

## Decision of the quality assessment of the Medicine Study Programme Group of the University of Tartu

27.04.2020

The Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education decided to approve the report of the Assessment Committee and to carry out the next quality assessment of the first and second levels of higher education of the Medicine Study Programme Group of University of Tartu in seven years.

Pursuant to § 48 (4) of Higher Education Act, § 10 (4) of University Act, clause 41 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 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 (hereinafter the Council) states the following:

1. On 28.01.2015, the Council decided to carry out the next quality assessment of the first and second levels of higher education of Medicine Study Programme Group of the University of Tartu after 5 years.
2. University of Tartu coordinated the quality assessment period of the Medicine Study Programme Group with EKKA on 1.02.2019.
3. On 13.11.2019, the Director of EKKA approved the Quality Assessment Committee of the Medicine Study Programme Group of University of Tartu (hereinafter the Committee) in the following composition:

<b>Janusz Janczukowicz (Chairman)</b>	Vice Dean for Education and Assessment Methodology, Medical University of Lodz- MUL (Poland)
<b>Andrea Olschewski</b>	Vice Rector for Medicine and Dean of the Medical Faculty Johannes Kepler University, Linz (Austria)
<b>Olli-Pekka Lappalainen</b>	Assistant professor, University of Helsinki (Finland); Ministry of Social

	Affairs and Health, Council for Choices in Health Care in Finland (Finland)
<b>Jouni Hirvonen</b>	Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy; Professor of Pharmaceutical Technology; University of Helsinki (Finland)
<b>Riho Tapfer</b>	President, the Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers in Estonia
<b>Gerlin Gil</b>	Student, TalTech Student Union Leader; TalTech Development Fund Project Manager, Estonia

4. University of Tartu submitted the following study programmes for assessment in the Medicine Study Programme Group:
  - Medicine (in Estonian, integrated Bachelor's and Master's studies)*
  - Medicine (in English, integrated Bachelor's and Master's studies)*
  - Dentistry (integrated Bachelor's and Master's studies)*
  - Pharmacist (integrated Bachelor's and Master's studies)*
5. University of Tartu submitted a self-analysis report to the EKKA office on 4.10.2019, which was sent to the committee by the assessment coordinator on 1.11.2019.
6. The assessment visit to the University of Tartu took place on 3.–4.12.2019.
7. The Committee sent the draft assessment report to the EKKA office on 14.01.2020, which EKKA forwarded to the institution of higher education for comment on 17.01.2020 and to which University of Tartu submitted a reply on 03.02.2020.
8. The Committee submitted the final assessment report to the EKKA office on 18.02.2020. The assessment report is an integral part of the decision. The report is available on the EKKA website.
9. The Secretary of the Assessment Council forwarded the final assessment report and self-analysis report to the members of the Assessment Council on 09.03.2020.
10. The Council discussed the received documents at the meeting of 27.04.2020 with the participation of 10 members and decided to highlight the following strengths, recommendations and areas for improvement of the Medicine Study Programme Group of University of Tartu.

**The Commission identified the following cross-cutting strengths in the study programmes of the University of Tartu Medicine Study Programme Group:**

1. The university has undergone major positive changes in terms of resources and learning environment - new buildings, a new simulation center and extensive use of e-learning opportunities.
2. Simulation-based teaching methods have been introduced. The new simulation center creates excellent opportunities for interprofessional learning.
3. In the near future, different study programmes of the Faculty of Medicine will be conducted in one campus area, which will increase synergies between specialties.

**The Committee highlighted the following areas for improvement and recommendations for the Medicine Study Programme of the University of Tartu:**

1. Although there have been a number of very positive developments in study programmes, the pace of implementation of previous recommendations is still too slow. There is a need to move more quickly towards integrated study programmes that include interprofessional elements, including an integrated assessment strategy.
2. Focusing on the development of students' clinical skills is a key direction in the development of a modern study programme. The share of clinical and practical elements in the study programmes of the University of Tartu has also been increased, but at the same time it is important to develop active learning in the course of practical learning. There is a need to further reduce the share of theoretical knowledge and to focus more on developing students' skills and attitudes.
3. The role of patients as partners in medical education should be enhanced by involving them, inter alia, in study programme development and the learning and assessment process.
4. Subjects that focus on the development of social competencies have been added to the study programmes, but there is a need to further find ways to integrate patient-centered social competences and intercultural communication skills and ethical attitudes throughout the study programme.
5. The creation of a lecturer portfolio is a recommendation that was already made in the previous assessment but has not yet been implemented. The implementation of this recommendation is still relevant today.
6. The Committee heard a number of complaints about students' professional misconduct. This problem is ubiquitous in higher education, and requires a clear and systematic approach. The Committee recommends the development of a strategy for identifying

- and correcting professional misconduct, which would, inter alia, make it possible to assess a student's ability to carry out practical procedures.
7. According to the lecturers themselves, there is a clear need for a lecturer development program. In addition, student feedback indicates that clinical faculty need additional training in teaching methods. A specific action plan to support the continuous development of lecturers would be useful. It is also necessary to develop criteria for recognizing good practice and teaching.

## **MEDICINE (INTEGRATED BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S STUDIES)**

### **Strengths**

1. The Faculty of Medicine has a good infrastructure, including the University Hospital.
2. Use of Moodle throughout the study period and use of Amboss in the sixth year.
3. The lecturers of the Faculty of Medicine are motivated and committed.
4. Some lecturers are proficient in modern teaching methods and regularly participate in conferences on the subject.
5. High employment rate of the alumni of the Faculty of Medicine.
6. A well-organized student feedback system.

### **Areas for improvement and recommendations**

1. Modern teaching materials have already been introduced. The effectiveness of their use and the implementation of e-learning and blended learning throughout the study programme should now be assessed, followed by a cycle of change.
2. Different levels of practical clinical competence in medical training must be defined: (a) before the start of the practical course, (b) before the start of the clinical practice in the sixth year, and (c) the level of the competence at the time of graduation.
3. Methods for assessing general skills need to be developed.
4. A significant part of the lecturers are not involved in the development of professional and teaching skills. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct regular trainings for lecturers, especially for lecturers working in hospitals.
5. Admission to the study programme is still based on state examinations. It is recommended to further develop the admission system, taking into account international good practices and assessing cognitive and other skills.
6. A systematic analysis of the causes of drop-outs should be carried out and an action plan developed.
7. Particular attention should be paid to developing graduates' communication skills, taking into account the diverse backgrounds of patients.

### **Proposals for further developments**

- Extend the use of Amboss to fourth- and fifth-year students.
- New e-learning resources should be introduced and existing ones constantly updated.
- Although there is a formal and non-formal student feedback system for study programme development, special attention should be paid to student feedback on the achievement of practical skills and learning outcomes.
- The vertical integration of the "Student Research" module would allow for better development and consolidation of students' research skills.
- It would be useful to expand the range of mobility programs.

## **DENTISTRY (INTEGRATED BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S STUDIES)**

### **Strengths**

1. The Dentistry Study Programme is very practical and closely related to working life.
2. In 2020, a new clinic building with the most modern equipment will be gradually opened.
3. The pre-clinical practice rooms have all the necessary equipment and the learning conditions are excellent.
4. The study programme is well structured. The learning outcomes are in line with European standards and presented logically.
5. Teaching usually takes place in small groups, which provides supervision for all students.
6. Highly motivated, dedicated and enthusiastic clinical lecturers with excellent knowledge of all disciplines of dentistry.
7. The mentoring system for lecturers is well developed. Faculty members are active users of the IT support and courses offered to develop their digital learning skills.
8. The student portfolio introduced has a significant impact on the assessment of competence-based progress and allows graduates to better present themselves to potential employers.
9. The opportunities for e-learning in the study programme are very good.
10. Students feel that their voices are heard in the faculty. They are represented in various committees and working groups at all levels.

### **Areas for improvement and recommendations**

1. The Committee recommends making more effective use of the ADEE guidelines for dental education and updated European educational standards in study programme development. Expanding the international connections of the study programme would probably motivate the continuous improvement of the study programme.

2. Some subjects use study materials from years ago. Every lecturer must be obliged to regularly review and update the study materials in order to avoid the use of outdated literature and study materials.
3. It is important to quickly address the lack of patients in prosthetics to ensure that all students have an adequate level of preparation.
4. The availability of the latest clinical dental materials must be ensured in the dental clinic.
5. The number of research papers in the field of dentistry published in international peer-reviewed publications is small, which indicates a lack of resources and/or a lack of interest in research. In order to adhere to the core values of the University of Tartu, research and international cooperation should be actively promoted in order to conduct evidence-based dental education.
6. Coping of Russian-speaking students in the Estonian-language study programme still needs more attention.

### **Proposals for further developments**

- The Committee recommends finding more opportunities for interprofessional learning in the study programme, such as joint courses and joint events with dental technicians.
- The assessment committee recommends moving towards competence-based education by increasing cross-curricular learning in different subjects in the study programme (e.g., periodontology, oral health promotion, prosthetics) and cooperation between medicine and dentistry. In addition, it is recommended to cooperate more closely with physiotherapy studies at Tartu Health Care College.
- The assessment committee considers that the future of the study programme is in jeopardy if the Institute of Dentistry continues to isolate itself scientifically and educationally from the international scientific and educational community.
- The assessment committee recommends that lecturers participate more actively in pedagogical training and participate more in international events on dental and health education.
- Faculty rotation is very low, which can hamper developments in the renewal of teaching and learning methods. It is recommended to increase the number of visiting lecturers in special courses. Increasing the mobility of lecturers could also motivate and improve the continuous development of the study programme.
- The administration of the Institute should closely monitor the workload of lecturers in connection with non-university clinical work.
- The assessment committee recommends that the institute increase the number of doctoral students in order to ensure the succession of academically oriented and trained lecturers.
- It is recommended to launch more short-term mobility projects so that students can also visit other universities.

- The assessment committee recommends improving access to psychological counseling and preventing drop-out due to mental well-being.

## **PHARMACIST (INTEGRATED BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S STUDIES)**

### **Strengths**

1. Pharmacy managers and other external stakeholders are satisfied with the quality of recent graduates and with the fact that they are ready for professional work immediately after graduation.
2. State-of-the-art, spacious learning facilities, including a state-of-the-art library and laboratory facilities and equipment.
3. A recently updated study programme where study programme objectives, methods, and assessment are clearly defined and consistent.
4. The professional competence and commitment of the lecturers of the Institute of Pharmacy is high. The head of the study programme was elected the lecturer of the year in 2019 at the University of Tartu.
5. A research project at the end of the studies that gives students a good understanding of the basics of practical and theoretical research and a possible incentive to enter doctoral studies.

### **Areas for improvement and recommendations**

1. It is essential that the internal evaluation and follow-up of the renewed study programme be comprehensive, especially in the development of transferable skills of students and the implementation of modern assessment standards.
2. The study programmes in the field of medicine should discuss and agree on the recruitment of full-time academic staff and doctoral students in the condition of limited resources. For example, the pharmacy study programme receives a new doctoral student from time to time, not necessarily every year. This limits the development of the succession of lecturers.
3. More foreign lecturers should be invited to Tartu for a shorter or longer period of time, especially on the topics of the pharmaceutical industry, which are largely absent in the current study programme.
4. Proactive measures must be planned to find good student candidates for the Pharmacist Study Programme.
5. It is necessary to reduce the drop-out rate in the Pharmacist Study Programme in order to train more specialists necessary for Estonian society.

### **Proposals for further developments**

- Career opportunities for pharmacists, especially in clinical pharmacy, are not fully recognized in Estonian society. Therefore, the voice of the academic circles of pharmacy and medicine could be stronger if the public debates concern the further status and development of the profession of pharmacist in Estonia - the strong status of pharmacists as health care providers should be emphasized.
- The content and organization of pharmacist training courses should be further developed to ensure that graduates are prepared to work as health professionals and entrepreneurs. This pursuit should also be clearly reflected in the learning outcomes.
- More use should be made of e-learning opportunities. Students are digitally competent and more open to new technologies than lecturers.
- As mentioned in the self-analysis of the study programme, an important goal should be to gradually increase the volume of study courses in English. Increasing student mobility abroad is also very important.

11. Clause 41 of the document "Quality Assessment of the Study Programme Group at the First and Second Level of Higher Education" stipulates that the Assessment Council shall approve the assessment report within 3 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 seven, five or three years.

12. The Council considered the strengths, areas for improvement and recommendations set out in clause 10 and found that the study programme, the studies provided on it and the development activities related to the studies meet the requirements.

13. In view of the above, the Council

#### **DECIDED**

**To approve the assessment report and to carry out the next assessment of the quality of the Medicine Study Programme Group of University of Tartu in 7 years.**

The decision was adopted by 10 votes in favor. None opposed.

14. The decision is valid until 27.04.2027

15. 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 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 5 days of receipt of the challenge. The



Assessment Council shall resolve the challenge within 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 30 days. Contestation of a decision in court is possible within 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**  
**Head of the Council**

**Hillar Bauman**  
**Secretary of the Council**