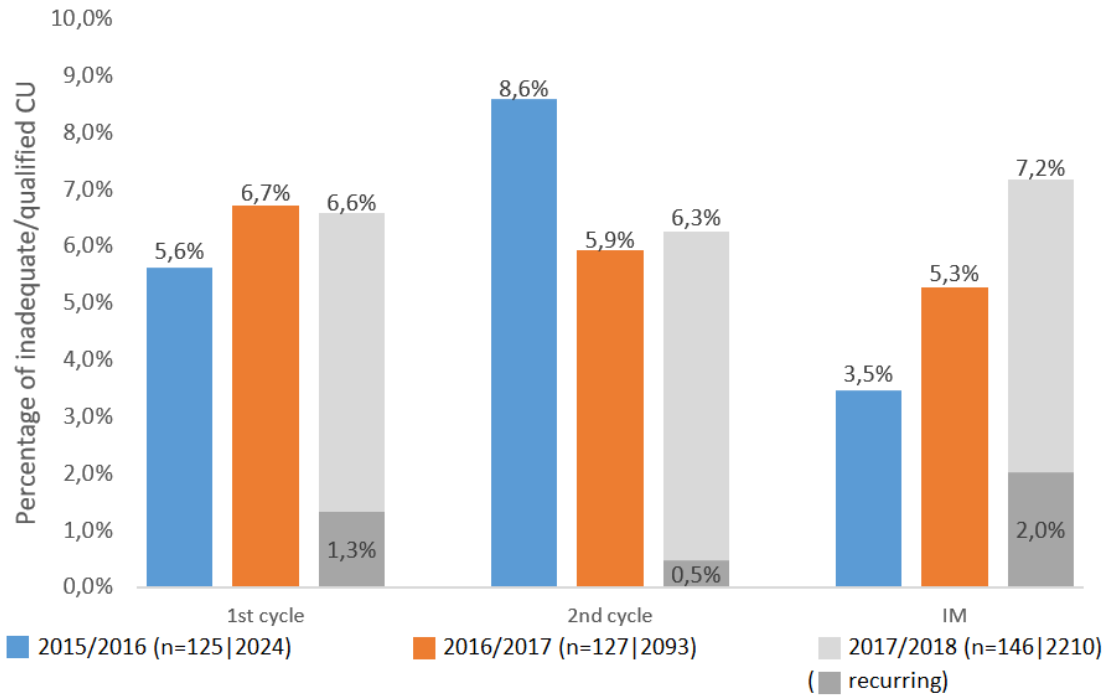

Figure 7. Percentage of inadequate/qualified CU per study levels

Figure 8 reveals the distribution of the percentage of student evaluations, the average value of which is ≤2,9, on the number of UC qualified in the last three academic years. The graph shows that the issue of the survey that stands out most in this context is Q8 (feedback to students). On the other hand, it is noted that this issue presents values lower than or equal to 2.9 in 10 % of inadequate CU, being solely responsible for the inadequacy of CU in 7% of cases.

On question Q8, the possible reasons pointed out by the AU for the low ratings were as follows:

- late information on the intermediate evaluations of students, which implies a difficult perception of progress on their part;
- short duration of CU;
- a high number of students enrolled, and consequent impossibility of individualized follow-up;
- no obligation of presences;
- little interaction and participation of students in classes;
- use of several teachers, of various specialties; and

- little importance attributed by students to feedback, particularly in situations where high ratings are placed on other issues, including overall satisfaction.

In order to improve perception of student feedback, evaluated in question Q8, AU presents several possible measures to be taken:

- hire grading assistants to avoid delays in delivery of evaluations;
- plan small projects to be carried out throughout the semester;
- divide classes;
- plan student presentations in theoretical classes;
- increase the percentage of the practical evaluation; and
- offer students resource classes with greater difficulties.

It is also suggested the reformulation of question Q8, for greater clarity and applicability to all types of CU, and in some cases it is proposed to eliminate them.

The directors of study cycles have closely monitored inadequate CU, especially applicants, proposing actions to improve, in particular in terms of resources and support to students, having already implemented some of these measures, and also, in the most problematic cases, replaced by teachers or even discontinued CU.

As regards question 4, which was the second worst-rated question, and which concerns teaching methodologies, the possibility of misfit between the methods practiced and the public targeted was suggested, i.e. the lack of adequacy of the methodologies used to expectations of each study levels.

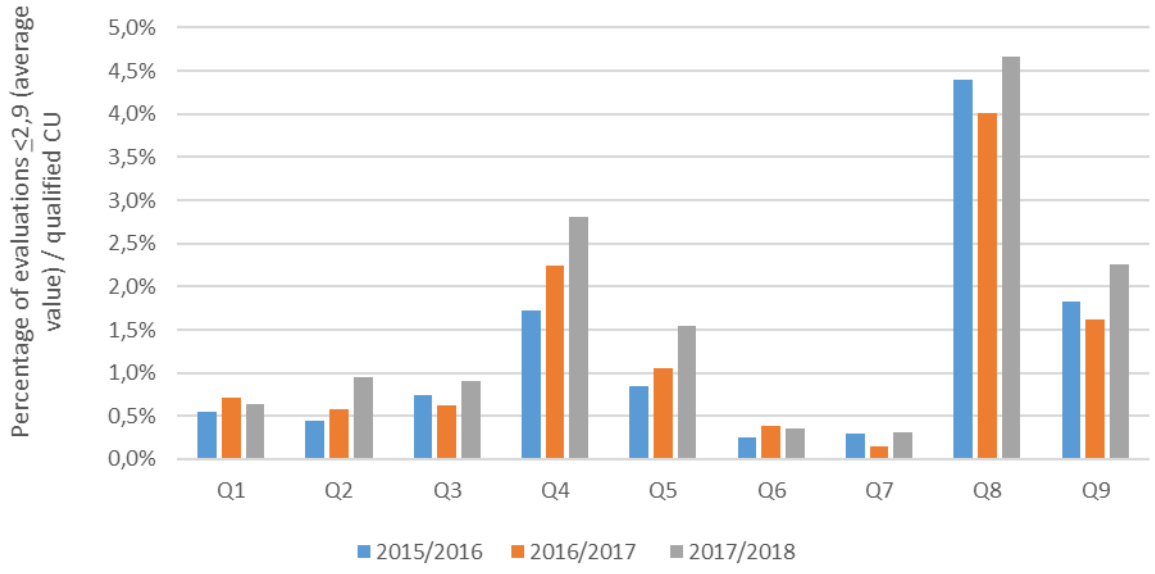

Figure 8. Percentage of evaluations ≤2,9 (average value) / qualified CU

The results presented in Table 3 correspond to the mean and standard deviation of the answers to each specific question (Q1 - Q9) for inadequate CU.

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Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of answers to each question (Q1-Q9) for inadequate CU (2016/2017:n=127;2017/2018:n=146)

	Mean		Standard deviation	
	2016/2017	2017/2018	2016/2017	2017/2018
Q1	4,0	3,9	0,793	0,790
Q2	3,9	3,8	0,671	0,726
Q3	3,9	3,8	0,671	0,771
Q4	3,4	3,3	0,815	0,797
Q5	3,7	3,6	0,723	0,793
Q6	4,6	4,5	0,754	0,746
Q7	4,5	4,4	0,674	0,816
Q8	2,9	2,8	0,633	0,652
Q9	3,5	3,3	0,805	0,807

Figure 9 graphically represents the same results, clearly showing that, in general, from one year to the next, inadequate CU evaluations have decreased and simultaneously became more dispersed.

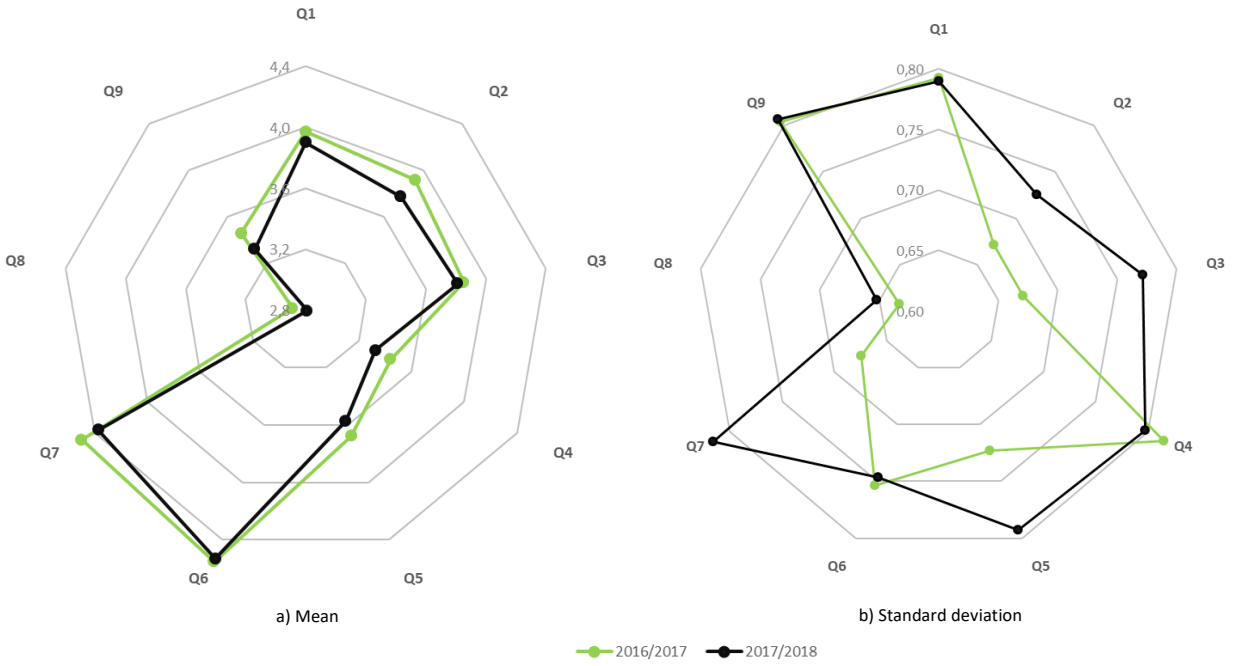

Figure 9. Mean and standard deviation of answers to each question (Q1-Q9) for inadequate CU, in the last 2 academic years

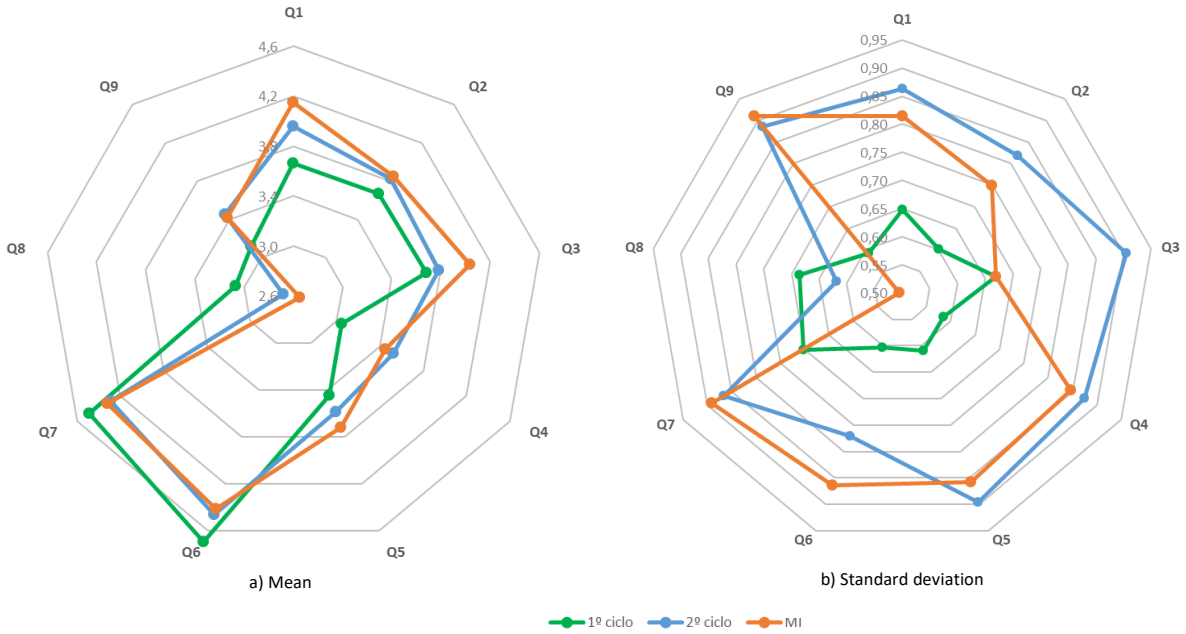

Figure 10. Mean and standard deviation of answers to each question (Q1-Q9) for inadequate CU, 2017/2018, per study levels

Figure 10 ilustrates the means and standard deviations, now discriminated by study level and referring to the academic year 2017/2018, not revealing any simple pattern of distinction of behavior between categories, except for the outstandingly lower overall variability in the first cycle.

3.2. Highly satisfactory Curricular Units

In 2017/2018, the percentage of qualified CU with an evaluation ≥ 5 (average value) in question Q9 is higher in second cycles, followed by the first cycles, and finally by IM.

Compared to the previous year, in all three study levels analyzed, this percentage increased by 1,6 percentage points. As can be seen in Figure 11, there was also a positive evolution in each of the study levels, to a greater degree in the second cycles (2,4 percentage points). The percentage of recurrence is higher in the 1st cycles (47%), followed by the 2nd cycles (35%) and IM (30%).

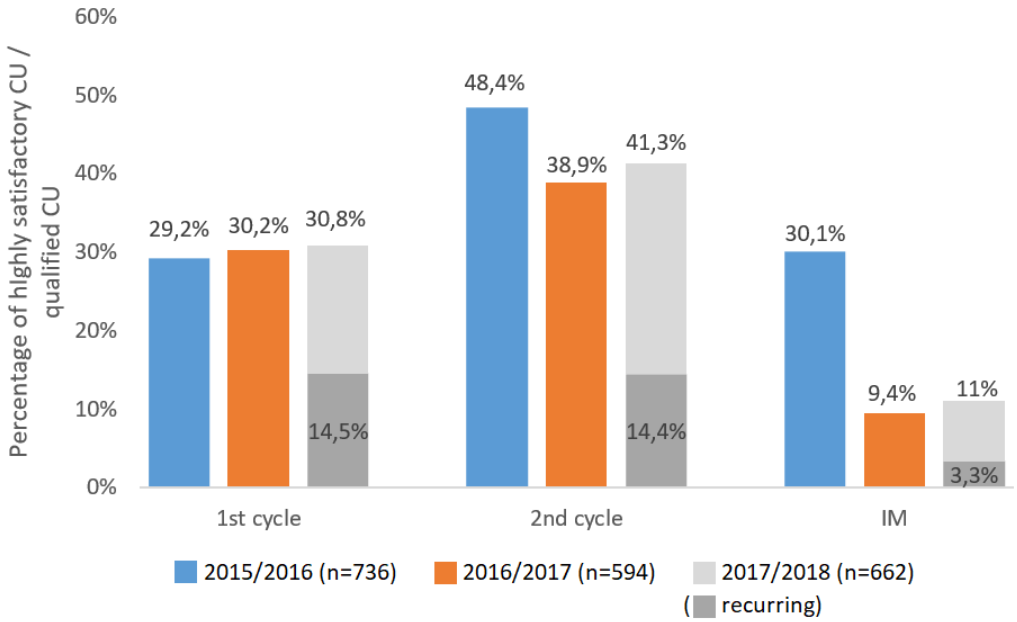

Figure 11. Percentage of highly satisfactory CU / qualified CU

Figure 12 illustrates the evolution of the percentages of evaluations ≥5 (average value) per question on the number of qualified CU for the CU that were perceived as having high overall satisfaction (i.e. Q9 ≥ 5). Compared to the previous year, there is general growth in these percentages. The results highlight the importance that students assign to some aspects that they identify as positive, namely the fact that the objectives are clearly explained by the teacher (Q2), information on the evaluation criteria be available (Q6) and the proposed evaluation criteria to be respected (Q7).

Question Q8 continues with the lowest percentage, but nevertheless there has also been a positive development, reflecting the effort made by teachers to create better conditions for responding to students, and there are already many positive examples of feedback-related student satisfaction.

With regard to improvements in issues related to the evaluation criteria (Q6 and Q7), AU justifies them with students' interest in the subjects, as well as the application of the following good practices:

- teacher-student proximity;
- pedagogical posture intended, reflective and oriented to promote learning;
- innovative and/or clearly learning-centric practices;
- transparency and consistency in relation to knowledge assessment methods; and
- improvement of continuous evaluation criteria.

As regards the overall improvement in overall satisfaction, AU refer the following best practices:
- implementation of pedagogical changes in CU, based on feedback from previous years;
- study visits;
- increased contact time on the ground;
- substitution of theoretical classes with theoretical-practical and practical classes;
- articulation between practical and theoretical classes;

- permanent availability of faculty;
- close student-teacher communication;
- follow-up tutorial of students;
- effort in the organization and planning of CU;
- diversified and current teaching;
- proper integration;
- motivation of faculty;
- quality of teaching of teachers, with the ability to maintain interest;
- mixed teacher profile, with academic solidity combined with practical experience;
- updated and relevant programmatic content;
- level of knowledge transmitted;
- multidisciplinary approach;
- student-centered teaching model;
- active teaching methodologies;
- reduced number of students;
- self-employed work with individualised monitoring;
- manual protocols of practical classes;
- round tables;
- focus groups with students from previous years;
- good explanation of content and methodologies;
- flipped-classroom approach; and
- use of televote.

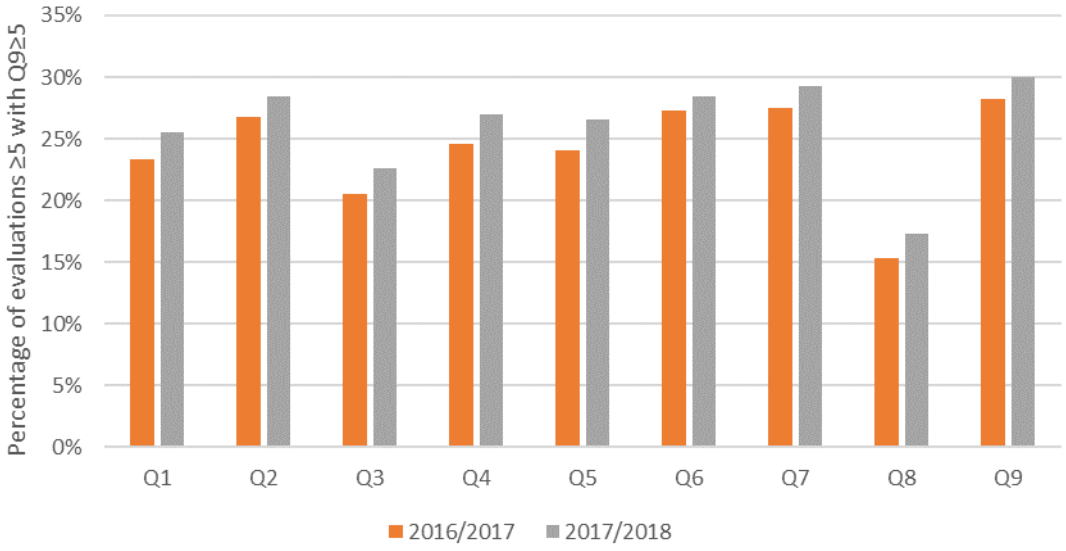

Figure 12. Percentage of evaluations ≥5 with Q9≥5 (average values)

Table 4 represents the means and standard deviations of the answers to each question (Q1-Q9), for the CU that were perceived as having high overall satisfaction (i.e. Q9 ≥ 5).

Table 4. Average and standard deviation of answers to each question (Q1-Q9) for CU with high overall satisfaction in the last 2 academic years

	Mean		Standard deviation	
	2016/2017	2017/2018	2016/2017	2017/2018
Q1	5,3	5,4	0,284	0,279
Q2	5,4	5,4	0,289	0,292
Q3	5,1	5,2	0,343	0,331
Q4	5,3	5,3	0,326	0,293
Q5	5,3	5,3	0,317	0,322
Q6	5,5	5,5	0,322	0,309
Q7	5,5	5,5	0,274	0,283
Q8	4,9	4,9	0,586	0,625
Q9	5,3	5,3	0,253	0,257

Figure 13 graphically represents the same results, showing that, in general, from one year to the next, the evaluations of CU in which Q9 ≥ 5 increased very slightly, with the variability presented a similar profile, being clearly higher in the case of Q8 question.

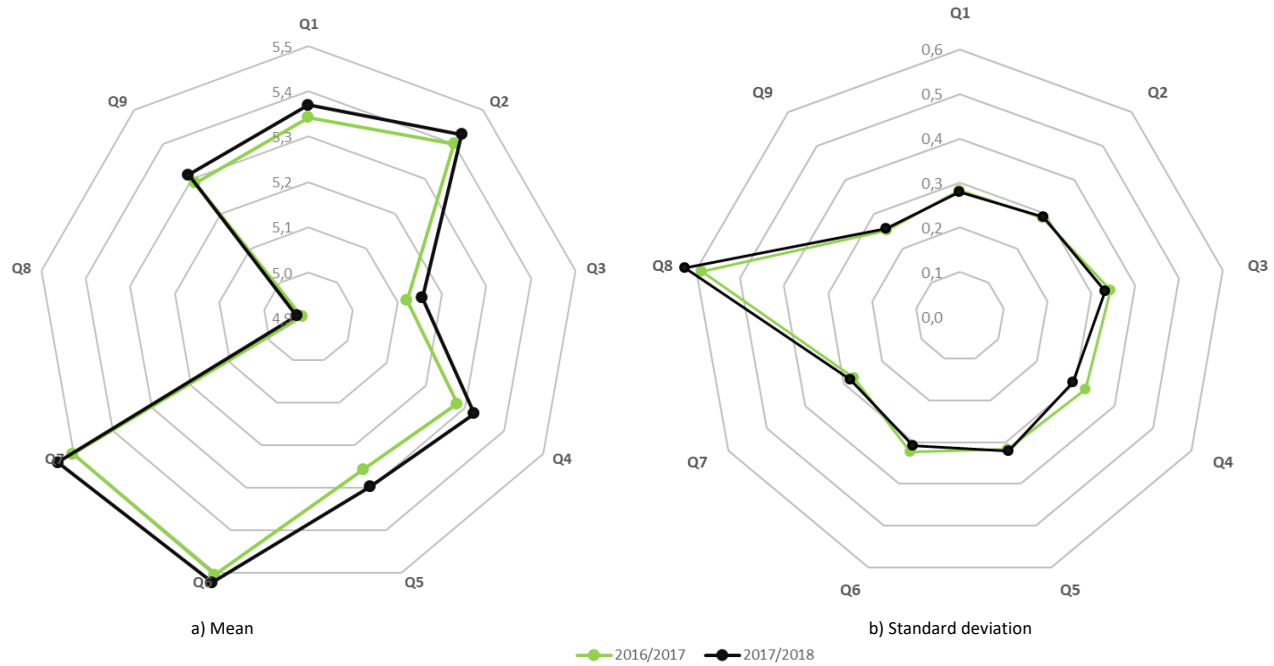

Figure 13. Average and standard deviation of answers to each question (Q1-Q9) for CU with high overall satisfaction

Figure 14 also represents the means and standard deviations, now discriminated by study level and referring to the academic year 2017/2018. As with inadequate CU, no simple pattern of distinction of behavior between categories is apparent, only with one exception, in this case the lower overall variability in the IM.

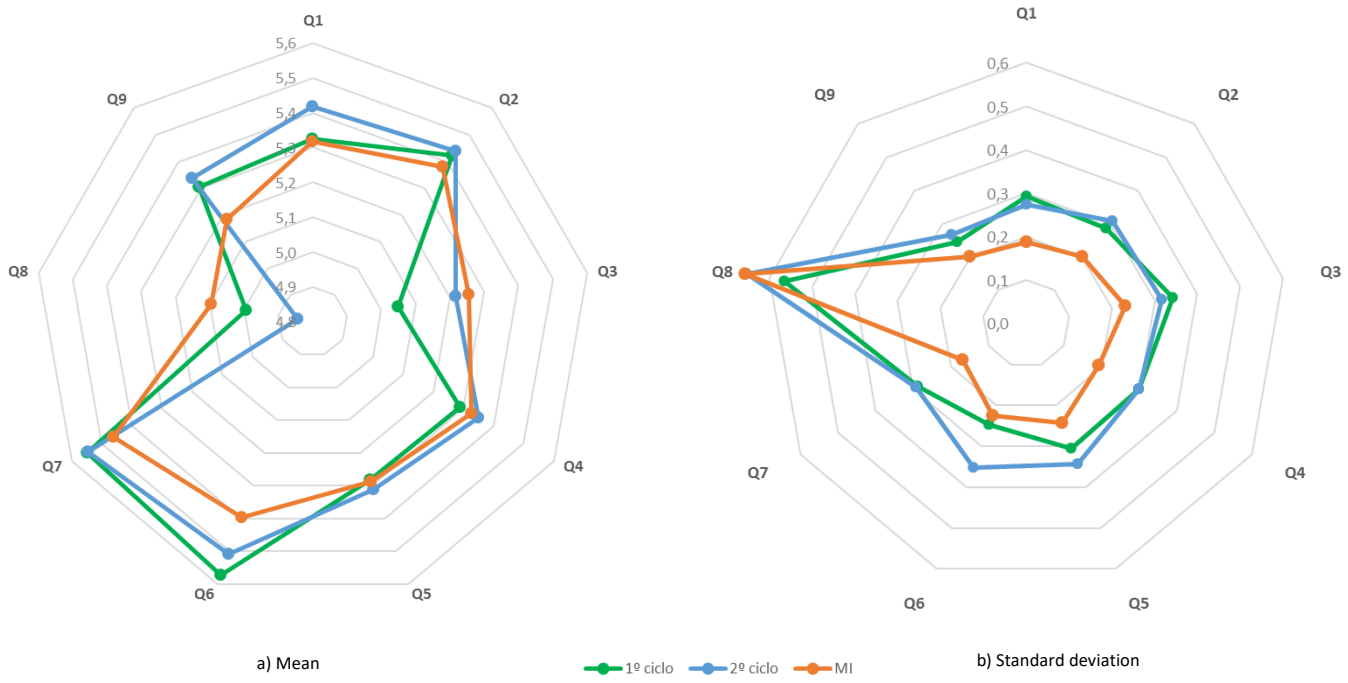

Figure 14. Mean and standard deviation of answers to each question (Q1-Q9) for 2017/2018, by study levels, in CU with high overall satisfaction