

27.01.2021

The Assessment Council for Higher Education of the
Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education
decided:

To consider the secondary condition imposed on the assessment decision for doctoral studies in the Architecture and Building study programme group at Tallinn University of Technology to be satisfied.

Based on subsection 53 (3) of the Administrative Procedure Act, and on the basis of subsection 10 (4) of the Higher Education Act, and points 40.1 and 41 of the document 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups at the Level of Doctoral Studies', authorised in point 24 (5) of the Statutes of the Education and Youth Board; the Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (hereinafter Council) affirms the following:

1. According to clause 53 (1) 2) of the Administrative Procedure Act, a secondary condition of an administrative act is an additional duty related to the principal regulation of the administrative act, and clauses 53 (2) 2) and 3) establish that a secondary condition may be imposed on an administrative act if the administrative act cannot be issued without the secondary condition, or if issue of the administrative act must be resolved on the basis of an administrative right of discretion. On 20.06.2018 the EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as 'the Council') adopted the decision to approve the assessment report¹ and to conduct the next quality assessment of the third cycle of higher education in the Architecture and Building study programme group at Tallinn University of Technology in seven years with the secondary condition that Tallinn University of Technology shall submit to the Council a report on eliminating the shortcomings referred to under point 11 of the assessment decision, by 20.06.2020.
2. On 20.06.2020 Tallinn University of Technology submitted the following documents to the Council: 1) *A report on the fulfilment of the side condition*; 2) *Action Plan for the areas of improvement and recommendations in the Quality Assessment Report of the Doctoral Study Group*.
3. EKKA invited the following members of the Assessment Committee to assess the progress made on the secondary condition:

Ruben Paul Borg	Professor, University of Malta (Malta)
Piia Markkanen	Doctoral student, University of Oulu (Finland)

4. The virtual assessment visit took place on 28.10.2020.
5. EKKA sent the preliminary report to Tallinn University of Technology on 14.12.2020, to which the university replied on 30.12.2020. The assessment committee submitted on 31.12.2020 to EKKA a report on the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in point 11 of the 20.06.2018 Council decision. The verdict was as follows:

The shortcoming underpinning the imposition of the secondary condition	Verdict
<p>Clause 6 (7) 2) of the Regulation of the Government of the Republic 'Higher Education Standard' sets out that conducting the studies meets the requirements if a lecturer or a researcher conducting the studies (which according to clause 2 (6) of the Higher Education Standard also covers supervisors) has the necessary teaching competencies and their qualification supports achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme. Only a few members of the teaching staff of the Civil and Environmental Engineering doctoral programme in Architecture and Urban Design (under its new name Civil Engineering and Architecture) hold a doctoral degree. Although recognised architects are involved in teaching, they lack the qualifications needed for supervising PhD students. To fully develop the Architecture and Urban Design field of study, the relevant research focus has to be strengthened at the University, more members of the teaching staff and supervisors shall have a PhD degree; also, better use should be made of collaboration and synergies with the long-</p>	<p>The shortcoming has been fully eliminated.</p> <p><u>The assessment committee brought out the following positive developments:</u></p> <p>1) There has been visible progress in the area of qualification and experience of teaching staff, contributing to the development of the field of architecture and urban planning as well as academic research thereof. New teaching staff members and supervisors have been recruited, indicating the continuous nature of the development processes. There are 20 teaching staff members in total on the architecture and urban planning branch (14 at the time of the previous assessment), 6 of them holding doctoral degrees. There are 7 doctoral students (2 at the time of the previous assessment). Furthermore, two teaching staff members are about to defend their doctoral theses.</p> <p><u>Recommendations for future development activities:</u></p> <p>1) In longer term, constant development and enhancement of the architecture</p>

standing and successful research teams of the construction field of study.	and urban studies branch is required. Therefore, it is recommendable that a long-term plan be devised, listing current strengths, desirable developments and target areas for specialization.
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6. Given that the assessment committee deem the shortcoming to be fully eliminated, the Council

DECIDED:

to consider the secondary condition imposed on the assessment decision of 20.06.2018 for doctoral studies in the Architecture and Building study programme group at Tallinn University of Technology to be satisfied and leave in force the decision to conduct the next quality assessment in seven years.

The decision was adopted with 9 votes in favour. Against 0.

7. A person who finds that his or her rights have been violated or his or her freedoms restricted by this decision may file a challenge with the EKKA Quality Assessment Council within 30 days after the person filing the challenge became or should have become aware of the contested finding.

The Council shall forward the challenge to its Appeals Committee who shall provide an unbiased opinion in writing regarding the validity of the challenge to the Council, within five days after receipt of the challenge. The Council shall resolve the challenge within ten days of its receipt, taking into account the reasoned opinion of the Appeals Committee. If the challenge needs to be investigated further, the deadline for its review by the Council may be extended by a maximum of thirty days.

A legal challenge to this decision is possible within 30 days after its delivery, by filing an action with the Tallinn courthouse of the Tallinn Administrative Court under the procedure provided for in the Code of Administrative Court Procedure.

Eve Eisenschmidt
Chair of the Council

Hillar Bauman
Secretary of the Council