

**Assessment decision of the Performing Arts Study
Programme Group
Tallinn University**

02/02/2018

The Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA) decided to approve the report of the Assessment Committee and to carry out the next quality assessment of the first and second levels of education of the Performing Arts Study Programme Group of Tallinn University in seven years with a secondary condition.

Pursuant to clauses 41.1 and 42 of the document “Quality Assessment of the Study Programme Group at the First and Second Levels of Higher Education” established on the basis of the authorization contained in § 10 (4) of the University Act and clauses 3.7.3 and 3.7.1 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education states the following:

1. Tallinn University coordinated the quality assessment period of the study programme group with EKKA on 10.11.2016.
2. The Director of EKKA approved with the order of 27.09.2017 the quality assessment committee (hereinafter Committee) for the first and second level of higher education of the Performing Arts Study Programme Group of the University of Tartu, Tallinn University and Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre in the following composition

Hannu Apajalahti	Chairman of the Commission - Lecturer, Sibelius Academy / University of the Arts Helsinki (Finland)
Gretchen Amussen	Director of External Affairs and International Relations, Paris Conservatoire (France)
Paula Tuovinen	Vice-rector University of the Arts Helsinki (Finland)
Anthony Dean	Dean of Cultural Engagement/Professor of Performing arts, University of Winchester (UK)
Ildikó Sirató	Associate professor, Institute for Literary and Cultural Studies, University of Pannonia (Hungary)

Sue Dunderdale	Director, writer, producer (UK)
Ankna Arockiam	student; Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (UK)

- Tallinn University submitted the following curricula for assessment in the Performing Arts Study Programme Group:

Choreography (Bachelor's Study)
Choreography (Master's Study)

- Tallinn University submitted a self-analysis report to the EKKA office on 23.08.2017, which was sent to the committee by the assessment coordinator on 8.09.2017.
- The assessment visit to Tallinn University took place on 02-11 November 2017.
- The Committee sent the draft assessment report to the EKKA office on 8.01.2018, which EKKA forwarded to the institution of higher education for comment on 9.01.2018 and to which Tallinn University submitted a reply on 17.01.2018.
- The Committee submitted the final assessment report to the EKKA office on 22.01.2018. The assessment report is an integral part of the decision. The report is available on the EKKA website.
- The Secretary of the Assessment Council forwarded the final assessment report and self-analysis report to the members of the Assessment Council on 22.01.2018.
- The Assessment Council discussed the received documents at the meeting of 02.02.2018 with the participation of nine members and decided to highlight the following strengths, recommendations, and areas for improvement concerning the first and second levels of higher education of the Performing Arts Study Programme Group of Tallinn University.

The Committee's general recommendations regarding the Performing Arts Study Programme Group at Tallinn University, the University of Tartu and the Estonian Academy of Music and Theater

- Taking into account interviews conducted with teachers, students, alumni, and employers, the Assessment Committee recommends organizing a national (including between different universities) discussion on the roles and goals of different music and theater art curricula in the Estonian higher education and cultural landscape at the initiative of professional networks. Consolidation of Estonian folk dance and music curricula could be considered.

Study programme group strengths

- Curricula support the development of entrepreneurial skills.
- Communication between faculty and students is smooth and informal.
- Good access to books and e-learning materials is guaranteed.
- In 2019, it is planned to build a new study building with rooms suitable for dance studies.

- 5) Students are satisfied with the transparency and objectivity of the assessment.
- 6) The study programme is taught by a small number of highly qualified lecturers who are passionately committed to their field and who do good teamwork with each other. Lecturers have a clear interest in keeping abreast of the latest developments in the field and in developing curricula further internationally.
- 7) The age distribution of lecturers is well balanced.
- 8) The curricula have dynamic alumni who are professionally active and shape the future of the Estonian dance landscape.
- 9) Students' satisfaction with the content, format, and methods of study is generally high.
- 10) As part of their studies, students participate in workshops organized by other Estonian and foreign higher education institutions.
- 11) The employment rate for graduates is high.
- 12) Students are very committed to their studies and actively provide feedback.
- 13) Student feedback is taken seriously and is central to study programme development.

Areas for improvement and recommendations related to the Study Programme Group

- 1) It is recommended to develop mechanisms for collecting formal feedback from employers, alumni, and other stakeholders on new challenges and opportunities in professional practice to be taken into account in further study programme development.
- 2) The curricula do not place enough emphasis on stage choreography, creative and improvisational work, and contemporary dance. In this sense, the name of the curricula (Choreography) is somewhat misleading and should be better aligned with their content.
- 3) Study programme coherence should be improved. In the case of the Master's program, it is desirable to define what constitutes the technical core of dance in the study programme and to remove from the study programme courses that do not help to build students' skills logically and are not relevant enough in today's context, such as the subject of character dance.
- 4) Estonian educational institutions conducting studies in the field of performing arts could cooperate more with each other than before.
- 5) The system of admission to curricula (in alternating years for the specialties of folk dance and contemporary dance) creates gaps in students' studies and makes it difficult to understand the general structure of curricula.
- 6) It is recommended to provide financial resources to the curricula independently of foreign funding, which would enable students to fully achieve their learning outcomes. Among other things, adequate funding should be provided to support student mobility abroad and to involve foreign lecturers in teaching. Technology also needs to be updated and suitable technical equipment provided for the new proposed study building (lighting, sound, and IT technology).
- 7) From the point of view of the health of students and teachers, it is essential to install specially covered floors and proper technical infrastructure for the planned dance studios.
- 8) Students should be given more personal feedback on their creative work during the learning process.
- 9) Practical and theoretical learning could be even better linked.
- 10) The resource of teachers is not always sufficiently ensured - for example, contemporary/composition dance is regularly taught by only two teachers, which may not be sufficient for the specific training of students. It is necessary to involve visiting lecturers with new ideas and competencies in teaching for longer periods, allocating the necessary financial resources. The number of teachers teaching different dance genres could be better balanced.
- 11) Teachers' self-development should be addressed consistently and in-depth. Teachers should be offered more opportunities to participate in conferences and festivals abroad.

- 12) Students would like to delve more into the different styles of contemporary dance in their studies.
 - 13) Students should be offered career counseling.
 - 14) More resources should be invested in student mobility abroad.
- 10.** Clause 41 of the document “Quality Assessment of the Study Programme Group at the First and Second Levels of Higher Education” stipulates that the Assessment Council shall approve the assessment report within three months after its receipt. The Council will consider the strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations identified by the Assessment Committee and decide to carry out the next quality assessment of the study programme group in three, five, or seven years.
- 11.** The Council considered the strengths, areas for improvement and recommendations set out in clause 9 and found that the study programme, the studies provided, and the development activities related to the studies meet the requirements on the following conditions:
- Pursuant to § 6 (5) of the Government of the Republic Regulation “Higher Education Standard” (HES), *the name and structure of the study programme must be consistent and the teaching methods and conduct of studies, including the volume of independent work and practice, must support the achievement of study programme objectives.* The curricula do not place enough emphasis on stage choreography, creative and improvisational work, and contemporary dance. In this sense, the name of the curricula (Choreography) is somewhat misleading and should be better aligned with their content. Study programme coherence should also be improved. In the case of the Master's program, it is desirable to define what constitutes the technical core of dance in the study programme and to remove from the study programme courses that do not help to build students' skills logically and are not relevant enough in today's context.
 - Pursuant to § 6 (7) 4) of the HES, *the necessary premises must be provided for teaching, the furnishings and equipment of which are sufficient and modern to achieve the objectives of the curricula and the condition of which complies with the health and safety requirements provided by legislation.* From the point of view of the health of students and teachers, it is essential to install specially covered floors and proper technical infrastructure (lighting, sound, and IT technology) in the dance premises.
 - § 6 (7) 1) of the HES prescribes that *there must be full-time lecturers for teaching, the number of which is sufficient to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme due to their tasks, the volume of teaching and research performed and the number of supervised students.* The resource of teachers is not always sufficiently ensured - for example, contemporary/composition dance is regularly taught by only two teachers, which may not be sufficient for the specific training of students. It is necessary to involve visiting lecturers with new ideas and competencies in teaching for longer periods, allocating the necessary financial resources. The number of teachers teaching different dance genres could be better balanced.
- 12.** Pursuant to § 53 (1) 2) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), *a secondary condition to an administrative act is an additional obligation related to the basic regulation of the administrative act* and pursuant to clause 3 also *an additional condition for the right arising from the basic regulation of the administrative act.* § 53 (2) 2) and 3) of the APA provide that *a secondary condition may be imposed on an administrative act: if the administrative action cannot be issued without a secondary condition or if the issue of the administrative act must be decided on the basis of an administrative right of discretion.* The Council considered that, without the secondary conditions, the next quality assessment of the study programme group should be carried out in

five years and on the basis of clauses 41.1 and 42 of the document "Quality assessment of the study programme group at the first and second levels of higher education."

DECIDED

To approve the assessment report and to carry out the next assessment of the quality of the first and second levels of higher education of the Performing Arts Study Programme Group of Tallinn University in seven years with a secondary condition.

Tallinn University shall submit a report on the elimination of the deficiencies described in clause 11 in English by 02.02.2020 at the latest. The members of the Assessment Committee are involved in assessing the fulfillment of the secondary condition.

The decision was adopted by nine votes in favor. None opposed.

13. The Assessment Council proposes to Tallinn University to submit to EKKA no later than 02.02.2020 an action plan on taking into account also the other areas for improvement and recommendations presented in the report.
14. A person who considers that the decision has violated his or her rights or restricted his or her freedoms may file a challenge with the Assessment Council of EKKA within thirty (30) days after the appellant became aware of or should have become aware of the contested act.

The Assessment Council shall send the challenge to the challenge committee of the Assessment Council of EKKA, which shall submit a written, impartial opinion to the Assessment Council on the reasoning of the challenge within five (5) days of receipt of the challenge. The Assessment Council shall resolve the challenge within ten (10) days of receipt, taking into account the reasoned position of the appeal committee. If the challenge needs to be further investigated, the Assessment Council may extend the term for reviewing the challenge by up to thirty (30) days.

Contestation of a decision in court is possible within thirty (30) days as of its service by submitting an appeal to the Tallinn Courthouse of the Tallinn Administrative Court pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Administrative Court Procedure Act.

Tõnu Meidla
Head of the Council

Hillar Bauman
Secretary of the Council