

**Decision Regarding Assessment of the Business and
Administration Study Programme Group
Lääne-Viru College**

21/08/2018

The Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education at the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education decided to approve the report by the Assessment Committee and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Business and Administration study programme group in the first cycle of higher education at Lääne-Viru College in seven years

On the basis of subsection 21¹ (2) of the Institution of Professional Higher Education Act, subsection 10 (4) of the Universities Act, point 3.7.3 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (hereinafter referred to as 'EKKA') and point 41.1 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', authorised in point 3.7.1 of the above-mentioned EKKA Statutes, the EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as 'the Council') affirms the following:

1. On 14.12.2017 Lääne-Viru College and EKKA agreed upon a time frame to conduct a quality assessment of the Business and Administration study programme group.
2. The Director of EKKA, by her order on 07.05.2018, approved the following membership of the committee for the institutional accreditation as well as for the quality assessment of the Business and Administration and Social Services study programme groups at Lääne-Viru College (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee'):

Paul Mitchell	Chair of the Committee – Non-university member of the Committee, higher education expert, Director, Mega Mitchell Consulting Ltd. (United Kingdom)
Ben Bierings	Previously lecturer in Social Work at Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, Sittard/Maastricht (Holland)
Ari Björkqvist	Project Director, Haaga-Helia Baltic Hotel Management School, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Finland)
Johanna-Kaisa Heikkilä	Senior Advisor, JAMK University of Applied Sciences (Finland)
Britt Järvet	Student, Tallinn University; Chairperson of the Estonian Federation of Student Unions (Estonia)
Enn Listra	Professor, Dean of the School of Business and

	Governance, Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia)
Danute Remeikiene	Director, Alytus College (Lithuania)

3. Lääne-Viru College submitted the following programmes for evaluation under the Business and Administration study programme group:
 - Accounting (Prof HE)**
 - Assistant Manager (Prof HE)**
 - Business Administration (Prof HE)**
 - Commercial Economics (Prof HE)**
 - Business Information Systems Management (Prof HE)**
4. Lääne-Viru College submitted a self-evaluation report to the EKKA Bureau on 27.02.2018 and the assessment coordinator forwarded it to the Committee on 5.04.2018.
5. An assessment visit was made to Lääne-Viru College during 15–17.05.2018.
6. The Committee sent its draft assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 4.07.2018, EKKA forwarded it to Lääne-Viru College for its comments on 5.07.2018 and the College delivered its response on 11.07.2018.
7. The Committee submitted its final assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 18.07.2018. That assessment report is an integral part of the decision, and is available on the EKKA website.
8. The Secretary of the Council forwarded the Committee’s final assessment report along with the College’s self-evaluation report to the Council members on 2.08.2018.
9. The Council with 11 members present discussed these received documents in its session on 21.08.2018 and, based on the assessment report, decided to point out the following strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations regarding the Business and Administration study programme group in the first cycle of higher education at Lääne Viru College.

Strengths

- 1) An introductory course in the Business Administration programme is gratifying because it helps students to better orient themselves in the study programme and gives them a general understanding of the goals and outcomes of their studies.
- 2) The College offers a very diverse range of programmes in this study programme group. Courses are well-developed and specialties are valued in the labour market.
- 3) The library continuously updates learning materials, both traditional and virtual.
- 4) The College has employed stringent measures against academic fraud.
- 5) New lecturers are offered mentoring to support their induction into the community of the College.
- 6) Lecturers are very satisfied with their work and their opportunities to contribute to programme development in the subject matter.
- 7) Overall satisfaction with the organisation of internships is high.
- 8) Student feedback on the programmes within the Business and Administration study programme group has become increasingly positive. The College takes various actions to improve the learning environment and student life.

Areas for improvement and recommendations

- 1) Distribution of subject sizes is very uneven, ranging from 1 ECTS to 20 ECTS credit points. The College should better explain the reasons for different sizes of courses and internship programmes, and reconsider them in some cases.
- 2) The College should consider whether teaching both financial management and personnel management as majors in the Business Administration programme is the best way to achieve

their common learning outcomes. Also, there is no mention of the financial sector among graduates' potential job positions, which may leave a false impression about the focus of the study programme.

- 3) The title in English of the Commercial Economics programme could be reconsidered in such a way as to better reflect the career prospects for graduates.
 - 4) The College could consider changing the title in English of the Assistant Manager programme, as it is currently quite confusing, referring to a personal role rather than an activity.
 - 5) With regard to the Personnel Management Internship and Seminar, as well as the Financial Reporting and Analysis Internship and Seminar, descriptions of contact hours and independent work should also be provided to help the students to better plan their studies. The assessment criteria are also too vague and should be more clearly defined.
 - 6) International students have very few opportunities to participate in the study programmes, as only one elective is conducted in English. It is advisable to deliver more courses in English.
 - 7) The College is advised to place more emphasis on the competencies that graduates should acquire from these study programmes – this would enable the College to evaluate the competencies and competitiveness of its graduates in the global market.
 - 8) The College should acquire more learning materials in English.
 - 9) The College is advised to use virtual classrooms and game-based materials for teaching in the future (e.g. business simulations games).
 - 10) Student and staff mobility is low by international standards. The College should increase international mobility at international partner institutions and inform students about the mobility opportunities.
 - 11) If possible, the College should ensure that each lecturer has both pedagogical competence and relevant work experience. Staff members should regularly engage in professional development.
 - 12) The system of interactive student feedback should be redesigned so that the default settings do not show the highest possible score.
 - 13) The number of dropouts has increased in the Business and Administration study programme group. This issue needs to be addressed seriously.
- 10.** Point 41 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', establishes that the Quality Assessment Council shall approve an assessment report within three months after receipt of the report. The Council shall weigh the strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations pointed out in the assessment report, and then shall decide whether to conduct the next quality assessment of that study programme group in seven, five or three years.
- 11.** The Council weighed the strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations referred to in point 9 of this document and found that the study programmes, the teaching conducted under these programmes, and development activities regarding teaching and learning conform to the requirements, and

DECIDED

to approve the assessment report and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Business and Administration study programme group in the first cycle of higher education at Lääne-Viru College in seven years.

The decision was adopted by 11 votes in favour and 0 against.

- 12.** The Council proposes that Lääne-Viru College submit an action plan to EKKA with regard to the areas for improvement and recommendations pointed out in the report no later than 21.08.2019.

13. 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 judicial 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 pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Code of Administrative Court Procedure.

Eve Eisenschmidt
Chair of the Council

Hillar Bauman
Secretary of the Council