

22.11.2019

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

To consider the secondary condition set for the assessment decision of the first and second levels of higher education of the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery Study Programme Group of the Estonian University of Life Sciences to be fulfilled.

Based on § 53 (3) and § 66 (2) (3) and (3) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and pursuant to § 37 and § 48 (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<sup>1</sup> and to carry out the next quality assessment of the first and second levels of higher education of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Study Programme Group of the Estonian University of Life Sciences after seven years, with the secondary condition that the Estonian University of Life Sciences submits a report to the Council no later than 10.03.2019<sup>2</sup> on the rectification of the deficiency referred to in clause 11 of the assessment decision.
2. On 11.03.2019, Estonian University of Life Sciences sent the following documents to the Council: 1) Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery Study Programme Group. Progress report, 2) Action plan of the areas of improvement and recommendations submitted in the assessment decision of the Agriculture,

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

<sup>2</sup>The assessment report is available on the EKKA website.

Forestry, and Fishery Study Programme Group. In assessing the fulfillment of the secondary condition, EKKA included a committee member in the assessment:

**Ole Martin Eklo**, Professor, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Norra

3. EKKA sent a preliminary report to the Estonian University of Life Sciences on 02.10.2019, to which the University submitted a reply on 03.10.2019. On 04.10.2019, the Assessor submitted a report to EKKA on the elimination of the deficiencies described in clause 11 of the decision of the Council of 10.03.2017. The assessment was as follows:

Deficiency underlying imposition of the secondary condition	Assessment
Pursuant to § 6 (3) of the Government Regulation "Standard of Higher Education" (SHE), the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme must be equivalent and comparable to the learning outcomes of higher education levels described in clauses 1.1 and 3.1 of Annex 1 (incl. ability to critically evaluate one's activities in solving problems and/or research issues in the field). § 6 (4) of SHE prescribes the requirement that the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated in such a way that on the basis thereof it is possible to assess the knowledge and skills of the graduate of the study programme. Pursuant to § 6 (2) of SHE , study programmes and the conduct of studies must, inter alia, be in accordance with national quality requirements and agreements. Pursuant to clause 5.3.7 of the Regulation "Study programme group quality assessment at the first and second level 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, the <i>assessment of learning outcomes must be relevant, transparent and objective and support learner's development</i> . In the animal science study programmes, the	<p><b>The deficiency has been completely remedied.</b></p> <p><u>The Assessor highlighted the following positive developments:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Learning outcomes and expectations for students are more clearly defined and communicated to students. All subject courses are divided into sub-modules based on the learning outcomes, and the assessment system and assessment criteria are related to the planned learning outcomes. The evaluation criteria have been revised.</li><li>2) The list of study literature in SIS has been updated.</li><li>3) In order to increase the objectivity of the assessment, at least two lecturers are involved in large-scale subject courses.</li><li>4) In order to encourage critical thinking, the role of problem-based learning has been increased - reports on farm visits are prepared, case studies and group work, etc. are conducted.</li></ol> <p><u>Recommendations for further development activities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) The reason for not participating in lectures is often the overlap of subject courses. Courses should be</li></ol>

<p>assessment system is not sufficiently clearly linked to the learning outcomes to be achieved, and the assessment criteria need to be clarified. In some cases, students are not aware of the expectations placed on them in their studies. The student essays and reports presented to the Committee consisted primarily of a reference to teaching materials that did not support the development of students' critical thinking.</p>	<p>reviewed regularly to avoid duplication.</p> <p>2) It is recommended that teachers conduct more problem-based exercises so that students can use their analytical skills to solve problems. Problem-based learning is an important tool for developing students' analytical skills and solving scientific questions.</p>
<p>Section 5.1.5 of the document "Quality Assessment of the Study Programme Group at the First and Second Levels of Higher Education stipulates that the <i>feedback of students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders must be taken into account when developing the study programme</i>. Feedback from students and lecturers is not collected or taken into account sufficiently systematically for all subjects. Both students and lecturers consider the current feedback system based on SIS to be inefficient and unreliable.</p>	<p><b>The deficiency has been completely remedied.</b></p> <p><u>The Assessor highlighted the following positive developments:</u></p> <p>1) Once a year, the feedback received by the Department of Academic Affairs is summarized and discussed with the heads of the institutes. Based on the problems that have arisen, an action plan is drawn up, which is also discussed with the Student Council. In order to change the structure of the feedback questionnaire, several seminars and discussions have been organized with students and lecturers.</p> <p>2) Based on the feedback received, a number of training sessions have been conducted in the areas of teaching methodology, digital technology, and e-learning.</p>
<p>Clause 5.3.3 of the Regulation "Assessment of the Quality of a Study Programme Group at the First and Second Levels of Higher Education" stipulates that <i>modern, effective, and effective teaching methods and tools are used in the study process</i>. Not all lecturers use sufficiently innovative teaching methods and materials or digital tools in the Fishery Study</p>	<p><b>The Fishery Study Programme is closed, the elimination of the deficiency cannot be assessed.</b></p>

Programme.

4. Given that all the deficiencies have been fully eliminated, the Council

**DECIDED:**

**To consider that the secondary condition set for the quality assessment decision of the first and second study levels of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Study Programme Group of the Estonian University of Life Sciences 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. 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 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.

**Tauno Otto  
Deputy Chair of the Council**

**Hillar Bauman  
Secretary of the Council**