

Decision Regarding the Assessment of the Law Study Programme Group

Tallinn University of Technology

15/09/2016

**The Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of the
Estonian Quality Agency for Higher Education and VET
decided to approve the report by the Assessment Committee
and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Law study
programme group in the first and second cycles of higher
education at Tallinn University of Technology in seven years**

On the basis of subsections 12² (1) and 10 (4) of the Universities Act, point 3.7.3 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher Education and VET (hereinafter referred to as 'EKKA') and point 41.1 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', authorised in point 3.7.1 of the above-mentioned EKKA Statutes; the Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of EKKA (hereinafter referred to as 'the Council') affirms the following:

1. On 15.04.2015 Tallinn University of Technology and EKKA agreed upon a time frame to conduct the quality assessment of the study programme group.
2. The Director of EKKA, by her order on 15.03.2016, approved the following membership of the quality assessment committee for the Law study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at the University of Tartu, Tallinn University of Technology and Tallinn University (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee'):

Achim Albrecht, Chair	Professor, University of Westfalia (Germany)
Michelle Everson	Professor, Birkbeck University of London (United Kingdom)
Madis Päts	Partner in OÜ Luberg & Päts Law Office, Board Member of the Estonian Bar Association (Estonia)
Hildegard Schneider	Professor, Maastricht University (Netherlands)
Susann Schultz	Student, University of Greifswald (Germany)
Kristel Siitam-Nyiri	Vice-Chancellor, Ministry of Justice (Estonia)

3. Tallinn University of Technology submitted the following programmes for evaluation under this study programme group:

Law (BA)
Law (MA)

4. Tallinn University of Technology submitted a self-evaluation report to the EKKA Bureau on 25.01.2016 and the assessment coordinator forwarded it to the Committee on 19.02.2016.
5. An assessment visit was made to Tallinn University of Technology on 27.04.2016.
6. The Committee sent its draft assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 13.06.2016, EKKA forwarded it to Tallinn University of Technology for its comments on 15.06.2016, and the University delivered its response on 16.06.2016.
7. The Committee submitted its final assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 08.07.2016. That assessment report is an integral part of the decision, and is available on the EKKA website.
8. The Secretary of the Council forwarded the Committee's final assessment report along with the University's self-evaluation report to the Council members on 31.08.2016.
9. The Council with 7 members present discussed these received documents in its session on 15.09.2016 and, based on the assessment report, decided to point out the following strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations regarding the Law study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at Tallinn University of Technology.

Assessment at the Levels of the Study Programme Group and Study Programmes

Strengths

- The management of Tallinn Law School at Tallinn University of Technology (TUT) is very well organised. Interdisciplinary orientation of the law school, integrating law and technology, is also commendable.
- There is a remarkable community spirit within the Law School which extends to communications with its stakeholders as well.
- The vision of Tallinn Law School in its development plan is presented very clearly.
- The market awareness of the Law School and its close relations with the working world through its start-up landscape and a politically responsible Estonian Human Rights Centre are commendable.
- The primary strength of the study programmes is a thoroughly developed field of law in technology which keeps pace with the latest developments in the discipline.
- Both are solid study programmes that offer sufficient specialisation opportunities to students.
- The BA programme maintains a good balance, satisfying both local and international needs for specific legal services.
- The three specialisations within the MA programme are well thought through, incorporating both practice and research.
- TUT's modern and well equipped facilities and library ensure a pleasant learning and working environment.
- There are sufficient resources for teaching staff development. The Estonian Centre for Engineering Pedagogy at TUT, which provides very good opportunities for staff development and training, is commendable.
- TUT has created a modern and supportive environment for high-quality research.
- The teaching methods used are modern, diverse, active and innovative. Assessment of learning outcomes is holistic and transparent, and the achievement of learning outcomes is constantly monitored throughout the teaching process.

- The process of teaching and learning is well regulated by different academic acts and policies at TUT. Study programme development takes into account the feedback from all the stakeholders (students, employers, teaching staff).
- Students take part in international competitions.
- International academic staff is well integrated into the local staff.
- The student-to-staff ratio in all four chairs is very good.
- International, EU and local legal topics in the study programmes are covered well by academic staff consisting of academics, scholars with international experience and practitioners operating in the labour market.
- The Law School has created flexible support mechanisms for their academic staff to participate in international projects and self-developments.
- The overall student satisfaction with the study programmes, teaching methods and learning environment is high. The students are motivated and appreciate the staff's friendly and helpful attitude.
- The students are deeply involved in research and encouraged to discover new and interesting research fields.

Areas for improvement and recommendations

- The main challenge for the Law School is to gain recognition within the local environment and visibility in the international and transnational arena. It is advisable to clearly communicate that the legal skills offered within the BA and MA programmes ensure solid performance of the graduates in the local labour market.
 - The assessment committee recommends continuing preparations to launch a planned PhD programme since all the necessary resources and potential for high-quality research in the field of international law and technology are in place.
 - The Law School should more actively market its research capabilities to the Estonian public and private sectors.
 - It is recommended that the Law School continue to focus its strategy on the integration of technology with commercial law, despite its participation in projects involving technology and public law.
 - The increasing number of international students may cause a shortage of dormitory places.
 - A larger number of suitable internship opportunities should be offered to both national and international students.
 - Academic staff's contacts with enterprises and professional organisations and associations should be further strengthened.
 - There is a need for risk management at the University to retain its highly capable teaching staff since foreign higher education institutions may become interested in recruiting them.
 - The workloads for teaching staff should be closely monitored and their distribution among staff members regulated.
 - The content of study programmes should be better explained to applicants.
 - The law school must identify the reasons students drop out and continue to take measures to reduce the dropout rate.
 - It is advisable to promote student mobility.
- 10.** Point 41 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', establishes that the Quality Assessment Council shall approve an assessment report within three months after receipt of the report. The Council shall weigh the strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations pointed out in the

assessment report, and then shall decide whether to conduct the next quality assessment of that study programme group in seven, five or three years.

11. The Council weighed the strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations referred to in point 9 of this document and found that the study programmes, the teaching conducted under these programmes, and development activities regarding teaching and learning conform to the requirements, and, on the basis of point 41.1 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education',

DECIDED

to approve the assessment report and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Law study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at Tallinn University of Technology in seven years.

The decision was adopted by 7 votes in favour. Against 0.

12. The Bureau of EKKA will coordinate a date for the next quality assessment of the study programme group with Tallinn University of Technology no later than 15.12.2022.
13. The Council proposes that Tallinn University of Technology will submit an action plan to EKKA with regard to the areas for improvement and recommendations pointed out in the report no later than 15.09.2017.
14. A person who finds that his or her rights are violated or his or her freedoms are restricted by this decision may file a challenge with the EKKA Quality Assessment Council within 30 days after the person filing the challenge became or should have become aware of the contested finding. A judicial challenge to the decision may be submitted within 30 days after its delivery, filing an action with the Tallinn courthouse of the Tallinn Administrative Court pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Code of Administrative Court Procedure.

Tõnu Meidla
Chair of the Council

Hillar Bauman
Secretary of the Council