

ESTONIAN QUALITY AGENCY
FOR HIGHER AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Institutional Accreditation
Report for
Estonian Academy of Security
Sciences

2019

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Introduction

‘Institutional accreditation’ is the process of external evaluation which assesses the conformity of a University or higher education institution’s management, work procedures, study and research activities and environment to both legislation and the goals and development plan of the higher education institution itself. This is feedback-based evaluation in which an international assessment panel analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the institution of higher education based on the self-assessment report of the institution and on information obtained during the assessment visit, providing recommendations for improvement and ways of implementing them.

The goal of institutional accreditation is to support the development of strategic management and quality culture that values learning-centeredness, creativity and innovation in the higher education institutions, as well as to increase the societal impact of education, research and development delivered by the HEIs.

Higher Education institutions are assessed according to twelve standards. Assessment focuses on the core processes of the HEI – learning and teaching, research, development and creative activities, and service to society – as well as on strategic management of the organisation and resource management. The learning and teaching process is examined in more detail under five standards (study programme, teaching staff, learning and teaching, student assessment, and learning support processes). Throughout the assessment process, there is a focus on academic ethics, quality culture and internationalisation.

Educational institution must undergo institutional accreditation at least once every seven years based on the regulation approved by EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education [Guide to Institutional Accreditation](#).

The institutional accreditation of the professional higher education institution *Sisekaitseakadeemia* (the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, EASS hereinafter) took place in March 2019. Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA hereinafter) compiled an International assessment panel for the accreditation as follows:

Robin Bryant (Chair)	Professor, Canterbury Christ Church University, United Kingdom
Kimmo Himberg	Rector, Police University College, Finland
Sergiu Vasile	Professor, Dean, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Police Academy, Romania
Mark Frederiks	International cooperation advisor, NVAO, The Netherlands
Merle Tikk	Deputy Director General of Häirekeskus, Estonia
Matthew Kitching	Student, Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, ESU, United Kingdom

The assessment process was coordinated by Liia Lauri (EKKA).

After an initial preparation phase, the work of the assessment panel in Estonia started on Monday, 11 March 2019, with an introduction to the Higher Education System as well as the assessment procedures by EKKA, the Estonian quality agency for higher and vocational education. The members of the team agreed the overall questions and areas to discuss with each group during the site visit to the EASS. The distribution of tasks between the members of the assessment panel was organised and a detailed schedule of the site visit agreed.

During the following days, meetings were held with the representatives of the EASS (Tuesday 12 and Wednesday 13 March 2019).

On Thursday, 14 March, the panel held an all-day meeting, during which both the structure of the final report was agreed, and findings of team meetings were compiled in a first draft of the assessment report.

The following report has two parts: a report on institutional accreditation and report on quality assessment of the 'Police Service' study programme. The findings of the study programme assessment are used to inform the full institutional accreditation report, through a form of 'sampling'.

Information about the EASS

The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (the EASS) is an institution of professional higher education in the area of government of the Ministry of the Interior providing vocational, professional higher education and Master's studies in the area of internal security. The Academy also provides continuing training as well as research and development work in the areas relevant to the development of internal security.

The Government of the Republic of Estonia established the Estonian Academy of Internal Security on April 15, 1992. One of the primary aims of establishing the Academy was the need to train police officers, ensuring national security and order. Considering the small size of Estonia, it was decided to expand the Academy's area of activity so that it also covered the instruction of other specialists and officials of internal security. In addition to the specialities of Police Service and Pre-trial Investigation, the new specialities came to include the curricula of Correctional Officer, Rescue Officer, Customs, Defence Service and Border Guard.

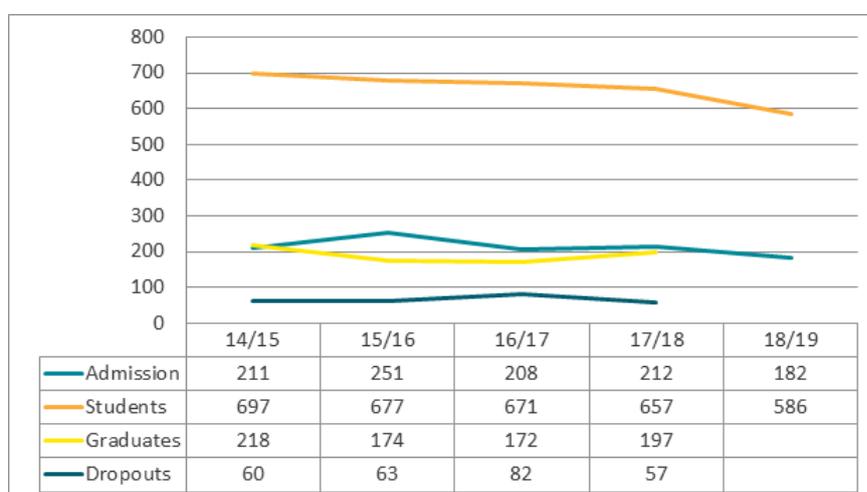
The academic structure of the Academy includes four colleges: Financial College, College of Justice, Rescue College and Police and Border Guard College, an institute - the Internal Security Institute and the Language Centre. The support structure includes the support service departments, the library and the Centre for Continuing Education.

The work of the EASS is conducted in four locations: the main study building is in Kase Street in Tallinn, the second study centre of PBGC is in Paikuse and the second centre of RC in Väike-Maarja.

The number of students has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 900 and 1000 in the past five years. Numbers of students are related to the changes in the state-commissioned student places presented to the Academy by The Ministry of the Interior.

In the academic year 2018/2019, there are 16 curricula divided between four levels: one curriculum in the Master's studies, five curricula in professional higher education, five continuing training curricula (EQF Level 5) and five basic training curricula (Level 4). As to the study forms, the EASS utilises 'regular studies and session-based studies, full-time and part-time studies and, since 2018, also 'on-the-job' (vocational) education.

Dynamics of student numbers of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (Source: HaridusSilm, 2019)



The main changes on the basis of the recommendations of the previous institutional accreditation

The previous accreditation decision (2012) was to accredit the EASS for seven years with the following secondary condition: the EASS will present the council by 01.05.2013: research and development strategy with a specific action plan for the achievement of the goals set in the strategy, and an action plan for the quality assurance of continuing education. The progress in the area "Organisational Management and Performance" was recognised with an additional note of "worthy of recognition".

By the due date, the a submission was made to the council, namely the "Overview of the Fulfilment of the Secondary Conditions for the Institutional Accreditation of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences" by which the assessment committee considered the secondary condition to be satisfied. On 28.11.2014, the EASS additionally submitted an interim review "The Activities of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences in Considering the Recommendations by the Assessment Committee Experts of the Institutional Accreditation (as of 1.12.2014)", providing a more detailed overview of the activities until the end of 2014.

Brief main impressions of the institution as well as of the self-evaluation report and of the visit.

After the preparation phase, the assessment team began their work in Estonia on Monday, March 11, 2019. EKKA, the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education provided an introduction to the Higher Education System and to the assessment procedure. The members of the team agreed the overall questions and areas to discuss. The distribution of tasks between the members of the assessment team was organised and the detailed schedule of the site visits agreed.

During the following days, meetings were held with the representatives of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, students, staff, alumni, associated Colleges and employers (March 11 -13 2019 inclusive). For the Schedule of the Visit, please see the Appendix of the Report. In all cases, the schedule for discussion on site for the Academy and the one study programme only allowed for short time slots for team members to exchange information, discuss conclusions and any implications for further questions. On Thursday, March 14, the team held an all-day meeting, during which both the structure of the final report was agreed, and the findings of team meetings were compiled in a first draft of the assessment report. This work was executed in a cooperative way and the members of the team had detailed discussions and expressed their individual views on the relevant topics. In the following sections of this report, the assessment team present a summary of their general findings, conclusions and recommendations which are relevant across the entire Academy together with the one programme under review. The team provides an external and objective perspective on the Academy's programmes and the contexts within which they are delivered. The intention is to provide constructive comment and critique which may form the basis upon which improvements in the quality of the work of the Academy and its programmes may be achieved. Judgements are based upon evidence, made available to the assessment team through various means including the written self-evaluation of the Academy, statistics concerning student progression and interviews with staff, students and employers. For the sake of brevity, the following abbreviations are used to indicate the source of evidence used to substantiate claims and recommendations:

Key to evidence

E: interviews with employers and Agencies

M: interviews with management staff

R: inspection of resources (e.g. library visit, specialist teaching rooms)

S: evidence from interviews with students (including alumni)

SD: self-assessment document

T: interviews with teachers and lecturers

Summary of the institutional accreditation findings

General Findings:

The assessment team were impressed with the dynamism, enthusiasm and dedication of all the staff of the Academy, from the Rector, the Vice Rector, teaching staff, support staff such as the library and from the students and alumni (M,R, S, T). The Academy can be justifiably proud of their staff and students and the quality of the programmes it offers. The Academy undoubtedly has very ambitious plans for the future in terms of exploiting its new resources and opportunities (SD, M). We found during our assessment visit much evidence of the deep collaboration between the Academy, the agencies and the Colleges which was demonstrated at all levels. The Academy has a high quality and rapidly developing digital environment to support effective and efficient teaching and learning based within an impressive and newly built infrastructure. This supports an innovative new set of modular curricula which are flexible and meet the needs of both students and stakeholders.

The theoretical and practical orientation of the programmes in the Academy are relevant to the professional needs of the public services and their currency is maintained through regular feedback and updating. The Academy is well-resourced with responsive learning and student support (for example the library provision and psychological care). Employers and other partners have been fully involved in developing, updating and implementing the study programmes (HE, vocational) (E). There is excellent internship organisation, which is well-structured and monitored (E,M,S,T). We found good integration of subject content and foreign language acquisition (S,T). Student feedback is used consistently and effectively in the development of the programmes (S,T).

However, we found that the theoretical aspects of programmes sometimes seem to appear to take second place to practical skills development and hence might lead to a decrease in the depth of critical reflection achieved by students (E,S, T). This may account for example, for the apparent unpopularity of the thesis at the final stage of the police service professional higher education programme. We also perceived a need for greater accommodation of non-traditional students e.g. arrangements for more mature students with parental responsibilities (E, T), although we acknowledge that the Academy have made efforts in this regard in the past. The research culture of the Academy might require further development e.g. encouraging PhD attainment and using research more to inform teaching (T). Multiculturalism tends to be viewed as a pedagogic phenomenon but should instead be considered more widely e.g. in terms of the cultural and religious needs of students (such as restrictions with food and the use of serving cutlery in the refectory) and the understanding of service professions of their communities (R,T). More could also be done to increase the 'service to society' the Academy offers (building on already good practice) e.g. in terms of public education concerning cybercrime. Finally, there needs to be a greater shared understanding of the challenge presented by academic ethics (so that both the Academy

and its partners employ the same guidelines) and a more proactive approach to maintaining the high standards already achieved by the Academy in this respect (E, S, T).

A summary of the assessment outcomes are given in the table below.

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Strategic management	x			
Resources	x			x
Quality culture	x			
Academic ethics	x			
Internationalisation		x		
Teaching staff	x			
Study programme	x			x
Learning and teaching	x			
Student assessment	x			
Learning support systems	x			
Research, development and/or other creative activity	x			
Service to society	x			

Commendations:

- A dynamic, purposeful Academy with strong management and highly motivated and committed staff, with an ambitious vision of becoming the best European centre of its kind.
- Deep collaboration between the EASS, the agencies and the Colleges demonstrated at all levels.
- Well-prepared graduates meeting the needs of both employers and the Estonian communities they serve.
- A wide international network built through the active involvement of the Academy's staff and students with associations and agencies in the field.

- An effective internal evaluation system that encompasses all relevant aspects and actively involves all internal and external stakeholders and which leads to a dynamic and developing curricula.
- A high quality and rapidly developing digital environment to support effective and efficient teaching and learning based within an impressive and newly built infrastructure.
- The significant contribution made by the Academy's staff to scholarship activities and its increased commitment to applied research.

★ Worthy of Recognition:

- The EASS's forward looking and innovative approach to developing the Academy, its effective and dynamic collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Agencies.
- The learning and teaching resources provided by the Academy.
- The study programmes offered by the EASS, designed and delivered in conjunction with stakeholders.

Recommendations:

- Further organisational integration with the embedded institutes and Colleges should be undertaken; for example enhanced cooperation, communication and collaboration between the institutes and college staff of the EASS, not limited to module-based curricula but also related to the other research and innovation domains or fields.
- To establish a greater shared understanding between the EASS and partner agencies of the challenge presented by maintaining academic ethics.
- To widen the opportunities in the curriculum for students to gain international and intercultural experience.
- Multiculturalism currently tends to be viewed by the Academy as a predominantly pedagogic phenomenon but should instead be considered more widely e.g. in terms of the cultural and religious needs of students.
- To increase the number of academic staff with a doctoral degree (promoting and encourage the RDI) and to motivate and support the EASS lecturers to achieve the requirements for the position of associate professor and professor.
- To consider widening the knowledge across the Academy of the existence of support arrangements for students who may possess specific learning disabilities.
- The goals for external communication (as well as measuring its success) could be developed beyond the recruitment of new students.

1.1. Strategic management

Standard:

Development planning at the higher education institution is purposeful and systematic, involving various stakeholders. The higher education institution regularly evaluates the achievement of its stated objectives and the impact of its activities.

Guidelines:

The HEI has formulated the objectives and key results for its core activities – learning and teaching; research, development and creative activities, and service to society – taking into account national priorities and the needs of society, focusing on its strengths and reducing unnecessary duplication both within the HEI and throughout higher education in Estonia. The HEI is managed in accordance with its mission, vision and core values, as well as objectives set out on the basis of those principles. Achievement of the objectives and effects of the activities are evaluated regularly. Creativity and innovation are supported and given value in both core and support activities. Membership of the HEI (including students), as well as external stakeholders, is involved in developing and implementing the HEI's development plan and action plans. The HEI members share the core values that serve as a basis for the institution's development plan.

Indicator:

The rate of achieving the objectives set in the development/action plan (key results)

conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
x			

Evidence and Analysis

The EASS is the sole provider of higher education and research in the field of internal security in Estonia. It has a central role in providing competent staff for the internal security authorities (police, border guard, emergency response centres, fire and rescue service, customs and taxation, prison and probation service).

The Academy sets its goals based on the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy and the Ministry of the Interior internal security development plan 2015-2020 as well as the development plans of the partner agencies (M, SD). The EASS mission is defined as teaching students to ensure Estonian security and for its citizens to live safely. According to the EASS vision, the Academy will be the best European academic and research centre in the field of internal security by 2025. The Academy has formulated its five core values as honesty, respect, professionalism, openness and development (SD). The interviews provided the panel with a strong impression that members of the Academy community share these values and the students are guided to follow them (S, T, M).

The Council of the Academy approved the EASS development plan in 2016. The main aims of the

plan are to improve the international competitiveness of the Academy, the integration of studies, quality in general and its organisation. The development plan has been updated thereafter, most recently in June 2018 (SD).

The aims of the development plan are provided in the areas of instruction (teaching), research and development and institutional evolution. Emphasis is put on the satisfaction of stakeholders in terms of teaching and research; core processes and development activities; the quality of academic staff (qualifications, international experience); teaching in an open, multicultural environment, and cost structure which calls for alternative sources of funding to allow personnel costs and learning environment investments to be increased (SD).

The Academy is in very close cooperation with the agencies it serves (E, M). The Advisory Board consists of representatives of the Ministries of the Interior, of Education and Research, of Justice and of Finance and of the Police and Border Guard, Rescue Board, Emergency Response Centre and Tax and Customs Board. The advisory college councils are each led by the leader of the respective agency. The Rector participates in weekly meetings of the Ministry of the Interior management (SD). However, it was not always clear how the 'embedded' colleges relate to the Academy as a whole in terms of the relationship to each other, their place within the management structure and the organisational arrangements (E, SD).

The panel interviews confirmed that the Academy maintains a close collaborative network which includes the relevant agencies, and the general atmosphere within this cooperation appears to be very positive at all levels (E, M, T). The Academy is well informed about new strategies and plans of the administration, and it is also able to convey its own strategies and plans to its partners. Mutual feedback is immediately available to be used to support strategic management and planning (E, T).

The Academy uses a number of internal feedback systems and regularly repeated internal surveys as an essential tool in developing its strategy as well as defining its action plans. (S, E, T).

Commendations

- A dynamic, purposeful Academy with strong management and highly motivated and committed staff.
- A deep collaboration between the Academy, the agencies and the Colleges demonstrated at many levels.

Recommendation

- In some respects, the Colleges of the EASS appear to function quite independently of the rest of the Academy. Organisational improvements are possible in order to improve both inter and intra- collaboration.
- Although research is included as a core area in the strategic Development Plan, its role in the everyday activities of the Academy and its connection with education and teaching in practice appears to be somewhat weak and requires to be strengthened.

1.2. Resources

Standard:

The higher education institution develops its staff and manages its physical and financial resources in a purposeful, systematic and sustainable manner. Internal and external communications of the higher education institution (including marketing and image-building) are targeted and managed.

Guidelines:

The HEI has an efficient staff development system. The principles and procedures for employee recruitment and development are based on the objectives of the HEI's development plan, and are fair and transparent. The career model of academic staff motivates talented young people to start their academic careers, creates opportunities for progress, and ensures sustainability of the academic staff. The principles for employees' remuneration and motivation are defined, available to all employees, and observed.

Allocation of the HEI's financial resources is based on the objectives of its development plan. The management and development of its infrastructure (buildings, laboratories, classrooms, IT systems, etc.) are economically feasible. Sufficient resources are available for updating the infrastructure for education and research, and/or a strategy exists enabling the HEI to acquire them.

A sufficient amount of textbooks and other learning aids are available, they are of uniformly high quality and accessible. Publicly offered information about HEI's activities (including study programmes) and the findings of external evaluations is correct, up to date, easily accessible and understandable. The HEI has a system to popularise its core activities and academic career opportunities. The HEI has a functioning system for internal and external communications, relevant to the target audiences. The HEI members are informed of the decisions relevant to them in a timely manner.

Employee satisfaction with management, working conditions, information flow, etc., at the HEI is surveyed regularly and the survey results are used in quality improvement activities.

Indicators:

- *Distribution of revenues and costs (incl. RDC activities)*
- *The results of the staff satisfaction survey*

conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
X			X

Evidence and Analysis

The management and development of the human, physical and financial resources are based on the Development Plan of the EASS (valid until 2025), the operational programme and the related strategies of the Ministry of Interior. The achievement of performance indicators are reviewed and analysed regularly: human resources related indicators by the General Department, financial resources by the Department of Finance and infrastructure and information technology by the Administrative Department (SD). The organisational analysis held in 2015 led to major changes in the structure of the staff (particularly in terms of a reduction in the numbers of support staff) (SD, M). Academic staff costings thereby increased from 27% in 2014 to 37% in 2017. Administrative staff cost savings were allocated to hiring academic staff and investments in the teaching environment (SD, M). A comparative analysis is conducted by the Academy with similar institutions of higher education (e.g. Estonian national Defence College, Tallinn Health Care College) on the basis of salary level to ensure that the salary of academic staff at the EASS remains competitive (SD).

The qualification requirements, tasks and responsibilities of Academy employees are defined in job descriptions and a specific document ('Description of the Career of an Academic Position at the Academy of Security Sciences'). Academic and support staff are primarily recruited through open, public recruitment. Applicants to academic positions are evaluated by a specific recruitment committee which assesses their professional activities, academic and RD work and teaching skills against the competence requirements of the position.

The Academy utilises visiting lecturers to bring in up-to-date practical knowledge. They are mainly invited from partner agencies for a maximum period of five years, and afterwards they return to their original position.

The professional development of the academic staff is ensured throughout the employment-cycle starting from the recruitment, mentoring, remuneration, performance and development discussion, involvement in development seminars and other non-monetary motivations, together with promotion. The Academy provides a variety of means to support the induction of new employees, such as mentoring, internal academic discussions and seminars and teaching skills training. The Academy plans to update the induction process to improve its effectiveness (SD). The performance and innovation pay of staff is agreed upon and the rules are clear (T). The satisfaction of the staff is regularly surveyed (every other year) and analysed by the Rector's Office. The staff of the EASS are most satisfied with the level of responsibility and professional independence (4.3 average rating in 5-point scale) and immediate manager (4.2). Areas of improvement are appreciation and feedback to work (3.6) and remuneration (3.3) (SD). In addition, the results of the development discussions are analysed across the Academy. On the basis of these results several improvement activities were planned, for example the principles of remuneration and workload of the academic staff were revised, including a rise in the employees' basic salary; the intranet update was initiated to improve internal communication (SD).

Several opportunities for professional development are provided such as assignments abroad, other international activities, participation in various training courses, and also sabbaticals for the academic staff. An external internship of one month every five years is mandatory for all academic staff. A training programme for managers has been initiated in 2018. Overall, discussions with the academic staff reflected a high level of satisfaction on the development opportunities provided (SD, M, T).

The financing aims are among the performance indicators of the EASS, which are monitored by the Department of Finance. The budget shows a stable upward trend over the past five years. The considerable increase of investment in the past two years is mostly related to the construction of the new building in Kase Street (SD). The finances of the Academy are in a satisfactory position, despite the EASS not recruiting the number of students foreseen by the MoI (M).

The EASS has four locations – based in Tallinn, Paikuse and Väike-Maarja. The new building in Kase Street (opened in 2019) has been designed to become a learning centre with innovative technologies (simulation labs and other facilities) not only for the students of higher education programmes but also for continuing education purposes for the other Ministry of Interior institutions.

The evaluation team especially noted how the new building illustrates the Academy's strive towards modern, practically oriented teaching. The simulation centre, the media simulation room, 'smart' classrooms and various simulation training areas provide an excellent learning and exercise environment. The new library provides a broad spectrum of relevant textbooks and professional journals. (R)

The development of digital competency is one of the main training aims of the Academy. These aims include support for the development of e-courses, where the goal is to have e-support for every EASS curriculum by 2020. The library is successfully developing access to the digital resources needed by the academic staff and students (SD, T, R). The digital developments are supported by the internal and external communication governed by the Department of Communication (M). Information concerning available training is provided through the intranet, weekly newsletters and targeted emails. Each unit has a separate budget for internal training which is administered by the head of the unit. Although there are several channels and tools effectively exploited by the Academy (web-site, the Academy journal, social media channels) especially for the recruitment of new students, there are also a number of areas identified for improvement (SD). These include how to make use of the intranet in order to enhance information and knowledge management across the Academy and between the units. Further, the contribution to educating the general public could be seen as a goal for external communication that requires further development (M).

Commendations

- Good cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and other stakeholders in planning and implementing the sustainable development of human and financial resources and infrastructure, whilst remaining at the same time innovative and open to the application of new technologies.
- The EASS has a new main building in Tallinn which provides an excellent teaching and learning environment specifically designed for, and by the Academy.

Recommendations

- Make fuller use of the intranet and other innovative and available IT solutions to encourage cooperation and information exchange across the Academy and between the units.
- The goals for external communication as well as measuring its success could be developed beyond the recruitment of new students.
- In view of the important role of the EASS in the field of internal security there are currently relatively low numbers of academic staff with a formal qualification in research (e.g. a doctoral degree). The Academy is encouraged to invest more in the recruitment of PhDs and in motivating staff members to undertake research training.

1.3. Quality Culture

Standard:

The higher education institution has defined the quality of its core and support processes, and the principles of quality assurance. In the higher education institution, internal evaluation supports strategic management and is conducted regularly at different levels (institution, unit, study programme), the findings of internal and external evaluations are analysed and quality improvement activities implemented.

Guidelines:

Members of the HEI have agreed upon definitions for the quality of their core and support processes and are guided by them in their daily work. The HEI develops and publicises its policies and procedures for internal quality assurance (internal evaluation) and conducts regular internal evaluations, which take into account, inter alia, the standards set out in this Guide, and incorporates feedback from its members and/or from external experts. In the course of internal evaluations, peer learning, comparisons with other HEIs regarding their results and means for achievement, as well as a sharing of best practices take place, among other things.

Internal evaluation is based on the following key questions in quality management: What do you want to achieve, and why? How do you want to do it? How do you know that the activities are effective and will have the desired impact? How do you manage the quality improvement activities?

Regular reviews and enhancements of study programmes ensure their relevance, including their compliance with international trends.

conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
x			

Evidence and Analysis

The Academy had used a quality manual since 2009 which was updated in 2015 (SD). However, this manual amounted to a duplication of other documents and was not frequently used (SD). When the recent EASS Development Plan was drafted it was concluded that quality assurance should be an integral part of performance management, closely linked with the performance indicators in the Development Plan. As a consequence this approach to quality management is relatively new and there is still little experience for demonstrating a systematic and consistent implementation across the Academy. On the other hand a culture of extensive internal and external evaluations has been established over the years which robustly supports the strategic and quality management.

In “The bases for QA at EASS” (Decision of the Council EASS 1.12.2018) it is stipulated that quality at the EASS is understood to be compliance with relevant legislation, and the needs and expectations of students, employers and society, and the possibilities of the Academy. Satisfaction surveys play a major role (‘the higher the satisfaction, the more successful the Academy’s main activity’). However,

the panel notes that satisfaction of stakeholders is only one dimension of quality as is also acknowledged by the Academy when describing quality as ‘a highly complex concept encompassing all of the organisation’s activities’. The core document in the internal QA system is the Development Plan which has been based on the ‘Balanced Score Card’ approach. Twenty one indicators for the quality system have been identified in the Development Plan. Information on the performance against these indicators is collected through multiple evaluations and internal assessments. The Development Plan sets out the current scores and actions to be taken; those responsible for the execution of the Development Plan are the members of the managerial board of the Academy, led by the Rector (Development Plan, SD). The Academy looks twice a year at the progress made on the indicators in the Development Plan. The planning starts at the beginning of the academic year, considering the progress made on the previous plan and then at the end of the academic year when there is an extended management board (M). This analysis is taken into account when devising the annual action plan of the Academy. Input is taken from different feedback forms and feedback seminars. With regard to continuing education the Academy has agreed ‘Principles for guaranteeing the quality of continuing education at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences’.

Internal evaluation consists of analysing the learning processes and outcomes in six areas: content and structure of the curricula; learning process; students; lecturers; learning environment and resources; support services (the document ‘Internal Evaluation of Curricula’; SD). A distinction is made between partial and full evaluation. The aim of the annual partial evaluation is to focus on one or several areas of internal evaluation that need some improvement. The aim of full internal evaluation, which usually takes place every three years, is to analyse and evaluate the curricula by focusing on all six areas of internal evaluation. The Department of Academic Affairs is responsible for managing and monitoring the process of internal evaluations. The curriculum coordinators in each college are responsible for compiling the evaluation reports. The evaluation reports are discussed by the Council of the College and the Learning Committee. The results of these discussions may lead to inserting improvement measures in the action plan of the Academy. When the need arises amendments to the curriculum, modules or subjects may be made. There is a procedure in place for deciding on these amendments. The internal evaluation reports are published on the intranet.

Input for the evaluations is taken through different feedback forms and feedback seminars. This feedback is guided by the document “Regulation of Collection and consideration of Feedback”. There are eight feedback surveys targeted at learners; five at employees; one at alumni; and one at employers. For each of the surveys the aim, place and time, responsible people, content, public disclosure and consideration of the results, and the units responsible for improvement activities are listed. Students are also asked to give feedback on the course after each subject. The academic staff are shown the feedback given to them by the students (T). Lecturers also tell students what has been changed according to the feedback (S,T). After internships feedback seminars are organised, and feedback is given by the teachers, which is appreciated by the students (S). However, the panel heard some instances where the feedback given to students in some Master's programmes was not sufficient (S).

In contrast with the higher education institutions that fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research the Academy does not have the tradition of publishing an annual report. The panel encourages the Academy (SD) to provide annual reports to inform the public on the work of

the Academy. The annual report can also be useful as a feedback mechanism for communicating any changes that have been implemented, some of these as a result of the evaluations.

The panel welcomes the EASS plans to compare all curricula with the curricula of at least two partner institutions (SD) and to use the results of these comparisons in the process of internal assessment.

Commendations

- The internal evaluation system encompasses all relevant aspects and the evaluation results are used for curriculum and other improvements.
- Both internal and external stakeholders are widely involved by the EASS in evaluation.
- The EASS has integrated the breadth of its internal evaluation system with its management process of monitoring the performance indicator and planning improvements in annual action plans.

Recommendations

- To broaden the use of quality measurements used in internal evaluations, so that these are not exclusively based on satisfaction surveys.
- To provide annual reports to inform the public on the work of the Academy and to communicate the changes that have been implemented as a result of the internal evaluations.
- To ensure that the well-structured evaluation and feedback system is also implemented across the Academy for the Master's programme.
- To consider building on the comparisons of curricula with partner institutions for a more thorough benchmarking of performance indicators, particularly in view of the Academy's ambition to become the best security centre in Europe by 2025.

1.4 Academic ethics

Standard:

The higher education institution has defined its principles for academic ethics, has a system for disseminating them among its members, and has a code of conduct including guidelines for any cases of non-compliance with these principles. The higher education institution has a functioning system for handling complaints.

Guidelines:

The HEI values its members and ensures that all its employees and students are treated according to the principle of equal treatment.

Employees and students of the HEI are guided by the agreed principles of academic ethics in all their activities.

The HEI respects fundamental values and policies of research set out in the document, 'Research Integrity', issued jointly by Estonian research institutions, the Estonian Academy of Sciences, the Estonian Research Council and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.

The HEI supports its students and teaching staff in their understanding and responding to ethical issues. Teaching staff and students do not tolerate academic fraud, including cheating and plagiarism, and they will act immediately upon any such occurrence.

Management of complaints from HEI members (including discrimination cases) is transparent and objective, ensuring fair treatment of all parties.

Indicator:

- Number of academic fraud cases

conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
x			

Evidence and Analysis

The EASS has defined its principles and procedures for academic ethics and in addition it has a code of conduct which includes guidelines for any cases of non-compliance with these principles - the 'Code of Ethics for Officials' which applies to both academic staff and students (SD - page 19). The staff and students of the EASS are guided by the agreed principles of academic ethics in all their activities (S, T).

The EASS also included instructions for the students with the scope to develop the skills, knowledge, experience and behavioural norms needed both for the job and for developing the personal characteristics necessary in public service (SD - page 20). The EASS supports its students and staff in their understanding of, and ability to respond to, ethical issues (SD page 21, S, T).

The EASS has also established a 'Court of Honour' with its rules of procedure regulated by statute (SD page 21). For all Court cases, the EASS acts in accordance with the Directive of the Minister of the Interior 'The Procedure for the court cases and other legal disputes of the Ministry of the Interior or

the institutions in its area of government' (SD). Administrative staff are represented in the Court of Honour (Ethics Committee) (M). There were two cases identified since 2006, both cases involved the conflict of interests in the competition of the training service provision (employee vs academy). According to the submitted documentation the Court of Honour made several recommendation to the management board of the EASS. The EASS succeed to implement behavioural and operational rules in order to avoid the conflict or apparent conflict of interests within the organisation (SD page 21, S, T).

There were several cases regarding the organisation of the studies outside the academy, addressed to the Administrative court - 2013: 2 cases, 2014: 5 cases, 2015: 3 cases, 2016: 1 case, 2017: 2 cases. The cases were mostly related to the notice of the tuition fee reimbursement of the invalidation of the result of the final thesis or final examination. The cooperation between the EASS and the main beneficiaries succeeds to decrease the number of challenges at the Administrative Court (SD).

During the visit we received good feedback provided by the alumni and their employers regarding the five core values identified by the EASS: those of honesty, respect, professionalism, openness and development. (SD, S, E). Further, the academic staff and the students are aware of the principles of academic ethics and internal procedures and regulations available for different situations (S and T). Academic fraud and misconduct constitute significant violation of the generally accepted behavioural norms and academic practises, as outlined in the EASS document 'The Procedures for the Misconduct of a Student of the Academy of Security Sciences, including Cases of Plagiarism' (SD page 20).

For the prevention of plagiarism by means of technical support, the students and lecturers have access to the plagiarism detection software URKUND (M, R, S, T). According to the interviews and submitted documentation there were identified several cases of plagiarism which were solved according to "The Procedures of the Misconduct of a student of the Academy of Security Sciences, including Cases of Plagiarism". However, there was some confusion during the interviews regarding the previously-used software KRATT and the new one introduced in 2017 (S, T).

The panel gained the impression that more information should be provided to staff and students regarding the utilisation of the plagiarism detection software URKUND (S, T). More generally, the panel perceived some lack of shared understanding between the EASS and its professional partners as to how to implement the EASS procedures for academic misdemeanors (E,T). However, there were only two registered cases of plagiarism in 2017, two in 2014 and three in 2013. All the cases of alleged plagiarism were dealt with appropriately. As it was mentioned in the SD all the plagiarism cases were treated individually. The students have the chance in the first instance of misconduct to receive more information and explanations regarding the plagiarism. In the case of recurrent instances, disciplinary measures are applied.

In the last few years the EASS appears to have become more robust in its approach to cases of alleged academic fraud (S, T).

The EASS has a functional and transparent system for proceeding and solving complaints (SD page 20); and these appeared to be well-understood by both senior staff and teaching staff (S, M). "

Commendations

- Students and employers are aware of the importance of ethics and the impact of their integrity as representatives of Estonian public services, including law enforcement.
- Detected cases of alleged plagiarism or other forms of academic misdemeanor are dealt with effectively and appropriately.

Recommendations

- There needs to be a greater shared understanding between the EASS and partner agencies of the challenge presented by maintaining academic ethics.
- A better dissemination of the recently-introduced plagiarism detection technology and the importance of the issue of academic misdemeanor throughout the academic staff and students.
- To explore the opportunity to use also another plagiarism detection software in order to offer a wider check of student assessed work in other languages (e.g to counter any “Google translate attempts”).

1.5 Internationalisation

Standard:

The higher education institution has set objectives for internationalisation and assesses the attainment of these objectives regularly. The higher education institution has created an environment that encourages international mobility of students and teaching staff, supporting the development of learning, teaching and RDC activities, as well as the cultural openness of its members and Estonian society in general.

Guidelines:

The HEI creates opportunities for international student exchanges by offering study programmes and/or modules taught in English. The learning environment at the HEI supports internationalisation and cultural openness.

Recognition of qualifications and recognition of prior learning and work experiences for student admission and programme completion are in accordance with the quality requirements set by the HEI, are systemic and consistent with the expected learning outcomes and support international student mobility.

The organisation of studies at the HEI facilitates student participation in international mobility. The HEI has agreements with foreign higher education institutions and, through international exchange, sends its students abroad to study and undertake practical trainings, providing comprehensive support for this. Members of the teaching staff encourage students to participate in international mobility.

International lecturers participate in the process of teaching, including supervision of doctoral theses.

The HEI supports and recognises the participation of its teaching staff in international teaching, research or creative projects, as well as their teaching, research or creative work and personal development which are performed at HEIs abroad.

Indicators:

- *Teaching staff mobility (in-out)*
- *Student mobility (in-out)*
- *Number of English-taught study programmes by main units and levels of study*

conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
	x		

Evidence and Analysis

The EASS Development Plan expresses the vision of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences to become the best centre for internal security related education and research in Europe by 2025 (SD). Although this vision is remarkably ambitious it is not made clear how the vision of the EASS can be transferred into reality and which international benchmarks are used to measure whether the EASS comes closer to reaching its vision. In the SD the international dimension of the vision is stressed and

reference is made to the five performance indicators associated with internationalisation (SD). These five indicators on internationalisation are (SD): the number of RDI projects with external funding (≥ 20 by 2025); the proportion of long-term mobility students ($\geq 4\%$ by 2025); the proportion of foreign students ($\geq 10\%$ by 2025); the proportion of employees contributing to international cooperation ($\geq 40\%$ by 2025); and, the number of foreign academic staff (≥ 12 by 2025). The EASS considers student mobility and increasing these numbers as the key element (M). The panel notes that the first indicator was already reached in 2017 and that for the most part the other four indicators were in 2017 not that far removed from the levels aimed for by 2025. In view of the vision of being the best centre in Europe the desired levels for 2025 are not overly ambitious. It is not clear why the indicators are set at these aimed levels for 2025. What are the international benchmarks for ensuring that when these levels are reached so that the EASS can rightfully claim to be the best centre of its kind in Europe? For instance, is it justified to claim that if 10% of all students are foreign students this constitutes European-wide best practice? Or can one reasonably claim to be 'best-in-class' when 4% of students have participated in long-term mobility programmes? The panel has neither in the documents nor in the interviews seen or heard any evidence to substantiate such claims (SD, M, T).

The EASS Development Plan has in its chapter on strategic courses of action a section on 'Partnerships in Estonia and abroad' (SD). A few lines refer to international partnerships but these are of a general nature: 'We take cooperation with international agencies and cooperation and professional networks to a new level (e.g. CEPOL, Frontex, OSCE and UCPMTP), for example, we increase participation in development projects creating international value'. In interviews the panel heard several examples of international cooperation and a focus on projects with some specific countries at the institute level (T, M). The EASS has an extensive international network, primarily through the participation of its institutes in the major European associations and agencies in the field. The EASS has 19 international cooperation agreements and 41 bilateral Erasmus+ agreements for supporting student and staff mobility (SD). However, an explicit policy for choosing partners and determining which are the strategic partners is missing. Neither has the panel found a substantiated EASS policy based on forging international partnerships to ensure that its 2025 ambition of being the best centre of its kind in Europe comes within close reach.

In the 2017 alumni and employers' satisfaction survey the international experience and knowledge were rated relatively low (SD). Further, in the professional higher education curriculum it is required to follow one module or part of a module in a foreign language or to provide integrated language learning within the module (Curriculum Statute, article 5.2.2). In the same article it is also stated that the elective parts of the curriculum include at least one subject taught in a foreign language and a subject on international cooperation. Furthermore, the student must have an opportunity to pass at least 5% of their studies in a foreign language. The panel welcomes these options for students but notes that this offer is limited in scope and focused primarily on languages, whilst the dissatisfaction regarding international experience and knowledge would call for a wider focus on internationalisation in the curriculum.

The proportion of long-term mobility students (who study abroad for at least three months or do an internship abroad for at least two months) was only 0.6% in 2017/18 (SD). The Department of Development plays a major role in the process of internationalisation and organising student mobility. These activities are mainly centered on facilitating the mobility of Erasmus and as a result

of the joint curricula with Frontex and CEPOL. The panel heard multiple examples of these activities in the interviews (M). Every college has an Erasmus contact person and students are assisted with finding an internship abroad. Scholarships (of 260 euro) for students to go abroad have been introduced. Attention is paid to integration of foreign students into the Academy. A tutoring system was established, language cafes will be organised, and efforts are made to ensure that Estonian and foreign students are studying in one classroom. Although there are subjects in which foreign and local students can study together, foreign student surveys and a feedback seminar showed that students are least satisfied with the contacts between local and foreign students (SD).

Providing an open multicultural learning environment is an important aim of the Academy. The question is how this can be done with limited numbers of foreign students and staff, with only 5% of courses taught in English, and language being a barrier. Contacts with foreign students and lecturers were highly appreciated in the interviews (S). At the same time there was a sense that these contacts could be increased and that the international dimension should be elevated. A positive example is a subject on intercultural communication in the third year (M). The Academy could make more efforts to not only stimulate mobility but also facilitate that students who stay at home still gain international experience and intercultural competences by including this in the learning outcomes and facilitating it by providing international classrooms, virtual mobility and internationalisation at home activities. Multiculturalism also implies catering for students with diverse cultural and religious needs.

The proportion of employees contributing to international cooperation was 32% in 2017. Examples of these activities are work meetings, development projects, conferences, trainings (e.g. CEPOL and Frontex), exchange programmes, missions and study visits. There were nine foreign academic staff in 2017/18 (SD). Although the EASS is involved in many international projects and exchange agreements, the level of incoming and outgoing staff mobility could be higher in view of the centre's vision. Language skills was one of the obstacles mentioned. The language centre has primarily focussed on the Estonian and Russian language (M) but also teaches English to many study groups from language levels A2 to C1.

Commendations

- The EASS has set out an ambitious vision of becoming the best European centre of its kind and closely monitors the achievement of five internationalisation indicators.
- The EASS has built a wide international network through the involvement of its institutes in the relevant associations and agencies in the field.
- Several measures to increase mobility and integration of foreign students have been introduced or planned, such as scholarships for outgoing students, tutoring for foreign students, mixed classrooms and language cafes.

Recommendations

- To operationalise the the EASS vision by clarifying the Academy's international benchmarks, providing arguments for the desired levels of the indicators for internationalisation and developing a substantiated international strategic partnerships policy in view of its vision.
- Multiculturalism tends to be viewed as an exclusively pedagogic issue but should instead be considered more widely e.g. in terms of the cultural and religious needs of students, the understanding of service professions of their communities.
- A lack of proficiency in English and the limited offer of courses taught in English constitute major obstacles for increasing outgoing and incoming mobility. The number of modules taught in English should be increased, aided by more courses and support of the language centre for both staff and students to increase proficiency in English.
- Widen the opportunities in the curriculum for students to gain international and intercultural experience, not only as electives but also where possible mandatory. The EASS should consider 'mobility windows' as a structural element of the curriculum.
- Introduce internationalisation at home as a fixed component of the curriculum to enable students who have no opportunity for international mobility to gain international and intercultural competences in international classrooms.

1.6 Teaching staff

Standard:

Teaching is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff who support the development of learners and value their own continuous self-development.

Guidelines:

Members of the teaching staff engage systemically in development of their professional and teaching skills, improve their supervision competence, and share best practices with one another.

Teaching staff's participation in research, development and/or creative activities supports the teaching process and ensures competence for the supervision of students' theses (including doctoral theses).

Members of the teaching staff collaborate in fields of teaching, research and/or creative work within the HEI and with partners outside the HEI, e.g. with field practitioners, public sector organisations, companies, other research and development institutions, and lecturers from other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions.

Qualified visiting lecturers and practitioners participate in the teaching process.

When assessing the work of teaching staff (including their periodical evaluations), the effectiveness of their teaching as well as their research, development and creative work is taken into account, including student feedback, the effectiveness of their student supervision, development of their teaching and supervisory skills, their international mobility, and their entrepreneurial experience or other work experience in their fields of speciality outside the HEI.

Indicators:

- *Competition for elected academic positions*
- *Results of students' feedback about the teaching staff*
- *Teaching staff participating in continuing training or other forms of teaching skills development*

conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
x			

Evidence and Analysis

The academic staff of the EASS include full-time lecturers and invited visiting lecturers (professor, associate professor, lecturer, assistant, vocational teacher) and researchers. According to the SD and interviews conducted by the panel some of the visiting lecturers are non-staff lecturers (their workload is usually small and based on a contract under the law of obligations on an hourly wage) (M, SD, T).

According to the statistics included in the SD (page 27) the number of permanent academic staff has remained stable in the last few years (between 80-83 during the years 2014-2018) (SD).

However, even though the number of the lecturers (2017 – 45, 2018 – 40) and assistants (2017 – 22, 2018 – 30) is high, there is only a relatively small percentage of more highly qualified academic staff such as professors (2017 -one, 2018 – two) and associated professors (2017 -three, 2018 – zero) (page 27, SD). Further, only a small number of the academic staff hold doctoral degrees (five in 2018, seven in 2017) and hence the EASS should be encouraged to increase this proportion (SD, M, T).

The EASS assure a sufficient number of teachers for conducting the instruction both in the curricula of professional higher education and levels 4 and 5 of vocational education (SD, page 27). The number of the students in the last few years has remained stable, allowing a ratio of about 12 students per one full-time lecturer (SD, T, S, M).

In order to calculate the academic staff workload, the EASS have in place its own procedures, namely the document 'Principles for planning the study activities and calculating the lecturers' workload at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences' (SD, page 28).

The average age of the academic staff of the EASS is approximately 46 years of age (2018 – 46, 2017 – 47, 2016 – 46) according to the statistics presented in SD, page 28.

The teaching staff of the EASS are professionally competent both according to the documented feedback evidence (SD, page 29) and during the site visit interviews (S, T). However, the 'Evaluation of the lecturers' professionalism and teaching skills in the instruction process' (4.77 out of 5 in 2017/2018) is relatively higher than the 'Evaluation of the diploma thesis supervision' (4.52 out of 5 in 2017/2018) (SD, page 29; S).

Every five working years the academic staff are evaluated according to 'The procedures of the academic staff evaluation (in Est.) (SD, page 29). During the evaluation the self-analysis of the academic staff according to their main work responsibilities is considered, their instructional abilities and the development of their teaching is assessed (including student feedback), research, development and innovation activity, similarly their participation in training that develops their teaching and supervising skills as well as the work practice in the taught field are analysed; the sabbatical term conditions and performance and development discussion summaries and other relevant aspects are also reviewed (SD, page 29, M, T).

The academic staff of the EASS also develop themselves professionally within an international environment through mobility programmes (ERASMUS, FRONTEX and CEPOL) and international cooperation initiatives and by participating in research, development and innovation (numbers of participations in 2013 were 81, in 2014, 74; in 2015, 66; in 2016, 72 and in 2017, 76; SD, page 29). The proportion of academic staff participating in external and internal training has increased year by year reaching about 300 attendances currently (SD, page 29 gives 2013 – 297, 2014 – 295, 2015 – 221, 2016 – 289, 2017 - 290) (SD, M, T).

The EASS engages systemically the members of the teaching staff in activities for the development of their professional and teaching skills and also in activities dedicated to improving their supervision competence (although there are comparatively few students applying at the end of the studies for this final assessment method). The EASS have in place their own procedures for supporting the professional development of the employees of the EASS (SD, page 28; M, T).

The academic staff of the EASS successfully accomplish their main tasks in conducting and developing instruction, research, development and innovation activities and other activities (professional development, participation in the development work within the Academy, supporting the organisational culture, shaping and maintaining the Academy's reputation, promoting the speciality and social activities). – Page 28 (SD, M, T)

The relevant members of the teaching staff of the EASS are encouraged to participate in research, development and/or creative activities in order to support the teaching process and to improve their competence for the supervision of students' theses (SD, M, T).

The EASS teaching staff effectively collaborate with the representatives of the stakeholders and with the practitioners from the operational field (S, T). There is strong cooperation between the EASS staff and the representatives of the public service partners (M, S, T). Together they update the curricula and the subjects required for teaching and learning. The academic staff have to undertake an obligatory practical module in the operational field at least one month every five years (E, M, S, T, SD).

Visiting lecturers and non-staff lecturers bring much expertise to the teaching processes with a high professional qualifications and being amongst the best specialists with practical experience from the main EASS partners, and the contribution they make is optimal for assuring high-quality instruction (SD, page 27; E, M, S, T).

The selection and the competition for the positions of full-time academic staff has increased in the last few years ensuring a higher level of expertise from the selected candidates – the lowest competition was identified in 2016 (2.27) and the highest competition was in 2018 (4.54) (SD, page 28 Figure 6).

However, both the institute and the Colleges of the EASS demonstrate the need for better communication and collaboration in the framework of the module-based curricula, in order to share best practices with one another and to facilitate the accomplishment of the common goals (M, S, T).

Commendations

- Within the EASS has sufficient numbers of experienced academic staff both to conduct professional training and also to achieve the learning objectives and tasks set according to the vocational and professional higher education and Masters' curricula.
- The academic staff of the EASS have a very efficient cooperation with all the beneficiaries and partners and the representatives of the operational field, sharing experiences and good-practice and human and logistical resources, and offering mutual assistance in improving teaching and learning. This applies to both the curricula of professional higher education and at levels 4 and 5 of vocational education.
- The self-improvement, development and evaluation of the academic staff are comprehensive and systematically supports the development of the teaching methods, research opportunities and further improvement of the professional curricula.

Recommendations

- To increase the number of academic staff with a doctoral degree (promoting and encourage the RDI) and to motivate and support the lecturers to achieve the requirements for the position of associate professor and professor.
- To enhance the cooperation, communication and collaboration between the institute and colleges staff of the EASS, not limited to module-based curricula but also related to the other research and innovation domains or fields.

1.7 Study programme

Standard:

Study programmes are designed and developed while taking into account the expectations of stakeholders, higher education and professional standards, and trends in the relevant fields. The objectives of study programmes, modules and courses and their planned learning outcomes are specific and coherent. The study programmes support creativity, entrepreneurship and development of other general competencies.

Guidelines:

In planning study programmes and student places, the HEI pursues its objectives and the needs of the labour market, and takes into account national strategies and the expectations of society. The planned learning outcomes are in accord with the requirements for the corresponding level of the Estonian Qualifications Framework. Expected student workloads defined in the study programmes are realistic and consistent with the calculation that 1 ECTS credit equals 26 student learning hours. Theoretical learning and practical learning are interconnected. The content and organisation of practical trainings support the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme and meet the needs of all parties.

conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
x			x

Evidence and Analysis

The study programmes within the EASS are approved, developed and managed according to the relevant legal Estonian and/or European frameworks and strategies in the field of training and education. These include Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act, Universities Acts, Vocational Education Institutions Act, Standard of Higher Education, Standard for Vocational Education, the Estonian and European educational policy innovations, the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020, Internal Security Development Plan 2015-2020 and the Development Plan of the EASS 2025. Within the EASS study programmes, the planned learning outcomes are in accordance with the requirements for the corresponding level of the Estonian Qualifications Framework (SD, page 30; E; M; R; T).

The study programmes take into consideration the changing needs of the EASS main partners (M, E). The EASS design and develop the study programmes while taking into account the expectations of stakeholders and the main beneficiaries, higher education and professional standards, and the trends in the fields (SD, E, M, T).

In the study programmes design, various feedback was analysed and considered to a large extent: in addition to the feedback given by employers, also the comments by students, alumni and the

academic staff were considered and involved in the development and updating process (SD, page 30; E; M; T).

A better involvement of the student representatives in the curriculum development and in the work of the Learning Committee, colleges and the Council of the EASS should be considered (SD, page 32; S; T).

The EASS curricula processes have been included in the Curriculum Statute approved by the EASS Council. The EASS developed a very complex and efficient procedure to open, amend and close the curricula (including mixed workgroups, different approvals from various bodies within the Academy (SD, page 30; E; M; T)).

According to the National Education Law applied to all HEIs, the EASS's curricula should be registered and included in the curriculum database in the Estonian Education Information System of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (SD, page 30; M) and the panel confirms this requirement.

The EASS develop and deliver numerous numbers of curricula designed for vocational education Level 4 (five curricula – 293 students for 2018/2019), vocational education Level 5 (five curricula – 49 students for 2018/2019), Professional Higher Education (five curricula – 475 students for 2018/2019) and one curriculum for Masters' Studies (Internal Security – 110 students). (SD, page 4, Table 2; M).

After conducting wide analyses regarding the curricula, several areas of improvement were identified and the EASS took measures in this regard: most of the study programmes were changed to module-based curricula; general competences were better integrated in the speciality studies; a new section of general studies was implemented; the common language instruction system was developed; new continuing education curricula were developed; new specialisation added to the Masters' curriculum; the common integrated internal security education model was completed in Spring 2018 (SD, page 32; M, T).

The new implemented system of module-based curricula raised different challenges in the cooperation between the lecturers in identifying the overlaps of the topics and the common objectives of the modules. However, it will take some time to synchronise and to raise the efficiency of the module-based curricula (SD, page 33; T; S).

In addition to the cooperation and collaboration at the level of teaching staff there is also an immediate need to strengthen the Colleges' cooperation in organising studies (SD, page 33; T; S).

Within the EASS study programmes, the objectives, the modules and their planned learning outcomes are specific and coherent, being in line with the beneficiaries' needs and requests. The study programmes include in the curriculum development both general competences and language instruction (SD, page 32; M).

The expected student workloads defined in the study programmes are realistic and consistent with the calculation and distribution of ECTS for learning hours, assessment and other activities. The internship is available according to the national laws. The volume of internship in the professional higher education curricula is at least 15% of the total volume of the curriculum including introductory internship of 3 ECTS (SD, page 31; M; T).

The study programmes combine effectively both theoretical learning and practical learning. E-learning, VR and other technical solutions are in place for supporting and optimising the learning process (SD, M, T, R).

The effective cooperation between the EASS and its partner agencies, which embraces the content and organisation of practical training support, assures the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programmes (SD, T, E, M, S).

Commendations

- The procedures and methodologies in place for study programmes are in line with Estonian and European requirements. Any decisions regarding the curricula are made with the mutual contribution of the main beneficiaries and the responsible chairs/representatives of the EASS.
- The variety of the study programmes delivered within the EASS, covering a wide area of specialised fields in order to meet successfully the needs of beneficiaries and partners.
- The EASS operates surveys for both the alumni and the beneficiaries and several areas of improvement were identified. Module-based curricula were implemented and several other measures were successfully applied in order to improve the general instruction level (in particular, better connectedness and balance of theory and practice; enhanced integration of general skills into the speciality studies).
- A good response was made to the possible overlap between the curricula of the Colleges within the EASS. Co-learning includes both daily instruction with joint lectures and practical training but also special cooperation activities and large-scale exercises.
- The integrated internal security education model was developed by the EASS with the respective action plan and procedures responding to the demographic decline.

Recommendations

- To involve students more in the processes regarding the development of the curricula.
- To enhance the communication and the collaboration of the Colleges within the EASS in the module-based curricula aspects, to better synchronise and deliver the common topics and other relevant learning activities.

1.8 Learning and teaching

Standard:

Admissions requirements and procedures ensure fair access to higher education and the formation of a motivated student body. The higher education institution systemically implements a student-centred approach that guides students to take responsibility for their studies and career planning, and supports creativity and innovation. Graduates of the higher education institution, with their professional knowledge and social skills, are competitive both nationally and internationally.

Guidelines:

The teaching process takes into account students' individual abilities and needs, and supports their development. Organisation of independent work and classroom teaching motivates students to take responsibility for their studies.

Teaching methods and learning aids used in the teaching process are modern, appropriate and effective, and support development of a digital culture.

Students are motivated to learn and contribute to improving the quality of their studies by providing meaningful feedback on both the learning process and the organisation of studies.

Doctoral students plan their studies, as well as their research and development activities, in collaboration with their supervisor(s), setting specific objectives for each year and assuming responsibility for achieving those objectives.

Indicators:

- *Student satisfaction with the content and organisation of studies*
- *Alumni satisfaction with the quality of studies*
- *Employer satisfaction with the preparation of the graduates*

conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
x			

Evidence and Analysis

The admissions requirements appeared very clearly understood and were presented to prospective students in a user-friendly and modern manner (E, S). Within the constraints of the professions involved (e.g. policing) they reflect good practice in terms of equal opportunities in accessing higher education (SD, S, E). Marketing activities to encourage enrolment appear well-developed and appeal to a good cross-section of the potential student body (R, S) with police departments also visiting schools and local communities to encourage recruitment (E).

We found much evidence (S, SD & T) that the teaching process at the Academy takes into account students' individual abilities and needs, and supports their development. For example, taught sessions are illustrated with examples that enable students to relate the theoretical and practical aspects of their professional and academic development (S, T). This is supported through regular

internships carried out by Academy teaching staff when they refresh their knowledge and understanding of the professions (SD, E, T). Specialists also contribute their expertise to the programmes of the Academy (SD, E, T). These specialists are also given pedagogic support by the full-time teaching staff and special introductory teaching courses (SD, T).

At the Masters' programme, the thesis is negotiated with students on a one-to-one basis between an identified Academy member of staff and the student but also reflecting employer needs (E, S, SD, T). There was some limited evidence that the selection of the Masters' thesis topic may be occurring too early within the programme (at interview stage) and before the student/applicant has sufficient knowledge (S).

The Academy has taken steps to improve the Estonian language capabilities of native Russian-language speaking students (SD). Students are also able to undertake their work-based placements at two locations: within East Viru county and West Viru (SD, M and S). There has been an increase in the number of Russian-speaking applicants to the Academy in the last three years (SD) and it is likely that these steps will help to maintain the proportion undertaking programmes. However, for some programmes the drop-out rates are relatively high (SD, , p 42) and we heard that this may be in part due to some students with family responsibilities (for example, childcare) being unable to travel long distances whilst also fulfilling those responsibilities (S) and also the residential requirements (S). Recruiting mature students is particularly important for the Academy given the demographic downturn in Estonia of the younger age groups (SD) and the imminent retirement of large numbers of police officers (M). We also heard evidence (although of a limited nature) that further improvements in Russian-language acquisition by Estonian speakers might be required (S, E). The Academy is responding to this challenge through the use of Moodle-based foreign language courses, internship placements, content and language integration learning together with other measures (M).

The organisation of independent work and classroom teaching motivates students to take responsibility for their studies (R, S, SD, T). For example, a number of modules contained within programmes of the Academy involve independent learning (SD, Appendices 8 and 11). There are a large number of e-courses available (almost 400 created in 12 years; SD, p. 36) and these encourage independent learning (S, T).

Employers are very satisfied with the preparation that the students receive at the Academy (E) and this was borne out in other interviews that the Panel undertook during the visit (S, T). The teaching methods and learning aids used in the teaching process at the Academy are modern, appropriate and effective, and fully support the development of a digital culture (R, S, SD, T). The new building assists in this respect, allowing the opportunity for innovative digital (SD, R) and increased opportunities for collaborative learning between the Agencies (E). High quality simulations are an innovative aspect of the Academy's approach to learning (R, SD). Although there are challenges in ensuring consistent quality across four different locations (M), all locations are digitally connected (SD, M) and staff from the four centres meet regularly (M, T).

Students are motivated to learn and contribute to improving the quality of their studies by providing meaningful feedback on both the learning process and the organisation of studies (M, SD, S, T) as evidenced in overall high levels of student feedback (SD) and tangible evidence of the feedback loop being closed with changes initiated (S). However, student feedback on 'teaching methods' whilst still at the acceptable level, is slightly lower than in other areas of the curriculum (SD, p.37).

Masters' students plan their studies, as well as their research and development activities, in collaboration with their supervisor(s), setting specific objectives for each year and assuming responsibility for achieving those objectives (E, S, SD, T).

Commendations

- A high quality and rapidly developing digital environment to support effective and efficient teaching and learning based within an impressive and newly built infrastructure.
- The ability and desire to increase the joint teaching and learning opportunities between the professional programmes (policing, corrections, rescue).
- Well-prepared graduates meeting the needs of both employers and the Estonian communities they serve.
- Motivated and skilled teachers who maintain their knowledge and understanding of the professional contexts.

Recommendations

- To consider strategies for increasing the popularity of the thesis at the final stage of the police service higher education programme.
- Review the adjustments made to programmes to accommodate the needs of 'non-traditional' students e.g. arrangements for more mature students with parental responsibilities.

1.9 Student assessment

Standard:

Assessments of students, including recognition of their prior learning and work experiences, support the process of learning and are consistent with expected learning outcomes. The objectivity and reliability of student assessments are ensured.

Guidelines:

The assessment criteria are understandable to students and students are informed about them in a timely manner. Members of the teaching staff cooperate in defining assessment criteria and apply similar approaches.

Assessment methods are versatile and relevant, and assess the degree of achievement of learning outcomes (including general competencies).

If possible, more than one staff member is involved in the development of assessment tasks and student assessments. Along with assessments, students receive feedback that supports their individual development.

The HEI supports development of the teaching staff's assessment competencies.

Evaluation of doctoral students is transparent and impartial. Its purpose is to support the development of doctoral students, to assess the effectiveness of their current work and to evaluate their ability to complete the doctoral studies on time and successfully defend their doctoral theses.

When recognising prior learning and work experience towards the completion of the study programme, results obtained through the studies and work experiences (the achieved learning outcomes) are assessed.

Students are aware of their rights and obligations, including the procedures for challenges regarding assessments.

Indicator:

- *The number of credit points applied for and awarded under the accreditation of prior and experiential learning scheme (APEL); this does not include credit points transferred from a different study programme at the same HEI.*

conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
x			

Evidence and Analysis

The assessment of students is based on regulations of the Ministry of Education and Research. The modules and subjects end with a credit test (43% in higher education curricula) or examination (57% in higher education curricula). In vocational higher education there is an undifferentiated assessment as this is deemed more appropriate for professional qualifications. Assessments may be formative or summative; and all parties appear happy with the balance between the two (S, T). The panel noted in the interviews (T) that curriculum development, including the formulation of assessment of methods

and criteria, is very much a team effort. The Department of Academic Affairs is responsible for confirming the uniformity of assessment methods and criteria with the learning outcomes (SD).

The syllabi with the assessment methods and criteria, as well as the timing for examinations and tests, are available on the SIS; the panel saw a short demonstration of this system. Students are allowed a resit on examinations or credit-bearing tests. There is also a procedure in case a student has doubts that the assessor is unbiased, although there has been no such procedure needed during the last few years.

Training for academic staff to develop assessment skills is provided by the EASS. Although the SD argues that this training should pay more attention to new and visiting lecturers, the panel heard much praise regarding the foreign lecturers in the interviews (S).

The EASS has developed principles for assessing internships, including a supervisor from the partner institution who provides feedback during the internship (the document 'Internship Guidelines of the EASS'). The internship is defended by the student and this defence is assessed by a committee that includes representatives of the employer and the EASS. The panel heard that students found the internships a very useful experience as preparation for their subsequent careers (S).

Students in professionally-based vocational education take a final exam, whilst students in higher education defend a (Master's) thesis (depending on the curriculum). There is a procedure for the assessment and organisation of the final exam and Master's thesis. The panel saw a collection of theses (R) and confirms that these procedures are in place.

Students must be involved in the curriculum committees and also decisions of the Councils of colleges are made with student participation (M). The panel heard that students are indeed involved in practice in these committees and councils (S).

Regular seminars e.g. on how to supervise graduation thesis are provided for teaching staff (T).

Students are asked to give feedback on the course after each subject. Lecturers also inform students what has been changed according to the feedback. After internships feedback seminars are organised, and feedback is given by the teachers, which is appreciated by the students (S).

There is a clear procedure for the Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (APEL). The procedure ensures that an APEL committee evaluates each APEL application. This committee is established by the Director of the College or the Head of the Institute, and consists of representatives of the academic personnel, non-academic personnel and, if needed, other experts. The APEL procedures work well (S,T), although the changes in the curricula have led to more rejections of applications in recent years (SD).

Commendations

- A balanced, coherent and fair system of student assessment.

Recommendations

- Greater training on assessment methods and procedures for visiting lecturers.

1.10 Learning support systems

Standard:

The higher education institution ensures that all students have access to academic, career and psychological counselling. Students' individual development and academic progress are monitored and supported.

Guidelines:

The HEI assists the student in developing an individual study programme based on the student's special needs as well as educational abilities and preferences.

The HEI advises its students (including students with special needs and international students) on finding practical training places as well as jobs. Students are aware of where to get support in the case of psychological problems.

The HEI has a functioning system to support and advise international students (including psychological and career counselling) which, inter alia, helps them integrate smoothly into the membership of the HEI and Estonian society. The HEI analyses the reasons students withdraw from studies or drop out, and takes steps to increase the effectiveness of the studies.

The HEI supports student participation in extra-curricular activities and civil society initiatives.

The HEI monitors student satisfaction with the counselling services provided and makes changes as needed.

Indicators:

- *The average duration of the study by levels of study*
- *Dropout/withdrawal rate*

conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
x			

Evidence and Analysis

The panel found that the Academy has a well-developed series of learning support systems that are highly valued by students (M, S). Programmes at the institution are highly vocational and as such there is a strong emphasis on career counselling throughout the application phases and during the early stages of students' courses (SD, S). This includes taught sessions on structural units within the security services and exposure to practical experience in the form of an internship (S). This helps to ensure that students understand the nature of police, border guard and emergency response work along with the demands that will be placed upon them. Students informed the panel that dropout rates based on misunderstanding the nature of the programmes is low (S, SD).

Students also informed the panel that the Academy is responsive to requests for greater insight into specific roles and units within the security services. An example of this included sessions run by guest lecturers which provided more detail on roles within border force security (S).

The panel also heard evidence that where cadets are practising in the field, staff responsible for monitoring their progress are provided with clear instructions and monitoring templates which are mapped to defined outcomes (E).

A holistic approach is in place to support students' academic and psychological counselling needs (SD, M, T, S). This includes support from academic affairs specialists, internship curators, discipline specialists and the Rajaleidja, together with group leaders, who are usually nominated students (SD, S). The panel found that students consider this arrangement to be effective and efficient and that they are able to access the necessary support.

The Academy informed the panel that students with disabilities are not admitted to study at the institution, including those with learning disabilities (M). An exception to this is the Emergency Response programme where students may be admitted with a physical disability. The panel found however that despite this stated approach students are not routinely tested for learning disabilities either during the application phase or beyond the point of admission (S, T) which means that some disabilities may go undiagnosed. The panel therefore considered that there is a possibility that current students may possess disabilities for which they are not receiving support and which may be affecting their progress and achievement. However, when diagnosed the Academy has a support system in place, but this appears to largely consist of the possibility of students re-taking assessments (written communication from the EASS).

The Academy has a very small number of international students, only 0.2% of the student body compared to an Estonian national average of 9.5%. The Academy informed the panel that it is working to better support international students' assimilation into Estonian culture and the life of the Academy (SD, M).

Commendations

- Well-developed and used general learning support systems.

Recommendations

- Consider routine testing to identify undisclosed specific learning disabilities amongst students, and widening the knowledge amongst Academy staff of the existence of learning disability support mechanisms.

1.11 Research, development and/or other creative activity

Standard:

The higher education institution has defined its objectives and focus in the fields of RDC based on its mission, as well as on the expectations and future needs of society, and assesses their implementation and the societal impact of its RDC activities. RDC supports the process of teaching and learning at the higher education institution. Support services for RDC are purposeful and support implementation of the objectives of the core process.

Guidelines:

The HEI places a high value on the role and responsibilities of the field of RDC in society and evaluates the results of its RDC activities, their international visibility and societal impact.

The HEI responds flexibly to the current needs of society and the labour market in terms of its research and plans its research in collaboration with enterprises, public sector institutions and organisations of the third sector.

Members of teaching staff introduce students to their research results as well as the latest scientific achievements in their areas of specialisation, and involve students in their R&D projects where possible.

The organisation and management of RDC take into account thematic differences and the mission (profile) of the HEI.

Indicators depend on the specificities of the HEI:

- *Numerical data: (1) scientific publications by classifiers; (2) public presentations of creative work; recognition from international competitions; reviews in professional publications, etc.; (3) patent applications, patents; (4) textbooks, study aids of various formats, etc.; (5) system development solutions; product development solutions; environmental applications solutions; (6) contracts concluded with enterprises; (7) spin-off companies, etc., in line with the profile and priorities of the HEI; etc.*
- *Number of scientific publications / creative works per member of academic staff and per employee with the requirement to do research (FTE, by areas)*
- *Number and volume of externally funded projects of RDC activities*

conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
x			

Evidence and Analysis

The 2016 accreditation report for the Academy noted that there was a need to increase the awareness amongst staff of both the need for personal research and scholarship and to clarify and promote the support offered by the Academy to undertake these activities. It is clear from both the panel's reading of the self-assessment document (SD) and meetings with staff, students and stakeholders (E, S, T) that the Academy now places increased value on the role and responsibilities of the field of RDC in society and evaluates the results of its RDC activities. The Academy has policies in place to support and encourage research (SD) and these appear to be functioning well (S, SD, T).

It helps that the Academy now has one overarching strategy which explicitly includes research and development objectives (M, SD) and that the Estonian authorities now have greater expectations on research emanating from the Academy (M). The Academy has a clear focus at the management level to build capacity in research (M) and there is now a requirement on relevant full-time academic staff at the Academy to undertake research (SD, T). However, currently it appears that not all academic staff with full-time responsibility are undertaking research (M). The panel also heard from other stakeholders that the emphasis in the Colleges was very much on scholarship activities such as writing textbooks, rather than research (E).

Achievement in research and development is evidenced in a variety of ways, including the publication of a high quality open-access *Proceedings of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences* which are both professionally and academically relevant (see [HERE](#)). Appendix 1 of the SD gives a total of 236 publications by the lecturers of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences from 2014-2018 inclusive. Further evidence is also provided by the significant increase in the numbers of staff and students of the Academy participating in international conferences and projects since 2014 (SD Appendix 2 shows two in 2014 growing to 26 in 2018, S, T). However, the number of completed research projects remains at a low level (Table 28 of SD) and the number of full-time academic staff servicing the curriculum of the police service with PhDs also appears low (SD, Appendix 12) and this is despite the Academy's support for staff (e.g. grants; SD, T) that is available in this respect (and confirmed by S, T, M). Take-up of the option of undertaking a thesis at the final level of at least one of the professional higher education programmes is also low (S), with most students opting instead for the alternative practical examination. This limits the extent of staff student collaboration although this is balanced to some extent by the Masters' programme research (SD, S, T). In terms of applied research (SD, Appendix 5) and scholarship activities the situation is more encouraging with the Academy making a major contribution to specialist professional textbooks that support police work (SD, T).

Commendations

- The commitment by the management of the Academy to build capacity in research.
- The requirement on all relevant academic staff to undertake research means a potential increase in high quality research, particularly of the applied variety (provided it is fully implemented)
- The Academy's open-access *Proceedings of the Estonian Academy of Security Studies* which are of a high quality and both professionally and academically relevant.

- The significant contribution made through the scholarship activities by the Academy (such as professionally-related textbooks).

Recommendations

- To further extend the research culture of the Academy e.g. using research to inform teaching, beyond the current scholarship activities
- Take further steps to encourage academic staff take-up of PhD programmes.

1.12 Service to society

Standard:

The higher education institution initiates and implements development activities, which enhance prosperity in the community and disseminate recent know-how in the areas of the institution's competence. The higher education institution, as a learning-oriented organisation, promotes lifelong learning in society and creates high-quality opportunities for that.

Guidelines:

The HEI contributes to the development of the community's well-being by sharing its resources (library, museums, sports facilities, etc.), by providing consulting and advisory services, and by organising concerts, exhibitions, shows, conferences, fairs and other events.

The HEI involves alumni in activities aimed at the development of the HEI and the knowledge society.

Employees of the HEI participate in the work of professional associations and in other community councils and decision-making bodies as experts, directing society's development processes as opinion leaders. The impact academic employees have on society is taken into account when evaluating their work.

The HEI has defined the objectives for in-service training and measures their implementation. In-service training is planned in accordance with the needs of target groups.

Indicators:

- *Number of people in continuing training (and other privately financed open forms of study), number of lessons or ECTS per participant*

conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
x			

Evidence and Analysis

The Academy initiates and implements development activities, which enhance the security and prosperity of the community. The panel interviews confirmed that the Academy is an acknowledged organiser of public lectures and conferences in the field of internal security (SD, T). An example of this is the autumn international conference on a current topic in the field, which is organised in cooperation with partners since 2013, and where the number of conference participants has doubled over the last few years (SD).

For the work with basic and secondary school students, the Academy has developed various forms of cooperation (SD). The delivery of internal security courses in 12 schools is a good example of the collaboration between higher and general education institutions. The cooperation between the EASS

and the relevant agencies has a positive impact on Russian-speaking applicants for integration into Estonian society (E).

Outside the normal teaching periods, the Academy rents the sport facilities to the local community. The Academy library is open for the internal security agencies and for the alumni (R). The library of the Academy is the only library in Estonia offering a wide spectrum of modern internal security related literature (R, E). The library service outreach services for the Police and Border Guard College of the Academy in Paikuse and also in the Rescue College of the Academy in Väike-Maarja contribute to the development of the community (E, R).

The Academy has almost 11,000 alumni in total. Although, 71% of the alumni responding to an RSU survey have not cooperated with the Academy after graduation (SD), the panel interviews confirmed that the alumni are interested in forms of cooperation which relate to their work and position. They are motivated to keep connected with the EASS and to be involved in the development of the Academy (by conducting training, sharing experiences with students and teachers, also teaching specific field of their profession) (E, S, T), and in its external communication to educate the population (E). The alumni association is responsible for designing a specific action plan for the inclusion of the alumni during 2019 (SD).

The continuing education of the EASS is well-developed and is being organised in a purposeful manner, focussing on the in-service training of internal security. The volume of continuing education, calculated as training days, has increased by 38% in the past three years, the number of participants by 28% and the financial scale by 15% (SD). The external stakeholders informed the panel that the Academy has focused on crisis management training on a tactical level, the further challenge being to provide training at the regional and ministry level (E, T).

Little attention has been paid to the training of volunteers (SD). As the volunteers of police and rescue are trained by police and rescue agencies throughout Estonia, the aim of the Academy is to provide training and open lectures to a wider audience (E, T). More effective involvement of volunteers in internal security enhances social inclusion, supports the development of volunteers and increases the coherence of public authorities and citizens.

Commendations

- Systematic, well thought through and purposeful collaboration with various target groups in the field of internal security promoting service to society.
- The new Academy infrastructure at Kase Street is modern (e.g. library and gyms), offering new opportunities not only to students and teachers, but also to partners, alumni and the public.

Recommendations

- Contribute more widely to educating Estonian society in the field of security (eg. coping in a crisis situation), raising people's awareness and skills and thereby reducing their risk behaviour.

- More active and systematic involvement of alumni as the best experts and practitioners in their field in the development of the Academy (conducting studies, developing curricula, organising internships).

2. Assessment findings of the sample of the study programmes

The assessment panel also evaluated samples of the Police Service study programme during the accreditation process in order to evaluate the implementation of principles and regulations for studies at the HEI level and the functioning of the internal evaluation system of at the level of study programmes.

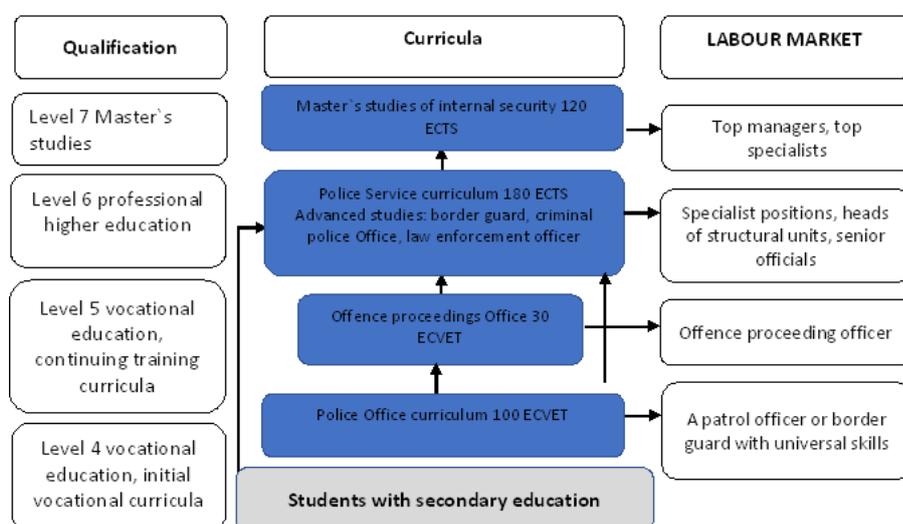
The structure of the remainder of this assessment report combines requirements of several institutional accreditation standards that are relevant at the study programme level and concentrated on three evaluation areas.

The assessment reports of the study programmes are also used as the input to the general report (Part I).

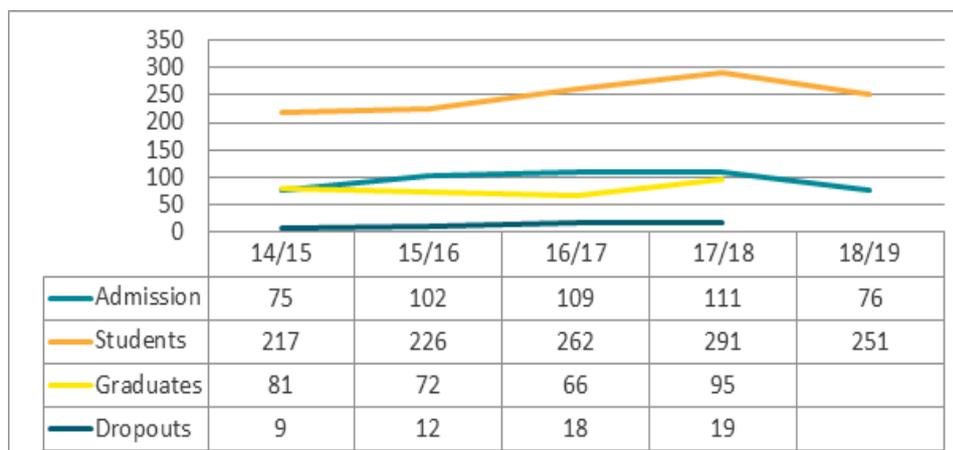
2.1. Police Service Professional HE Study Programme

The Police Service professional higher education study programme is based on the new police and border guard education model since 2017/2018. The model was developed together with the Police and Border Guard Board.

Police and border guard curricula system since 2017/18 (Source: SER EASS, 2018)



Dynamics of students of the Police Service study programme (Source: HaridusSilm, 2019)



2.1.1. Planning and management of studies

- The design and development of study programme(s) take into account the expectations of students and other stakeholders, national strategies, legislation and trends in the particular area as well as labour market needs. The level and volume of RDC activities is sufficient and supports the launching of the study programme(s).
- The objectives of study programme(s), modules (including courses) and their learning outcomes are concrete and coherent. The teaching content and methods and assessment criteria and methods support students in achieving their learning outcomes and developing their key competencies. The study programmes support the development of creativity and entrepreneurship and other general competencies.
- The administration of material and financial resources that ensure the design and implementation of the study programme(s) is purposeful, systematic and sustainable. The learning environment, including materials, tools and technology support the students in achieving their learning outcomes.

Evidence and Analysis

Section 1.1 above, concerning Strategic Management, highlighted that the Academy sets its goals based on the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy and the Ministry of the Interior internal security development plan 2015-2020, as well as the development plans of the partner agencies and this is equally true for the Police Service Professional programme (M, SD).

The Academy are acutely aware of the challenges they face with respect to labour market needs (M). Estonia is subject to an ageing population at present and as such the security services are experiencing a significant proportion of their workforce reaching retirement age while competition

for students across institutions is fierce and challenging (SD, M, E). The Academy is aware of the need to recruit a greater number of mature and/or part-time learners but a further review of how the structure and requirements of the programme might affect recruitment and retention would be beneficial.

Significant emphasis is placed on monitoring and enhancing the quality of the study programme. Feedback from all stakeholders, including students and employers is regularly sought and acted upon. The move to a module based system is understandably taking time to become effectively embedded however it has been received positively by students and staff on the Police Service Professional programme (S, T, E).

Creativity and entrepreneurship are less prominent competencies on this programme, which is highly vocational and designed to meet the needs of the internal security authorities. The Academy excel however at ensuring graduates are competent in their chosen field and this is enabled through coherent learning outcomes and appropriate learning resources (SD, M, R, S). These resources have been strengthened further with the development of a new building that houses high calibre shooting, fitness and VR facilities. Resources at the Academy's were praised by students on the Police programme, in particular the police vehicles which allow them to gain valuable driving experience (R, S).

Commendations

- Enhancement of the learning environment and resources brought about by the effective design and construction of the Academy's new campus

Recommendations

- Review recruitment strategies in an attempt to widen the Academy's potential recruitment pool, in particular surrounding mature applicants

2.1.2. Learning, teaching and assessment

- Conditions and organisation of admission ensure fair access to education and motivated student body. Students' choice of specialisation is supported.
- A student-centred approach is used in the studies, aiming at the students to assume responsibility for planning their studies and career and supporting the development of key competencies and achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme.
- Student assessment, including taking accreditation of prior and experiential learning into account, supports the students and corresponds to the learning outcomes. Objective and reliable assessment is ensured.
- The organisation of studies including practical work and training is based on the specificities of students and forms of study and supports the student in achieving the learning outcomes. Opportunities have been established for mobility within Estonia and internationally.
- Support services for students are in place and available for students. Individual development and progress of students are monitored and supported.
- Graduates of the study programme are competitive in terms of their knowledge and social skills both nationally and internationally.

Evidence and Analysis

Clear arrangements are in place for admission to the Police and Border Guard College which are in line with practice across the rest of the Academy. The Police and Border Guard Service support the admission process by providing background checks and participate in committee discussions where a prospective student's application is not automatically approved or declined. There is a potential issue however, as identified in Section 1.10 of this report, with the admission of students with specific learning disabilities and this applies equally to those studying in the Police and Border Guard College (M, T).

As with other programmes across the Academy each module has a leader who coordinates activity and ensures that it is coherent with the rest of the study programme. The Police and Border Guard College seek to review the curriculum on an annual basis. Staff acknowledged that this process was not always as fluent as it could be but it was still considered effective and drew on the knowledge and expertise of a wide range of staff and stakeholders (M, T, E). The panel found that the objectivity and reliability of the student assessments are ensured due to the methods described above and in the SD, and heard no indications to the contrary in the interviews (S, T).

The panel were provided with explicit examples where a student-centred approach to teaching and learning was employed. For instance, in the Police and Border Guard College students had requested, and been provided with, a more detailed explanation of the different operational units within the Police service (S). Other examples included the use of specialist resources at Paikuse and

group based learning, often involving multiple pathways, using interactive technology to simulate real time crisis situations.

Notwithstanding the comments made in the Internationalisation section above and the fact that the Academy can strengthen its work in this area, students that had taken part in international activity reported positively to the team about their mobility experience (S). Examples were provided of students having travelled to Greece, Italy and Germany with FRONTEX and to witness other security services. Students also informed the team that previously Russian had been taught in three separate blocks during the year and that this 'stop-start' approach had impacted on their learning. As a result of their feedback, Russian is now taught throughout the academic year (S).

Students were also able to direct their learning when it came to opting to undertake a thesis or to sit a final exam. The vast majority of students currently elect to sit the exam. The main reasons for this were that it was seen as preparing them better for real life scenarios and also because it was easier to prepare for alongside work and placements (S).

Due to the nature of the programmes and their tight alignment to national security requirements graduates are highly employable within Estonia (E, M, S).

Commendations

- Student-centred approach to teaching leading to highly motivated, well-trained and in-demand Police Service students.

Recommendations

- Consider testing for undisclosed learning disabilities and increasing awareness of support arrangements for students who may subsequently be discovered to possess specific learning disabilities.
- Ensure students recognise the benefit of assessment by thesis and use this to encourage higher level study and research.

2.1.3. Development, cooperation and internationalisation of teaching staff

- Teaching is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff who support the development of the students.
- Teaching staff follows the principles of academic ethics and the codes of conduct in case of non-compliance.
- Members of the teaching staff participate in international mobility programs which encourage the development of their teaching and RDC activities and the cultural openness of the HEI and the Estonian society.
- The effectiveness of both studies and RDC activities, students' feedback, the effectiveness of supervision, development of teaching and supervision skills, international mobility and entrepreneurial or work experience in the specific field outside the HEI is taken into consideration in evaluating the work of the member of the staff.

Evidence and Analysis

The Academy had over 40 lecturers in place between 2017 and 2018, 29 of whom are currently attached to the Police and Border Guard College. Section 1.6 of this report highlights that only a small number of these staff are professors or associate professors (only two professors in 2018 and no associates). Likewise only five staff held doctoral degrees as of 2018. The panel found that the majority of staff in the Police and Border Guard College failed to see the benefit of doctoral study and instead prized the level of professional experience they possessed (SD, T). Further evidence of the importance attached to practical experience is the fact that a significant number (c.60) of Police and Border Guard staff are used to teach on various modules within the programme (M).

Staff were aware of the importance of academic ethics however there was some disparity between the Academy's stated approach to scrutinising assessed work for malpractice and that outlined by staff and employers (E, T). The panel also found examples of new staff who had not yet been trained in the use of 'anti-plagiarism' software (T). Staff were able to recite a toughening of the Academy's policy stance for any students who are caught cheating.

We saw in-direct evidence of the feedback mechanisms used to assist student learning (S, T).

Staff from the Police and Border Guard College provided numerous examples of engagement with international mobility programmes and of international scholarly activity. This included participation in the FRONTEX grant project and cooperation with colleagues in Latvia and Lithuania with the aim of creating e-learning materials (T).

Commendations

- The extensive use of professional practitioners in students' learning activities which ensures teaching draws on contemporary challenges and scenarios.

Recommendations

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Academy's policy for adhering to academic ethics and that this is consistently implemented, in particular in relation to understanding the use of plagiarism software.
- Strengthen efforts to ensure more staff recognise the value of and engage in doctoral study

Appendix. Schedule of the Visit

Institutional Accreditation
Estonian Academy of Security Sciences
SCHEDULE OF THE VISIT
10 – 15 March 2019

Members of the assessment committee:

Robin Bryant (Chair)	Professor	Canterbury Christ Church University (UK)
Kimmo Himberg	Rector	Police University College (Finland)
Matthew Kitching	Student	Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University (UK)
Mark Frederiks	Coordinator of international policy	Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie (The Netherlands)
Merle Tikk	Deputy Director General	Estonian Emergency Response Centre (Estonia)
Sergiu Vasile	Professor, Dean	"Alexandru Ioan Cuza" Police Academy (Romania)

Coordinators:

Ms Liia Lauri

Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA)

liia.lauri@archimedes.ee

+372 5665 1709

Ms Jekaterina Masenko

Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA)

jekaterina.masenko@archimedes.ee

+372 5903 2163

MONDAY, MARCH 11

Venue: EKKA Office (Toompuiestee 30)

Introductory and panel meeting in EKKA office (address Toompuiestee 30)

9.30 – 12.30 Orientation seminar

- a) Estonian (higher) education system
- b) Quality assurance in higher education and research
- c) Guidelines and procedures of institutional accreditation and study programme group assessment
 - a. Assessment components
 - b. Interviewing techniques
 - c. Writing assessment report
 - d. Decision-making
 - e. Deadlines

12.30 – 16.30 Preparation for the visit: strategy for interviews, final formulation and division of questions, etc.

TUESDAY, MARCH 12			
Venue: Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, Kase 61, Tallinn			
Time	Activity	Experts/ room number	Representatives of the Academy
9.45 – 10.00	Introductory meeting with self-evaluation team	All, Rector's Meeting Room, B308	
10.00 – 10.50	Meeting with the Rector, Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs, Vice-Rector of Development and Innovation	All B308	Rector Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs
11.00 – 11.50 Parallel interviews	Meeting with external stakeholders of the Academy	Bryant, Frederiks, Tikk B308	Head of Personnel Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior Personnel Manager of the Estonian Rescue Board Acting Head of Rescue Work Department of the Estonian Rescue Board Training Specialist of the Emergency Response Centre Training Specialist at the Personnel Department of the Estonian Tax and Customs Board Advisor at the Legal and Development Division of the Prisons Department of the Ministry of Justice
	Meeting with external stakeholders of the Police and Border Guard College graduates	Vasile, Himberg, Kitching A207	Head of the Border Guard Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior Prefect of the North Prefecture of the Police and Border Guard Board Deputy Director General of the Police and Border Guard Board Chief Specialist of the Training and Development Division of the Administration of the Police and Border Guard Board Advisor of the International Cooperation Bureau of the Department of Development of the Police and Border Guard Board

12.00 – 12.50	Meeting with the Head of the Financial Department; Head of the Department of Communication; Head of the General Department, Head of the Administrative Department	All B308	Head of the Financial Department Head of the Department of Communication Head of the General Department Head of the Department of Administration Head of Information and Communication Technology of the Department of Development Rector's Advisor
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch		
14.00 – 15.00	Tour of the facilities	All	Rector's Advisor Rector
15.00 – 15.50	Meeting with the Head of the Department of Academic Affairs; Head of the Language Centre; Head of the Centre for Continuing Education; and Head of Department of International Cooperation and Development	All B308	Head of the Department of Academic Affairs Head of the Language Centre Head of the Centre for Continuing Education Head of the Department of Development Senior Specialist of International Affairs of the Department of Development Advisor of the Police and Border Guard College Development Manager of the Department of Academic Affairs
16.00 – 16.50	Meeting with the Directors of Colleges and Head of the Institute of Internal Security	Bryant, Frederiks, Tikk B308	Deputy Director of the College of Justice Director of the Financial College Head of the Institute of Internal Security Head of Rescue Work Department of Rescue College Methodologist of the Department of Academic Affairs
Parallel interview	Meeting with the Head of the Police and Border Guard College	Vasile, Himberg, Kitching A207	Head of the Police and Border Guard College Deputy Head of the Police and Border Guard College Advisor of the Police and Border Guard College
16.50	Panel meeting; inquiry of documents requested from the Academy	All B308	

WEDNESDAY, March 13			
Venue: Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, Kase 61, Tallinn			
Time	Activity	Experts	Representatives of the Academy
9.45 – 10.45 Parallel interviews	Meeting with the teaching staff	Bryant, Frederiks, Tikk B308	Lecturer at the Department of Crisis Regulation and Fire Safety of Rescue College Lecturer at the Department of Crisis Regulation and Fire Safety of Rescue College Lecturer of the Financial College Professor of the Financial College Assistant Lecturer of the Department of Imprisonment of the College of Justice Lecturer of the Department of Imprisonment of the College of Justice Lecturer at the Centre for Legal and Social Sciences of the Internal Security Institute Lecturer at the Centre for Legal and Social Sciences of the Internal Security Institute
	Meeting with the teaching staff of the Police and Border Guard College	Vasile, Himberg, Kitching A207	Lecturer and Head of the Department of Border Management of the Police and Border Guard College Head of the Department of Security Tactics of the Police and Border Guard College Head of the Department of Offence Proceedings of the Police and Border Guard College Head of the Department of Public Order of the Police and Border Guard College Lecturer of the Department of Public Order of the Police and Border

			<p>Guard College</p> <p>Assistant Lecturer of the Department of Offence Proceedings of the Police and Border Guard College</p> <p>Assistant Lecturer of the Department of Security Tactics of the Police and Border Guard College</p> <p>Assistant Lecturer of the Department of Public Order of the Police and Border Guard College</p>
11.00 – 11.45 Parallel interviews	Meeting with students	Bryant, Frederiks, Tikk B308	<p>Student Year 3 of Customs and Taxation of the Financial College (day-time studies)</p> <p>Student Year 3 of Customs and Taxation of the Financial College (day-time studies)</p> <p>Student Year 1 of Rescue Service of the Rescue College (day-time studies)</p> <p>Student Year 2 of Rescue Service of the Rescue College (distance learning)</p> <p>Student Year 2 of Corrections of the College of Justice (day-time studies)</p> <p>Student Year 3 of Corrections of the College of Justice (day-time studies)</p> <p>Student Year 1, Master's Studies of Internal Security of the Institute of Internal Security (distance learning)</p> <p>Student Year 2, Master's Studies of Internal Security of the Institute of Internal Security (distance learning)</p>
	Meeting with students of the Police and Border Guard College	Vasile, Himberg, Kitching A207	<p>Student Year 2 of Police Service of the Police and Border Guard College (distance learning)</p> <p>Student Year 2 of Police Service of the Police and Border Guard College (distance learning)</p> <p>Student Year 2 of Police Service of the Police and Border Guard College (day-time studies)</p> <p>Student Year 1 of Police Service of the Police and Border Guard College</p>

			(day-time studies) Student Year 1 of Police Service of the Police and Border Guard College (day-time studies)
12.00 – 12.45 Parallel interviews	Meeting with alumni	Bryant, Frederiks, Tikk B308	Customs and Taxation of the Financial College, alumna of 2017 Merli Vesingi – Customs and Taxation of the Financial College, alumna of 2017 Rescue Service of the Rescue College, alumnus of 2018 Rescue Service of the Rescue College, alumnus of 2018 Corrections of the College of Justice, alumnus of 2017 Corrections of the College of Justice, alumna of 2017 Internal Security of the Institute of Internal Security, alumna of 2017 Internal Security of the Institute of Internal Security, alumnus of 2018 Internal Security of the Institute of Internal Security, alumna of 2019
	Meeting with alumni of the Police and Border Guard College	Vasile, Himberg, Kitching A207	Police Service of the Police and Border Guard College, alumnus of 2017 Police Service of the Police and Border Guard College, alumnus of 2018 Police Service of the Police and Border Guard College, alumnus of 2018 Police Service of the Police and Border Guard College, alumnus of 2018 Police Service of the Police and Border Guard College, alumnus of 2018 Police Service of the Police and Border Guard College, alumnus of 2018
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch		
14.45 – 16.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inquiry of documents (in case we have discovered during the visit that we need some more evidence) ● “open doors” – opportunity for those from Academy who want to come to discuss various topics related to institutional accreditation with the experts (please register by sending e-mail: liia.lauri@archimedes.ee by March 	B308	

	<p>12; time limit is 5 minutes per person)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ad hoc interviews (in case we have discovered during the visit that we need to talk (again) with someone) 		
16.30 – 17.00	<p>Open meeting to staff and students: presentation of preliminary conclusions by the panel</p>	<p>All B308</p>	

<p>THURSDAY, MARCH 14 Venue: EKKA Office (Toompuiestee 30)</p>
<p>Panel meeting & discussions, writing the assessment report</p>