

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

Institution: Euroakadeemia (Euroacademy, EA)

Assessment committee:

1. Dr. Ivo Matser – Chair; CEO of the ISM University of Management and Economics and the Dean of ISM Executive School (Lithuania). Former Chief Executive Officer at TSM Business School (the Netherlands). Currently a member of the executive board of the AOG, shareholder of TSM Business School
2. Dr. Johann Schneider; Former professor at University of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschule) Frankfurt am Main. Present activities as consultant, expert and coach concerning he-politics (Germany)
3. Helen Thomas - Freelance Higher Education Consultant (UK)
4. Pille Juhkov - Student, Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences (Estonia)

Coordinator: Riin Seema

Dates of the assessment visit: 12.–13.05.2015

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: / 16.06.2015 /

Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: /03.07.2015/

Assessment committee approved the final version of component assessment with four in favour and zero votes against.

Date: /08.07.2015/

Introduction

EuroAcademy (EA) is a private institution which has its roots in a higher education institution that was established in 1997. In 2010 it became an Institution of Professional Higher Education. It is owned by Eesti Euroinfo Ühing.

EA offers professional higher education programmes and masters programmes across five faculties: the Faculty of International Relations, the Faculty of Translation, the Faculty of Business and Management, the Faculty of Environmental Protection and the Faculty of Design. At the time of the accreditation visit there were just under 600 students registered at EA.

The assessment team (AT) noted that EA has a specific role to play in Estonian Society and has developed its programmes in response to the needs of Estonian society both in terms of the content of the programmes and in their delivery which enables students to work and study at the same time. Programmes are practice oriented and applied to the working contexts of students and employers; research is similarly applied.

I Summary of the assessment (mark with 'X'):

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Organisational management and performance		X		
Teaching and learning		X		
RDC	X			
Service to society		X		

Comments:

Until 2010 EA had university status. The assessment team gained the impression that the change of status continues to be difficult for staff to adapt to. The Team was impressed by the practical value EA's educational programmes offer to students, a value which is key for institutions of applied sciences. The AT considers that EA could be more self-confident in terms of its status and the approach it offers. Embracing the current status should help enhance the perception of the institution's relevance in the educational context.

Overall the AT found many areas of commendation: there are also a number of recommendations. Underpinning many of these is a common thread which encourages EA to adopt a more critical approach to its practices, to be more explicit in its management processes and ensure greater transparency in its communication.

The AT considers that EA needs to develop the interconnection between strategy and implementation to enable it to face future challenges and to anticipate the opportunities afforded to it. Effective change management is needed to secure improvements and developments and this is rooted in good communication and sound processes. Interconnection between strategy, decision making processes and operations, combined with effective communication will be fundamental enablers for the development of EA.

EA has an external focus on students, employers and alumni and this focus has generated high levels of customer satisfaction. From a broader perspective, however, EA has too great an internal focus. The AT recommends that EA develops greater external orientation. External orientation has two dimensions, that of the present and that of the future. Currently EA could have higher visibility in society and could explore more "worlds" both in Estonia and internationally, identifying new market niches and opportunities. EA needs to explore the likely needs of students, the potential for international growth and identify and develop its business model.

Commendations:

- The focus of strategy, management and curricula provision on providing students with skills for employment.
- Flexibility, demonstrated by the organisational structure, academic staff and administration to meet the needs of students.
- The commitment of staff to the institution and to supporting students, especially in providing contacts and links with employers and research organisations.

- The satisfaction of employers with the skills of EA graduates.
- The degree and level of RDC activities particularly in the context of EA's size and permanent staff complement.
- The appreciation of external stakeholders to the outcomes of RDC.

Worthy of Recognition: (if applicable)

Recommendations:

- EA should develop a strategy which has greater external focus, has an achievable vision for internationalisation and a portfolio of programmes to reflect this and which supports the development of a profitable institution.
- EA should articulate clearly what the strategy means for business functions including HR, marketing, finance and operations.
- Develop a strategy for the recruitment, management and development of staff, including a detailed profile of the competences and knowledge needed for new academic staff, that are transparent and clearly related to EA's vision for the future of the institution.
- Develop practical management systems for a broader based evaluation of teaching staff and for their recruitment.
- EA should develop an effective forum for the systematic scrutiny of curricula to ensure they address fully all the stated soft skills and support a more systematic approach to the development of inter-disciplinarity.
- EA should develop a pedagogically driven assessment policy which better meets international norms, together with a strategy and related systems to ensure the consistent assessment of learning outcomes at the module and programme level.
- EA should develop a strategy and corresponding processes to support RDC which drives research forward more systematically and which ensures transparency in the coordination of research at both institutional and faculty levels.
- EA's strategy for RDC activities should promote greater cooperation with other universities and strengthen the applied orientation in profiling RDC activities.
- EA should develop a structured advertising plan which reflects its vision and niche to help increase its popularity and to grow the student numbers.
- EA should conduct a systematic analysis of the needs for in-service training in co-operation with employers and representatives of interested groups and thus identify new target groups for in-service training.

II Assessment areas and sub-areas

ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

General comments:

EuroAcademy is a student and client focused institution and its operations are appropriately customer centred. EA is responsive to the needs of the students and flexible in its support of them. This flexibility is well-founded because many students work and study at the same time.

EA has a vision and strategy, as presented in the Self Evaluation Report; it is a small institution and most of the staff in key positions have worked for the institution for many years. From meetings with staff and from documents, the AT reached the view that EA could develop more effective managerial impact. Specifically this managerial impact needs to focus on creating and managing more explicitly the relationships between vision and strategy on the one hand and business functions (HR, Marketing, Finance and business operations) on the other, and then to deploy this in making strategic decisions about business functions and programme development. The AT found that there is scope to develop greater institutional vision on personnel, market positioning and communication, programme development, and investment strategy.

The regional context for EA is a complex one: challenges include demography and economics. There are, however, also opportunities, including new markets and the growth of life-long, part-time and corporate learning. These are opportunities for Estonian higher education in general as well as for EA. Taking advantage of the opportunities will require EA to have a more effective organisation to support developments and changes. EA needs to manage both the operations and the developments and innovations in a coordinated way so as to ensure they are enablers in facing the challenges and in exploiting opportunities.

<p>1.1 General management</p>	<p>conforms to requirements</p>		<p>partially conforms to requirements</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>does not conform to requirements</p>		<p>worthy of recognition</p>	
<p>Requirements:</p> <p><i>A higher education institution has defined its role in the Estonian society.</i></p> <p><i>The development plan and the related action plans of a higher education institution arise from the concrete purposes that are built on its mission, vision and core values, and that consider the country’s priorities and society’s expectations.</i></p> <p><i>Key results of a higher education institution have been defined.</i></p> <p><i>The leadership of a higher education institution conducts the preparation and implementation of development and action plans and includes the members and other stakeholders in this work.</i></p> <p><i>Liability at all management levels has been defined and described, and it supports the achievement of institutional purposes and the coherent performance of core processes.</i></p> <p><i>Internal and external communications of a higher education institution (including marketing and image building) are purposeful and managed.</i></p> <p>Evidence, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the rate of achievement prescribed in development/action plans (key results)</i> • <i>results of employee satisfaction survey: satisfaction with management and information flow</i> • <i>other indicators arising from institutional purposes</i> • <i>interviews</i> • <i>documents</i> 								

The Self-Evaluation Report included a description of EA's vision and strategy and an institutional action plan. EA's historical development is an interesting one and the picture that emerged from this history was clear to the Team. The vision for the portfolio of faculties and the programmes to be offered was less clear. A more specific vision and strategy would serve EA more effectively than the current position which appears to be a continuation of the present story about the past.

As a small institution many staff at EA have multiple roles which means that the individual impact of each member of staff is very influential. There is a risk in this context that formal procedures for "middle management" decisions and actions will be too dominant. Through meetings with staff, the assessment team identified a managerial gap between decision making processes and their implementation. This is an area which EA needs to work on to ensure that there is clarity in the managerial decision making process and the implementation of those decisions.

The AT commended the practice of holding weekly meetings of key staff in the organisation. At the same time it found that the process and the outcomes of these meetings could be more transparent. The fact that many staff have worked for EA for a long time means that many routines and decisions are habitual and thus go unquestioned. It would be useful to create more opportunities for self-reflection on the strategic and managerial "why" questions.

Overall the Team found that the relationships between the overarching strategy, programme development, faculty development, staff development, marketing, finance and the business operations could be more explicit. For example, from the marketing perspective EA has a clear vision for which media and channels of communications to use. However, from feedback from alumni, employers and staff the AT found that the positioning and perceived identity of EA were much less clear.

EA's website presents factual information about the institution and the programmes offered. However, the overall profile and the image EA wants to project of itself is unclear. Websites are an important means to attract new students and interest. The EA website lacks inter-activity and thus undersells the institution.

EA maintains an 'open door' policy for students, alumni and employers, which is good. The assessment team noted that this policy works because of the many effective, informal relationships. The external orientation of EA appears to be focused on the short term activities of the institution. In order to strengthen its long term position, the AT recommends that EA develops a more systematic, outward-facing approach which will attract a broader spectrum of stakeholders.

Commendations:

- The focus of the strategy and management of EA on the everyday needs of students.
- The flexibility of the organisational structure and the operational planning together with their responsiveness to student needs.
- The appointment of a new Vice Rector which has the potential to create new directions.

Recommendations:

- EA should develop a more focused strategy including a vision for future programme development and internationalisation.
- EA should seek to close the gap between the managerial decision making process and the implementation of those decisions.
- EA should articulate clearly what the strategy and the future direction mean for business functions including HR, marketing, finance and operations.
- EA should strengthen its long term external orientation.
- EA should improve external communication to ensure it is more pro-active and experience-based.

<p>1.2 Personnel management</p>	<p>conforms to requirements</p>		<p>partially conforms to requirements</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>does not conform to requirements</p>		<p>worthy of recognition</p>	
<p>Requirements: <i>The principles and procedures for employee recruitment and development arise from the objectives of the development plan of a higher education institution, and ensure academic sustainability.</i> <i>When selecting, appointing and evaluating members of the academic staff, their past activities (teaching, RDC, student feedback, etc.) are taken into account in a balanced way.</i> <i>The principles of remuneration and motivation of employees are clearly defined, available to all employees, and implemented.</i> <i>Employee satisfaction with the management, working conditions, flow of information, etc., is regularly surveyed and the results used in improvement activities.</i> <i>Employees participate in international mobility programmes, cooperation projects, networks, etc.</i> <i>Employees base their activities on principles of academic ethics.</i></p> <p>Evidence, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the rate of competition for academic positions • the number and profile of the staff (academic and administrative/support staff, age distribution, qualifications, including their average age by qualification level) • the proportion of foreign teaching staff and research staff • indicators of international mobility of academic staff as a proportion of their total number • <i>other indicators arising from institutional purposes</i> • <i>interviews</i> • <i>documents</i> 								

Most of the regulations relating to personnel are clear. Given that EA is a small institution, regulations and procedures should not be overburdensome. In meetings with staff it became clear that most of them had been recruited through personal contact, including a number who were EA graduates. Thus the open competition process described in the Self Evaluation Report had not been used. It would be helpful for EA to implement its strategy in a way that systematically supports continuous improvements such as having a more explicit vision for the recruitment of faculty.

The Team learned that the evaluation of faculty performance is based mostly on student satisfaction. Performance management would benefit from a broader perspective. The AT observed that staff motivation is based on strong commitment to the institution and to the wellbeing of students which is good. However, there is room for improvement in, for example, encouraging more teamwork in programme and inter-disciplinary developments.

The AT gained useful information about the faculty and commended the flexible organisation of administration. It would be useful for EA to develop an HR strategy for the desired profile of faculty, related to planned programme developments and the vision of EA's future. This would include articulating the specific expertise and competences needed for the recruitment of new academic staff.

The Team was positively impressed by the ownership and responsibility that teaching staff had for the courses and programmes. At the same time, the AT observed that developments and improvements generally tend to be based on individual action. This applies equally to the development of the courses and to the development of the faculty members themselves. This bottom up approach could be more effective if faculty members had a clear understanding of planned developments, whether for themselves or for the institution more broadly.

The academic staff profile has a reasonable balance of local and visiting faculty. Many staff work in other Estonian higher education institutions and many have international links through their own research. There is scope to use this profile to attract more international faculty and to encourage faculty to share their vision with EA for programme development. This could also support the development of enhanced external orientation.

Commendations:

- Staff ownership of the courses and programmes.
- The flexibility of academic staff and their links with other higher education institutions.

Recommendations:

- Develop a plan for the development of staff related to the strategic vision of the institution.
- Develop practical management systems for a broader based evaluation of teaching staff and their recruitment.
- Create a detailed profile of the competences and knowledge needed for new academic staff.

1.3 Management of financial resources and infrastructure	conforms to requirements		partially conforms to requirements	X	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements: <i>The allocation of financial resources of a higher education institution as well as the administration and development of infrastructure are economically feasible, and are based on the objectives of the development plan of an institution of higher education and national priorities (except private institutions).</i> <i>A higher education institution uses information systems that support its management and the coherent performance of its core processes.</i> <i>The working conditions of the staff, and the learning and RDC conditions of students (library, studios, workshops, laboratories, etc.) meet the needs arising from the specifics of an institution of higher education and the expectations of members.</i></p> <p>Evidence, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the distribution of the revenue and expenditure • investment dynamics • results of employee satisfaction survey: satisfaction with working conditions • results of student satisfaction survey: satisfaction with learning and RDC conditions • <i>other indicators arising from institutional purposes</i> • <i>interviews</i> • <i>documents</i> 								

The financial control system is simple and effective and this is entirely appropriate. The president takes the role of the chief financial officer, which is good.

EA's financial situation can be assessed from the short and the long term perspectives. In the short term the AT noted a decline in the number of students in recent years, which clearly impacts on its financial position given the importance of student fees in the overall budget. The financial reserves are sufficient to address the lack of profitability in the short term. In the long term, however, the dependence on the reserves is not sustainable. EA needs to become profitable to avoid depleting the financial reserves, this is also important for investments. The AT noted that in Environmental Protection and in Design the institution has already invested soundly which should guarantee the future of these subject areas.

The AT recommend that EA creates a sustainable portfolio of programmes and develops more effective marketing and sales activities to enable it to establish stronger income streams. Given the current level of financial reserves, EA has both the time and the opportunity to undertake these developments.

EA conducts questionnaires and surveys to measure both employee and student satisfaction. The data from these, together with feedback from students and staff, gave the impression of a happy EA community. The output of the surveys appear to be used to understand what is currently happening in the institution. They could also be used more explicitly for enhancement purposes and for improving internal communication.

Commendations:

- Learning accommodation, especially for practical work for Design and Environmental Protection students.

Recommendations:

- Support the development of a profitable institution through strategic decisions about the future portfolio.
- Use the satisfaction surveys to develop a more systematic approach for improvements.

TEACHING AND LEARNING
<p>General comments:</p> <p>The Self-Evaluation Report makes a number of statements about the objectives of learning including that it should take account of “inter-disciplinarity, be learner-centred, use a wide range of pedagogic approaches including e-learning, and that the approach will ‘produce graduates who are competitive, have high moral quality, non-standard and flexible thinking skills, are capable of professional growth, self-organisation and self-improvement.’” EA also intends graduates to be effective in gaining relevant employment in the labour market. From the data provided, feedback from meetings with students, alumni and with employers, it was clear that the aim to prepare graduates who have relevant skills for the intended industry was being successfully met. However, the AT noted a tendency for programme development to be undertaken in isolation within a faculty and sometimes restricted to individual staff members. The AT also noted that assessment processes lack clarity and objectivity. These points need to be addressed to ensure that teaching and learning at EA meet international expectations.</p>

2.1 Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

A higher education institution has defined its educational objectives and measures their implementation.

A higher education institution educates students so they are nationally and internationally competitive.

The number of student places is planned in accordance with the social need and the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education.

The admission rules are consistent with the mission and purposes of an institution of higher education and support the formation of a motivated student body.

Students are provided with opportunities to study at a higher education institution regardless of any special needs.

Evidence, e.g.:

- positive graduation rates, including the fulfilment of performance agreement
- employer satisfaction with preparation of graduates
- rates of alumni employment
- other indicators *arising from institutional purposes, and give, among other things, evidence of the international competitiveness of graduates*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

In line with the applied and practical nature of EA's programmes there are appropriate opportunities for students to undertake internships. The team scrutinised the document on Work Based Learning and found that it helpfully included definitions, health and safety guidance and examples of trilateral contracts. Students and staff reported positively on the use of these in setting up and managing internships. Employers and students reported that internships had led to full-time employment on completion of studies which is sound evidence for the relevance of EA graduate skills for the labour market.

Graduation rates run fairly consistently at around 90%, although 2011-12 was an exception to this. This phenomenon coincided with the change of status of EA to a Higher Institution of Professional Learning and can reasonably be considered an unusual statistic. The action plan includes a target to increase graduation rates which looks realistic.

EA has identified targets in its Action Plan for an increase in student numbers, particularly of overseas students. EA demonstrated that it has the capacity to enrol and provide for the current number of students as well as having spare capacity to enrol increased student numbers across the provision in line with the action plan. It was not clear to the AT, however, how EA would attract the additional overseas student numbers and thus questions how realistic the Action Plan is in this respect.

The requirements for entry into EA are clear to prospective students and are appropriately checked by the Study Department. Student admissions are undertaken with care, providing all students with the opportunity to meet both administrative staff in the Study Department and deans of faculty. Deans advise prospective students on their choices, thus ensuring that students enrol on courses that meet their interests and needs. Students reported that they found the application and enrolment process straightforward and that they felt the institution was welcoming.

A particular strength in the provision is the opportunity it affords for mature students to continue their education and to retrain. The team met some graduates who had successfully transferred their career direction. The team also heard, on more than one occasion, that EA is positively perceived as an institution for 'grown-ups'.

Commendations:

- The aims of the curriculum to develop graduates skilled for the labour market and the satisfaction shown by employers to graduates.
- The aspirations of EA to increase the graduation rate to over 90%.
- The care and attention given to students during enrolment.

Recommendation:

- EA should revisit its targets for the increase in international students to ensure that they are realistic and achievable.

2.2 Study programme development	conforms to requirements		partially conforms to requirements	X	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements:</p> <p><i>A higher education institution bases its new study programmes on its purposes and the needs of the labour market, and takes into account the strategies of the country and expectations of the society.</i></p> <p><i>Development activities related to study programmes are systematic and regular, and different stakeholders are involved in the development of study programmes.</i></p> <p><i>Graduate satisfaction with the quality of instruction and employer satisfaction with the quality and suitability to the requirements of the labor market of graduates are surveyed and analysed; the results are considered in the development of study programmes.</i></p> <p>Evidence, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student satisfaction with the quality of studies • alumni satisfaction with the quality of studies • employer satisfaction with preparation of graduates • results of quality assessments of study programme groups • <i>other indicators arising from institutional purposes, e.g., the number of joint study programmes, the number of study programmes in English, etc.</i> • <i>interviews</i> • <i>documents</i> 								

The overall conception of the programmes offered by EA shows a vision of inter-disciplinarity which reflects the labour market needs and the direction of Estonia's strategy. EA demonstrated an understanding of the need for entrepreneurship and for increased language skills in the Estonian environment. Changes made to the overall offer of EA evidence awareness of this market, as, for example, the closure of German programmes; the expansion of programmes delivered in Russian, and plans to start programmes delivered in English from the 2015-16 academic year. At the same time the AT learned of suggestions from employers for possible developments that EA does not seem to have taken note of. This may be because such feedback is frequently informal and EA lacks the systems and processes to ensure that it is fed into fora for focussed discussion.

The individual curricula across the five areas are modified and developed to some extent. Such changes often reflect the interests of individual staff, feedback from students and some input from employers. However the Team did not find evidence of a systematic approach to the development of the curriculum which would ensure the collection and collation of the feedback and formal discussion of it either at the faculty or institutional level. There was scant evidence of systematic discussion across and between programme areas that would support, in particular, the development of inter-disciplinarity, a key aspect of EA's vision. For example, suggestions about the most appropriate language development in Design or about entrepreneurship and business management skills in Environmental Protection do not appear to have reached faculty or institutional level.

The curricula for the overall programme appear to cover the key and important areas of the particular subject as well as reflecting the special interests of staff. The curricula documents showed that the subject knowledge content areas meet the stated aims of the programme. However, the Team found no forum in which the overall balance of the curriculum in developing the identified soft-skills was scrutinised to ensure appropriate coverage. The individual courses and modules did not include reference to these, despite their clear articulation in the overall aims of EA in producing graduates who were able to "think flexibly, were of a morally high standard and who were capable of professional growth."

The development of new curricula in English reflects market trends. It is not clear, however, how EA have developed these curricula and how they will ensure an appropriate level of support for the delivery of them.

Commendation:

- The responsiveness of the curriculum offer to the needs of the market.

Recommendations:

- EA should develop a more systematic approach to the development of inter-disciplinarity within the institution.
- EA should develop an effective forum for the systematic scrutiny of curricula to ensure that the curricula address fully all the stated soft skills.

2.3 Student academic progress and student assessment	conforms to requirements		partially conforms to requirements	X	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements: <i>Student academic progress is monitored and supported.</i> <i>Student assessment supports learning and is in line with learning outcomes.</i> <i>A higher education institution has an effective system for taking account of prior learning and work experience.</i></p> <p>Evidence, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the average duration of study by its levels • the proportion of dropouts • <i>other indicators arising from institutional purposes</i> • <i>interviews</i> • <i>documents</i> 								

The Team noted student progression rates including the numbers of those taking academic leave. Whilst the rate appears relatively high, the team heard from staff, students and alumni that these rates were normal in the current higher education context. Within an institution that attracts a large proportion of mature students, the ability to take academic leave and to reintegrate into their studies is critically important. The Team found that students returning from academic leave were well supported by the Study Department which prepares an individual study plan for the student which outlines what they need to do to meet the requirements of their course of study. Where necessary, the Study Department speaks to individual faculty members to ensure that the study plan is appropriate and that any necessary additional support is provided. This is an area of strength.

The Self-Evaluation Report includes reference to the systems for taking account of prior learning and work experience (APEL). The Team found that the process was clearly described and took into account different types of learning including formal courses from other institutions, in-service training and experiential learning. The opportunity to use APEL provides good support for mature students, many of whom come to the institution with significant work experience and/or a previous degree. EA may like to consider renaming their guidance in English to conform with the commonly used APEL title rather than the rather long-winded and possibly opaque RPLWEWE.

The AT was provided with access to the study regulations which describe assessment processes and they were also given a document *Assessment in EA*. These documents were reasonably clear but were largely procedural in nature and there was an absence of pedagogical rationale. The documents made clear that there are different forms of assessment and, through discussion with staff, it was apparent that assessment methods varied with the subject area which is entirely appropriate. In the broader international context there is a clear recognition of the value of assessment as a learning tool. The AT could find no stated rationale for particular types of assessment and gained no sense of there being an understanding at EA of formative and summative assessment and of the value of assessment for learning as opposed to assessment of learning. To be in line with international developments, EA should provide a pedagogic rationale for assessment and use, transparently, both formative and summative approaches.

The additional document given to the AT on assessment at EA notes that “The precise assessment method of each subject is defined in the subject syllabus.” In the overwhelming majority of curriculum documents made available, there were general state-

ments about assessment such as “based on tests and pass-fail examinations” and “as per subjects, based on the general grading system.” The individual course descriptions did not detail the specific learning outcomes and the AT could not see how the assessments addressed the individual course learning outcomes. This leads to a major concern about clarity and transparency in the assessment of learning outcomes for both staff and students. This needs to be systematically addressed.

The study regulations and the document on assessment at EA outline the grading criteria. These are clear at a generic level.

In discussion with staff, the AT learned that the design, setting and marking of assessments, whether oral or written, may be carried out by a single member of staff. Moreover an individual staff member may enable a student who has ‘received a positive grade’ to retake the exam to gain a higher grade. This same staff member may also advise the student and test them. This system leaves EA very vulnerable. To strengthen the assessment system and to bring it up to international norms and expectations, the AT recommends that more than one member of staff be involved in the design and marking of assessments, most especially of those assessments which contribute to the final grade. There are a number of mechanisms that can be used to provide this check, which can beneficially include externality. The AT also recommends that EA has formal, institution-wide discussions about assessment to ensure that there is consistency of approach across the institution. This is of particular importance to the successful development of inter-disciplinarity.

The AT noted, from documentation, that there are instances where student participation in class may be considered in awarding the final grade. Staff reported differently on this, with one staff member saying that this was no longer practised. If the institution includes student contribution and participation in class in the calculation of the final grade, then there needs to be clear criteria for assessing it and the criteria should be clearly stated in course and assessment documentation.

Commendations:

- The care given by the Study Department in supporting students returning from academic leave.
- The opportunity provided for and the management of APEL.

Recommendations:

- EA should develop a pedagogically driven assessment policy and strategy.
- EA should develop a transparent system which demonstrates how the assessment addresses learning outcomes at the module level.
- EA should address the vulnerability of having a single staff member design, deliver, grade and re-test any individual student cohort.

<p>2.4 Support processes for learning</p>	<p>conforms to requirements</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>partially conforms to requirements</p>		<p>does not conform to requirements</p>		<p>worthy of recognition</p>	
<p>Requirements: <i>The organisation of studies creates an opportunity for students to complete their studies within the standard period. A higher education institution provides students with counselling related to their studies and career. A higher education institution supports student international mobility. Modern technical and educational technology resources are used to organise educational activities. Students are periodically asked for feedback on learning and support processes (the organisation of studies, assessment, counselling, etc.); the results of surveys are taken into account in improvement activities.</i></p> <p>Evidence, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proportion of foreign students and foreign guest students • the number/ proportion of students who have studied at foreign institutions of higher education compared to the total number of current students and graduates • the proportion of dropouts • results of feedbacks • <i>other indicators arising from institutional purposes</i> • <i>interviews</i> • <i>documents</i> 								

Classes are held predominantly in the late afternoons and early evenings. This was cited very positively by current students and alumni and certainly contributed to their choice of EA as an institution to study at. The timetabling is particularly attractive to the current and likely future profile of students who tend to be mature, with many continuing to hold full time jobs while studying. Whilst there is a significant number of students who interrupt their studies, often for personal reasons, EA's flexible approach to timetabling and to providing for both full- and part-time students is fully supportive and appropriate.

The AT heard from staff, students, alumni and employers that there are many personal contacts between staff and industry. It was also clear from discussions with students that staff use these contacts to give students information and good advice. This enables students to undertake internships and to follow up particular career path interests. Students were very appreciative of the time that individual staff gave and of the contacts given. This reflects the claim in the Self-Evaluation Report that faculty provide career guidance to students. EA may like to consider whether the personal nature of the contacts and the relatively informal way that advice is given, may be vulnerable where there are changes of staff.

EA sustains a number of international relationships for ERASMUS and DoRa student mobility. The percentage of students taking up these opportunities is relatively small. Students who had been able to avail themselves of the opportunity were very appreciative and valued the fact that they could collect credits against their EA degree. The Action Plan includes a target for increasing the numbers over a five year period. Some alumni reported that they would have liked to have taken up such an opportunity but their personal circumstances prevented it. Given EA's student profile, the targets for increasing student mobility may be over-ambitious.

EA provides both generic and specialist technical and educational resources to support the students' learning. Information about the students' study programme is available on the intranet and students cited this as a very good source of information.

EA is keen to develop its e-learning opportunities. Currently there is a platform for and use of Moodle. This is used most actively in the Business Management Faculty where a number of courses have loaded learning resources including lectures. This appears to be a successful and appreciated by students. EA has also provided development sessions for staff on e-learning. However, the Team detected a reluctance on the part of other faculties to explore actively the opportunities and reflect on how they could be used in the pedagogy of their subject area. The AT toured the facilities and were very impressed by the specialist facilities and re-

sources for both Environmental Protection and for Design. The separate building for Design provides an excellent learning environment overall.

EA provides a number of channels for students to give feedback on their experience of EA. These channels include a survey questionnaire that is distributed every semester, informal feedback to staff, and comments passed through the student council representative to the student council. The AT noted a relatively low rate of return for the semester surveys. Students suggested that this may be because there are many informal opportunities to speak to staff and provide feedback. They also indicated that students tend to respond to questionnaires more when they are unhappy. In reviewing the questionnaire returns the AT noted that, although the overwhelming majority of responses were positive, there was also a small percentage of negative ones.

Both staff and students could cite examples of changes made in response to student feedback. Senior management reported that individual staff members had been dismissed in response to it. Students gave an example of classes being increased in an area where they were having difficulty. It is clear that EA is keen to collect and be responsive to students. The Team would encourage EA to be as systematic as possible both in the collection and in discussion of the feedback in an appropriate forum to ensure that any of the lessons learned, whether of good practice or of a weakness, are shared across the institution and so enables it to learn.

Commendations:

- The appropriateness of the timetabling for the student profile.
- The wealth of links that staff have with industry and their preparedness and generosity in using these to the benefit of students.
- The opportunities offered to enable students to undertake some of their studies abroad.
- The excellent learning facilities and resources for Design and Environmental Protection.

Recommendation:

- EA may like to consider a more systematic approach to the collection and analysis of student feedback to ensure that it is fully used for enhancement of the provision.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RDC)
<p>General comments:</p> <p>As an institution of Professional Higher Education Eurocademy conforms to requirements in the measure of RDC activity. EA’s status as an institution of PHE is still relatively recent and it is also a small institution; nevertheless it is important for it to systematise its RDC activities and build on the applied orientation in further profiling these activities.</p>

3.1 RDC effectiveness	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

A higher education institution has defined its RDC objectives and measures their implementation.

A higher education institution monitors the needs of society and the labour market, and considers them in planning its RDC activities.

Evidence, e.g.:

- numerical data: (1) total research publications; (2) publications of categories 1.1., 1.2, 2.1, 3.1; monographs on national sciences; (3) public presentations of creative works; recognitions from international competitions; reviews in professional publications, etc.; (4) patent applications, patents; (5) text books, teaching tools for various media; (6) system development solutions, product development solutions, environmental solutions; (7) contracts with enterprises; (8) spin-off firms, etc.
- the number of research publications/creative works per member of the teaching staff and per member of research staff (calculated in full-time positions, by field)
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

RDC is part of EA's mission, vision, Development Plan and Action Plan. The Self-Evaluation Report provides numerical data which is broken down and specified for each of the key categories. The aims of the Development Plan are also quantified. The main KPIs are the numbers of publications, the size of the budget for RDC activities and the number of conferences and projects engaged in.

The change in EA's status from a university to an IPHE three years' ago resulted in changes to the KPIs for RDC over recent years. One of EA's goals is to restore its former status and consequently RDC has a high priority for the institution. The Development Plan outlines an increase for all the relevant indicators, including the budget ratio. The plan for financial resources from the medium term perspective is realistic. In the long term it will be necessary to increase tuition fees to take account of the lack of financial support from the government.

EA's history as a university has given it both ambition and competence in the area of research and development. However, the AT observed that this operates on a personal level rather than being based on a systematic approach. The Action Plan names specific research projects in the field of Business Studies, Translation and Environmental Protection, most of them involving cooperation with partners.

The responsibility for the development of RDC rests at a decentralised, faculty level, where research reports are compiled and discussed, and new initiatives approved. EA aims to generate a close relationship between research and teaching in general and in the development of study programmes in particular. From meetings with staff, students and alumni it was clear that this relationship is established in many areas.

External stakeholders are involved in identifying the needs of society and of the labour market. However this is not undertaken systematically. Personal contacts and individual engagement dominate the process for identifying opportunities, including those for cooperation.

The AT learned from staff that EA has defined seven areas of research. Two of the areas are cross-faculty: Business-Environmental Protection, and Environmental Protection-Politics, thus combining strengths from different areas. The annual RDC report provides the basis for measuring the output at both faculty and institutional levels. The number of research publications over the last three years has increased from 15 to 24, with a further increase outlined in the Development Plan. The number of research publications per academic staff member has varied between 0.52 and 0.78 over the same period.

Six research contracts have been conducted in the last four years, four of them funded by foundations and trusts. The AT observed that Environmental Protection and International Relations do not enjoy a particularly close relationship with the private sector fields where different kinds of partners are more relevant. The situation for RDC in Translation and Design is different again; here links tend to be with small companies and with self employed professionals. Overall EA aims to have more applied research in co-operation with enterprises and to enlarge the external funding for RDC.

The foci of the research carried out at EA are related to the needs of society as identified by the demand from specific partners, whether private or public. Most research projects have a practical orientation, depending on the subject area. It was clear to the AT that Environmental Protection and its related fields make a distinctive contribution to society.

The Self-Evaluation Report lists publications and graduation papers by research subject. These are evenly distributed across business, ecological and political issues. According to the Self-Evaluation Report the number of papers with practical application has increased over the last three years.

All students are taught research methods and are appropriately prepared to conduct or be involved in the faculty's projects. The individual faculty research areas often provide the basis for students' papers. Some of the best of these are published or presented at conferences. In Design student work is presented in exhibitions and fashion shows.

Commendation:

- For an Institution of Professional Higher Education RDC activities are remarkably high and evenly distributed across the different faculties.

Recommendations:

- EA should strengthen the applied orientation of its RDC und use it for profiling its activities.
- In the long term EA should define which areas it will focus on and ensure that this is visible and attractive to potential RDC partners to support the generation of further revenue.
- EA should develop a strategy and corresponding processes for support to RDC.
- Cooperation with other universities should be a strategic aim, given the small size of EA.

3.2 RDC resources and support processes	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements:</p> <p><i>A higher education institution has an effective RDC support system.</i></p> <p><i>A higher education institution has financial resources needed for RDC development and a strategy that supports their acquisition.</i></p> <p><i>A higher education institution participates in different RDC networks.</i></p> <p><i>RDC infrastructure is being updated and used effectively.</i></p> <p>Evidence, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • results of employee satisfaction survey: satisfaction with RDC support services • investments into the RDC infrastructure • the proportion of RDC finances in the total budget, separately including finances received from international contracts, applied R&D contracts, grants for creative activity; trends, comparison with partners (partial overlap with management) • RDC finances per member of research staff (calculated in full-time positions) • <i>other indicators arising from institutional purposes</i> • <i>interviews</i> • <i>documents</i> 								

EA allocates a budget for RDC which is about 10 % of the total budget. This is mostly used for salaries, conference participation and publications. Research contracts have their own budget and resources. Overall staff are encouraged and supported to be active researchers and to publish. Senior and successful staff are allocated more research time and less teaching. Academic staff are given support to undertake PhD studies which helps to create a broader base for research and development for EA in the future.

EA has had its own academic journal *The Baltic Horizon* for many years and this is addressed to the scientific community. It provides an opportunity for staff to publish their research work. EA is aware that, if it is to regain university status, it will need to increase the number of publications, particularly in indexed journals. Linked to this EA also aims to raise the level of *The Baltic Horizon* in the ETIS classification to '1.2'. The AT recommends that EA strengthens this approach.

The faculty councils are responsible for RDC and are supported by the Rector's Assistant who is also responsible for lecturers' and students' mobility. The recently appointed Vice-Rector is responsible for RDC at the institutional level. The AT learned that she has plans to discuss faculty research with the deans in order to improve coordination. Despite the significant level of support available, the AT could not identify a clear system or strategy to drive RDC forward in the faculties. Decisions appear to have been made on a case by case basis. There is some indication of change to this in the Action Plan where specific projects have been defined for the coming years.

The AT gained a positive view of the facilities which are used for both teaching and research and development. The Herbarium, a special laboratory and core collection in the context of Environmental Protection, is registered with the international Index Herbarium of New York Botanical Gardens. It is also the basis for cooperation with the Institute of Ecology and Earth Sciences at Tartu University. This model could be adopted for strategic partnerships with other institutes. There are further improvements planned for research laboratories for Environmental Protection. This area has a long and successful tradition and is linked to the scientific qualification of the founder's generation.

EA participates in a number of RDC networks and these are used for exchange of information and potential cooperation. EA also participates, in a modest way, in European programmes such as Erasmus and DoRa. Five of the planned projects included in the Action Plan entail participation in various networks. Cooperation with other higher education institutions stems from visiting pro-

fessors but these appear to be only on an individual, personal basis.

The Statutes state that experience in research and development are a basic requirement for new professors. EA does not employ research only staff, partly because it is small and partly because research and development is considered integral to teaching and teaching to research.

Commendations:

- The range of support, and the percentage of budget EA spends on RDC.
- The level of RDC activities particularly in the context of EA's size and the number of permanent academic staff.
- Visiting professors who use their research experience to the benefit of both teaching and research at EA.

Recommendations:

- EA should develop its systems for driving research forward on a more systematic basis.
- A transparent strategy is needed for the coordination of research at both institutional and faculty levels.

3.3 Student research supervision	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements: <i>A higher education institution includes students of all academic cycles in research, creative or project activity; and systematically surveys student satisfaction with their supervision. Professionalism, effectiveness and the workload of supervisors are reasonably balanced, which ensures the quality of research papers and positive graduation rates. Students are guided to recognize plagiarism and to avoid it.</i></p> <p>Evidence, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proportion of supervisors (including co-supervisors) from outside of the higher education institution, including from foreign countries • results of student satisfaction survey: satisfaction with supervision • <i>other indicators arising from institutional purposes</i> • <i>interviews</i> • <i>documents</i> 								

There are a number of ways in which EA supports RDC activities. It pays particular attention to students' graduation papers, especially to the theses of masters' students. One of the main contributions of students to the institution's research and development activities is their graduation papers which they often undertake in co-operation with external partners. This is intended as part of the drive to help regain university status. Occasionally masters students are involved in research projects within the faculties. The very best papers and creative work are published or presented at exhibitions as appropriate. This is a good system of incentives for students.

Whilst the number of final papers has declined in line with the drop in student numbers, and the average number of papers per supervisor has also dropped slightly, the rate of papers supervised by external supervisors has increased from 32.9 (2010) to 41.2 (2014). EA states that it uses academic qualifications and experience as criteria for selecting supervisors. Supervisors' performance is measured by the quality of the graduation papers and student satisfaction. The proportion of students who were either *satisfied* or *rather satisfied* with their supervision has been over 80% for the last 4 years with a small positive trend.

Most of the external supervisors are also visiting lecturers, which ensures links with teaching and learning. This input to teaching supports the growth in the number of graduation papers with a practical application. Each faculty has its own workload model for supervision. The positive impact of these relationships with the partner organisations was confirmed in meetings with employers. It was clear to the AT that employers and entrepreneurs appreciate the practice focus and see it as one of EA's defining characteristics.

Guidance on plagiarism and academic misconduct are included in in the Code of Ethics and in the Study Regulations. Academic misconduct is also addressed in seminars early in the students' course and again when they are embarking on their graduation papers. Ethic rules are the same for students of both cycles. The AT learned that EA uses plagiarism detection software which is appropriate for some Russian language work. In other cases it is the responsibility of the individual member of staff to investigate any breach of ethics and take appropriate action. There are no recorded cases of plagiarism and the relevant sections of the Study Regulations have not yet been used.

Commendations:

- The level of student involvement in RDC.
- The appreciation of external stakeholders to the outcomes of RDC.

Recommendation:

- EA should strengthen stakeholders involvement in RDC by integrating their contribution into a broader based institutional strategy.

SERVICE TO SOCIETY
<p>General comments: Euroacademy partially conforms to requirements in the measure of RDC service to society. The degree of engagement in professional associations varies significantly between faculties. Each faculty develops its own action plans based on individual views and particular interests of staff. The AT concluded that EA lacks a systematic approach to the general popularisation of its core activities. While EA does offer some in-service training, further development is needed in this area.</p>

4.1 Popularization of its activities and involvement in social development	conforms to requirements		partially conforms to requirements	X	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

A higher education institution has a system for popularising its core activities.

Employees of an institution of higher education participate in the activities of professional associations, and as experts, in other social supervisory boards and decision-making bodies.

Evidence:

- the number of people/enterprises (including students, separately) involved in activities of popularizing RDC, the number of events by type, trends
- employee participation in non-university bodies (the number and %)
- articles by employees in newspapers (the number of articles per employee), commentaries, interviews, etc.
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

EA staff are actively engaged in professional associations and in a range of decision-making bodies in society. EA has a publication record which includes the work of alumni and staff members as well as the institution's own English-language academic journal *The Baltic Horizon*, which is available to members of the public. EA staff participate in activities in their own field of expertise internationally. From meetings with staff and from a review of documentation it was clear that there is significant variation between faculties in the degree of engagement in professional associations and the extent to which individual staff promote their work more broadly. For instance the Dean of Environmental Protection is very active in advocating environmental protection issues; this was confirmed in meetings with alumni and employers. Each faculty develops its own action plans based on individual views and particular interests. This leads to inconsistencies across the institution. The AT concluded that EA lacks a systematic approach to the general popularisation of its core activities.

The Self-Evaluation Report states that EA staff visit schools and invite 10th-12th grade students to visit the institution. This cooperation is restricted to 6 schools which represents a small proportion of the 51 secondary schools in Tallinn alone. In order to attract more students it would be beneficial for EA to co-operate with a larger number of Estonian schools including those, for instance, in Ida-Virumaa county from where it would be possible to attract Russian-speaking students to the Russian-language programmes.

EA uses a number of channels to advertise its activities including the EA's homepage, the annual "Teeviit" fair and other fairs, newspapers, shopping centres and the radio. It was not clear to the AT whether EA have identified particular target groups. Nor could the Team find any evidence of a media efficiency evaluation or analysis of general advertising results. The EA advertising plan indicates where the institution will advertise but there is no structured media plan as a foundation for advertising the institution to new students and the wider public, or to underpin the choice of marketing activities.

Recommendations:

- Develop a vision for increasing the popularity of the school and growing the student numbers.
- Create a structured advertising plan which reflects EA's vision and its niche.
- Make consistent use of the resulting marketing focus.

<p>4.2 In-service training and other educational activities for the general public</p>	<p>conforms to requirements</p>		<p>partially conforms to requirements</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>does not conform to requirements</p>		<p>worthy of recognition</p>	
<p>Requirements: <i>A higher education institution has defined the objectives regarding in-service training and measures their implementation. In-service training is planned in accordance with the needs of target groups as well as with the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education. Participant satisfaction with the quality of in-service training is regularly surveyed and the results are used in planning improvement activities.</i></p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of participants (including per full-time member of the academic staff) in continuing education (and in other forms of paid open learning) per hour, or the number of ECP per participant • the proportion of money acquired from continuing education compared to the total scope of finances for educational activities • <i>other indicators arising from institutional purposes</i> • <i>interviews</i> • <i>documents</i> 								

EA’s in-service training objectives are not clear. Participant satisfaction with the quality of the training offered is monitored; however the monitoring is not undertaken systematically. From meetings with staff, alumni and employers it was clear that in-service training is not designed according to the needs of the target groups neither are they in line with the institution's potential and targets. EA’s partner employers reported that they were not aware of the in-service training opportunities but were open to co-operation in this area. With the exception of one alumnus of Environmental Protection, the alumni met were not aware of the in-service training opportunities. The Dean of Business Administration stated that training in the field of finance is advertised on the portal raamatupidaja.ee. Overall the AT considered that, whilst EA does offer some in-service training, this offer is patchy across the institution and lacks a systematic approach. EA’s senior management recognised that further development is needed in this area.

Commendation:

- Flexibility to create and to execute.

Recommendations:

- Conduct a systematic analysis of the needs for in-service training in co-operation with employers and representatives of interested groups (employers, co-operation partners who accept students for on-the-job training, the unemployment Office etc).
- Identify new target groups for in-service training (for instance mid-career professionals who need new skills, employers, employees, schools to study in the herbarium).

4.3 Other public-oriented activities	conforms to requirements		partially conforms to requirements	X	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

Public-oriented activities are purposeful, the results of the activities are periodically evaluated, and improvements are introduced based on those evaluations.

A higher education institution contributes to the enhancement of community welfare by sharing its resources (library, museums, sports facilities, etc.) and/or by organising concerts, exhibitions, performances, conferences, fairs and other events.

Evidence:

- the number of public-oriented events by type, the number of participants (if measurable)
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

EA arranges some public events including the Europe Day, displaying works from Design in coffee-houses, libraries and in the city hall. The EA Facebook page includes pictures posted from fashion shows and other events where Design's students' work has been shown. The Self-Evaluation Report states that the institution lets rooms to a number of NPOs (for instance, The Estonian Association for Quality, The Association of Estonians Abroad, The Association of Scientists in Tallinn, The Estonian Green Cross etc). The AT also learned that they let rooms to a driving school which, in turn, offers discounts to EA students. The EA library is open to students from any institution. EA holds seminars on environmental protection issues. Despite the range of activities claimed, it was clear from meetings with employees and alumni that there is a dearth of information about EA's public events. Whilst there are some areas where the EA is better known to the public, for instance Design students' fashion shows and Environmental Protection's public lectures and seminars, EA needs to develop a more consistent provision of public events and ensure that these are well promoted in the media.

Recommendations:

- Open the Herbarium and the Design facilities to interested groups from other schools to enable students to widen their knowledge and satisfy their curiosity.
- Co-operate more with alumni and students in spreading of information about EA's events.
- Plan a greater number of far-reaching advertising campaigns to attract particular target groups.