

29.08.2019

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

To consider that the secondary condition set for the assessment decision of the first and second levels of the teacher training and educational science study programme group of the University of Tartu has been fulfilled.

Based on § 53 (3) and § 66 (2) (3) and (3) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and pursuant to § 10 (4) of the Universities Act and clause 3.7.3 and clause 3.7.1 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education on the basis of clause 41.1/41.2 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 therein, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (hereinafter the Council) states:

1. § 53 (1) 2) of the APA provides that *an additional duty related to the principal regulation of the administrative act* and § 53 (2) 2) and 3) provide that *a secondary condition may be imposed on an administrative act: if the administrative act cannot be issued without the secondary condition or if the issue of the administrative act must be resolved on the basis of the administrative right of discretion*. On 10.03.2017, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (hereinafter the Council) adopted a decision to approve the assessment report ¹ and to carry out the next quality assessment of the first and second levels of higher education of the Teacher Training and Educational Science Study Programme Group of the University of Tartu in 7 years, with the secondary condition that the University of Tartu submits no later than 10.03.2019 ² an action plan and activity report for the elimination of the deficiencies set out in clause 11 of the assessment decision.
2. On 11.03.2018, the University of Tartu sent the following documents to the Council: 1) Progress Report on the fulfillment of the secondary conditions, 2) Job descriptions of academic staff, 3) Action plan for the activities carried out and planned in the study programme group and study plans for taking into account the recommendations and identified areas for improvement. EKKA involved the

¹ The assessment report is an integral part of the decision and is available on the EKKA website.

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following members of the Committee in the assessment of the fulfillment of the secondary condition:

- 1) **Milan Pol**, Professor, Masaryk University Brno, Czech Republic
- 2) **Margit Timakov**, Chairman of the Board of the Estonian Teachers' Union
3. The members of the Committee visited the University of Tartu on 28.05.2019 and submitted to EKKA on 09.07.2019 a report on the elimination of the deficiencies described in clause 11 of the decision of the Council of 10.03.2017. The assessment of the Committee was as follows:

Deficiency underlying imposition of the secondary condition	The assessment of the Committee
<p>Pursuant to § 6 (5) of the Government of the Republic Regulation "Higher Education Standard" (HES), <i>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 objectives of the study programme.</i> Pursuant to § 6 (2) of the SHE, <i>study programmes and the conduct of studies must, inter alia, be in accordance with national quality requirements and agreements.</i> Clause 5.1.2 of the regulation "Quality assessment of the study programme group at the first and second levels of higher education" adopted on the basis of § 10 (4) of the Universities Act and clause 3.7.1 of the statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education stipulates <i>that the structure and content of study programme modules must support the achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.</i> The structure and content of study programmes do not pay enough attention to the topics of inclusive education and work with students with special educational needs. The study programme of an Early Years Teacher at Narva College does not focus clearly enough on pre-school education. The number of subjects common with</p>	<p>The deficiency has been completely remedied.</p> <p><u>The Assessment Committee highlighted the following positive developments:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Changes have been introduced in the study programmes. The topic of inclusive education is addressed both in separate subject courses and within other subject courses. The special education study programme has close cooperation with other educational science study programmes. 2) Narva College has specified its focus and included more internships in the study programme of Early Years Teacher, including children with special needs. The study programmes of Narva College also address the issue of inclusive education more. <p><u>Recommendations of the Assessment Committee for further development activities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) It is necessary to continue developing the qualifications of all lecturers and exchanging best practices on inclusive education. 2) Given the priority state funding

<p>the study programme of a Primary School Teacher has to be reduced and more subjects related to pre-school teaching and development need to be included in the study programme. The special education study programme does not provide enough internship opportunities for students. Exposure to children with special educational needs should be provided to students at an earlier stage of their studies.</p>	<p>for teacher training, we must be prepared for a situation where the number of students is growing.</p>
<p>According to clause 5.3.6 of the Regulation "Quality Assessment of the Study Programme Group at the First and Second Levels of Higher Education", <i>the study process must support study academic mobility</i>, and clause 5.5.4 stipulates that <i>students study as foreign or visiting students in other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions</i>. The level of international mobility of students is low. In study programmes, mobility opportunities are restricted by overly strict rules on the transfer of ECTS credits acquired abroad. The study programmes of Narva College do not see international mobility as a part of studies. The international mobility of students must definitely be encouraged and foreign students must also be recruited for study programmes.</p>	<p>The deficiency has been substantially remedied.</p> <p><u>The Assessment Committee highlighted the following positive developments:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Mobility is supported at university, institute, and study programme level. A mobility window has been introduced, English language courses have been developed, and students are involved in international research groups. The mobility of lecturers is also supported, which is also a good example for students. Discussions and seminars are organized to address mobility issues. Students who participate in the mobility share their experiences with other students, which can be more effective than any campaign initiated by the state or the university. 2) Study programmes are flexible enough to take into account the individual needs of students. <p><u>Recommendations of the Assessment Committee for further development activities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Introducing flexible solutions to students should be more systematic.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Students for whom long-term mobility is not suitable should be offered more opportunities for short-term mobility. 3) Cooperation with Narva College should be more extensive. 4) More English language courses should be prepared.
<p>Pursuant to § 6 (7) 1) of the Government of the Republic Regulation "Standard of Higher Education" (SHE), the conduct of studies conforms to the requirements: <i>if ordinary teaching staff and research staff are available for the studies, who meet the qualification requirements established in legal instruments and whose number is, based on their responsibilities, the volume of conducted studies and research and the number of supervised students, adequate for achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.</i> The share of research in the workload of lecturers is mostly small. The teaching workload of some lecturers does not allow them to focus enough on research, which inevitably affects the quality of teaching. Study and research activities are not interconnected, and students of Narva College study programmes are not involved in research work. Thus, the number of lecturers whose research would support the achievement of the goals of the study programmes is not sufficient in terms of the number of students for the purposes of SHE.</p>	<p>The deficiency has been substantially remedied.</p> <p><u>The Assessment Committee highlighted the following positive developments:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) From the autumn of 2018, new job descriptions are in force at the university, which will, among other things, establish the proportions between different positions. 2) New research groups have been formed at the university (e.g., in the fields of didactics, inclusive education, and virtual reality), and students have also been involved in their activities. Many large-scale research projects make it possible to strengthen research and its links with teaching. The involvement of Narva College students in research projects has also increased. 3) Annual development interviews with lecturers are important in initiating the necessary changes. <p><u>Recommendations of the Assessment Committee for further development activities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Attention must continue to be paid to involving all lecturers in research and to distributing the workload more evenly among lecturers. Lecturers who have not

	<p>yet been involved in research should be provided with training to develop their research skills.</p> <p>2) Opportunities should be found to involve Narva College students in Tartu research groups.</p>
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4. Taking into account that the deficiencies identified in the secondary condition have been fully or substantially remedied, the Council

DECIDED:

To consider that the secondary condition set for the quality assessment decision of the first and second study levels of the Teacher Training and Educational Science Study Programme Group of the University of Tartu adopted on 10.03.2017 has been fulfilled and to maintain the decision to carry out the next quality assessment after seven years.

The decision was adopted by eight votes in favor, none opposed.

5. The Council requests the University of Tartu to submit information on the consideration of the recommendations for further development activities of the Assessment Committee mentioned in this decision no later than 29.08.2020.
6. A person who finds that the decision of the Assessment Council has violated his or her rights or restricted his or her freedoms may file a challenge pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Administrative Procedure Act. The challenge shall be submitted to the Assessment Council of EKKA within thirty (30) days after the person who filed the challenge 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.

Challenging of a decision of the Assessment Council of EKKA 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.

Eve Eisenschmidt
Chair of the Council

Hillar Bauman
Secretary of the Council