



Institutional Accreditation Self-Assessment Report

2025

SISEKAITSEAKADEEMIA

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INTRODUCTION

General information and a brief history of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences

The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (EASS) is an **institution of professional higher education** in the area of government of the Ministry of the Interior providing vocational, professional higher education and Master's studies in the area of internal security. The academy also provides **continuing training** as well as **research and development work** in the areas relevant to the development of internal security. EASS is unique in Estonia and does not duplicate the curricula in other higher education institutions. The academy is also responsible for the **recruitment and the development of the career system** of the academy as well as the Emergency Response Centre (hereinafter HÄK), Police and Border Guard Board (hereinafter PPA), Rescue Services Agency (hereinafter PÄA) and the Ministry of the Interior.

The academy's model in which all internal security specialities are taught in one professional higher education institution is not common in Europe. The given model allows integrated learning of various internal security curricula, facilitates research and development activities (hereinafter R&D) and provides a good basis for cooperation between different services after the studies. Several countries whose internal security education is supported by the academy (e.g. Ukraine, Moldova, Albania) have expressed their interest to reorganise their system on the Estonian model.

Specialists are trained by the **Prison Service College, Rescue College, Financial College, Police and Border Guard College, and on Master's level the Internal Security Institute**. In total, there are annually nearly 1100 students at the academy with almost 7000 people participating in continuing education.

The academy has brought together the expertise and experience of leading internal security specialists for over 30 years. Almost 100 of the academy's 270 employees are lecturers. In addition, there are almost 350 visiting lecturers contributing to the instruction whose daily work takes place in internal security institutions.

The main employers of our graduates are PPA, PÄA, HÄK, Tax and Customs Board (hereinafter MTA) and Prison Service (hereinafter VT).

The Estonian Academy of Internal Security was established by the Government of the Republic of Estonia on **15.4.1992**. The name was changed into **Estonian National Defence Academy in 1993**. It was given its current name the **Estonian Academy of Security Sciences in**

1998 as the training of officers of the Defence Forces was transferred to the new military academy in Tartu.

An important role in the development of the operational logic and areas of activity of the academy was played by the consideration of current and future needs.

The total number of graduates of EASS and the schools joined with it has now exceeded 11,000 – the most important structural units of the internal security of Estonia now mainly rely on these people.

The structure, management and cooperation of EASS

Pursuant to the statutes of the academy, the structure of EASS is divided into academic and supporting structural units and the Internal Security Career Centre (see Figure 1). Several changes have been made in the academy's structure over the years. The most recent structural changes were made following the approval of the new development strategy in 2024 and 2025 to better support the achievement of the strategic goals, for example, the positions of Vice-Rector for Research and Vice-Rector for Support Services were established.

The work of the academy is conducted in five locations: in Tallinn, Paikuse, Väike-Maarja, Narva and Meriküla.

Pursuant to the statutes of the academy, the academy and its council are led by the **Rector elected for 5 years**. The **Rector** is responsible for the matters concerning the overall management of the academy.

The Financial College, Police and Border Guard College, Rescue College, Prison Service College and the Internal Security Institute are academic units within the area of government of the Rector conducting instruction, learning and teaching development, research and development activities as well as continuing education. The colleges are led and represented by directors and the institute by the head of the institute employed for five years on the basis of employment or service relationship.

The Vice-Rector for Research, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs

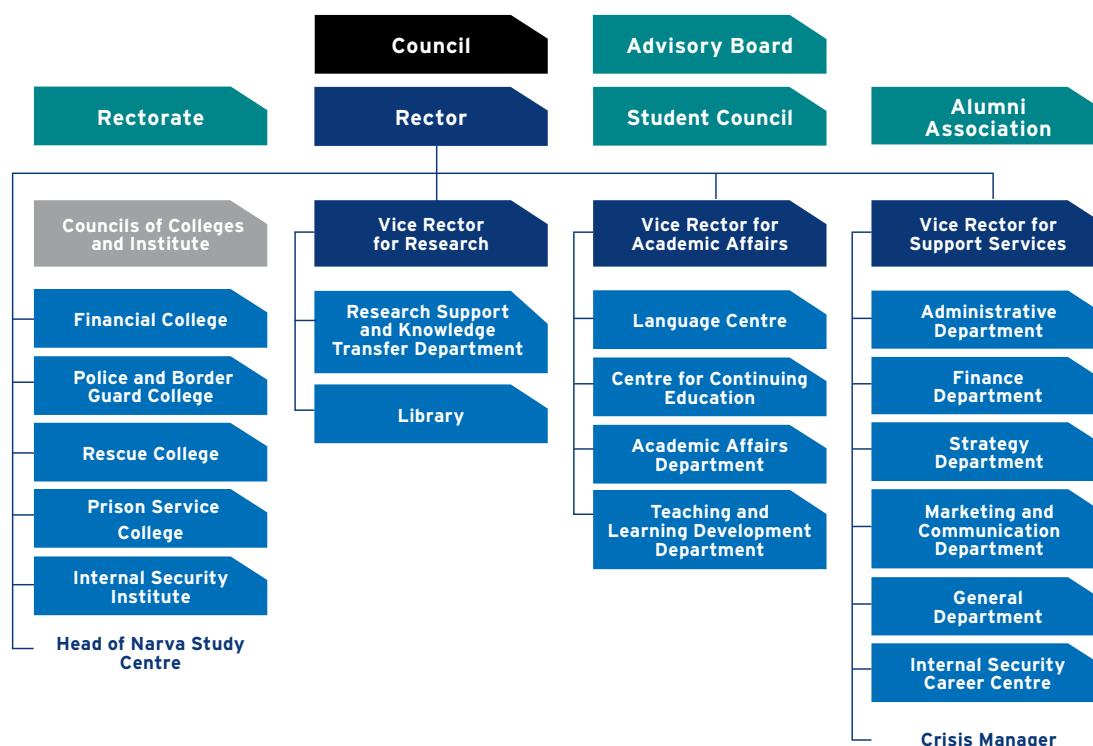


Figure 1. The structure of EASS

and Vice-Rector for Support Services are responsible for leading their area of activity and the management of the positions of the respective structural units as well as external positions.

An important role in the management and development in the academy is played by various collegial formats including the staff of the academy and relevant partners.¹

The highest collegiate decision-making body is [the Council](#) whose decision-making competence includes the most important issues related to the activities and development of the academy. The council makes decisions on the most important issues related to instruction, research and development activities, approves the academy's development strategy and curricula, elects permanent staff, establishes various normative documents etc. The Council includes the Rector, Vice-Rectors, head of the institute, representatives of the employees and students, the Deputy Secretary General for Assets of the Ministry of the Interior and other persons appointed by the Rector.

[The Advisory Board](#) is the advisory body linking the academy and the government bodies responsible for the given field and the society, making recommendations to the council, Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Research and Education as well as providing evaluation on the issues related to the academy, including curriculum development.

The student council and alumni association contribute to the development and functioning of the academy. The student council is the representative body of students that appoints, for instance, student representatives to the decision-making and advisory bodies and working groups of the academy. The non-governmental organisation Alumni Association of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences is a voluntary association of the graduates that advises, for instance, the academy's activities and contributing to its development.

[The council of the college/institute](#) is an advisory body of partner organisations established for the development of the college or institute whose main task is to organise the cooperation between the college/institute and the government authorities of the respective specialities and to make recommendations on the issues related to the college or the institute.

¹ The implementation of the development strategy and the strategic management of the academy are further described in Chapter 1 of the report.

[The Rector's Office](#) is the advisory body of the Rector including Vice-Rectors, college directors, head of the institute and other persons appointed by the Rector.

For the discussion of the relevant issues of the core activities of EASS, the [Learning and Teaching Committee](#) led by the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and the [Research, Development and Innovation Committee](#) led by the Vice-Rector for Development have been established by the Rector's directive.

For the organisation of daily management, there are **weekly Rector's Office meetings and discussion meetings for managers**. An important role in the management of the academy is played by the employees' annual **performance** and development discussions and other feedback and the analysis of the respective results, the formulation and implementation of the improvement activities. In order to improve teamwork and achieve the strategic goals, **strategy seminars for managers** are organised once or twice a year focusing on the most important development areas of the academy, and, if necessary, discussions on the development of the academy are held involving also wider membership. These formats also support the strategic management of the academy and they are integrated into the implementation of the development strategy.

In order to better link the activities of the academy with the partners, the Rector participates in the **weekly meeting of the heads of the agencies** in the government area of the Ministry of the Interior while the heads of colleges attend the regular meetings of the **main partner institutions**. Similarly, the Rector participates in the work of the **Estonian Rector's Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences** and the academy representatives in the respective thematic workgroups.

The management of the academy, its development and cooperation activities are supported by our representatives' work in other **workgroups and networks at both national and international level**. For instance, through the EU agencies CEPOL, Frontex and eu-LISA (i.e. the EU agency responsible for the large-scale IT-systems) the academy cooperates with more than 30 internal security educational institutions primarily in Europe and contributes to the area at large by participating in various international organisations and professional networks. Broad-based cooperation at national and international level allows the academy to support the development of the area and also consider the needs of the society and partners in guiding its activities.

The preparation of the self-assessment report

The self-assessment report working group was formed by the Rector's Directive no 1.1-2/180 "The establishment of the working group preparing for the institutional accreditation and the approval of the schedule and action plan" of 03.03.2025. The Directive stipulated the action plan and time schedule of the self-assessment process.

During the period covered by the institutional accreditation report, quality assessment was conducted in the vocational education of the curriculum group of the Protection of Property and Persons in 2023. [At its meeting on 07.09.2023, the Quality Assessment Council for VET of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education decided](#) that the instruction in the curriculum group of the Protection of Property and Persons meets the quality assessment criteria and legal acts with the next quality assessment due in six years.



NIMI: Joonat
FAKTID: Pärnu,
abielus, 4 laps
jookseb, jõusaal,

PH:
JUHTLAUSE:

SED/EESMÄRGID: kuuluvus, kaitse

AB NURINAT: ühiskonna suhtumise
likus

MOTIVEERIB:

VÄLJENDAB SUHTUMIST: Aateline

POLITSEI

SELF-ASSESSMENT

I. THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ACADEMY

1. Strategic Management and Development

The academy has defined its role in the Estonian society and internationally, involves relevant stakeholders in the planning and management taking into account the expectations of the society, future challenges and the principles of sustainable development. Resource management is directly related to the academy's priorities and developmental needs. The academy consistently evaluates the achievement of the set goals ensuring and promoting quality in all areas of its activities.

The role of the academy in the society is set out in the Statutes of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences approved by the Minister of the Interior which provides the basis for involving necessary stakeholders in planning and managing the development.

The strategic management of the academy, including the goals and implementation of activities are guided by [The Development Strategy of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences 2025–2035](#). The previous development plan was valid for the period of 2015–2025.

The academy's employees and key partners were included in drawing up both development plans. The documents were drawn up considering trends in the internal and external environment as well as national priorities, including various development documents to ensure compliance with the expectations of the society, future challenges and the principles of sustainable development at large. Drawing up and implementing the documents guiding the development of the academy, incl. monitoring the achievement of the goals is regulated by the procedure for strategic planning of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (former Procedure for the documents guiding EASS development). The planning of the academy's resources and the achievement of strategic goals form an integrated whole. The internal organisation of resource management is regulated by the budgeting guidelines.

The self-assessment report below includes an overview of the previous period. The report also considers the issues related to the implementation of the new development strategy beginning in 2025. The chapter "Strategic Management and Development" includes only brief overviews of various areas and examples – more detailed examples and analyses on HR management, infrastructure and information management, teaching and learning as well as research and development activities are provided in the following chapters of the report. Somewhat more attention has been paid to the system and logic of strategic management and development.

1.1. An overview of and conclusions from the previous development plan period

The development plan of the academy 2025 aims to increase the competitiveness of the sector at international level and improve the integration, quality and organisation of the instruction.

The aims of the development plan were set in four areas: impact on society, the processes supporting the impact, organisational capability and resources.

There were five lines of action to achieve the aims: instruction and lifelong learning, development work and applied research studies, partnership in Estonia and abroad, contemporary learning and work environment, effective and innovative organisation.

The activities agreed for the implementation of the development plan were largely carried out, however, there were also activities and areas that need continuous development. For instance, in the improvement of processes related to the implementation of educational, research and development activities and the respective support systems, an important role is played by continuity.

The main changes in **instruction and lifelong learning** were concerned with the development of degree studies, lifelong learning, organisation of studies and teaching methods. For instance, all curricula were made module-based, with new forms of studies opened and the first micro-degree programmes established. The volume of both degree and continuing studies increased during the period of the development plan.

The greatest progress made in **the development activities and applied research studies** is the fact that a significantly higher capacity is established in R&D activities in support of the area of internal security. For the given purpose, a research centre was established within the Internal Security Institute as well as the Remote Sensing Research and Development Centre, similarly the Civil Protection Research and Development Centre within the Rescue College in 2025. The number of researchers increased from 3.5 to 12.8 in 2020–2024 with the number of employees with research ob-

ligation increased by 30% within 5 years reaching 60 by the end of 2024. There has been an increasing trend in the publication of high-level research studies in 2020-2025 with reports supporting policy-making published continuously. The above is necessary in order to organise knowledge-based instruction and give various topics of internal security of national relevance a broader and more research-based treatment and thus support solving the respective practical problems in terms of research, including innovative solutions, international and national cooperation with other research institutions and to promote the scientific view of internal security in the society.

In terms of organisational changes, it is important to highlight the career model of academic positions established in 2020 and updated in 2024 defining the expectations and volume of RDI activities more clearly. Another important innovation includes the RDI strategy of the area of administration of the Ministry of the Interior 2030 approved in 2025. It allows to channel more R&D activities to solving the agreed priority challenges, while also increasing the cooperation between the institutions in the area of administration of the Ministry of the Interior and ensuring the applicability of the academy's research and development activities.

An important role in implementing the activities in the line of action **Partnership in Estonia and abroad** and achieving the respective goals was played by COVID hindering international mobility, for instance, the international module was not opened in 2020/2021 due to the pandemic. After the end of the pandemic, there has been a slow recovery in the volume of mobility, however, since 2023 we have seen increasing trends among both employees and students.

The main challenge in the internationalisation of instruction is still the small number of foreign students attending the academy through short- and long-term mobility. Increasing the number of subjects conducted in English has been time-consuming and thus foreign students have not been efficiently integrated into the daily life of the academy and the peers. In order to implement the necessary changes to improve the situation, the academy did not offer incoming long-term mobility for Erasmus+ students in 2024, channelling the resources into strategic change planning.

On a more positive note, the employees of the academy have taken more part in various international cooperation formats, influenced also by the establishment of the above-mentioned competence centres at the academy. The internationalisation of experts was also considerably enhanced by the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the resulting broader global security shift. It has placed the security experts of Estonia and the Eastern Europe at large under increased attention. The given trend is also supported by the increasing cooperation between the academy and Ukrainian internal security educational institutions aiming at supporting Ukraine in integrating with the European judicial and security area and also collecting best practices and experiences from the Ukrainian experts.

The most important development in the area of **contemporary learning and work environment** was the opening of Narva Study Centre with modern learning environments and dormitory in 2020. Also other study centres were updated, for instance, study labs were established in Tallinn study centre, hybrid learning possibilities established in all classrooms and multimedia capability significantly upgraded. The decision made in 2024 to develop the infrastructure of Tallinn and Väike-Maarja study centres and close the centres in Paikuse and Meriküla will have a major long-term impact. It allows to ensure an optimum use of resources, modern, smart and sustainable instruction, and the development of the infrastructure necessary for research and development activities.

The activities with the greatest impact in the line of action of **effective and innovative organisation** were concerned with the improvement of work environment. In 2022, we joined the Healthy Campus programme and in the same year we were the first Estonian institution to be awarded the highest or platinum level. The academy will implement the principles of the programme, including sustainability, also in the new development strategy period. In 2023, the academy was acknowledged by the silver level badge of an organisation valuing mental health and the gold level badge of a family-friendly employer. In order to improve the efficiency of the organisation, the processes of the main and supporting activities of the academy were analysed, necessary changes planned and the related financial model established.

1.2. Preparation of the New Development Strategy and the Aims in the Next Decade

The Development Strategy of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences 2025–2035 is approved by the Council of the Academy. It was drafted with the participation of the employees, students and strategic partners of the academy – there were discussions and workshops, a questionnaire among the staff and further feedback collected from the partners. The strategy was drawn up considering the conclusions from the implementation of the previous development strategy, analysing the academy's internal and external environment, including the future trends, and also how the academy supports various national priorities and the needs of the society at large. The consideration of the principles of sustainable development is ensured through the consistency of the academy's activities and national strategies used in the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The development of academic services in the new development strategy period will also be based on the principles of sustainable development, in particular in terms of economic, social and environmental sustainability. The strategy is in line with and contributes to several national development documents, primarily to the implementation of the [internal security development plan 2020–2030](#) (hereinafter *STAK*), the development documents of partner institutions as well as other documents reflecting the national priorities and the future needs of the society.²

The strategy sets out the academy's **mission, vision, values and principles** as well as the **development goals** needed to achieve them together with respective **lines of action** and **indicators**.

The **mission** of the academy is to be a leader in security education and research and the **vision** is to be the smart security development partner. In other words, the academy provides training, research studies and respective solutions to institutions as well as the state and the society at large, including on international level.

The academy's activities are based on three **main principles**: courage, expertise and care.

The development strategy sets out three developmental aims with goals, indicators and lines of action:

A well-functioning research and development ecosystem for internal security – creating an environment needed for research and development, conducting international R&D cooperation and implementing the results of R&D activities in instruction, policy-making, entrepreneurship and elsewhere.

Meaningful learning experience – developing research-based instruction, providing practical and sustainable learning environments as well as means for lifelong learning.

Committed people and a sense of unity – the focus is on the employee appreciation and motivation, it is important to establish an environment where every employee understands their role in creating smart security and where culture supports employees' development and fosters a sense of unity.

The academy addresses internationalisation as a common theme, as a means to achieve goals and as an opportunity to increase the social impact of the academy's activities. Internationalisation is framed by the internationalisation principles updated in 2025.

In the coming years, it is planned to expand the academy's international cooperation and develop the academy into a mediator of international competence in the field of Estonian internal security. There is still a need to cooperate with European vocational and higher education institutions, participate in the work of international organisations and networks to support the area of R&D and instruc-

² The most relevant development documents include the [national development strategy "Festi 2035"](#), the Estonian National Strategy on Sustainable Development "Säästev Festi 21", [Educational Development Plan 2021–2035](#), [Research and Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Plan 2021–2035](#), [Cohesive Estonia Development Plan 2021–2030](#). The planning of RDI activities is based on the [RDI Strategy of the Ministry of the Interior](#) (see Chapter 7 of the self-assessment report).

tion and also to allow the academy to offer added value.

1.3. The Implementation and Monitoring of the Development Strategy

Based on the results of the employee satisfaction survey in 2023, the average employee assessment of the clarity of goals has slightly improved compared to 2017 (3.9 and 4.0 respectively). According to the employee satisfaction survey in 2023, change management in a broader sense was assessed as one of the improvement areas. A broad understanding of the objectives by the employees and good change management practices play an important role in achieving the goals. For this purpose, the implementation logic of the development strategy has been changed, for instance, there are clearer links between the activities of each unit and the development strategy as well as updated regulations, supporting materials and processes related with strategic management and planning.

The implementation of the strategy will be assisted by the establishment of an **implementation programme** for a four-year period³ bringing together more detailed development projects and activities with respective deadlines and attribution of responsibilities and also **work plans of structural units** for a one-year period. Compared to the previous period, this will help to ensure the alignment of all development activities and routine tasks with the goals of the strategy.

Pursuant to the national strategic planning framework and the allocation of the state budget, the entire budget, priority goals and key indicators of the academy are stated in the STAK programme "Smart and Innovative Internal Security" updated annually and approved by the Minister of the Interior for four years. This is why the implementation documents of the academy's strategy receive more attention compared to other national strategy documents. Each year, the Ministry of the Interior approves **the action plan** of the academy as well as other institutions in its area of administration – the given development tasks are integrated in the implementation plan of the strategy as well as in the work plans of its structural units.⁴ Such an approach allows to ensure that strategy documents and national priorities are systematically implemented and each responsible party has clarity about their role.

The strategy implementation plan is updated annually to ensure its relevance, compliance with national priorities and alignment with state budget strategy. The academy's budgeting process is logically linked to other planning to ensure that resource management is in line with the academy's priorities and development needs. Respective discussions are held to update the implementation plan including the academy's employees and the student council representatives. Pursuant to the statutes, issues relating to the development of the academy are also raised in the Council of the Academy and advisory bodies including employees, students and key stakeholders.⁵ A more detailed work plan is annually drawn up in every structural unit. In addition to the above, annual performance and development discussions are held with employees, one part of which is the alignment of one's activities with the strategy. In addition to what is formally agreed in the implementation plan, it also supports each employee's contribution to achieving the goals and allows them to make proposals necessary for the development of the organisation. It is also worth mentioning the analysis of the trends and future developments of the external environment of internal security (EST), compiled every other year by the researchers of the academy. The analysis is more broadly intended to support policy-makers and the strategic management of the field, but it also helps to consider both societal expectations and future challenges in the knowledge-based steering of the academy's development.

³ In the first year of the implementation of the strategy, the implementation plan is approved for a shorter period.

⁴ The work plans of the Prison Service College and Financial College consider also the main partner institutions of the Ministry of the Interior supported by advisory bodies and other functioning cooperation formats.

⁵ The most important collegial formats involving the members and partners of the academy, including the links between national and international networks and the management and development of the academy are explained in the chapter "The Structure, Management and Cooperation of EA55".

Monitoring is carried out three times a year (on 4, 8 and 12 months). It assesses the fulfilment of the academy's development projects, activities and budget and the achievement of the target levels of the indicators, including the affecting factors, and makes the respective conclusions and, if necessary, also necessary changes. The monitoring of the implementation plan and the action plan are supported by the discussion meetings of the managers involving, if necessary, also more members of the academy (e.g. implementers of particular activities). The monitoring of the work plan of the structural unit is the responsibility of head of the unit who uses appropriate formats relevant in the given unit. The Rector reports to the management of the Ministry of the Interior on the indicators of 4, 8 and 12 months and selected priority tasks.

The monitoring information on the indicators and activities are published on the academy's intranet. Since 2025, information on the key indicators is also published on the academy's website. The annual summary of the academy as well as the analysis of the key performance indicators are included in the public performance report on internal security drawn up once a year and approved by the Minister of the Interior. Compared to the previous development plan period, the monitoring is more focused on the analysis of the operational environment, indicators and development activities in order to draw early conclusions for changing activities or adjusting goals, if necessary.

1.4. Resource management

The resource management of the academy is based on the aims of the development strategy and budgetary means. The academy has a four-year financial plan supporting the funding of the activities agreed on in the development strategy.

Table 1. The financing aims and performance indicators in the development plan 2021–2025

Indicator	2020 (actual)	2021 (actual)	2022 (actual)	2023 (actual)	2024 (actual)	2025 (target level)
The proportion of academic activities payroll in the budget	27%	28%	35%	36%	40%	≥50%
The investments in the learning environment, teaching methods and means in the budget	44%	7.90%	5%	18.80%	8%	≥15%
The proportion of revenue from business activities in the total budget of the academy	6.71%	13%	13.70%	10.60%	13%	≥15%
The proportion of external instruments in the total budget of the academy	3%	9%	10%	8.60%	5%	≥9%

Data: Financial Department

The academy's budget planning is based on national regulations and the guidelines and procedures of the Ministry of the Interior. The internal organisation of the work is regulated by the budgeting guidelines with the respective appendix. The budget is partially centralised, with the overheads and other general expenses led centrally. Financial accounting is conducted in the economic software programme SAP. The budget revenue is largely generated from the state budget but also from external funding, revenue from economic activities and other sources. The majority of the

revenue from business activities is generated by the continuing training provided for internal security organisations.

Table 2. Overview of the academy's budget in 2020–2024 (in euros)

Sources of revenue	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
State revenue	20 957 577	11 098 759	12 184 980	18 467 526	22 317 462
External support	311 815	372 804	523 704	826 262	777 409
Other support	123 241	268 159	168 676	132 707	184 311
Business activities	838 384	1 218 244	1 523 076	2 017 697	2 308 080
Amortization	3 566 095	1 355 858	3 311 558	772 991	679 687
Total	25 797 111	14 313 825	17 711 993	22 217 184	26 266 949
Expenses by account groups	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Scholarships	1 018 774	1 064 358	1 062 413	1 412 821	1 475 130
Supports	43 263	42 362	40 128	43 278	28 041
Personnel costs	7 324 664	7 602 937	8 490 735	11 230 876	13 133 422
Administrative costs	2 843 098	3 190 565	3 684 009	5 708 272	7 786 387
Investments	8 796 870	436 102	457 172	1 740 906	1 383 338
Value added tax	2 204 348	621 644	665 979	1 308 040	1 780 942
Amortization	3 566 095	1 355 858	3 311 558	772 991	679 687
Total	25 797 111	14 313 825	17 711 993	22 217 184	26 266 949

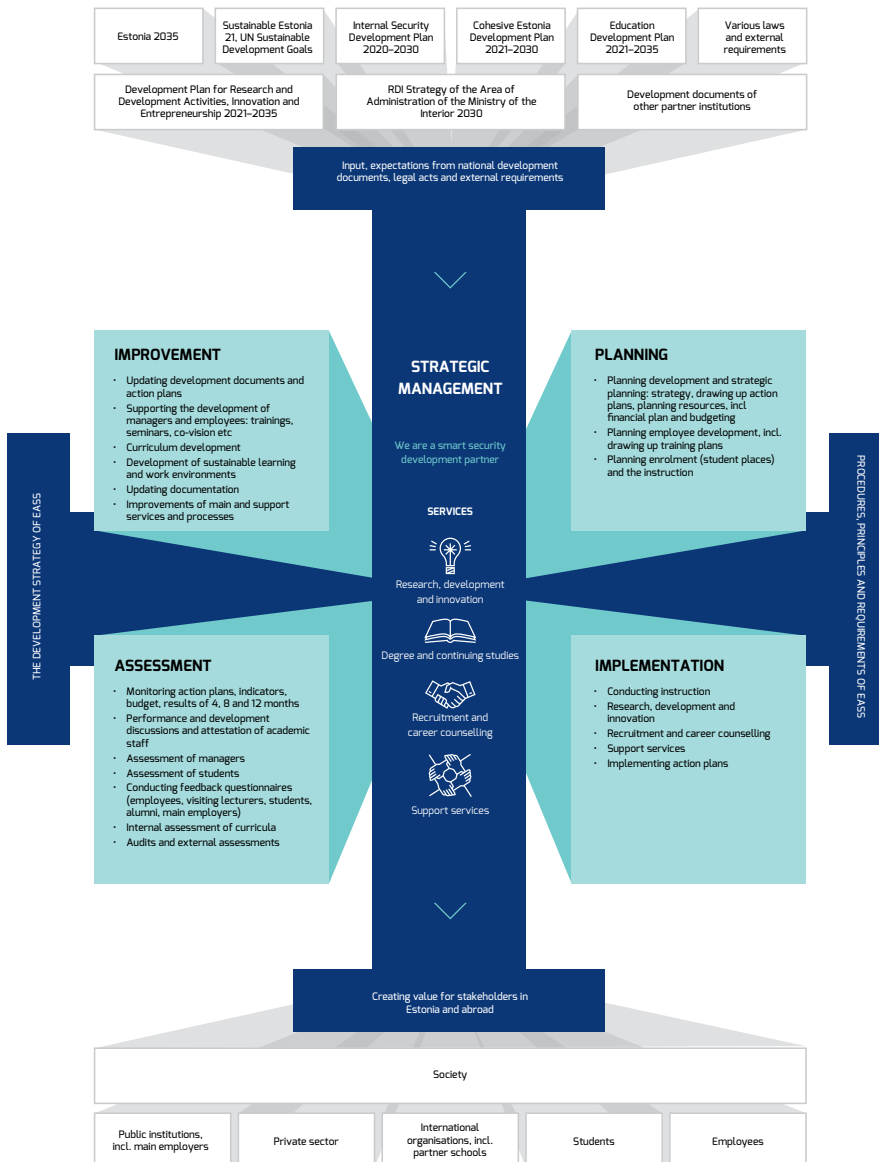
Data: Financial Department

The total budget of the academy is on the rise. In 2020, the budget was larger due to the investments related to the construction of Narva study complex. The considerable increase in the budget is related to real estate investments and the transfer of the facilities management to Riigi Kinnisvara AS. Since 2023, the academy has been allocated research funding from the state budget which has allowed a significant increase in research activities in the area of internal security. There has also been a substantial increase in the state-commissioned places in police education and thus also the budget of the academy.

1.5. Quality Management System

In order to support the quality management of the academy, **quality manuals** have been updated on a need basis since 2009 bringing together the aims, principles and performance indicators of quality assurance from different documents. When drawing up the development plan for the previous period, it was concluded that the quality assurance and management system needed to be integrated into all academy's activities, and the new underlying principle was that **quality is a complex concept encompassing all aspects of the organisation and its activities**. For the given purpose, in 2018 the Council of the Academy approved the basis of quality assurance at the Academy of Security Sciences that was relied on in the previous development plan period. The document stipulates the main aim and principles of the academy's quality assurance and systematises the various processes and documents into a summarised common system on the basis of the Deming Cycle principles. The focus was primarily on the two main processes of the academy – instruction and research and development activities. The content of the document was provided a more detailed description in various procedures and guidelines and integrated into the activities of the academy's members.

In 2024, the development strategy for 2025-2035 was approved and the strategic management model updated. In the area of administration of the Ministry of the Interior, the aim in the following years was to integrate a more service-based approach into the institutions' management system. In relation to the above, the basis for the quality assurance was similarly updated in 2025. The following figure provides an overview of the general model of the quality system of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences. The various chapters of the self-assessment report include its components with respective relevant references to the documents.



dures of the Ministry of the Interior and its agencies also provide for risk assessment and mitigation to be part of the development documentation, implementation planning and monitoring processes.

In addition, the identification, assessment, mitigation and monitoring of risks in the academy are under increased attention in the **fields of crisis management, information security, data protection,⁶ occupational safety and health, as well as in project management.** In these areas, the basis is formed by particular laws, their implementing provisions, related guidelines and other documents approved at the academy.

It is also worth pointing out the **crisis preparedness system** of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences. The academy is part of the crisis preparedness system of the area of administration of the Ministry of the Interior, in other words, crisis preparedness, stocks and regular training exercises are planned for the entire area of administration and in cooperation with partner institutions. The academy has described its crisis management system and levels of readiness in the directive "Reaching the Readiness of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences in Crisis Situations". It describes the priority tasks during the crisis and the positions and their role in resolving it. Information on the state of readiness and the system is given on the academy's intranet. The respective procedures and changed work organisation have been put to practice during the COVID crisis, assistance to Ukrainian refugees and other events. Monitoring crisis procedures has allowed to ensure the sustainability and continuity of instruction.

In this area, the academy has also contributed to the development of national crisis preparedness at large, for instance, by participating in organising international crisis preparedness training exercises (e.g., CREVEX, RREX). The training exercises have made use of the academy's expertise in assessment while the students and employees have been active in the so-called counterforce. Similarly, the academy's infrastructure has been used during the training exercises.

Figure 2. The quality assessment model of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences

In addition, a thorough mapping and analysis of the processes was conducted in 2024 and 2025 to ensure the consistency and effectiveness of the academy's activities in achieving the goals and their quality. Activities to improve the quality management system will continue in the coming years.

1.6. Risk Management System

The academy's risk management system includes risk detection, implementation of mitigation activities and continuous monitoring.

The academy's **risk management system is part of strategic management and planning.** When drawing up the strategies, both external and internal environment were analysed with the threats and opportunities mapped and considered in planning the respective activities. The risk management system and the monitoring process of the strategy support the prevention and mitigation of strategic level risks. The strategic planning, monitoring and reporting proce-

In order to align the various methodological approaches of the risk management system and ensure its effectiveness, the Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with the representatives of the authorities, started to create a common risk framework for the entire government sector at the end of 2024. The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences has considered the above in updating its risk management system. **In 2025, the risk management framework was defined in the procedure for strategic planning of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences with the principles, roles and methods in the academy's procedure for risk management.**

It is aimed to implement the new risk management system since 2026 to ensure its alignment with the comprehensive risk management logic of the entire area of administration of the Ministry of the Interior. The aim of risk management is still the prevention of risks at the strategic level of the academy, the continuity of instruction, R&D activities and support processes, reduction of the risks of interruption of activities and damage to reputation, and supporting the fulfilment of tasks arising from the law. In the updated system,

⁶ Risk management in the field of information security and data protection is further described in the chapter "Infrastructure and Information Management".

risk management has been integrated with all processes of the academy, roles have been clarified and the methodology aligned, unlike in the previous version.

1.7. Academic Ethics

In all their activities, the employees and students rely on the principles of academic ethics in its broadest sense agreed at the academy. The academy supports its members in understanding, solving and reacting to ethical problems through daily work practice and respective trainings.

The core values of the academy are formulated in **the academy's development plan for 2015–2025** and development strategy for 2025–2035. They are supported by [the collection of the principles of academic ethics](#), **public service code of ethics**, [good research practise acknowledged](#) in the scientific community and **guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence** in instruction and R&D activities. In addition, **the codes of ethics** of internal security agencies apply which also students are expected to follow.

The aim of the instruction is to develop the knowledge, skills, values and personality traits necessary for research and work in the public sector. The academic staff inform students of the principles

of academic ethics, assessment criteria and requirements for written assignments, draw their attention to deficiencies and proceed their improper conduct.

Incidents of improper conduct are set out in the [study regulations of the academy](#) (see section 6.3). **Plagiarism detection software Strike Plagiarism** is used to prevent plagiarism. The cases of improper academic conduct are registered and processed according to "[The Procedures of Handling Cases of Improper Academic Conduct, including the Cases of Academic Theft](#)". In the case of the first violation, the nature of plagiarism is explained, in repeated cases, disciplinary measures will be applied.

In order to prevent plagiarism, regular trainings on information retrieval and referencing are organised, guidelines for written assignments have been prepared and authorship rules are followed. Supervisors and lecturers are provided respective seminars and trainings. In all higher education curricula, the subject of **research methodology** is strongly connected with the process of compiling their final theses.

The principles of academic ethics also apply to the research conducted by the academic staff. **Publications published by the academy's publishing house are peer-reviewed.**

1.8. Summary of the Assessment Criterion "Strategic Management and Development"

STRENGTHS

A clear and unique position in the field of internal security instruction and research

The academy has a clear and strong role in the Estonian educational and research landscape as an internal security competence centre. There is no duplication of curricula and attention is focused on R&D activities in areas important for the development of internal security. The academy stands out from other higher education institutions for its strategic focus and unique integrated education model, as it is the only professional higher educational institution in Europe teaching all internal security specialities as a unified interdisciplinary system. The given approach promotes coherence of R&D activities, strengthens cooperation between agencies and ensures the academy's position as an internationally recognised and trusted partner in the field.

Strategic Management and Development Framework

The academy has a forward-looking and inclusive strategic framework that supports the planning of development, achieving goals and meeting the expectations of the employers and the society. The processes of strategic planning, monitoring and assessment are systematic and transparent and cover both the members and partners of the academy. A forward-looking research-based approach is implemented to support forward-looking management.

The coherence and sustainability of resource management

Strategic management and resource management are closely connected with national priorities and strategies. The academy has guaranteed sustainable funding to implement its strategic goals. It is further supported by well-considered financial planning, cost management and efficient use of resources.

A comprehensive overview of the operation of support systems and risk management

The academy has a comprehensive overview of the operation of instruction, R&D activities and support processes which provides a good basis for their systematic and data-driven improvement. Information security, crisis management and HR risk management systems are well defined supporting the strengthening of crisis preparedness of the academy and the state.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Improving data-driven management

Although the academy has developed systematic and high-quality solutions of data-driven management, data presentation and processing are time-consuming. Online solutions are being developed that make the analysis and use of data in strategic management more efficient and user-friendly. At the same time, management information is organised to improve decision-making processes.

Integration of the risk management system

A functional risk management framework has been established at the academy, however, the comprehensive system covering all areas of activity to implement it is still being developed. The development of the updated risk management system is underway, as well as the implementation of the risk management principles and practices in the entire organisation.

Increasing international impact

The academy has developed a strong international cooperation network and meaningful partnerships. At the same time, in order to increase the international impact, it is necessary to expand the number of partners and also further strengthen the academy's visibility and position at the international level. Among other things, the principles of internationalisation will be updated.

2. Human Resources (HR) Management

HR development is based on the development goals, it is efficient and effective. The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences values its members and ensures the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for all employees.

The HR development at the academy is based on the HR strategy of the area of administration of the Ministry of the Interior for 2024–2028, the development plan of the academy for 2025–2035 general HR management principles, the principles of [career management of the academic staff](#), gender equality plan and other relevant regulations.

The academy also has a significant role in implementing the aims of STAK programme “Smart and Innovative Internal Security”.

Since 2023, the academy has held the gold level badge of a family-friendly employer and thus it has been guided by the family-friendly employer programme of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The general HR management principles describe the organisational and management culture as well as the principles for HR planning, recruitment, reception of new employees, the professional development of employees as well as motivation and acknowledgement.

2.1. Employees

The academy employs sufficient support and academic staff to fulfil various tasks in the areas of research, instruction, support services and maintenance.

The employees of the academy include employees working on the basis of an employment contract as well as civil servants in a service relationship: police officers, rescue officers and prison officers. All employees – those working on the basis of an employment contract as well as civil servants – are divided into academic and non-academic staff.

In all decisions and activities related to employment, the academy is guided by the principles of equal treatment. All employees and applicants are treated fairly and without direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion or beliefs, political views, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status or other circumstances unrelated to the performance of work duties. The academy has [a gender equality plan for 2023–2028](#). (EST).

Over the years, there have been more women (around 60%) than men (around 40%) in the academy’s staff (see Table 3). The academic staff includes more men (around 55%) than women (around 45%). In the academy’s view, the gender distribution is optimum, especially when considering that historically there have been positions in the field of internal security that have been considered more suitable for men.

Table 3. The gender structure of the staff of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences in 2020–2024

Gender and proportion (%)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Women	164 (62%)	167 (62%)	159 (60%)	160 (59%)	169 (58%)
incl. academic staff	43 (46%)	44 (44%)	48 (45%)	48 (43%)	58 (47%)
Men	101 (38%)	103 (38%)	105 (40%)	110 (41%)	123 (42%)
incl. academic staff	50 (54%)	56 (56%)	59 (55%)	64 (57%)	65 (53%)
Total	265	270	264	270	292

Data: General Department Database

The average age of the staff of the academy in the past five years has remained stable both for the entire staff and for the academic staff only – 46,6 years.

Over the past five years, the number of full-time equivalent staff has increased by 10,5% (see Table 4), and the number of academic staff by 31,7%. The increase in the number of employees is due to the new tasks assumed by the academy requiring also the creation of new positions.

Table 4. Change in the number of employees in 2020–2024

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Change
All employees	242.1	244.9	235.63	243.45	267.4	10.5%
incl. academic staff	82	87	92	95	108	31.7%

Data: General Department Database

In the period of 2020–2024, new positions have been created due to the establishment of new structural units and the increase of state-commissioned student places (see section 5.1).

At the same time, the number of positions has also decreased, primarily in the area of maintenance: we have given up on staff related to cleaning and partly also catering. The given services are now outsourced.

The overall academic qualification of the staff of the academy has increased in the past five years (see Table 5). In 2020, the number of full-time equivalent employees with a PhD degree was 13 (including 9 academic staff) and in 2024 18 (including 13 academic staff). In other words, the number of academic staff with a doctoral degree has increased by 2.5% rising from 9.7% to 12.2%.

Table 5. The academic qualification of the staff of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences in 2020–2024

Year / academic qualification	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Doctoral degree	13	13	17	17	18
Master's degree or a corresponding qualification	113	117	120	122	132
BA or a corresponding qualification	76	76	78	84	99
vocational and secondary education	60	61	48	46	42
basic education	3	3	1	1	1
TOTAL	265	270	264	270	292

Data: General Department Database

Also the number of academic staff has increased (see Table 6) – in 2020, the academic staff constituted 35% of the total number of staff, while in 2024 it was 42%.

In 2020, 14% of the academic staff of full-time equivalent positions had research obligation (38 persons) and it had increased to 20% (59 persons) in 2024.

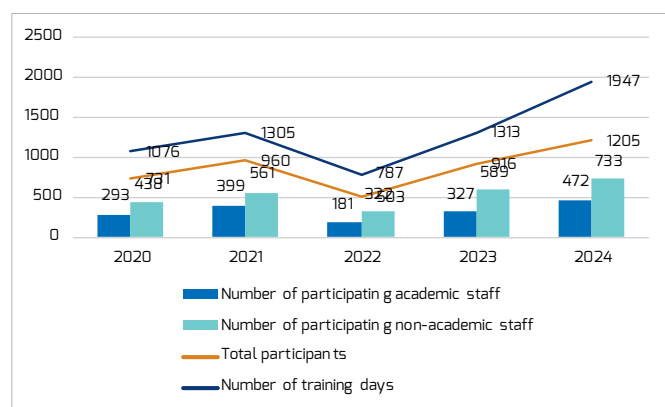
The number of employees with a research obligation with a doctoral degree increased 1.5 times – from 9 in 2020 to 15 in 2024.

Table 6. The change in the number of academic staff with a doctoral degree with a research obligation in 2020–2024

Year/ indicator	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Academic staff with a doctoral degree with research obligation	9	9	13	13	15
Academic staff with research obligation	38	43	49	49	59

Data: General Department Database

The academy supports the professional development of all employees, providing numerous internal trainings as well as trainings and conferences at other training institutions (see Figure 3).


Figure 3. Employees' participation in trainings and conferences

Data: State Employee Self-service Website

Pursuant to their development needs, the employees may choose their own courses and trainings. The most popular professional training topics are brought together in Table 7.

Table 7. Areas of professional trainings and number of participations

Area	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
education	236	290	67	56	158
ethics	16	0	3	5	4
legal issues	30	2	8	70	16
management	43	68	28	41	92
internal security	95	121	48	12	137
computer-based learning	95	120	76	63	147

Data: State Employee Self-service Website

In order to carry out the academy's development aims, value its membership and implement the principle of equal treatment, several framework documents have been approved by the Rector's directive: the principles of career management of the academic staff and the principles of supporting the professional development of the employees and two procedures regulating remuneration as well as the motivation and acknowledgement of employees.

The Principles of Career Management of Academic Staff at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences stipulate the positions of the academic staff, job descriptions and qualification criteria, the employees' main responsibilities, the basis for calculating the workload, principles of attestation and the procedure for the recruitment of academic staff. A member of permanent academic staff must meet the requirements set in the regulation.

Academic positions are filled by way of public competition or by the Rector appointment without announcing public competition.

In recruiting and electing new staff, attention is paid to their compatibility with the organisational culture, their professionalism and contribution to the achievement of the academy's strategic goals with their personal traits and potential. In order to ensure the availability of young academic talent, the academy also cooperates with partner institutions. The succession of academic staff is supported by the rotation principles of the administrative area of the Ministry of the Interior approved in 2023 encouraging rotation in particular to the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences – in order to allow a public servant to contribute with their experience to the training of future internal security officials, partnership cooperate in identifying potential lecturers.

The full-time working hours of an academic staff member is 40 hours in a week. The particular responsibilities and their proportional distribution and workload within an academic year are agreed between the employee and their line manager pursuant to the job description and principles of career management. In order to support the induction of the new employee, the line manager informs them of their tasks as well as the activities and main values of the academy and together they will plan the first trainings.

The development and career opportunities of the academic staff is also supported during their **attestation**. During the attestation, the employee's compliance with the requirements set for the position is assessed and they are given feedback to support their development and improve their academic performance. Academic staff are attested at least once in five years of work starting from their appointment. The attestation considers the employee's self-analysis report, assesses the performance of their R&D activities and development of teaching and general skills (see Table 7), student feedback (see Table 9) and international mobility (see Table 10).

In the past five years, altogether 81 academic staff members have been attested (see Table 8), most of them in the course of regular attestations. Following the attestation, 33 out of the 81 employees continued in their position whereas 44 were promoted. On four occasions the employee was demoted.

Table 8. An overview of the attestations of academic staff in 2020–2024

	Total number attestations	Continuing in the same position	Promotion	Demotion
2020	20	7	13	0
2021	24	8	14	2
2022	6	2	4	0
2023	15	11	2	2
2024	16	5	11	0
TOTAL	81	33	44	4

Data: General Department

Academic staff are consciously promoted in order to increase their motivation to develop further and move to positions with higher research requirements. Pursuant to the principles of the employees' career management, the amount of research work required on each successive academic level is progressively higher than on the previous one (e.g. junior lecturer > lecturer > senior lecturer > professor).

Employees of partner organisations are usually recruited for academic positions either as teachers, senior teachers or junior lecturers. They can move to higher academic positions after their attestation once the respective requirements have been met.

Students have rated their lecturers' expertise consistently high on a 5-point scale (see Table 9).

Table 9. Student assessment of their lecturers' expertise on a 5-point scale

Vocational education				Higher education			
2019	2020	2024	2025	2019	2020	2024	2025
4.8	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.8	4.8	4.4	4.2

Data: Study Information System

The assessment of the lecturer's expertise is the sum of various subsections – active involvement of learners in the instruction, the support of (e-)materials in achieving the learning outcomes, the balance between theory and practice, providing constructive feedback, the support of the learning environment and the teaching and learning process as a catalyst for learning.

The academy has taken systematic action for the **development of academic and non-academic staff by means of international cooperation activities**. For the given purpose, we have used various educational programmes and the expert exchange programmes of EU agencies, especially CEPOL and Frontex. Following the end of COVID restrictions, employees have been increasingly more active in international cooperation (see Table 10). The number of international business trips has increased significantly from 63 to 227. Also, the employees' qualification and competence have been valued highly as international trainers or experts, particularly in the activities of CEPOL and Frontex.

Table 10. The participation of the employees of the academy in international cooperation in 2020–2024

Year	business trips within international cooperation	Participation in CEPOL and Frontex activities	
		trainings	as a trainer/expert
2020	63	7	19
2021	46	10	38
2022	233	9	23
2023	182	12	21
2024	227	9	18

Data: Strategy Department

The Remuneration Regulation of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences stipulates the regulation and conditions for the payment of the remuneration (hereinafter the salary) of a staff member under employment contract and a civil servant in a service relationship. A civil servant whose service is regulated by the Civil Service Act and its implementing provisions is ensured the salary and additional remuneration prescribed by the given legal acts. The salary conditions of a civil servant are determined pursuant to the academy's salary model to ensure internal fairness.

Employees are acknowledged pursuant to the **Procedures for Motivating and Acknowledging the Employees of the Academy of Security Sciences** for excellent results and long-term efficient work. Also, the best employees of the field are acknowledged with an honorary title, letter of appreciation, decoration or cross of merit. Employees are also motivated by **non-monetary incentives**. For many years, led by the Student Council, the best lecturers have been selected at the academy once a year and announced on Teachers' Day at the beginning of October. The categories for the nominees have been occasionally changed. Every year, the academy also acknowledges the internship supervisors at partner organisations.

The Principles of Supporting the Professional Development of the Employees of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences set out the basis of organising continuing education at the academy, the conditions for a sabbatical year and the principles for internships for lecturers.

The professional development of employees, including academic staff is supported by the **training plan** compiled in cooperation between the General Department, Department of Academic Affairs and Continuing Training Centre considering the needs of various target groups (academic staff, including permanent and visiting lecturers). Particular attention has been paid to supporting new lecturers. There are development days for lecturers held twice a year for supporting the academic staff, especially new lecturers.

The trainings are planned pursuant to the strategic development needs or considering the development needs of the structural unit or employee. For the given purpose, each structural unit and the Continuing Training Centre have their **own budgets**. An important training area is the development and support of lecturers, including visiting lecturers, in educational technology.

The academy offers all lecturers and cooperation partners internal trainings developing teaching and digital skills with the respective schedule and topics available on the intranet. In order to support the development of lecturers and their educational technology skills, there is a dedicated **website on the intranet Digiait for developing digital competence**. It includes video instructions on how to use the e-learning platform Moodle but also Microsoft Teams and Zoom user guides, recordings of earlier trainings and other useful tips. Digiait also includes the lecturer's digital competence model based on the European Commission DicComp2.1 and DigCompEDU models that aims at supporting the lecturer's independent digital competence development across seven topics. In 2022, the **online training series "Digiamps"** was established introducing monthly a software, programme or other technology allowing the employees and academic staff to simplify their daily work. There is a special course on Moodle for lecturers providing access to training

recordings in Digiait or on private Youtube channel. The aim of Digiamps trainings is to give a quick and immediate information on the software programmes used at the academy or the respective opportunities. The trainings are mainly aimed for the permanent and visiting academic staff of the academy, and in case the given features are used also by partner organisations and/or students, they will also receive the invitation. The topics for the training are selected on the basis of employee input. Employees are asked for feedback in summer and the issues requiring advice are monitored throughout the year. In 2022–2025, there have been altogether 39 „Digiamps“ training sessions.

The trainings in the self-development mini-lecture series take place 13 times in a year. These may be participated by employees, cooperation partners and students.

In addition to self-development through formal and continuing studies, the academic staff also undertake participatory or observation internships or job-shadowing to complement their knowledge base with practical experience. In 2020–2021, more than half of the permanent academic staff have been on an internship in their field. In spring 2025, a questionnaire was conducted among lecturers to learn about their opinion on the internship as an opportunity to gain practical experience to enrich their teaching. It was concerned with their experience in 2021–2025. The respondents – 53% of the full-time academic staff (42 persons) – mainly did their internship in the main partner organisations, higher education institutions and foreign internal security agencies (in Slovakia, Norway, Germany, UK, Spain, Singapore). Internships were considered a positive experience allowing them to retain their expert level in the given field and link the theory with practice.

Employees' individual development is guided by means of annual performance and development discussions. In addition to analysing the tasks of the previous period and setting goals for the new period, it is agreed how to support the employee's further development, and feedback is collected on the work organisation and environment.

The information collected with attestations, performance and development discussions as well as feedback questionnaires are used for the employees' individual development and the improvement of work organisation and work environment. On the basis of the feedback from the development discussions, sectoral summaries are drawn up and sent to the units responsible for the field for review and, where appropriate, for the development and implementation of solutions.

2.2. Recruitment and Competitions

The recruitment of staff at the academy is based on the principles of equal treatment and selections are not made on the basis of gender or age. Competences, qualifications and, in general, the applicant's compliance with the conditions for the post are taken into account. The equal treatment principle is stated in all job ads published since the academic year 2025/2026.

Academic positions are filled by way of public competition or head-hunting, also direct offers to or promotion of current employees. The aim of recruitment is to find qualified employees who share the academy's vision, mission and main values.

The recruitment and promotion of academic staff is based on the principles of the academy's academic staff career management approved by the Council of the Academy, stipulating the qualification conditions for academic staff, positions and their respective requirements etc.

An average of 49 competitions per year have been organized to fill positions in the past five years. Around 88% of them have been successful. In the 12% of unsuccessful competitions, the aim has been to fulfil teaching positions, however, in most cases the obstacle is the salary which the applicants consider too low. In order to cover the competence and workload of unfilled positions, visiting lecturers from partner institutions have been invited. They bring practical value to enrich the instruction directly from the institutions where the students will work in the future.

To compensate for the difference in salary levels between the academy and partner organisations, the academy strives to create value through an excellent work environment and ambience and a diverse value proposition to ensure employee satisfaction and commitment (see section 2.4).

Voluntary staff turnover at the academy in 2020–2024 was 7–9% and in 2022 exceptionally 12,6%. Between January and August 2025, it was only 3%. Thus, the measures used in the academy to develop the organizational culture help employees to be connected to the academy.

Altogether 111 persons have worked for the academy for more than six years, which is a significant length of service. 100 people have worked at the academy for two to five years and less than one year.

2.3. Management Culture and Quality

The management culture, the development of managers and the satisfaction of employees with management are assessed at the academy in a 360-degree feedback survey carried out every two years. Employees are also asked for feedback on management in a satisfaction survey, the most recent of which took place in 2020 and 2023. In the previous satisfaction survey, respondents rated their line managers with a high score of 4.4 (on a 5-point scale) based on 14 questions.

The most recent 360-degree feedback study was conducted in spring 2024 collecting information on 19 managers. The feedback was based on the internal security governance principles covering four topics: seeing the big picture, broad-based cooperation, support for teamwork and self-development. Also the communicative skills of the manager were assessed. Communicative skills and teamwork support of managers were rated higher, while seeing the big picture and broad-based cooperation were rated lower. On average, the ratings for all subtopics were similar, ranging from 4.3 to 4.5 on a 5-point scale. The main strengths of the managers (rating above 4.5) were clear self-expression, honest and open communication, giving adequate freedom of action to team members and supporting them, maintaining a work-life balance and seeing the links between the field of internal security and other areas. The survey also highlighted that it is important to make a conscious effort to develop a management culture so that managers can better understand each other and the rules governing each other's behaviour. Managers also need to more smoothly perceive the common space of values in order to ensure, among other things, a more consistent involvement and decision-making processes. Greater attention needs to be paid to two-way feedback, targeting, well-considered communication and involvement in decision-making processes, continuing personal development of managers, and encouraging employees to develop themselves, including by example.

Based on the results of the 360-degree feedback survey, an action plan for leadership development was developed. It includes managers' experience club held three times a year, co-vision meetings held six times a year as well as management-related trainings. For instance, in cooperation with the Estonian Military Academy, a central task management training was held for the academy leaders in the fall of 2024, and four leaders participated in the management program of the governance area, which takes place once a year and lasts for six months. In 2025, there are plans to train managers on, for example, quality management and the use of management software.

2.4. Employee Satisfaction and Commitment

The employee satisfaction and commitment are measured **once every two years with a satisfaction survey**. The previous survey providing data also for the current self-assessment was conducted **in autumn 2023**. The feedback gathered through this survey was also an important input for the development of the 10-year development strategy from 2025 onwards. The next satisfaction survey will be conducted in autumn 2025.

The results of the survey conducted in **2020** were as follows:

- the commitment, overall satisfaction and general attitudes of the staff of the academy towards the organisation were rated much higher compared to the results of the 2017 survey;
- commitment and general attitudes are driven by direct leadership and good team collaboration;
- in part, work autonomy, commitment and overall workload have been positively affected by remote work;
- challenges are mainly concerned with the cooperation between units and appreciation, in which every employee has their own role to play.

The participation rate in the satisfaction survey in 2023 was very high. While 81% of employees took part in the survey conducted in 2020, then in 2023 the response rate was 5.6% higher at 86.2%. The employee commitment index as an indicator summarizing the general feeling of employees was 83.6 points, which was lower than the commitment rate of 90% in 2020. To some extent, the decrease can be explained by the fact that the academy was without a rector from November 2022 to May 2023 – the new rector took office in June 2023. By the time the satisfaction survey was conducted, the rector had been running the academy for nearly four months. The open-ended responses to the survey indicated that employees had high expectations for the academy's new leader.

In February 2025, the Ministry of the Interior organised a recommendation index survey for the top managers of the institutions in its area of government, where the employees of each institution could give feedback on the head of their organization. Out of the six top leaders, the highest rating from his employees – 62.4 – was received by the Rector of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences.

Participants in the 2023 satisfaction survey rated the content and meaning of their work on a 5-point scale at the level of 4.4 (see Table 11) comparable to the results in 2020 (4.5 points). In other words, according to the employees, they can do work that they like and that is also important to the society. The respondents consider it important to have freedom of action and decision-making power in their work.

Table 11. Assessment of the content and meaning of work in the 2023 satisfaction survey on a 5-point scale

Indicator	Assessment
I can do the kind of work that I truly like.	4.3
I can do work that is important to the society.	4.5
I have enough freedom of action in my work.	4.5
I have enough decision-making power in my work.	4.3
The content and meaningfulness of the work in total	4.4

Data: General Department

All in all, the results of the satisfaction survey were divided into three based on the assessments given. With topics rated 4.6–5 on a 5-point scale, it is appropriate to continue in the same way. These were employee- and family-friendliness, smoothness of remote work, meaningful work and management. Ratings of 4–4.5 are also very high, however, some improvement is needed in the given topics. These were work environment and healthcare, culture, work organisation and information flow. Considerably more attention needs to be paid to topics that are rated below 4 – development and career opportunities, organization and change management, recognition, remuneration and job security.

In order to promote the topics that need development and preserve the existing strengths, an action plan was drawn up based on the results of the satisfaction survey, including both topics that needed improvement and activities related to maintaining the existing situation.

2.5. Summary of the Assessment Criterion “HR Management”

STRENGTHS

Supporting the employees' professional development

The academy encourages continuous self-improvement and career growth by offering a wide range of development and training opportunities. The strategic goals and the specific development needs of the different target groups are taken into account in the planning of the training programme.

Balanced and sustainable composition of staff

The academy has achieved an optimal gender and age balance. The staff is diverse, combining both specialists with practical professional experience and employees with research and development competence. Recent recruitment indicates a generational renewal which strengthens the future potential of the academy.

An appreciative and inclusive organisational culture

Employees highly value a well-functioning system of feedback, recognition and information exchange that supports an open organisational culture and inclusive management. Value-based initiatives in which the academy participates and for which the institution has been recognized also increase satisfaction and well-being at work, for instance, the silver level badge of an organisation valuing mental health, badge of a family-friendly employer and the participation in the exemplary movement White Balloon.

Transparent and fair remuneration and career model

A clear and fair system has been designed in the academy, which ensures the transparency of both salary arrangements and academic career. The remuneration model is based on the principles

of equality and fairness and already implements the principles of the European Union Pay Transparency Directive. A clear academic career framework supports the professional development of staff and creates a transparent basis for evaluating work contributions.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Succession and career development of teaching staff and managers

Various systemic opportunities must be designed to ensure the succession of both academic staff and managers. This includes the development of competent teaching staff and researchers and supported career paths for doctoral students to become researchers and professors, to ensure the high quality of research and broader research-based instruction. It is important to continue cooperation with partner institutions, systematically involve young specialists and implement the principles of rotation in cooperation with partners and the Internal Security Career Centre.

Strengthening a common organisational culture and sense of belonging

Satisfaction surveys carried out by the academy have highlighted the need and expectation to develop organisational culture in a way that enhances the sense of belonging and cohesion of the employees. As a development perspective, it is necessary to develop principles and traditions that support cooperation between units, the sharing of knowledge and experience, and help employees feel that they are making a significant contribution to the achievement of the common development goals of the academy. A common and collaborative culture strengthens the sense of belonging, supports motivation and lays the foundation for the sustainable and value-based development of the academy.



3. Infrastructure and Information Management

The physical and digital infrastructure is managed and developed in a targeted, sustainable and cost-effective manner. The communication within and outside the academy is two-way, purposeful and controlled. Information is managed and administered in an appropriate manner and data protection and data security are ensured.

3.1. The Development and Maintenance of Infrastructure

The academic activities of the academy take place in five locations: in Tallinn, Narva, Paikuse, Väike-Maarja and Meriküla. However, it is resource-intensive to operate in several locations, and this does not allow for the sustainable development of all learning environments in the same way. It is planned to transfer instruction from Paikuse and Meriküla to other study centres starting from 2028. This approach ensures a more efficient use of resources and creates the conditions for innovation and smart learning and for the development of a consistent R&D infrastructure. Consolidating instruction in fewer locations increases its quality and flexibility and helps to ensure the sustainability of the academy's teaching and research activities.

According to the development strategy 2025–2035, the focus is on the development of educational infrastructure in three locations: in **Tallinn, Väike-Maarja and Narva**.

The development of infrastructure and information assets is directly related to the priorities set in the academy's development strategy 2025–2035 and the real estate plans of the area of governance of the Ministry of the Interior. Investments are purposefully designed to ensure environments that support interdisciplinary collaboration and hands-on learning. The ongoing and planned infrastructure projects are the basis for the academy to consistently move towards its vision to be a smart security development partner and offer students and cooperation partners the best possible learning experience in the field of internal security.

The broader goal of the developments is to ensure that the learning and working environments of the academy meet the needs arising from the specifics of the higher education institution and the expectations of the target groups. All developments take into account that the environments are safe, accessible and support the mental and physical well-being of the academy members. The management and development of the infrastructure is based on purposefulness, sustainability and economic feasibility. The investments

are designed to ensure long-term value in use, energy efficiency and a wide range of applications.

The focus in the development of environments is on technical solutions for modern instruction, practical simulation environments and internship bases supporting preparation for speciality-specific scenarios, a comfortable and learning-oriented learning environment, and a flexible digital infrastructure to support hybrid learning and research.

3.2. The Most Important Infrastructure Developments

The new main building of Tallinn study centre was opened in 2019 housing in addition to classrooms also special-purpose facilities: laboratories, simulation centre, prison simulation environment, Emergency Response Centre simulation classroom, document control classroom and sports and training facilities (including an indoor shooting range). The next stage is to build a dormitory and study building extending over almost 15 000 m² for 800 students. There will also be a tactics building for practical training and energy continuity will be ensured with backup generators.

In Väike-Maarja, an almost 60-hectare study and practice campus will be built with about 100 special-purpose buildings and 12 thematic study areas. Multifunctional learning objects (e.g. building and learning simulators, driving practice area) allow to combine theoretical learning with the needs of real-life simulation and R&D in the field of internal security (rescue, police, customs, border guard). It will provide the conditions to conduct research and development activities, including applied research, and to test new tactics and technologies.

Narva Study Centre was opened in 2020 with its infrastructure providing the basis for research, development and innovation activities in the field of border guard. At the same time, also the role of a cooperation centre for border management and national defence, a leader in innovation, a creator of a meaningful learning experience and a platform for cooperation between the private sector, authorities and universities is fulfilled.

In the coming years, nearly 110 million euros will be invested in the development of Tallinn and Väike-Maarja study centres. It is a long-term development that creates the prerequisites for high-quality and sustainable organization of both degree studies and research and development activities.

The infrastructure is developed in cooperation with **Riigi Kinnisvara AS**, which ensures that all safety, accessibility, sustainability and economic feasibility requirements are followed during planning, design and development. **The academy's input** into the development processes **ensures** that the learning and working environments meet modern standards and take into account the ergonomics and aesthetics required for the well-being and working environment of all academy's members. **The academy regularly evaluates the suitability of the work and learning environment** and implements improvements. The employee satisfaction survey in 2023 and the risk analysis survey in 2020 highlighted the ergonomics of workplaces, the lack of privacy and recreation areas, and the impact of windowless rooms. The risk analysis emphasised the importance of adequate and ergonomic work and rest areas. Following the feedback and analysis, ergonomic workplaces have been created in the study centres, also rest areas, including outdoor ones, have been built, offices have been relocated, soundproof booths have been added for telephone and video communication, and the interior design of the classrooms has been updated. A comfortable and modern rest area was designed for employees in Tallinn Study Centre. The academy's efforts to create a supportive work environment are also confirmed, for example, by the Platinum status of the Healthy Campus Programme awarded in 2022 and 2024 and by the gold badge of the family- and employee-friendly employer awarded by the Estonian National Social Insurance Board.

3.3. Classrooms, Library and Sports Facilities

The development of classrooms is based on the regular analyses of technology and user feedback. Feedback on the working and learning environment is collected from employee satisfaction surveys and annual student feedback surveys.

All auditoriums are equipped with a touch screen and a laptop dock based on a common technical standard to ensure flexibility of teaching. The layout of the classrooms can be easily modified, similarly mobile touch screens are available. Lecturers have ergonomic desks. Stationary computers are in special-purpose rooms.

All classrooms have hybrid learning capabilities, most with integrated video and audio systems. The classrooms include short instructions for using the equipment with technical support provided. Large auditoriums use projectors, wireless microphones and duplicate screens to ensure the best visibility and sound quality. If necessary, mobile conference devices (e.g. Meeting Owl) can be used.

In addition to standard classrooms, **rooms with special solutions** have been created: a computer classroom (35 workplaces with special equipment), weapons simulator, document control, interrogation, logistics and virtual simulation classrooms. The latter use XVR software and a range of special equipment to simulate events and crises. In the media simulation classroom, communication with the media is practised and e-learning materials are produced. **Auditoriums and special classrooms are used for degree studies and continuing education.**

Wi-Fi coverage is ensured in all educational buildings, including the outdoor area of the Tallinn Study Centre, the quality and security of which will be improved in the future by segmenting users.

The library supports educational and research activities both through its traditional materials and access to various databases. All study centres have a library branch. Three e-catalogues are available: [ESTER](#), [URRAM](#) and [WorldCat](#). In addition also 9 licence databases: [EBSCOHost Web](#), [SAGE Journals Online](#), [Oxford University Press](#), [ProQuest Ebook Central](#), [ScienceDirect](#), [Wiley](#), [Scopus](#), [Cambridge University Press](#) ja [Taylor & Francis Online](#). There are 14 repositories: [arXiv](#), [CEPOL](#), [DataDOI](#), [DIGAR](#), [Digiriiul](#), [Estonian Aviation Academy Library RIKS \(graduation theses\)](#), [Dspace of the Estonian Academy of Life Sciences](#), [ETERA](#), [E-Varamu](#), [OAlster](#), [OJS](#), [TalTech digital database](#), [Tartu University digital database ADA](#) and [XLaw](#). Altogether 47 open-access databases are available. In addition, it is possible to use the interlibrary lending service and to scan and print in the library.

All study centres of the academy have sports infrastructures

providing students and employees with the necessary conditions to maintain and develop their physical fitness. In Tallinn, there are several sports halls, including a hall for ball games and group training, a gym and two sports halls with mats. Narva Study Centre includes a swimming pool, Paikuse Study Centre has a hall for ball games and football field. There are sports facilities also in Vääke-Maarja. In addition to the academy's own facilities, public sports facilities of the local government can be used in all study centres. The infrastructure supports the students' regular training in all study centres.

3.4. Information Systems and Data Management

The academy has systematic and effective data management, which ensures the availability of high-quality data to make better management decisions, creates additional value inside and outside the organization, and supports the development and implementation of data-based services. Information security rules (including data protection and user privacy) are in place and implemented. The academy uses up-to-date and relevant digital technology solutions, including learning information systems, document and asset management, and e-learning environments.

A systematic data management organization has been created at the academy, which is closely related to the organization's strategy and quality management framework. Key indicators supporting the implementation of the strategy are defined and regularly monitored by both management and employees.

There is a designated person responsible for the comprehensive organisation and development of information. There are assigned responsible persons who ensure the systematic collection and use of metrics related to the academy's main indicators.

An overview of the databases and information systems used in the academy has been compiled. The overview includes information on databases and systems, including, for example, information on studies, research, HR management, finance, satisfaction surveys and feedback questionnaires and it is updated regularly. The data will be used to make related management decisions on an as-needed basis and they will support monitoring and reporting, including data-driven decision-making in the development of instruction, research and development and support services. This will help the academy's activities meet the expectations of society, including the employers.

There are also tools supporting data-driven decision-making including study information and the key indicators of the strategy implementation. It is planned to further develop user-friendly solutions to support data-based decision-making from 2026.

The Information Management Procedure at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences defines the principles, organisation and responsibilities for the processing and use of data and maps out the user roles under which employees are granted access to data, information systems and collections.

A comprehensive overview of the information has been prepared. Data are stored in the information systems, databases, registers, shared folders and network drives mentioned in the overview. Each storage location is assigned a data owner who is responsible for the correctness, up-to-datedness of and access to the respective data. Once a year, the employee responsible for information management performs a spot check on the correctness and up-to-datedness of the data and, if necessary, supplements the overview.

The academy implements the **E-ITS information security standard** on the basis of the Cybersecurity Act and **has passed a preliminary audit. The main audit is planned for the end of 2025.** The majority of the academy's information and communication technology (hereafter ICT) is managed by the **information technology partner, the Information Technology and Development Centre of the Ministry of the Interior**, which has passed the ISO27001 audit and is a **certified partner. The academy's information protection is regulated by the information security and personal data protection policy and also the procedures for risk management, workstation and equip-**

ment use and incident management. Damage scenarios for four business processes have been evaluated, with protection requirements determined and the related target objects identified. For the target objects, an initial risk analysis has been carried out on the basis of a risk management procedure based on the ISO27005 risk management principles and the E-ITS baseline risks. Regular risk monitoring is established by the Information Security and Personal Data Protection Policy. Risks have been introduced to the management with suggestions made on how to mitigate residual and realized risks. Necessary corrective actions have been implemented and documented. The information security manager actively participates in ICT and infrastructure development projects in an advisory role.

The academy has organised information security, data protection and crisis management in active cooperation. In case of solving security issues, the crisis management and data protection have been involved from the earliest phases of incident management.

Since the majority of ICT administration is covered by the **service of an information technology partner**, the academy's information security mainly focuses on the implementation of organizational measures and raising the awareness of employees and students about information security. This ensures a safe work environment and the initial preparation of students before they start working in the partner institutions.

As part of the **training programme for new staff**, an initial short training on **cyber hygiene** and information security at the academy will be provided. The intranet regularly provides information on current cyber threats and code of conduct. **Some training on cyber hygiene and trust has been provided to students.** Also, the information security and personal data protection policy stipulates raising students' information security awareness as one of the goals. The **information security training plan** is part of the action plan presented at the management review. In addition to the planned training, the IT security officer shall provide **additional training as required and based on risk assessment.** Various tests are used to assess the awareness of employees, and at least once a year they have to **pass the cyber test of the Estonian Information System Authority and familiarize themselves with the training material.** In cooperation with the Information Technology and Development Centre of the Ministry of the Interior, the information security manager also organizes phishing and other security tests as needed.

The information security and personal data protection policy is presented to all employees and familiarization with it is mandatory. Articles and public documentation related to information security are available on the intranet in the section of state secrets and information security.

Documents created at the academy are formalised, aligned, registered, signed, enforced and sent out via the **Delta document management system**. The document management system is logged in either by password or identity verification. Each employee is assigned a specific role on Delta, which determines their access rights to documents. All documents and activities are logged, and file opening can be identified based on the person. Documents are easily retrievable using metadata in Delta's search system. Documents in the system will be **destroyed** by the document controller **after expiry of the deadline, following a predetermined procedure.** Documents with a long-term and permanent storage period are archived in Delta, documents deemed to be of archival value are handed over by the academy to the National Archives.

The document management system and the public document register are constantly and regularly monitored to check access restrictions and to prevent access-restricted documents from being made public by mistake. At the end of the access restriction period, the documents are evaluated on the basis of their content. If necessary, the restriction is extended or the documents are made public in the register.

The Ministry of the Interior has **established uniform principles for the depersonalization of personal data and the deletion of data** for the institutions of its administrative area. Based on this, the owner of personal data is obliged to anonymise them (using anonymisation or pseudonymisation) or to delete them in time when the relevance of the data ends.

The academy attaches **great importance to data protection** in order to ensure the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of students and staff. In 2018, a data protection specialist was appointed at the academy, and in 2024, another position performing the duties of a data protection specialist was added. A work plan has been established for the organisation of data protection to create necessary and update existing guidelines and procedures to make data protection work better. In the training programme for new employees, the data protection officer introduces the academy's procedures for processing personal data to new staff. The procedure imposes responsibilities on each employee whose work involves personal data. The procedure is mandatory for all employees.

At least once a year, staff are provided with training on information management and personal data processing to increase their awareness and skills to process data, including personal data, correctly. Training materials and presentations will be available later on the intranet. In case of any questions, employees can turn directly to a data protection specialist.

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, the **academy has established a register for the processing of personal data.** It describes the types of personal data to be processed, the purpose of the processing, the place and time of their storage. The register is updated regularly.

In 2023 and 2024, external auditors carried out audits of the processing of personal data (on student data in 2023 and on staff data in 2024). As a result, action plans have been drawn up and persons responsible for eliminating deficiencies have been appointed.

In 2024–2025, the Internal Audit Department of the Ministry of the Interior conducted a data protection audit. The corrective actions for deficiencies identified on the basis of this aggregate assessment have been included in the work plan of data protection specialists and are addressed on an ongoing basis. **It is planned to introduce software and applications creating added value in instruction as appropriate.** Central management of software and updating of licenses is supported by the information and communication partner Information Technology and Development Centre of the Ministry of the Interior. Whenever possible, educational licenses are used when acquiring software, which have more favourable terms and functionality, but are still standard applications. Nearly 250 different software are used in the academy, and to increase usability, an overview has been created on the intranet for employees and academic staff. The database contains the product name, manufacturer information, version and experienced main users of the service along with a description of the software.

Services supported by ICT are provided through various partner services, which ensure the continuity of the created solutions. In part, the services are provided under regularly renewed service contracts, but there are also complete solutions that do not require a partner service. Additional work, development or troubleshooting will be arranged on needs-basis. In total, the academy has 96 services with an ICT component, which are described in the academy's ICT portal together with the necessary metadata and the main user. It can only be accessed from a work computer through the security network connection of the administrative area of the Ministry of the Interior. The **main aim of the IT development of the academy is to ensure smooth, efficient and secure work organisation within the academy and also between the cooperation partners. The academy uses centralized asset, transportation and weapons management systems. The e-learning environment Moodle, the further education information system Juhan and the learning information system Tahvel** (developed by the Ministry of Education and Research) are used in instruction. In order to improve work efficiency, state-wide systems have been taken into use, for instance, the state employee self-service website used for arranging trainings, vacations and work-related trips.

3.5. Communication

The academy has established **clear and transparent communication processes and uses effective information exchange channels.** This ensures that staff and students receive timely information and enables them to participate in decision-making processes. External communication activities are designed in accordance with the

academy's values and objectives. Relevant information on the main activities is available to the public.

The internal and external communication of the academy is coordinated by the Department of Marketing and Communication. The activities are based on the approved principles of internal and external communication. The document considers the needs of the different stakeholders and identifies appropriate communication channels. Communication supports the academy's strategic goals: maintaining and developing a good reputation, introducing advanced and continuing education, research and development and applied research in the field of internal security, and involving the academy's members in the development of the organization. In addition, the principles for the communication of research and development, social media and external projects have been established. A new marketing plan is drawn up for each year.

In 2022-2023, the academy's brand and visual identity were updated and compiled into a brand book. This document is the basis for a common communication language. **The academy has an external website (both in Estonian and English), an internal website and several social media channels. Communication is two-way**, allowing staff and students to receive timely information, participate in decision-making processes and provide feedback.

The internal communication of the academy is aimed at strengthening the commitment, professionalism and sense of unity of employees and students and at providing students with a meaningful learning experience. Employee satisfaction is assessed through regular surveys. For example, in 2023, the flow of information was rated very highly, as on a 5-point scale, 29.9% or more of employees rated it 4.5 (as opposed to 45.5% who rated it below 4.1). The responses highlighted the positive functioning of channels and the overall flow of information, the areas in need of improvement were cooperation between units, clarity of responsibility and the operability of information. The most important sources of information were the line manager (4.8), meetings (4.2), the intranet (4.2) and the weekly newsletter (3.4).

The main information channel is the intranet, which contains news, guides, documents, event calendar and topic pages. You can also give feedback on the intranet. Information exchange is supported by unit and Rector's Office meetings, lists, overviews by the management and engagement seminars. As a new format, there are thematic minutes once or twice a month to address current issues and gather suggestions. These are recorded and published on the intranet. Microsoft Teams is used as a channel for quick information exchange.

A separate website has been set up for non-staff (visiting) lecturers to provide them with the information they need and to allow them to give feedback. A mailing list has also been created for the visiting lecturers and they receive a monthly newsletter.

Students receive a weekly newsletter as well as targeted communication. Involvement and information exchange are supported by meetings of group leaders, meetings between the Student Council and the management, feedback surveys and the freshman website. Information on instruction flows through the educational information system. Additional channels include information boards located in study centres, the content of which can be supplemented by students.

The aim of external communication is to enhance the reputation and image of the academy, to raise the visibility of internal security topics and awareness of learning opportunities, to promote research activities, to develop the employer brand and to strengthen cooperation with partner institutions. **The activities are planned in cooperation with the academy's units and based on the calendar of events.**

Regular meetings are held with cooperation partners (e.g. Tax and Customs Board, Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, Police and Border Guard Board, Emergency Dispatch Centre) to coordinate marketing and communication activities. Daily exchanges of information are supported by mailing lists and cooperation on social media. A separate marketing plan will be drawn up for the enrolment campaign, allowing the partners to plan employer marketing activities in support of the academy's campaign.

The main information channel for the public is the academy's external website, featuring the information and documents arising from the law as well as an overview of learning opportunities, research, international cooperation and development activities. In addition, social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube) are used, each with their own target group and purpose. Public communication is supported by daily proactive and responsive media activities, including press releases, opinion articles, presentations and speeches.

Table 12. Media coverage about the academy in 2021-2024

In 2021	In 2022	In 2023	In 2024
945	1182	1392	1381

Data: Department of Marketing and Communication

The academy's external communication is primarily supported by **Verbis Aut Re**, a magazine intended for academy members, alumni and employees, but also by the scientific journals **Security Spectrum: Journal of Advanced Security Research** and **Turvalisuskompass** in Estonian as well as regular newsletters for alumni and those who subscribed to the internal security research news list.

As a result of targeted marketing, **the academy's reputation among its target audiences has increased over the years**. In Kantar Emor's 2022 and 2024 institutions of higher education reputation survey, the academy ranks third together with Tallinn University after the public universities Tartu University and Tallinn University of Technology. In the 15-24 age group, awareness of the academy has risen significantly in two years from 16% to 21%.

3.6. Summary of the Assessment Criterion “Infrastructure and Information Management”

STRENGTHS

Strategically developed infrastructure that supports sectoral needs

The clear focus set on three study centres (Tallinn, Väike-Maarja, Narva) ensures efficient use of resources and sustainability. The infrastructure meets the needs of the field of internal security, supports cooperation with partner institutions and enables the cross-use of degree studies and continuing education.

Modern and diverse learning, working and digital environments

New and renovated study buildings with simulation environments, digital solutions and hybrid learning opportunities create an innovative and practical learning environment. A well-structured and secure digital infrastructure supports research, development and instruction while ensuring accessibility and user-friendliness.

Efficient information management and strong communication culture

Clear principles of internal and external communication, multi-channel information exchange and two-way communication support cooperation and involvement. Increasing media coverage and a strong brand enhance the visibility of the academy and support the achievement of its strategic objectives.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Consolidation of the infrastructure and optimization of the development of learning centres

Operating in several locations is resource-intensive and makes it

difficult to manage the infrastructure in a coherent way. As a development perspective, the focus is on consolidating the infrastructure, including smoothly transferring the activities of Paikuse and Meriküla to three main centres (Tallinn, Väike-Maarja, Narva) and sustainably strengthening them there.

Improving the ergonomics of the work and learning environment and the user experience

Feedback from staff and students points to the need to improve the quality of work and learning environments, including comfort of the facilities, privacy and well-being. The development work will focus on the overall improvement of ergonomics, leisure facilities and use of space to support a productive and motivating environment.

More effective communication and cooperation mechanisms

The efficiency of information exchange and cooperation between units need more systematic development. As a development perspective, it is planned to improve communication processes and cooperation tools in order to ensure faster information flow, transparency and smooth work organisation throughout the academy.

Integration of digital infrastructure and increasing the awareness of information security

Fragmentation of ICT services and uneven awareness of information security require a systematic approach. As a development perspective, it is planned to integrate digital infrastructure and consolidate software to improve user comfort, security and data-based management. At the same time, information security and data protection trainings are conducted consistently throughout the academy to increase awareness and competence.



II. LEARNING AND TEACHING

When planning studies and developing curricula, the academy considers the needs and expectations of society and the labour market, its own development goals, sectoral competence and available resources. The academy monitors compliance with higher education and professional standards and international trends. Curricula are designed in a research-based and coherent manner, and their development is consistent and evidence-based. Curriculum development is supported by an effective internal evaluation system.

4. Curricula and curriculum planning

Estonian Academy of Security Sciences is an institution of professional higher education that offers vocational, professional higher education and Master's programmes.

The academy's vocational education curricula (levels 4 and 5) belong to the property and personal protection curriculum group, professional higher education curricula (level 6) belong to the internal security and business and administration curriculum group, and Master's degree (level 7) curricula, including international joint curricula, belong to the internal security curriculum group.

Table 13. Curricula of Estonian Academy of Security Sciences for the academic years 2019/2020–2024/2025

Curriculum group	Level of education, EQF* level	Curriculum	Form of study
Internal security	Master's programme, Level 7	Internal Security (120 ECTS)	module studies
		Strategic Border Management (90 ECTS), Countering Hybrid Threats (90 ECTS)	module studies, joint study programmes
		professional higher education, Level 6	Police Service (180 ECTS)
	Level 6	Rescue Service (180 ECTS)	daytime and module studies
		Corrections (180 ECTS)	daytime studies
		Business and administration	Level 6
Property and personal protection	vocational education, Level 5, continuing vocational education and training	Taxation and Customs (180 ECTS)	part-time, module studies
		Rescue Unit Leader (30 ECVET)	daytime studies
		Case Manager (30 ECVET)	daytime studies **
		Information and Investigation Officer (46 ECVET)	daytime studies **
	vocational training, Level 4, initial training	Offence Proceedings Officer (30 ECVET)	distance learning
		Call Taker (60 ECVET)	daytime studies
		Rescuer (60 ECVET)	daytime studies
		Police Officer (100 ECVET)	daytime and module studies
		Prison Guard (60/30 ECVET)	daytime studies
	EOD1 Technician (30 ECVET)	on-the-job learning**	

Data: Estonian Education Information System

* EQF – Estonian Qualifications Framework

** Curriculum closed

4.1 Statistics on students, admissions and graduates

The Ministry of the Interior determines the number of students admitted to the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences for each academic year. It also provides a forecast for the next three academic years for each curriculum.

The following Table 14 shows the statistics on students, admissions and graduates for the academic years 2019/2020–2024/2025. When planning admissions, the availability of competent staff, necessary financial resources and infrastructure are taken into account. When applying to open a new curriculum, the curriculum manager must, pursuant to clause 8.5 of the academy's curriculum statute, submit a calculation of the cost of the curriculum together with a description of the necessary resources.

Table 14. Students, admissions and graduates by level of study and curriculum for the period 2019/2020–2024/2025

Level of study/curriculum	2019/2020			2020/2021			2021/2022			2022/2023			2023/2024			2024/2025		
	Students	Admitted	Graduates	Students	Admitted	Graduates	Students	Admitted	Graduates	Students	Admitted	Graduates	Students	Admitted	Graduates	Students	Admitted	Graduates
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION																		
Level 4																		
Police Officer	172	82	78	187	103	78	193	69	107	141	55	77	164	110	73	218	132	94
Call Taker	15	15	10	21	19	16	15	15	9	1	0	1	19	19	23	21	19	14
Rescuer	81	81	78	40	40	69	35	34	74	35	35	60	34	34	60	40	40	59
EOD1 technician*	0			7	7	7	*											
Prison guard	64	63	68	48	47	44	66	62	60	48	48	48	42	42	37	42	42	65
Level 5																		
Rescue Unit Leader	21	20	20	21	20	18	20	20	19	16	16	16	20	20	20	15	15	15
Offence Proceedings Officer				11	11	9	0	20	20		x		x				x	
Information and Investigation Officer	10	10	10	12	12	11				12	12	12	*					
Case Manager	13	11	12	13	12	12	10	9	9	*								
HIGHER EDUCATION																		
Level 6																		
Police Service	248	74	82	212	56	68	237	106	59	268	109	49	315	107	93	339	127	87
Customs and Taxation	87	30	19	96	30	30	94	31	23	93	28	24	98	33	29	91	29	26
Taxation and Customs	46	29		70	33		94	33	8	105	29	17	101	23	13	117	39	20
Corrections	34	16	10	42	26	4	54	15	14	52	17	20	51	20	13	54	17	17
Rescue Service	71	16	14	59	16	14	75	30	5	80	31	12	90	32	17	90	31	28
Level 7																		
Internal security	100	29	14	101	32	22	93	31	14	93	29	14	92	33	22	83	32	22

* curriculum closed

x no admissions

Data: Department of Academic Affairs and education data portal haridussilm.ee

4.2 Curriculum development trends, curriculum planning

The trends in curriculum development are described in the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences Development Plan 2015–2025 and schematically in [the unified integrated education model for internal security](#), which was completed in spring 2018 and has been supplemented over time. The development of the education model was prompted by the need to respond in a more systematic and flexible manner to new challenges in the field of internal security and the current demographic situation, where the number of young people is much smaller than before and the proportion of career changers is increasing. The education model was developed as a joint effort, with contributions from the teaching staff and employees of all colleges and institutes.

The educational model describes learning pathways at different levels of education and continuing education, including micro-credential programmes. The model highlights research directions based on the needs of the specialities offered by the academy and the academy as an employer, as well as the profile of the colleges and the Internal Security Institute. The educational model is also based on common elements and forms of study organisation. The main objective of the model is to maintain a focus on cooperation with key partner agencies in the management of teaching activities in order to implement solutions that ensure that academy graduates are well prepared for work in a changing security environment.

In 2024, a detailed model for police education was developed as an extension of the education model, focusing on the preparation of police officers with higher education. The change was necessary because police work is becoming more complex, which means that jobs in the future will require employees with higher education – vocational education does not meet the objectives. The core curriculum of the model is a three-year professional higher education programme, which also allows for the development of specific skills through micro-credentials and elective modules.

When planning and developing curricula, the academy takes into account the needs of society and partner institutions, the approved development plan and the availability of resources. Various parties, including alumni and students, are involved in the creation, development and modification of curricula through working groups. Curriculum development is continuous, consistent and evidence-based.

During the reporting period, curriculum development has been based on **relevant legislation in the field of education** ([Higher Education Act](#), [Vocational Education Institutions Act](#), [Higher Education Standard](#), [Vocational Education Standard](#)), Estonian and European **educational policy reforms, strategies** in the field of education and internal security (Internal Security Development Plan, Estonian Academy of Security Sciences development plans 2015–2025 and 2025–2035, [Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020](#), Education Development Plan 2021–2035) and **the changing needs of the academy's main partners**, i.e. **agencies, and sectoral legislation**. Curriculum development is also based on OSKA research reports ([public administration](#) (est, 2020) and its [monitoring report](#) (est, 2023), [internal security and law](#) (est, 2020) and its [monitoring report](#) (est, 2022), [finance](#) (est, 2020) and its [monitoring report](#) (est, 2023)), as well as general forecasts and overviews [of the labour market situation](#) (est, 2020) and [trends until 2027](#), the skills required [for the digital and green transition](#) (est, 2021) and general skills for [working life](#) (est, 2022).

- For example, while creating the curriculum for professional higher education in police services, the working group has been guided by the following:
- the PPA's mapping of contemporary police work competencies (i.e. professional competences, integrable general competences);
- the updated higher education standard;
- Strategies and reports: [Internal Security Development Plan](#), programme document "Smart and Innovative Internal Security 2025–2028", [Cohesive Estonia Development Plan 2021–2030](#), Strategy "[Estonia 2035](#)" and the Government of the Republic's Action Programme 2023–2027 (renewal of the internal security education system, analysis and proposals for the development of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences' degree

and continuing education programmes and learning environment, including increasing the volume of training for police officers), report by the working group on the financial impact of crime compiled by the Ministry of the Interior (2024), research report "Knowledge and attitudes related to domestic violence among rescue workers and police officers" (2023).

The Police Service curriculum takes into account the learning outcomes of professional higher education, which are in line with the general requirements described in level 6 of the Estonian Qualifications Framework (hereinafter *EQF*). The objectives and learning outcomes of the curriculum subjects progress from simple to complex in order to ensure that the objectives of the curriculum are achieved and that the social expectations set out in Annex 1 to the Higher Education Standard are met. In order to create horizontal and vertical coherence, the prerequisites for subjects, the scope of the topics covered in the subjects, the depth of and the assessment system have been defined at the subject level. The modules and subjects of the curriculum can be used in continuing education, including micro-credential programmes. Continuing education in line with degree programmes allows PPA officials to continuously update their knowledge and skills as needed.

The development of curricula is based on relevant educational trends, analyses and labour market needs, as well as various types of feedback – in addition to feedback from employers, feedback from students, alumni and teaching staff. Every four years, the academy conducts a satisfaction survey among its alumni and their employers (2017, 2021, 2024) and participates in the national satisfaction survey of vocational education institutions (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024; see section 5.3 for more details).

Curricula are opened, amended and closed in accordance with the [curriculum statute](#) approved by the council. In professions where there are **professional standards** (rescue and border guard), these can be used to obtain the necessary input. In other professions, the necessary **competences** are described (prison service, business, administration and police professions) in order to adjust the curricula accordingly. This has been done continuously **in close cooperation between the authorities and the academy, under the methodological guidance of the academy**. Curricula are developed, approved and confirmed by various broad-based working groups and decision-making bodies, which on the one hand makes the internal academic process lengthy, but on the other hand involves important parties (students, teaching staff and employers). This ensures the transparency of the process and guarantees a common understanding and high-quality results.

In order to develop new curricula and revise existing ones, working groups are formed by order of the Rector. The working groups include, in addition to representatives of the authorities, the curriculum manager, the heads of the relevant departments and representatives of the teaching staff, a representative of the alumni, a student representative and an employee of the Department of Academic Affairs. The draft curriculum prepared by the working group shall be approved by both the college council, chaired by the head of the relevant department, and the academic committee. The draft vocational education curriculum shall be finally approved by the council and enacted by order of the Rector. The draft higher education curriculum is approved and enacted by a decision of the council.

The academy has developed a specific **methodology for developing and updating curricula and implementation documents**, in the course of which:

- work packages and tasks are defined;
- competences are formulated and the structure of modules is created;
- the objectives and learning outcomes of modules or subjects are formulated;
- topics are formulated;
- assessment criteria are formulated and assessment methods selected;
- appropriate teaching methods are defined.

If the curriculum is based on a professional standard, the curriculum is created or developed on the basis of the professional standard and the competences and performance indicators set out in its annexes. Currently, professional standards are only used as a

basis for the vocational training curricula of call takers, rescuers and rescue unit leaders.

A uniform methodological approach and close cooperation ensure that the curricula meet the needs of employers, they are comprehensive and coherent, and that the topics are specific, the teaching methods are appropriate and diverse.

The curricula are comprehensive and coherent, and the learning outcomes of the modules and subjects, the volumes of independent work and practical training, and the methods and tasks used to assess learning outcomes are consistent with each other. The curriculum statute sets out the internal requirements for curricula, the structure of curricula and modules, and guidelines for their implementation, and the volumes of practical training and practical work in the curricula. Employer satisfaction surveys have shown that communication, cooperation, influencing and persuasion skills, as well as the ability to cope with stressful situations and setbacks, are particularly important for specialists in this field. Based on this, key lifelong learning competences and general competences that are important in the field have also been integrated into the modules. To this end, the academy has developed a support guide for curriculum developers entitled "Integrating general competences into curricula".

Higher education curricula include subject programmes, and vocational education curricula include module implementation plans. Their purpose is to provide an overview of how, when and in what context teaching takes place. The choice of teaching and assessment methods described in the subject programme or implementation plan must support the learner in achieving the learning outcomes. The teaching methods used in the learning process mainly include lectures, seminars, practical work, CLIL, integrated teaching, simulations, group and pair work exercises. The subject programme or implementation plan also determines the volume of independent work, assignments and assessment criteria for the learner. The scope of practical training and practical work is determined by the documents regulating the organisation of studies at the academy. All possibilities for teaching activities are described and regulated in the curriculum statutes and the Study Regulations. Module-based learning that relies on subject programmes and implementation plans significantly improves the connection between theoretical and practical learning and internships, and has noticeably reduced the internal fragmentation of curricula. At the same time, it requires better cooperation between the lecturers teaching the modules, which is being actively pursued.

4.2.1. Main changes in curricula during the reporting period

The academic year 2022/2023 marked the beginning of a generational change in vocational education curricula, and in the academic year 2024/2025, the process of updating curricula for professional higher education was started.

The vocational education curriculum portfolio closed the curricula for EOD technicians, Information and Investigation Officers, and Case Managers due to changes in the needs of the labour market. Due to changes in the professional standard for Call Takers (Level 4), the objectives, learning outcomes, and structure of the existing curriculum were also changed. The changes were so significant that, instead of updating the existing curriculum, the working group developed a new curriculum, which was registered in the Estonian Education Information System (hereinafter *EEIS*) in 2025. As suggested by employers and students, elective subjects have been added to all vocational education curricula.

In 2023, the National Audit Office published a report entitled "A Long-Term View of the Prison System", which pointed out that Prison Guard curricula, i.e. training of the prison guards, are mainly based on providing security skills, while establishing social contact with prisoners has been left in the background. The current Prison Guard curriculum (60 ECVET) did not meet the professional needs of the prison service or the expectations of career changers in terms of its length and focus. Based on the reorganisation of the field of work and the guidelines set out in the report, the working group decided to reorganize the current Prison Guard curriculum into two different EQF level training programmes – a level 4 ini-

tial vocational education and training curriculum (30 ECVET) and a Level 5 continuing education curriculum. The Level 4 Prison Guard curriculum (30 ECVET) was registered in *EEIS* in 2024 and the Level 5 continuing education curriculum for the Unit Leader (30 ECVET) in 2025. Following the redesigning of the curriculum into different curricula, it is planned to discontinue admission to the 60 ECVET Prison Guard curriculum and close the curriculum in 2026.

The most significant development in the professional higher education curricula was the uniform renewal of the general studies module in all curricula.

Based on better coherence between future skills and key competences, priorities set for internal security education, employers' requirements, and the goal of supporting students' personal development, the module of general studies of professional higher education curricula was updated for the academic year 2024/2025. The module comprises 30 ECTS credit points, of which 21 are compulsory and 9 are elective. The compulsory subjects are 'Security Environment and Internal Security' (3 ECTS), 'Civil Protection and Crisis Management' (3 ECTS), "Fundamentals of Law" (6 ECTS), "Practical Legal Thinking" (3 ECTS), "Academic and Digital Literacy" (3 ECTS) and "Communication Psychology" (3 ECTS). Through elective courses, students can develop self-management, thinking and communication skills. Elective courses include health psychology, fundamentals of athletic performance, organisational behaviour, self-management, cultural intelligence, public speaking, service design, language learning (Russian, Finnish, English), international study experience, and, as web-based/distance learning courses, the basics of economics and entrepreneurship, the basics of project management, spreadsheets and data processing.

When considering curricula open for admission, the conditions for completing the Customs and Taxation and Taxation and Customs curricula were changed. Whereas previously it was possible to complete the studies with a traditional thesis, it is now also possible to take a final exam to complete the studies.

During the reporting period, elective courses were added to the Master's programme in Internal Security to enable students to expand their skills in analysing security threats, develop critical thinking and operational competence, cultivate research skills, and gain knowledge of remote sensing and drone technology. In 2023, a new 21-ECTS-credit-point Countering Hybrid Threats study programme was developed.

4.2.2. International dimension of study programmes

The vision of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences' development plan for 2015–2025 included an international dimension: the academy aims to become Europe's best centre for internal security education and research. According to the development plan, internationalisation covers both teaching and research and development activities, primarily in the form of cooperation and mobility activities.

Internationalisation of the academy and international cooperation in the field of curricula **was realised** during the reporting period **primarily through two joint Master's programmes – Strategic Border Management (EHIS code 247822) and Countering Hybrid Threats (EHIS code 258556).**

The Strategic Border Management Master's programme is an international joint programme between six higher education institutions and Frontex, created to train middle and senior officials responsible for border management in European Union. The consortium's academic partners have cooperation agreements with national law enforcement agencies and border and coast guard authorities. In Estonia, **the partner is the Police and Border Guard Board**, which participated in the development of the curriculum and has a need to train its border guard officials. The PPA, as the sending organisation, also appoints the officers to be sent for training.

The curriculum does not accept students every year. Once one study group (1.5 years of study, 90 ECTS) has graduated, the next one is accepted. No admissions took place during the COVID period, when the movement of students was restricted.

To get an overview of student admission and graduation data, the long-term trend across study groups is as follows:

2015–2017 – 26 admitted, 22 graduated;
2017–2019 – 25 accepted, 24 graduated;
2019–2021 – 34 admitted, 32 graduated;
2025 – 27 admitted, 26 expected to graduate in 2026 (one student has discontinued their studies).
The proportion of graduates completing their studies within the nominal period of study is very high, ranging from 85% to 96%.

The academy has organised six modules in the strategic border management curriculum and participates in the work of the quality assurance council and the board. This experience provides the necessary foundation for dealing with various problems and ensuring the sustainability of the curriculum.

The joint curriculum “Countering Hybrid Threats” was created with the support of the European Union funding. [An analysis](#) of training needs in the field of hybrid threats and cyber security commissioned by the European External Action Service in 2020 provided an important impetus for the development of the curriculum. The analysis showed that various topics related to hybrid threats are covered in different higher education institutions in Estonia and Europe, but there is no compact curriculum. In order to create and develop the curriculum “Countering Hybrid Threats”, the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences used external funding from Erasmus+ (project HYBRIDC 2022-1-EE01-KA220-HED-000089329, HYBRIDIM project 101127138).

The development of the curriculum was started in 2020 by a working group that included, in addition to the academy, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior, eu_LISA, the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats (Finland), Tallinn University of Technology, and the Estonian Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These partners have strong links with employers and other stakeholders, which provided the basis for designing the curriculum and learning outcomes based on the vision and needs of employers. The Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence considered the creation and launch of the curriculum to be important and supported it with their letters.

The partners implementing the curriculum are the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, Mykolas Romeris University in Lithuania, and Rīga Stradiņš University in Latvia. The academy plans to admit students to the curriculum in the academic year 2026/2027.

4.2.3. International standards in curriculum development

The curricula for police officers and police services ensure that the PPA has qualified employees, taking into account both international standards and national expectations (competence requirements). The academy's curricula follow the Common Core Curriculum for Border and Coast Guard Basic Training in the EU (hereinafter CCC) developed by Frontex, which is based on the Frontex sectoral qualification framework. Frontex regularly assesses the national implementation of the CCC, with the latest assessment taking place in March 2025 as part of the Common Core Curriculum – Interoperability Assessment Programme CCC-IAP 2024–2025.

The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences' professional higher education curriculum in Customs and Taxation in the field of business and administration has been recognised by the European Commission as a top-level curriculum, the completion of which provides students with knowledge in line with the European Union's customs competence standards CustCompEU. The recognition is granted for a period of three years. The curriculum of the Financial College has been recognised for the period 2020–2023 and subsequently from 2024 onwards.

In the field of prison guard training, international standards are set by the Council of Europe's [guidelines regarding recruitment, selection, education, training and professional development of prison and probation staff](#). All of the vocational and higher education curricula of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences that focus on the training of prison staff are in line with the guidelines and have been highlighted internationally as best practices.

4.3. Internal evaluation of curricula

A functioning internal evaluation system has been established for the continuous development of curricula.

The internal evaluation of curricula is governed by [the internal evaluation procedure for curricula](#), which stipulates that a comprehensive internal evaluation of curricula is generally conducted in every three years and that the curriculum manager is responsible for the process and analysis. Partial internal evaluation of curricula is a continuous annual process that does not cover all areas of internal evaluation and is based on feedback and needs from stakeholders. For partial internal evaluation, feedback and input are obtained from students and other target groups through feedback surveys and studies, research and analysis, key partner institutions, and feedback seminars. For the internal evaluation of the curriculum, broad-based working groups are formed by order, which include representatives of teaching staff and employers, as well as a student representative.

Based on all internal evaluations and the analyses contained therein, action plans are drawn up.

Vocational education curricula range from 30 to 100 ECVET credit points and last from six months to a year and a half – they are mainly subject to partial internal evaluation. During the evaluation period, various thematic analyses were carried out on vocational education curricula, resulting in the following changes:

- analysis of the internship of the vocational training curriculum for rescuers – the defence of the internship report was replaced by a discussion seminar involving all parties, and the achievement of the learning outcomes of the internship is assessed by the internship supervisor in the rescue station;
- comparative analysis of the rescuer's professional examination and final examination – the learning outcomes, tasks and assessment of the final examination and the professional examination are similar and no changes are necessary;
- assessment of the compliance of the rescuer curriculum and the rescuer (level 4) professional standard – the analysis confirmed the compliance of the curriculum modules and learning outcomes with the professional standard;
- assessment of the coherence of the organisation of studies, the topics taught and the needs of employers in the curriculum for Information and Investigation Officers – the organisation of studies was changed and the structure of study tasks was supplemented.

During the reporting period, several **case-based internal assessments of higher education curricula were carried out**. An analysis of the final examination was carried out in the professional higher education curriculum, as a result of which the content of the final examination was made more practical and the pass criteria for the final examination were made more similar to the assessment criteria used for officials in the world of work.

In 2024, materials were submitted to the Study Committee for approval of updates to two professional higher education curricula – Customs and Taxation, and Taxation and Customs. Analysis of the submitted materials showed that, compared to the current versions, extensive changes have been made to the objectives, learning outcomes, structure and graduation requirements of the curricula. The formulated learning outcomes lead students to acquire a completely different combination of knowledge and skills than before, which means that, pursuant to clause 8.1 of the curriculum statute, these are essentially new curricula. It was therefore correct to register the submitted versions as new curricula. In order to assess the extent of the changes, additional feedback was requested from the Ministry of Education and Research, the vice-rectors for academic affairs of the Council of Rectors of Universities of Applied Sciences, and the Estonian National Defence Academy. The opinions received confirmed the conclusion of the internal assessment: the changes are so significant that the curricula are to be considered as new.

In the autumn semester of 2024, the Rescue College's working group assessed the compulsory and elective modules of the Master's programme in Internal Security from the perspective of civil protection issues. It was found that the objectives of the compulsory subjects "Strategic Management", "Legal Regulation of Internal Security", "Internal Security Policy Development and Cooperation" and "Security and Hybrid Threats and a Broad Approach to National Defence" do not need to be changed.

4.4. International mobility of students

The curricula provide opportunities for international student mobility, and these opportunities are being utilised. **The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences has an Erasmus+ Higher Education Charter for 2021–2027.**

The academy's curricula are primarily focused on national security and are linked to the domestic legal environment. This makes it difficult to find partner schools in other countries whose curricula are sufficiently similar in terms of subjects and learning outcomes to offer foreign students subjects suitable for their curricula within the framework of one of the academy's curricula in the volume of at least 15 ECTS credit points. For this reason, the academy has compiled an independent 'Erasmus module', which brings together 25 subjects from which foreign students can declare at least 15 ECTS credit points for long-term learning mobility, based on the curriculum profile of their home institution. The Erasmus module is not offered every academic year – there was no intake in 2020/2021 and 2024/2025.

Table 15. Incoming long-term Erasmus+ study mobility

Academic year	2019/2020	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2025/2026
International students	24	22	22	24	18

Data: Study Information System

In addition to long-term learning mobility, the academy offers students from other countries short-term study, job shadowing and internship opportunities.

Table 16. Incoming short-term Erasmus+ learning mobility

Academic year	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Vocational students	3	5	14
Higher education students	-	4	19

Data: Strategy Department

Within the framework of Erasmus+, the academy supports student mobility (see Table 17).

Table 17. Outgoing Erasmus+ learning mobility

Academic year	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Students in mobility	1	4	19	12	23

Data: Strategy Department

The learning mobility of students at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences also takes place **through various study trips** to partner schools, which the academy finances from its own budget. Study trips are related to the so-called internationalisation subjects in the curricula, "International Cooperation" and "Internship Abroad".

Table 18. Student mobility through study trips

Academic year	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Students	8	28	7	6
Higher education students	55	53	110	20

Data: Delta document management system

The academy considers it important to promote international contacts among students, as international networking is invaluable for their academic and professional development. By participating in international exchange programmes, studies and practical training, students broaden their horizons, improve their communication skills with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds and gain a broader understanding of the international security environment and its impact on their future careers.

One of the main ways in which the academy supports student mobility is through **bilateral agreements concluded with research and educational institutions in the field of internal security** throughout Europe. A total of 40 agreements have been concluded, facilitating student exchanges and enabling students to familiarise themselves with the security systems of partner countries. Under these agreements, students can also participate in training exercises and sports competitions organised by partner countries, which in turn improve their understanding of the daily work of their partners.

In order to enable internationalisation without going abroad (i.e. internationalisation at home), e-courses of varying lengths have been included in the curricula. Students can choose those based on their personal or professional development needs.

4.5 Summary of the assessment criterion “Curriculum planning and study programmes”

STRENGTHS

A modern and comprehensive internal security education model. The integrated education model supports systematic and flexible planning of learning paths at different levels of education, and allows for a strategic response to demographic changes and labour force needs. The education model is based on a uniform methodology, transparent quality management and regular internal evaluation, which includes both comprehensive and partial evaluations.

Inclusive and evidence-based curriculum development. Curriculum development is based on the needs of society and the labour market, development plans, OSKA surveys and the results of internal curriculum evaluations. Based on the assessment results, targeted improvements are made to the curricula and the organisation of studies. Employers, experts, teaching staff, students and partners are involved in the assessment and development process, ensuring feedback-based, evidence-based and sustainable development.

International and innovative learning environment. Curricula take into account international standards and are linked to European competence frameworks (e.g. Frontex CCC, CustCompEU). International cooperation is largely focused on joint curricula and joint learning for students in an international learning environment. To this end, the academy has created several effective solutions – joint study programmes and international mobility opportunities (including short-term mobility, study trips, international online courses) that support the students’ and the teaching staff’s international experience and the quality and attractiveness of studies.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Speed of curriculum development processes. The broad-based involvement of stakeholders (alumni, employers, students) ensures the quality of curriculum development, however, it makes the development process time-consuming and less flexible when implementing rapid changes. It has been planned to optimise the process, plan the work of working groups and define clearer time frames to ensure more effective change management.

Strengthening cooperation between teaching staff and the quality of teaching within the framework of modular learning. The modular learning model requires close cooperation between teaching staff, a common understanding of the achievement of learning outcomes and the implementation of a learner-centred approach to learning. There is a need for further strengthening of cooperation and methodological consistency across different subjects and modules. There are plans to organise regular development days for teaching staff, provide training on learning and teaching topics, and offer systematic digital support to promote the development of a common approach to learning and a high-quality learning process.

Deepening the international dimension and developing international student mobility and cooperation. Within the framework of cooperation agreements with partner schools, it is planned to find common ground in curricula to enable two-way student mobility. The content of the Erasmus+ module is regularly updated.

5. Teaching

The academy systematically applies a learning-centred approach to support the development of self-directed learners and to guide learners to take responsibility for their studies and career planning. Fair access to higher education, the research-based nature of the content and process of learning and teaching, and the relevance of graduates' knowledge and skills to the constantly changing needs of the labour market and the expectations of society are guaranteed.

5.1. Planning of study places and the admission of new students

The planning of study places at Estonian Academy of Security Sciences used to be regulated by the Minister of the Interior's regulation "[Basis, conditions and procedure for financing the educational activities of an professional higher education in the field of internal security](#)" (EST). The number of places in vocational, professional higher education and Master's programmes at the academy is planned according to the strategic objectives of the internal security development plan and the projected personnel needs of partner institutions – Emergency Response Centre, Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, Estonian Internal Security Service, Tax and Customs Board, Police and Border Guard Board, and Estonian Rescue Services Agency.

Since 2023, the practice and work process for planning the study places was changed in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior. It is now more collaborative in nature and, in terms of its timeframe and logic, much better aligned with the planning logic of all agencies within the Ministry of the Interior's area of governance, including the budget planning schedule. Since 1 February 2024, the process of designing study places has been regulated by the Minister of the Interior's regulation "[Basis, conditions and procedure for financing the educational activities in the field of internal security](#)" (EST).

The study place planning process is cyclical and collaborative.

- Every February, the Ministry of the Interior issues a task to plan study places for the next four academic years.
- Based on the initial task, both Estonian Academy of Security Sciences and the institutions prepare analyses, the results of which are discussed at joint meetings (education seminars) held in March.
- Based on the initial tasks and discussions, proposals are made for the creation of new study places and study development activities.

In January, the Ministry of the Interior confirms the number of study places for the following academic year, together with a forecast of the number of study places for the following three academic years and, if necessary, study development activities. In order to ensure

flexibility, the Rector of the academy has the right to make certain changes within the budget: if necessary, study places may be re-distributed between colleges, the number of study places in some specialities may be increased by up to 10%, and part-time study places, which are financed from tuition fees, may be opened. This allows admissions to be adjusted based on the needs of national security and to respond more quickly to changes in the labour market and financial opportunities.

The main criteria for determining the number of study places are the needs of employers and the capacity of the academy, taking into account both the workload of the teaching staff and the infrastructure available.

For example, the PPA's personnel analysis revealed a critical need for additional new police officers. In 2024, necessary funds were allocated to the academy from the state budget. These funds will enable the necessary developments to be made in the coming years to implement the updated police education model and increase the number of places in police training (500 additional places over four years). In order to provide more students with modern learning opportunities, the academy has also launched major infrastructure development projects – a new teaching and dormitory building will be constructed at the Tallinn training centre, and a tactical training centre with a training ground and living quarters will be built at the Väike-Maarja training centre. These will support the continuing education and training of critical importance for the Rescue Services Agency, PPA and other service personnel, as well as the provision of degree studies in a sufficient volume at the academy. The new learning environments are scheduled for completion in 2027.

The number and structure of new study places over the past five years by curriculum are described in Table 19 below. The table shows that the national training order for study places has been fairly stable over the years – there have been fluctuations in the number of study places per curriculum, and the number of places in the national training order has increased primarily due to the personnel needs of the PPA. The general trend in the national training order for all curricula is that an increasing number of students are admitted with the referral from the respective authority. When filling study places with students with the referral from their authority, the relevant partner agency organises the selection of candidates, the collection of documents and the necessary entrance examinations. The lists of successful candidates are submitted to the academy no later than two weeks before the start of the academic year. Students who are admitted with the named referral have an employment relationship with the agency and their salary is maintained during their studies. There have been both public competitions and the referral system applied for places on the prison guard and corrections training programme at the same time. However, the places offered through the public competition have remained unfilled and will be filled with in the course of the referral procedure organised by the prison service.

Table 19. Number of study places at Estonian Academy of Security Sciences by level, programme and year

Admission year	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	PC	RA	PC	RA	PC	RA	PC	RA	PC	RA	PC	RA
VOCATIONAL TRAINING												
Level 4												
Police Officer	50	50	25	75	25	78	25	50	25	75	50	125
Prison Guard	5	55	61		60		60		60		60	
Call Taker	16		20		20		20		20		35	
Rescuer *		80		83		80		80		75		65
EOD1 technician *		0		7	curriculum closed							
Level 5												
Rescue Unit Leader *		20		15		15		15		20		15
Offence Proceedings Officer *		15		15		15		15		0		15
Information and Investigation Officer *		12		12		12		12		12	curriculum closed	
Case Manager *		12		12		12	curriculum closed					
Total vocational education	71	244	325		317		277		287		365	
HIGHER EDUCATION												
Professional higher education												
Police Service	75	0	50	25	50	25	75	25	75	25	125	50
Rescue Service		17	15	15	30		30		30		30	
Customs and Taxation	30		30		30		30		30		30	
Corrections	10	10	25		25		20		20		20	
Total professional higher education	115	27	160		160		180		180		255	
Master's studies												
Internal security	30		30		30		30		30		30	
TOTAL higher education	145	27	190		190		210		210		285	

PC – public competition, RA – referral from the authority; * referral from the authority only

Data: Delta document management system

At the academy, admissions are planned and organised by the admissions committee. The committee develops the activities and schedule related to admission, appoints the persons responsible for organising admission, compiles the evaluation criteria for public competition admission tests and determines the conditions for taking into account physical tests taken outside the academy. The admission requirements are regulated by the document “Conditions and Procedure for Admission to the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences” (amended and updated each academic year), approved by the council.

During the assessment period, participation in tests has been made more flexible – for example, the option to conduct tests online has been added where necessary, some study programmes have offered the opportunity to take tests in April-May and July, and conditions have been established for transferring the results of physical tests taken elsewhere. In addition, students’ opportunities to enrol have been expanded by lowering the physical test thresholds, as physical fitness can be improved during the course of study. The fact that candidates can now apply for up to three study programmes also provides them with better opportunities to be admitted. Candidates can also improve their application results with additional points awarded for completing an elective course in internal security, demonstrating top sporting achievements, and graduating from secondary school with a gold or silver medal.

Based on the requirements established for officials of partner institutions, the admission conditions have been supplemented so that candidates must be of legal age and Estonian citizens and must undergo background and health checks. At the same time, exceptions have been made for curricula that are not directly related to a position at a partner institution. For example, there is no restriction that only Estonian citizens can apply for the Internal Security and Rescue Service curricula. Health requirements are more flexible in the Customs and Taxation, Taxation and Customs, and Call Taker curricula – for example, persons with limited mobility can also enrol in the latter curriculum.

In 2019, the admission period was extended and applications are

accepted already in February. In order to ensure that there are enough applicants **for the public competition, the admission process is flexible and offers alternatives**. At the same time marketing activities are carried out systematically, too. From 2024, significant changes have been made to the admission process: the number of places in the Police Service and Taxation and Customs curricula have been increased; and since 2025, vocational training places will be filled with students with a referral from their agency. Based on these decisions, the opportunities for higher education at Estonian Academy of Security Sciences have been promoted in external communications. The results also show a positive trend in the admission indicators for the last two academic years (2024/2025 and 2025/2026): the number of applications for higher education has increased by 23% (930 applications in the academic year 2024/2025; 1143 applications for higher education in the academic year 2025/2026) – the trend is shown in Figure 4 below.

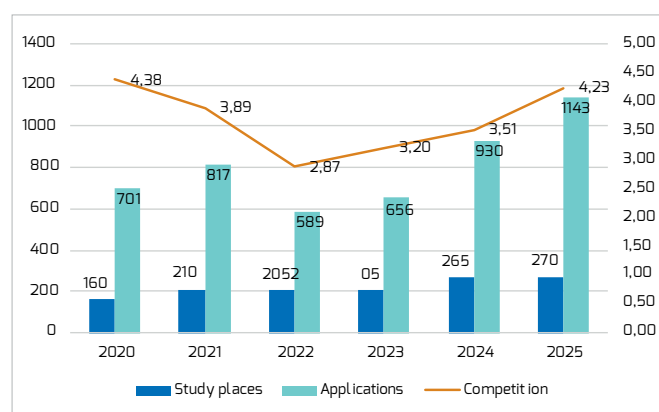


Figure 4. Public competition for places in higher education in the period 2020–2025

Data: Department of Academic Affairs

In order to support the members of the admission interview committees, training on conducting admission interviews was held in the spring of 2024. During the training, good practices for admission interviews were jointly established. Before the interview period, the members of the admission interview committees are introduced to the document featuring the best practices and information sessions are held to ensure that the assessment process is clear and smooth for the members. Each academic unit has an admissions officer who directly supports the work of the committees. In the case of inter-academic tests, the role of the admissions officer is to be carried out by the study specialist responsible for admissions working at the Department of Academic Affairs.

In order to make the application process as easy as possible for candidates, the admission information on the website and in the admission information system has been reviewed, reorganised and clarified. For example, for the 2024 admission cycle, diagrams showing how candidates can progress from application to studies were created for each curriculum. The information on physical tests includes advice from the head of sports. The criteria for all interviews are also available on the website so that candidates can prepare for them. At the beginning of the application period, open doors days are organised and information sessions are held for those interested in the Master's programme and the curriculum of Taxation and Customs. Should candidates have specific questions, they can contact the admissions office by email or phone, or they can directly contact the admissions officer for the curriculum. The admissions procedure includes a feedback request process and, in 2025 a process of appeals was established. In order to support the start of their studies, candidates whose native language is not Estonian can participate in an intensive Estonian language course in August. To ensure a smoother transition, orientation days for first-year students are held at the beginning of the academic year.

The admission requirements and procedures ensure fair access to education for students and support their readiness to successfully complete the curriculum. Qualifications obtained abroad are recognised academically on the basis of international agreements and Estonian legislation. If necessary, the academy involves the ENIC/NARICU centre in this process. However, applicants with educational qualifications acquired abroad are very rare.

5.2. Students in study programmes, graduation, discontinuation and target group satisfaction with studies

The academy organises vocational education (i.e. six curricula), professional higher education (i.e. five curricula) and Master's level education (i.e. one curriculum). All of the academy's higher education programmes are full-time programmes in the fields of property and personal protection, internal security, and financial accounting and taxation, with the exception of the professional higher education programme in Taxation and Customs, which is only available as a part-time programme. The number of full-time and part-time students per academic year by curriculum group is shown in Table 20 below.

Table 20. Number of full-time and part-time students by curriculum group and academic year

Curriculum group / Full-time and part-time Number of students	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
	full/partial	full/partial	full/partial	full/partial	full/partial	full/partial
Property and personal protection (Level 6)	353	313	366	400	456	483
Financial accounting and Taxation (Level 6)	87/46	96/70	94/94	93/105	98/101	91/117
Internal security (Level 7)	100	101	93	93	92	83

Data: Education information portal haridussilm.ee

The number of students enrolled in the part-time study programme in Taxation and Customs accounts for nearly 18% of the total number of students. The number of places available for students admitted to this programme is confirmed by the order of the Rector of the academy. The number of places varies from year to year, ranging from 20 to 30, with competition ranging from 2.2 to 2.6 applications per one study place.

The effectiveness of higher and vocational education is characterised by the proportion of graduates completing their studies within the nominal period of study. The academy's development plan for 2015–2025 specified that by 2025, the proportion of graduates completing their studies within the nominal period of study should be at least 80%. However, it does not specify which level or levels of study this applies to. The development plan for 2035 defines target levels for each level of study, and in higher education, these are differentiated between levels 6 and 7. Table 21 below shows the proportion of graduates within the nominal period of study by level of higher education among those who started in the year of admission.

Table 21. Proportion of higher education graduates graduating within the nominal duration of (%) of those who started in the year of admission

Level of study/year of admission	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Professional higher education	72	68	75	78	70	x
Master's studies	22	44	25	25	27	36

Data: Study Information System

The Ministry of Education and Research's performance report for the academic year 2022/2023 notes that in 2023, 55% of those who started professional higher education completed their studies within the nominal period. The corresponding figure for the academy is 70%, which is significantly higher (15%) than the Estonian average. The performance report does not provide public data on Master's programmes.

The proportion of graduates with a nominal duration in vocational education is also very high compared to the Estonian average, ranging from 83% to 89%.

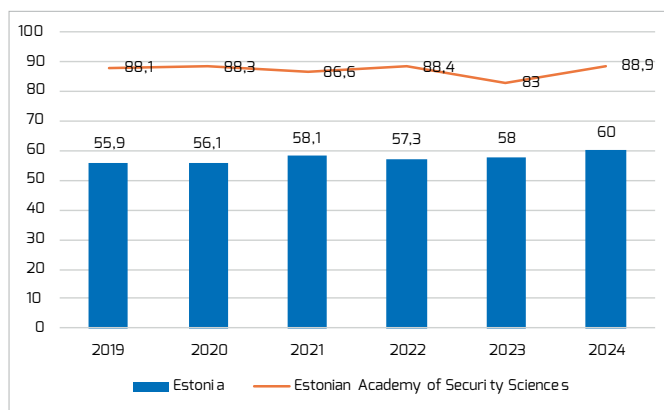


Figure 5. Proportion of vocational education graduates within the nominal period

Data: education information portal haridussilm.ee

Considering the high rate of students graduating within a nominal period of study in professional higher education and vocational education, it can be said that the student selection process works, students are motivated, the support system supports them, and supervision is effective.

The academy takes the **feedback** from **students, alumni and employers** into considerations and has set goals, the fulfilment of which is monitored. The satisfaction of different target groups with their studies varies depending on the role of the evaluator (which is natural), but the results are quite close to the achievement levels set in the development plan (see Table 22).

Table 22. Indicators for the satisfaction with the quality of studies on a 5-point scale established in the academy's development plan

Indicator	2017 level	2021	2024	2025 level
Alumni satisfaction with the education received remains stable for two to four years after graduation	4.4	4.2	Not studied	≥ 4.2
Employers are satisfied with the education provided by the academy	3.95	3.79	3.9	≥ 4.0

Data: Employer satisfaction surveys of graduates of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences in 2017, 2021 and 2024

Employer satisfaction with the education of graduates has remained stable over the years (see Table 23).

Table 23. Employer satisfaction with the education of graduates over the years on a 5-point scale

Indicator	2017	2021	2024
Knowledge	3.5	3.7	3.6
Skills	3.7	3.8	3.8
Attitudes	3.8	3.9	4

Data: Employer satisfaction surveys of graduates of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences 2020–2024, Psience 2024

A separate survey conducted in 2024 examined employers' satisfaction with the education of graduates with higher education on a 5-point scale. The results are summarised in Table 24 below.

Table 24. Employer satisfaction with the education of higher education graduates on a 5-point scale

Indicator	Professional higher education	Master's level
Knowledge	3.6	4.0
Skills	3.9	4.3
Attitudes	4	4.2

Data: Employer satisfaction surveys of graduates of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences 2020–2024, Psience 2024

When comparing levels of education, employers are most satisfied with the education of Master's degree graduates.

This trend is logical, as employers highly value the deeper professional competence of Master's degree graduates, as well as their critical thinking, project-based work and research skills. The results of the survey may also indicate that employers expect people with a Master's degree to be more suitable for certain types of jobs. This means that **the objectives and profiles of study programmes** must be clearly defined in curriculum development, i.e. what level and what knowledge and skills graduates are expected to have for what types of jobs.

The proportion of graduates employed in the security sector five years after graduation was 87% in 2018 and 86% in 2020. The development plan set a target of at least 80%.

A 2021 satisfaction survey of graduates and employers of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences revealed the following. Nearly 80% of the academy's graduates are employed, and 20% are working and studying at the same time. 86% of the respondents work in an institution related to their field of study, 7% in other public sector institutions and 6% in the private sector. Most work in positions related to their field of study: 70% of respondents work in positions directly related to their field of study and 22% in positions partially related to their field of study. Alumni working in positions related or partially related to their field of study consider themselves to be performing well at work: on a 5-point scale, they gave themselves a rating of 4.5. They are also satisfied with their current job, giving it a rating of 4.3.

The satisfaction of the alumni of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences with their choice of specialisation is high. On a 3-point scale (1 – not satisfied; 2 – neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 3 – satisfied), the average rating was 2.8, which indicates that they are generally satisfied with their studies at the academy and with the education they have received. On a 5-point scale (1 – disagree; 5 – strongly agree), the decision to enrol at the academy was rated 4.4 and satisfaction with the education received was rated 4.2. **Satisfaction with work confirms the choice of specialty and the desire to work in the field.**

54% of alumni show positive attitude towards continuing their studies at degree level. 15% of the respondents are currently studying, 29% wish to continue their studies, and 10% have already completed further studies. The responses indicate that alumni are oriented towards lifelong learning and continuous self-improvement. The academy does not collect detailed data on the further studies of its alumni.

Since 2018, data related to the incomes of the graduates of Estonian Academy of Security Sciences and the Estonian Military Academy have not been publicly disclosed. Therefore, their income is not discussed in terms of labour market success in this report.

5.3. Results of the national vocational student satisfaction and school environment survey

In the **national vocational education** satisfaction and school environment **surveys conducted in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024**, the researchers have presented students' satisfaction with their school as a generalised indicator. On a 5-point scale, the average was

4.0 in 2021 (4.1 at the academy), 3.74 in 2022 (4.1 at the academy), 3.8 in 2023 (4.2 at the academy) and 3.8 in 2024 (4.3 at the academy). According to the respondents, the reputation of the school has also been high over the years (see Table 25 for more details).

Table 25. Reputation of Estonian Academy of Security Sciences according to vocational students on a 5-point scale

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024
Highschool reputation	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.4

Data: Education information portal haridussilm.ee

Students' assessments to various aspects of the school environment during the last four surveys are presented in Figure 6. As the survey is conducted in the spring semester, students who have studied on so-called short curricula have completed their studies by that time, which is why the number of participants in the survey is quite small. Therefore, the results do not reflect the views of the entire target group and cannot be extrapolated to make generalisations.

Learners' assessments of aspects related to learning have improved. It is noted that studies develop independence and responsibility at work, and learners can largely decide for themselves how to do things at school and learn in the way that suits them best. Learners also set themselves high goals to strive for in their studies and appreciate the support they receive from the teaching staff. It is recognised that teachers guide learners to find additional materials on the subject themselves, and group work and group discussions are a regular part of lessons.

In addition, the feedback received during and after the internship is highly valued, and there is satisfaction with the cooperation between the school and the professions in organising the internships. At the same time, compared to the scores of the two previous surveys, the assessment of the organisation of work placements has fallen in 2023 and 2024. On the other hand, the majority of vocational students have entered the school through with a referral from their agencies and therefore their work placements take place in the agency that referred them to the school.

High ratings can also be given for the self-efficacy of learners – they are confident in their ability to complete their studies and believe that the tasks given at school are manageable. Along with self-efficacy, they also value their connections with other students and high academic discipline. Between 2021 and 2023, the ratings for the value of the profession have fallen, i.e. Estonian employers value vocational education less.

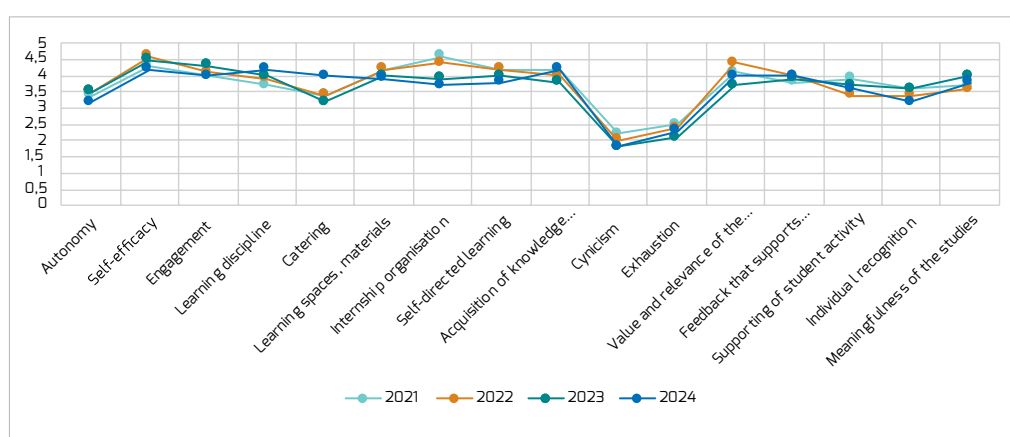


Figure 6. Vocational students' satisfaction with the school environment in 2021-2024

Data: education information portal haridussilm.ee

Setting high personal goals and striving to achieve them has not been accompanied by higher ratings of exhaustion (rating of 2 on a 5-point scale) – students do not feel overburdened with schoolwork. The researchers have also noted the same rating as the average for schools.

Ratings for changing approaches to learning (supporting learner activity, development-oriented feedback, individual recognition) have risen across the surveys.

5.4. Continuing education

In addition to degree programmes, the academy offers a wide range of continuing education courses to its partners and the wider public. Currently, the ratio of degree students to continuing education students is 1:7, i.e. there are seven continuing education students for every degree student.

Continuing education is coordinated and developed by the academy's **Centre for Continuing Education**, which supervises colleges and other structural units in taking a comprehensive approach to the organisation of continuing education, advises and monitors compliance with quality requirements and legislation, and organises the collection, analysis and reporting of statistics. In addition, the centre organises and mediates training courses within and outside the area of governance of the Ministry of the Interior.

The academy focuses on continuing education topics that are closely related to degree programmes. When developing degree programmes, it has been aimed to ensure that degree modules or subjects are also available as continuing education courses. The continuing education regulations and the principles for organising and ensuring the quality of continuing education have been approved. Since the academic year 2018/2019, the organisation of continuing education has been supported by Juhan, the Information System for Continuing Education. All curricula and training courses are registered there, and it is used to register students for training courses, issue them with final documents and collect statistics.

The academy regularly requests and analyses feedback from students, employers and other target groups and stakeholders. The feedback received is also taken into account in curriculum development and the organisation of continuing education. The fact that the trainers involved are specialists in their area and the teaching methods are appropriate is something both training participants and employers appreciate the most.

According to a survey conducted among the employers of the graduates of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences in 2020-2024, employer satisfaction with continuing education was 3.8 on a 5-point scale in both 2017 and 2024, and 4 points in 2021.

In recent years, the volume of continuing education has increased. Over 80% of the training is organised for agencies within the Ministry of the Interior's area of governance and other partner agencies to enable them to focus on their core activities. The academy's clients also include other security organisations (agencies, inspectorates, security companies, municipal police, defence forces), as well as large private and state-owned companies (Tallink Grupp AS, G4S Eesti AS, Eesti Energia, etc.). In addition to improving the organisation of continuing education and the satisfaction of participants and clients, the academy is turning its

attention to new topics – for example, the academy has developed e-courses on civil protection and crisis management, which can be taken by all public service employees. In cooperation with the Government Office, the academy organises a crisis management master class for Estonia's top leaders. What is more, the academy actively trains volunteers in the field of internal security, thereby supporting community safety and preparedness for emergencies. Various training courses are aimed at training assistant police officers and supporting the work of volunteer rescuers, providing the necessary preparation and practical skills.

Table 26. Objectives and performance indicators in continuing education stated in the academy's development plan

Indicator	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 level
Number of participants in continuing education	4,932	5,899	7,846	7,917	7,190	≥ 12,000*
Volume of continuing education in training days	182	2,185	2,628	2,924	2,998	≥ 1,800

Data: Juhan, the Information System for Continuing Education

*The development plan indicators were set in 2015. At that time, continuing education data were collected manually and an error occurred in the number of training participants (participants were mistakenly counted twice, separately for each training day in the case of long programmes). In the meantime, proposals have been made to change the indicator, but this has not been approved by the council.

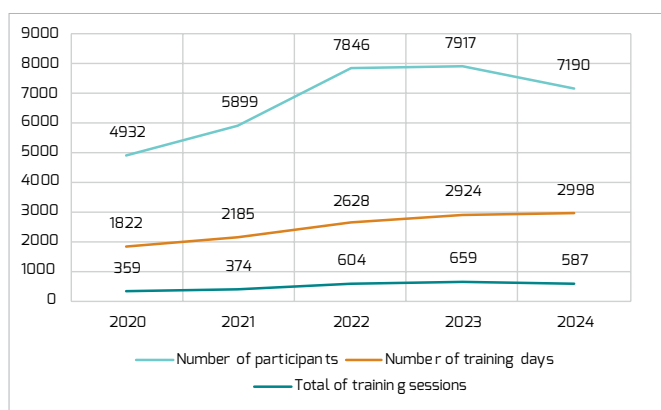


Figure 7. Volume of continuing education in the period 2020-2024

Data: Juhan, the Information System for Continuing Education

Since the academic year 2022/2023, the academy has been offering micro-credential programmes (see Table 28 for details). **Most students study alongside degree students, which promotes better integration and cooperation.** In highly sought-after fields, such as fire safety, separate micro-credential study groups have been created so that all interested parties can enrol and the target group can be offered more targeted and flexible teaching.

Table 27. Number of micro-credential programmes, students who started and completed their studies

Academic year	Number of micro-credential programmes	New students	Finishers
2022/2023	5	35	29
2023/2024	5	56	49
2024/2025	9	83	74
2025/2026	8	69	x

Data: Juhan, the Information System for Continuing Education

In 2024, the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences piloted a micro-credential programme in English entitled 'Countering Hybrid Threats' in cooperation with Mykolas Romeris University and the Croatian Police Academy. Seventy-four people from various European Union Member States applied for the 25 places available. The candidates represented all areas, from the Government Office, local governments and law enforcement agencies to employees involved in ensuring the continuity of critical infrastructure. All 25

participants completed the micro-credential programme, and the training received very good feedback from both participants and all cooperation partners.

5.4.1. Training offered in general education schools

The Centre for Continuing Education also coordinates an elective course in internal security for secondary school students. The aim of the subject is to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for maintaining public order, firefighting and rescue operations, border control, and work as tax officials, customs officers and prison officers, and to support young people in choosing a future career in the field of internal security.

The elective subject consists of nine courses and preliminary internal security training camps. In 2020 and 2021 the organisation of the courses was supported by the European Social Fund.

Table 28. Number of schools participating in preliminary internal security training and the number of graduates by year

Year	Partner schools (based on the year the agreement was signed)	Finishers
2021	17	156
2022	18	157
2023	19	138
2024	31	233
2025	31	339
TOTAL		1,023

Data: Juhan, the Information System for Continuing Education

In order to encourage and support young people, the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences has created a scholarship for internal security studies. The scholarship fund is determined each academic year by the Minister of the Interior. In the spring of 2025, the total amount of the fund was 5,000 euros. Students can apply for the scholarship themselves – to participate in the competition, they must have completed at least three preliminary internal security training courses. The scholarship can be awarded to the same student only once.

All students who have completed the curriculum, receive a certificate for **completing preliminary internal security training**. Table 28 shows the number of students who have completed preliminary internal security training and received a certificate.

Completing preliminary internal security training provides a good basis for joining volunteer organisations (e.g. land and sea rescuers, assistant police officers, internal security reserves), and also gives extra points in the professional suitability interview when applying to the academy. Based on the number of applications for additional points submitted in the admission information system in the last three admission years, it can be said **that the average number of applicants having completed preliminary internal security training is nearly 40.**

5.5. Organisation of learning and teaching

Teaching and learning are based on up-to-date subject-specific knowledge and research, and support the development of scientific thinking. The academy promotes and implements a learning-centred approach in both degree studies and continuing education. Target group-appropriate and goal-oriented teaching and assessment methods support meaningful and in-depth learning. The development of professional and general competences is integrated, and internships are linked to professional studies. The academy has prepared framework documents for internships and a programme for each internship, which contains information about the objectives, learning outcomes and performance criteria for the internship.

Students' internship period is supervised and the academy supports the supervisors through training courses. General principles for assessing students are set out in the study regulations and are based on the regulations of the Minister of Education and Research "Uniform assessment system used in vocational education, bases for assessing the achievement of learning outcomes, assessment methods and criteria, and descriptions of grades" (vocational education) and "Uniform assessment system for higher education and conditions and procedure for awarding diplomas and academic certificates" (higher education). These general principles are specified in the subject programmes and module implementation plans. Regular teaching staff, guest lecturers, practitioners and experts in the field are involved in the organisation of studies (see section 2). The academy offers students opportunities to participate in both curricular and extracurricular developmental activities.

The documents that shape teaching and the organisation of studies are the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences study regulations, the curriculum statute, the internship guidelines, the procedures for final theses, Master's theses and final examinations, the principles for compiling timetables and the teaching schedule. All curricula include subject programmes or module plans.

The planning of studies is primarily based on a student-centred approach to ensure that studies are diverse and varied and that the workload is distributed as evenly as possible throughout the academic year. In order to ensure the best possible connection between studies, practical training and work, the wishes of employers are also taken into account when planning teaching. Several study groups commence their studies in the middle of the academic year, for example, in order to spread out the absence of employees from one employer.

The curriculum statute regulates the requirements for the structure and content of the academy's degree programmes and their implementing documents, the procedure for opening, amending and closing curricula, the planning and organisation of studies, and the proportion of the different parts of the curriculum.

Curricula include compulsory and elective general and specialised studies, and, where necessary, in-depth study areas.

Learning activities consist of **contact learning, e-learning, practical work, internships and independent work. The proportions of learning activities are specified in the curriculum statutes.**

Since 2020, the academy has had a developed digital learning support system, which ensures systematic digital support for all courses at the beginning of each academic year. All modules and subjects in the curricula are available as courses in the Moodle e-learning environment. The creation of courses and technical support are organised by educational technologists. With the development of Moodle and other digital learning technologies, more and more interactive solutions are being integrated into teaching, including SCORM packages, H5P and various open source tools that support the creation of a modern and learner-centred learning environment. In 2025, the Moodle environment was updated, allowing better monitoring of course statistics and enabling lecturers to use learning analytics to monitor students' learning activities. Moodle also uses a plagiarism detection software plugin, which allows the detection of academic dishonesty in written work uploaded to the environment. Plagiarism detection is primarily used to check student papers and internship reports.

The coronavirus crisis led to the rapid development of digital learning materials, the continuing development of which is supported according to the quality criteria of the Estonian Education Quality Agency. In 2023, Articulate software was introduced. This was used to create materials for 13 courses and a civil protection training programme, which received the Estonian Education Quality Agency's quality mark in 2025. In addition, interactive and audio-visual solutions (H5P, XVR simulations, drone videos) are used in the courses. Over the past five years, the academy has submitted nine e-courses for the quality mark competition – five of them have received the quality mark, confirming the competitive level of the academy's digital courses.

5.5.1. Learning and teaching

Learning and teaching are based on the latest knowledge in the field and practical know-how, incorporating the results of scientific research. It is important to develop a scientific mindset in learners – i.e. the ability to think critically, analyse evidence, distinguish reliable information from unreliable information, and draw conclusions based on facts. In this process, it is the learner's active participation that is important; the teacher is a guide or a mentor who creates the conditions and supports the learner. The goal is for the learner to thoroughly understand the subject, connect it with other knowledge, and be able to apply what they have learned in their work, integrating professional and general skills. Therefore, it is important that the learning methods and objectives take into account the needs, interests and abilities of the learner. Deep learning is supported by **active and meaningful methods** and assessment that focuses on **understanding, reasoning and application**. The learning methods used include problem-based learning, case analysis, project-based learning, discussions and collaborative learning, and the assessment methods used include feedback, self-analysis, presentations of practical tasks and projects, learning portfolios, essays, oral discussions and defences. **Assessment methods and criteria are derived directly from the learning outcomes** so that they are relevant and diverse and support learners in acquiring knowledge and skills. The consistency and coherence of learning outcomes, assessment tasks, methods and criteria form the basis for professional and objective assessment. Learning outcomes are assessed on the basis of **formative and summative assessment**. Formative assessment is verbal feedback from the lecturer, the purpose of which is to provide the learner with supportive feedback during the learning process and, if necessary, to modify the process of achieving learning outcomes before the summative assessment. Modules and subjects end with a credit test or exam, the assessment form is specified in the curriculum and is selected based on the objectives and learning outcomes of the module or subject. The assessment methods and criteria for examinations and credit tests have been developed by the curriculum working group in cooperation with teaching staff and employers and confirmed in the subject programme. The assessment methods and criteria are included in the syllabus, and the dates of exams/ are planned and available in the study information system and Moodle. In case of failure, the student may retake the exam or credit test up to two times. Exams and credit tests are scheduled so that students have sufficient time to prepare for them. If a student suspects that a lecturer is not impartial towards them, they may request taking the second exam or credit test before the Committee. In this case, their performance will be assessed by an independent three-member committee, which does not include the lecturer who taught the module or subject. Students can receive feedback on their performance from the lecturer.

Teaching at the academy is carried out by full-time lecturers and visiting lecturers (see section 2).

The academy collects feedback from students on a 5-point scale regarding their progress in their studies and the achievement of learning outcomes.

Table 29. Students' self-assessments of the achievement of learning outcomes in the periods 2019–2020 and 2024–2025

Indicator	2019	2020	2024	2025
I was motivated to participate in learning.	5	4.7	4	4
I used my independent study time effectively.	5	4.7	4.3	4.1
I submitted my independent work by the agreed deadline.	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.8
I actively used the e-learning opportunities in the Moodle environment.	5	4.7	4	4
Average	4.9	4.7	4.4	4.3

Data: Study Information System

In their feedback, students have given high ratings to their progress in their studies and the achievement of learning outcomes. These

ratings are also supported by the results of the alumni and employer satisfaction survey – alumni are satisfied with their studies and their performance at work.

Work-based internships at partner organisations form a very important part of the academy's teaching. The academy pays great attention to the good organisation of internships – best practices for internship have been drawn up, **academy-wide internship guidelines** have been approved, and there is an internship programme as a subject for each internship. Each college at the academy has an internship coordinator or supervisor. **The completion of internship tasks is monitored and assessed directly by the supervisor** during the internship, **and the final assessment** is generally carried out during the internship defence and is undifferentiated. As the academy's students undertake their internships with specific employers, internship supervisors are regularly trained on topics

such as output-based learning, supervision, feedback, etc. **An interdisciplinary web environment**, praktikad.ee, has been created to support the preparation, organisation, assessment and feedback of internships. Also, the Moodle environment offers a basic e-course for novice supervisors.

Higher education studies end **with a final examination or the defence of a final or Master's thesis, the assessment and organisation of which** is regulated by the final thesis, Master's thesis or final examination procedure. The objectives and learning outcomes of all final theses in professional higher education curricula are identical so that the quality requirements are the same for all curricula and graduates. **The assessment of the final examination and thesis can be contested** in accordance with the procedure established in the study regulations.

5.6. Summary of the assessment criterion "Teaching activities"

STRENGTHS

Systematic and collaborative, yet flexible planning of study places. Study places are planned in close cooperation with employers and partner institutions within the Ministry of the Interior's area of governance, based on strategic personnel needs and labour market forecasts. The process is clearly regulated and linked to budget and development cycles. At the same time, the agility of the system ensures the possibility to quickly reallocate or open study places based on the changing needs of the labour market and internal security. Flexible admission arrangements (e.g. the Rector's right to change the distribution, open part-time studies) allow for a response to changes without compromising quality.

Clear and transparent admission procedures that support equal access and student success. Admission requirements are public, up-to-date and tailored to different target groups (e.g. flexible thresholds for physical tests, language courses for candidates whose native language is not Estonian). A comprehensive and accessible information environment has been created to support candidates (criteria, drawings, best practice for conducting interviews, information days). Employers are involved in the selection process, which helps to ensure that candidates meet the expectations of the field. The high proportion of graduates completing their studies within the standard period (70% vs. the Estonian average of 55%) confirms the effectiveness of the admission procedure and student support.

Close cooperation with employers and a high-quality internship system. The learning process involves close and systematic cooperation between employers and internship providers, ensuring that graduates' skills match the needs of the labour market. Internships are integrated into the curricula and supervised, supervisors are trained, and documentation supports the professional development of students. Employers' satisfaction with graduates' knowledge and attitudes is high and stable. Initial and continuing education are closely integrated, supporting lifelong learning and knowledge transfer.

Continuing education has a strong position and influence on the development of the field. Continuing education is organised systematically and strategically, based on the needs of partner institutions and linked to degree programmes and employer expectations. Each year more than 7,000 students undergo continuing education at the academy – seven students for every degree student – which demonstrates the significant proportion

and impact of continuing education. Micro-credentials and international projects (e.g. Countering Hybrid Threats) have increased the academy's visibility and improved the quality of training. Preliminary internal security training offered to secondary school students supports the next generation and promotes the field of internal security.

A modern and learner-centred digital environment. The use of digital solutions (Moodle, Articulate, H5P, XVR simulations) and e-learning tools supports an interactive, flexible and learner-centred learning process. Up-to-date teaching methods and the involvement of specialists of the field ensure the quality of training. Several e-courses have received a quality mark, which confirms the competitive level of the academy's learning environment and supports the implementation of innovative forms of learning.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Making the reconciliation of students' workload and work even more flexible. Although the needs of employers are taken into account when planning studies, there are places where integration of work and study workload requires additional flexibility and supportive solutions, especially in module and part-time studies. The aim is to develop additional solutions (individual learning paths, expansion of e-learning opportunities, etc.) to manage work and study loads, and through that support more flexible learning for working students.

More systematic use of learning analytics in the development of learning. Until now learning analytics has been used at the level of individual courses, but there is a systematic implementation underway to support monitoring all teaching and learning. There are plans to integrate the learning analytics capabilities of Moodle and other digital platforms to improve learner-centred feedback, support risk groups and streamline the management of the learning process.

Development of data-based monitoring of further education and lifelong learning. Currently, the academy collects only some data concerning the career paths and further education of graduates. This limits the strategic management of long-term developments. In cooperation with the Career Centre, work has begun on creating a data collection and analysis system that will make it possible to monitor the further education and career advancement of graduates, and also use the information obtained for the strategic development of curricula and continuing education.

6. Learning and teaching support systems

The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences takes into account the specific characteristics of its students, it also monitors and supports their academic progress, development and well-being.

The aim of the support system is to support students in their choice of specialisation, reduce dropout rates, shape the attitudes and values that are important for future civil servants, increase students' activity and responsibility for their choices, learning outcomes and coping, involve them in the academy's development activities, and support young people's future coping and competitiveness in their everyday life and on the labour market. The principles of counselling and supporting students at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences are described in the guidance material "Support system for student development and coping at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences", which was compiled in 2015 and updated in 2022.

The most important indicators for assessing the functioning of the system are a reduction in dropout rates, employer satisfaction with graduates, and the ability of the alumni to cope with the changing and unexpected situations in their workplace. The 2024 employer satisfaction survey confirmed that the graduates of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences are generally well-prepared and that their knowledge, skills and attitudes are highly valued. Graduates have a strong theoretical background and are ready for work, but based on employers' experience, they need additional guidance and practical skills training to settle into the workplace. The results of the recommendation index indicate that the recruitment of graduates is considered to be rather positive (index 20 in 2024), but compared to previous surveys, the level of support has fallen by a few points (index 25 in 2021, 19 in 2017). In summary, it can be noted that employers value the professional and value-based training of the graduates of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences but expect greater emphasis on practical skills and support for adapting to working life. Therefore, it is necessary to continue developing the organisation of practical training with the aim of ensuring the graduates' smooth transition from studies to working life.

The implementation of the support system is coordinated by the Department of Academic Affairs in cooperation with colleges and other units. **Academic assistants** advise students primarily on issues related to the organisation of their studies, such as timetables, theses related processes, scholarships, and provide general and urgent information related to studies and the organisation of studies. Academic assistants also monitor students' academic progress and deal with potential dropouts (including those taking academic leave, studying externally, etc.). Academic assistants also provide information about other extracurricular activities (e.g. accommodation, sports facilities, library). Each college has one or two academic assistants, with a total of nine at the academy. In addition to academic assistants, some colleges also have **specialists of academic discipline** who monitor compliance with internal rules and support the development of values. **Internship coordinators** also work with students, securing internships for college students at partner agencies and organising cooperation between the college, employers and students.

Academic assistants work closely with group leaders. The group leader system at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences has been created to strengthen the functioning of a comprehensive support network. A **group leader** is a representative elected by the study group who mediates information between the school and the study group, represents the study group in communication with the school, and cooperates with the student council, conveying the collective opinion of their study group.

There are very few students with special needs at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, as most study programmes have strict health and physical requirements for admission. In study programmes where some special needs are accepted, the academy offers adjustments to support learning, if necessary. The academy supports the professional development of its teaching staff by offering them training in teaching methodology and learning and teaching topics. The training also covers supporting students with special needs and recognising their special needs. Although awareness has increased, this area still needs systematic development. It is particularly necessary to increase the readiness of teaching staff to support students with special educational needs, ensuring that they have equal opportunities to participate in studies. Therefore, the training of the teaching staff and the development of support measures must be continued in order to strengthen the academy's ability to provide a learner-centred and inclusive learning environment.

Student satisfaction with support services is analysed regularly in every two years through a feedback system. The last survey was conducted in the academic year 2024/2025, and among other things, students were asked to evaluate the quality and availability of support services. The analysis of the responses provides a basis for the continuous development of the support system based on student expectations and needs. The survey results showed that satisfaction with the support services that are directly related to learning is high (responses "rather satisfied" and "very satisfied" – 82% with the study information system, 82% with the e-learning environment, 80% with information boards and screens in the study building). Students are also satisfied with the accessibility of the academy (93%) and sports facilities (83%). Additional services that support students require systematic development: accommodation and catering services are viewed critically (answers "rather dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied" – catering 47%, accommodation 17%). In previous surveys, satisfaction with accommodation and catering has also been low.

The survey results show that students do not have a high need for counselling services. The respondents have not used these services extensively and are unable to say whether they would need them in the future (response "don't know" – academic counselling 61%, career counselling 67%, psychological counselling 79%). The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences has invested in improving support services in the areas highlighted in feedback surveys: the opportunity to receive up to four free psychological counselling sessions has been created, career counselling opportunities have been expanded in cooperation with partner agencies, Wi-Fi coverage in dormitories has been improved, the provision of uniforms has been standardised, and a development project for the Kase Street dormitories has been prepared. In addition, the academy has offered chaplaincy services as a counselling service, but due to a lack of interest among students, this service was discontinued in 2024. The catering service provider has also been changed to ensure a higher quality service for students. The process of writing final and Master's theses has been streamlined, including the launch of writing camps to support the writing of final theses and their timely completion.

The individual development and academic progress of students is monitored and supported. Students are granted academic leave on the basis of the rules set out in the study regulations (in the period 2020/21–2024/25, students have mostly taken an academic leave upon their own request, this is followed by leave for military or alternative service, health reasons and caring for a child under 3 years of age), their progress in their studies is monitored and, if

necessary, the curriculum is adjusted so that the student can complete their studies. Students can extend the nominal duration of their studies. If a student is expelled due to lack of progress, they may, if they wish, clear their academic debts as an external student or auditor and then apply for re-enrolment in a vacant study place. The academy accredits students' prior and experiential learning i.e. APEL is applied. If they wish, students can transfer from one study programme to another on the basis of their application and the availability of a free place, provided they meet the admission requirements for the study programme. This option reduces and prevents dropouts due to unsuitability for the field of study.

The development and well-being of students is supported by opportunities for feedback (e.g. first-year student surveys, surveys at the end of each semester focusing on their studies), the results of which enable the academy to implement improvements. In addition, students receive scholarships and study grants. Depending on the curriculum and level of study, students are provided with free meals, accommodation and uniforms, and their travel expenses are reimbursed. The state, government agencies and the academy itself contribute to these benefits.

Estonian Academy of Security Sciences pays **basic scholarships, additional scholarships and special scholarships**. The scholarship system also values social activity and good academic performance.

The most important are the basic and additional scholarships paid on the basis of the Minister of the Interior's regulation "The amount, conditions and procedure for paying scholarships to students, cadets and pupils of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences". The basic scholarship is awarded to full-time students of vocational and professional higher education who participate in studies as required, fulfil the obligations imposed on students and make progress in their studies. Supplementary scholarships are awarded to students who have distinguished themselves in their studies and research, represented the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, or otherwise contributed to the successful fulfilment of the tasks of the academy, government agency, or partner organisation. Over the years, the basic scholarship amount has increased (from €260 to €300 in 2023). The academy also awards several special scholarships – a special scholarship for call takers, a sports scholarship, an Ida-Viru County scholarship, and a special scholarship for a Master's degree research and scientific work. The procedure for applying for and paying special scholarships is established in the relevant statutes. In addition, partner institutions and agencies pay special scholarships to students in their field – the Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, the Tax and Customs Board, the Ministry of the Interior, and the agencies under the ministry's jurisdiction, the Police and Border Guard Board, the Rescue Services Agency, and the Emergency Response Centre.

Students participating in study trips are paid a daily allowance related to the study trip.

The best students are recognised at the ceremony held on the Independence day of the Republic of Estonia. Graduating students will also be recognised at the graduation ceremony, for example, the best thesis or the best final exam will be selected from each academic unit. The author of the best thesis or Master's thesis will receive a scholarship from the Council of Rectors of Universities of Applied Sciences.

Additional activities have been added for which an additional scholarship is paid – for example, for inviting new students to the academy (in 2024).

6.1. Discontinuation of studies

The academy's development plan for 2015–2025 does not set a separate indicator for the proportion of students who discontinue their studies. The academy monitors the numerical indicators related to discontinuation based on data published on the central education data portal. Both in vocational and higher education, dropout rates are lower than the Estonian average for the respective levels of education.

The proportion of dropouts in higher education in the first year of studies (see Figure 8) and in higher education (see Figure 9) is shown in the following figures.

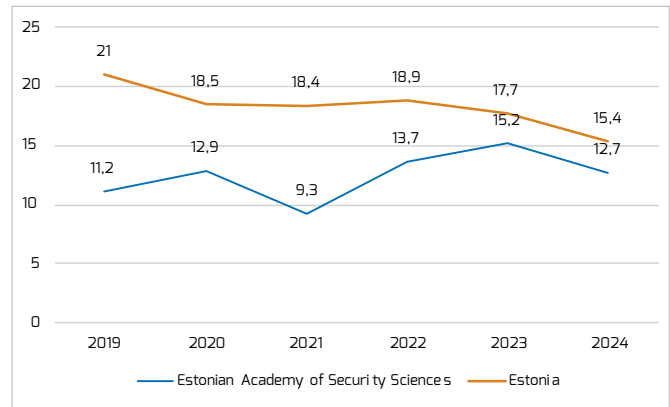


Figure 8. Proportion of dropouts in higher education in the first year of studies

Data: Education information portal haridussilm.ee

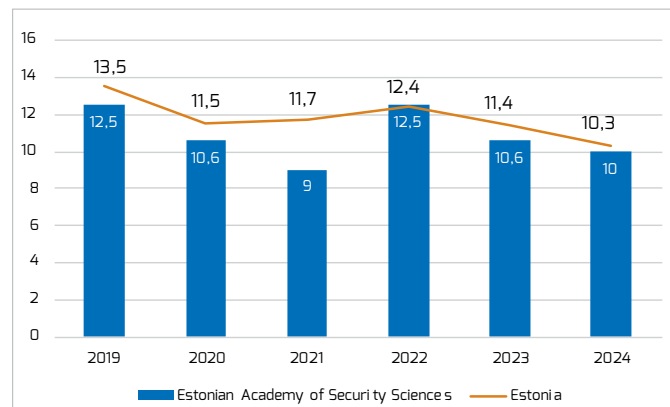


Figure 9. Proportion of dropouts in higher education

Data: Education information portal haridussilm.ee

Students mostly discontinue their studies at their own request (due to unsuitability of the speciality, financial reasons, work-related reasons, etc.). The reasons deleting a student from a matriculation register at the initiative of the academy have been the student's failure to progress in their studies, academic arrears, exceeding the deadline for completing their studies, but also failure to attend classes, failure to commence studies and inappropriate behaviour.

The proportion of students who drop out in the first year of higher education is significantly lower than the Estonian average, and the proportion of students who drop out of higher education does not differ significantly from the Estonian average.

The proportion of dropouts in vocational education is relatively low compared to the Estonian average, remaining below 10% even during the coronavirus pandemic (see Figure 10).

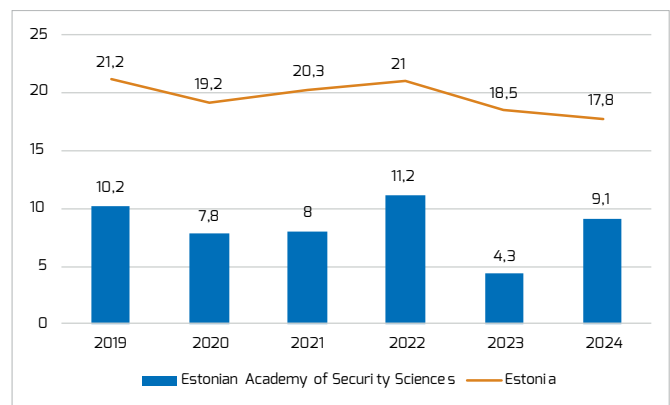


Figure 10. Proportion of dropouts in vocational education

Data: education information portal haridussilm.ee

Similarly to the students in higher education, students in vocational education have more often discontinued their studies themselves – for reasons such as unsuitability of the speciality or health reasons. The academy has initiated the deleting of a student from a matriculation register due to their academic arrears, non-attendance, failure to pass a vocational examination or final examination in their field of study, or inappropriate behaviour.

The low dropout rate in both vocational and higher education is a testament to the fact that the student support system is fulfilling its purpose and that students are receiving the support and guidance they need. The low dropout rate shows that the academy is able to keep students motivated and that the curricula and organisation of studies are effective. The organisation of studies is flexible – all those who have dropped out can **return to study as external students, transfer their previous studies through APEL** and complete their studies after passing the final exam or defending their thesis. The principles of external studies are set out in the study regulations.

6.2. The APEL system and its implementation

Estonian Academy of Security Sciences has a system for advising on and processing APEL applications, and this system is implemented. The submission, assessment and consideration of APEL applications is regulated by the procedure for the [accreditation of prior and experiential learning](#). In order to inform students about the possibilities of applying for APEL, information is shared on the website and in newsletters, information sessions are held as well. Applicants are advised by Academic assistants. In addition, some colleges have created a relevant course for APEL applicants in Moodle.

APEL is applied for and assessed in the Tahvel study information system and is free of charge for students. To make the APEL process more student-centred, there was an APEL feedback survey conducted among the students in the academic year 2023/2024. Based on the results of the survey, the information about APEL provided to students in the information channels was reorganised in order to increase awareness and offer more support in the application process.

APEL applications are mainly submitted by students of the Police and Border Guard College, who account for up to 68% of the total number of applications in the last five academic years. Students of the Police Officer and Police Service curricula primarily apply for the recognition of subjects already completed at the academy, but also for the recognition of learning acquired through work experience. As internal security specialisations are only taught at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, it is natural that previous study results also originate from the same school.

The number of APEL applications submitted (see Table 30) has decreased in recent academic years. On the one hand, this is due to changes in the content and structure of the curricula, which do not allow for a one-to-one transfer of subjects. On the other hand, the number of poor-quality or superficially prepared applications has decreased; applications are submitted in a more conscious and targeted manner. This indicates that those involved in the process – both learners and advisors – have a better understanding of the nature and purpose of APEL.

The decrease in the number of APEL applications and the volume of credits awarded in recent academic years indicates, above all, a quality-based approach to APEL processing. The submission of more conscious and targeted applications is largely the result of better counselling and information management. At the same time, the work of the assessment committees has become more meaningful and professional – the stable composition of the committees is well acquainted with the curricula and learning outcomes, enabling them to make reasoned and substantive decisions. The percentage of credits awarded (i.e. 73% on average) can be seen as a sign that the committees do not approve applications on a formal basis, but on the basis of substantive compliance. The obligation to justify decisions in turn supports transparency and increases the credibility of the assessment process.

The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences participates in the

work of the APEL joint network, which, in cooperation with other vocational and higher education institutions, creates a valuable platform for training, harmonising understanding and sharing best practices. At the 2024 APEL joint network seminar, the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences gave a presentation “Organising the APEL process at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences”.

Table 30. Number of APEL applications over five academic years

Academic year	Number of APEL applications	Total number of credits applied for	Total number of credits awarded	Percentage of credits awarded out of total credits applied for
2024/2025	366	3682	2633	72
2023/2024	385	4163	3473	83
2022/2023	472	5225	4104	79
2021/2022	480	3506	2197	63
2020/2021	255	2199	1537	70
Total	1958	18776	13944	Average 73%

Data: Study Information System

6.3. Handling of complaints and problems

The processes for handling disagreements regarding the organisation of studies, academic misconduct and ethical issues are described and function. Students and staff are aware of these issues and know how to act when they encounter them.

The academy has a functioning and transparent system for handling and resolving complaints based on the Administrative Procedure Act. The rules for contesting decisions related to the organisation of studies, deadlines and the procedure for handling complaints are described in Chapter 11 of the Study Regulations and Chapter 9 of the Continuing Education Regulations. Both documents are available on the academy's website.

To appeal against an assessment decision or another decision related to the organisation of studies, a student may submit a complaint to the person or committee that made the decision (e.g. a lecturer, assessment committee, college director or institute director). If the person or committee that made the decision does not change it, the student may submit an appeal to the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs. If a student wishes to contest an order made about them (e.g. exmatriculation), they may submit an appeal to the Rector. Appeals submitted to the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and the Rector shall be resolved within 10 days of the submission of the appeal. If further investigation of the appeal is necessary, the review period may be extended by up to 30 days.

A student or former student who wishes to appeal against a negative result in their final examination or a negative result in the defence of their final or Master's thesis must submit an appeal to the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, who will form an independent committee if necessary. Based on the committee's opinion, the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs shall make a reasoned proposal to the final examination assessment committee or the final or Master's thesis defence committee to change the initial decision or reject the appeal.

Students and staff are aware of the possibility of submitting dissenting opinions and know how to act when they notice problems. The submission of appeals related to teaching activities is illustrated in Table 31 below.

Table 31. Appeals related to teaching activities

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	June 2025
Degree studies	4	1	1	2	4	1
Continuing education	-	-	-	2	4	3

Data: Delta document management system

A student who believes that the academy has violated their rights may file a complaint with the administrative court to protect their rights. Filing a complaint with the administrative court is regulated by the Code of Administrative Court Procedure.

In 2020–2023, students did not submit any complaints regarding degree studies to the administrative court. In 2024 and 2025 (as of 06.06.2025), one complaint has been submitted to the administrative court concerning exmatriculation from degree studies.

The procedures for dealing with academic fraud and ethical issues are described in Chapter 10 of the Study Regulations and in the procedure for dealing with misconduct, including cases of plagiarism, by students of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences, which has been approved by the Rector.

According to clause 175 of the Study Regulations, misconduct in studies is considered to be a violation of academic practices. For example, misconduct in the assessment of learning outcomes includes the use of materials and resources that have not been expressly permitted by the lecturer, and the unauthorised acquisition of knowledge, for example by copying from someone else. Plagiarism, which is defined as presenting one's own or someone else's written work or parts thereof under one's own name without proper academic citation, is also considered misconduct.

In teaching, except for final examinations, practical training, and the (preliminary) defence of a final or Master's thesis, the procedure for dealing with misconduct, including plagiarism, is organised by the lecturer who discovers the violation.

Each case of misconduct is dealt with individually. In the case of a first-time or minor misconduct, the nature of such behaviour is explained to the student. In the case of significant but non-recurring or large-scale misconduct, a written warning is issued to the student. In the case of repeated or large-scale misconduct, the student will be expelled.

Table 32. Cases of misconduct

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	June 2025
Written warnings	-	3	5	2	3	1
Exmatriculation	-	-	1	1	-	-

Data: Delta document management system

Measures for academic ethics and the prevention of academic fraud are described in section 1.7 of the report.

6.4. Student involvement and extracurricular activities

The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences has an active and motivated student council led by dedicated students. The council includes students from all academic units and course representatives, who can participate in decision-making processes and discussions on topics important to students.

Student representatives are members of the council. Students have representatives also in college and institute councils, the study committee and various working groups (e.g. the curriculum development working group, the strategy working group, and the committee for awarding sports and Ida-Viru County special scho-

larships). Through their representatives, students participate in the management of the academy and academic units.

Student activity increases significantly in the context of specific events or discussions, which demonstrates their substantive participation and interest.

6.4.1. Student participation in academic and professional activities

Students of Estonian Academy of Security Sciences actively participate in various professional exercises and cooperation projects (e.g. CREVEX, Green Victory and dog handler training exercises). They also contribute to the learning processes of other academic units and participate in cooperation projects aimed at introducing the academy and promoting interest in the specialities – for example, they give tours to visitors, participate in job fairs and visit schools. Students of the Police and Border Guard College participate in the organisation of preliminary internal security training camps, serving as role models and support for high school students.

Students collaborate in research and development activities. Feedback questionnaires are compiled to gather information about student satisfaction and learning experiences. As mentioned above, students are also involved in various working groups.

6.4.2. Involvement in community projects and voluntary activities

Students actively participate in community-based and socially important projects. For example, they contribute to the safety campaigns of the Rescue Association, the Police and Border Guard Board, and the Rescue Service Agency in schools and at public events. They volunteer as assistant police officers and rescuers, which strengthens the link between study and practice and supports the fulfilment of civic duties.

6.4.3. Participation in cooperation networks and student organisations

The student council of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences works closely with student organisations at other higher education institutions in Estonia. This cooperation includes organising joint events and exchanging experiences. It is also represented in national organisations such as the Federation Estonian Student Union and the Estonian Academic Sports Federation. Through the latter, the students of the academy have participated in international sporting events (e.g. the SELL Games in Finland).

6.4.4. Sport and health promotion

Sport plays an important role at Estonian Academy of Security Sciences. The academy offers students free sports facilities and the opportunity to participate in both internal and official competitions, as well as student competitions. Students can participate in a variety of sports, from basketball, volleyball and swimming to athletics, orienteering and chess.

The academy regularly organises and participates in different sporting events and campaigns, such as summer games, winter games, the academy's sports day, the academy's anniversary competitions with alumni participating as well, the "King of the High-Rise" running competition, step counting and YuMuuv campaigns, and the YliSport student event. The academy's athletes and teams have successfully represented the school in Estonian championships and international student competitions, as well as in world student championships and universiades.

Students value **mental well-being**, which is why they participate in mental and physical health surveys, mental health lectures, and mini-lectures across the academy to broaden their horizons.

6.4.5. Social and cultural life

The student council organises various cultural, creative and charitable activities. Examples include the reflector tree campaign, creative competitions (photography, art, handicrafts), student days (quizzes, bingo, film screenings, board and console games), autumn get-togethers and the annual Christmas party. Students also participate in the Opinion Festival, Independence Day parades and flag days.

Involvement of vocational students

Vocational students are not formal members of student organisations, but they can also participate in events organised by the student council and the academy. Compared to higher education students, vocational students participate less, but they have access to the same support structures and the same opportunities for participation.

The academy supports student initiatives both financially and organisationally.

6.5. Summary of the assessment criterion “Learning and teaching support systems”

STRENGTHS

Comprehensive and effective student support system. The student support system is comprehensive, well organised and based on the needs of the student. Cooperation between group leaders, academic assistants, internship coordinators and teaching staff ensures that students receive continuous support throughout the learning process. They are offered individual counselling and flexible solutions for continuing their studies (e.g. external studies, APEL). Regular monitoring and feedback help prevent dropouts, the rate of which is consistently lower than the Estonian average in both vocational and higher education. An effective support system promotes students’ academic success and completion of their studies within the nominal period.

High employability of graduates and employer satisfaction. Graduates are valued as specialists with a strong theoretical background, practical skills and a value-based attitude. The consistently high satisfaction of employers and the rapid transition of graduates to the labour market confirm the quality of education and the relevance of curricula to the expectations of real working life.

Socio-economic support measures offered to students. Scholarships and free services (e.g. catering, accommodation, uniforms and travel expenses) help to reduce drop-out rates and support students in focusing on their studies. The support system creates equal opportunities and strengthens the academy’s sense of social responsibility.

Transparent and lawful system for handling problems and disputes. Clearly defined and transparent procedures ensure student confidence and a safe learning environment. Inclusive and solution-oriented problem management supports a value-based management culture and student satisfaction.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Strengthening the development of practical skills and support for adapting to working life. Employers have emphasised the need to increase the role of internships and induction processes so that graduates are better prepared for the specifics of the workplace. The strategic role of internships has been increased in the development of curricula, and students’ self-analysis and reflection skills have been developed. In cooperation with employers, guidance and mentoring solutions are being planned to support graduates’ entry into working life and professional adaptation.

Development of a support system for students with special needs. Although the number of students with special needs is small, continuous attention is needed to raise awareness and preparedness among teaching staff to identify and support such students. There are plans to provide training for the teaching staff and compile support materials on the principles of inclusive education and supportive methodologies in order to develop the academy’s capacity to ensure equal access and quality of learning for all students.

Increasing the visibility and usability of the counselling and APEL system. Students’ awareness and trust in counselling services and the APEL system need to be strengthened. To this end, communication and promotion of services to different target groups has been improved, the information field has been enhanced, and a trustworthy and personal counselling environment has been created. The Career Centre supports the integration of counselling services and career planning. The APEL system has been adapted to the structure of the new curricula, and guidance and support mechanisms for the application process have been improved.

Improving the quality of accommodation and catering services. Student satisfaction with these support services is lower than in other fields of study, which directly affects student well-being and the perceived quality of the learning environment. To improve services, a dormitory construction project has been launched and plans are in place to systematically monitor the quality of catering services and collect feedback from different study programmes. In the future, results related to service quality and satisfaction will be linked to the student development reviews and quality assessment system.





Multivac Eesti juht: Eesti tööstus arenguks ainuõige tee on rohkem investitsioone

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III. RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITIES (R&D)

7. Research and development

Given the specific nature of the field, it should be noted that security research differs from many other fields of research in terms of its institutional and applied nature. Research is largely guided and shaped by the demands of government agencies, not just academic interest. This means that research activities depend on the capacity of agencies to commission, fund and implement research, resulting in a more applied focus and a certain degree of unpredictability in the development of research topics and needs. Research in this field is also closely linked to rapidly changing threats and operational needs, which often evolve faster than the research cycle allows.

The academy's R&D focuses on four main areas: (1) analysis of internal security factors and trends in Estonia and Europe and their impact on the resilience of states and societies; (2) mapping security needs and developing evidence-based policy recommendations, helping to bridge the gap between theory and practice; (3) developing strategic foresight to enable security agencies to adapt to new challenges; (4) strengthening Estonia's crisis resilience, which includes institutional preparedness, public awareness, and legal and regulatory frameworks.

These directions are being implemented by the academy's professors, lecturers and researchers, all of whom have had R&D obligations since 2016. The total number of academic staff has increased during the reporting period: while the number of employees with R&D obligations (converted to full-time equivalents) remained at 50 in 2020–2022, it has increased since 2023 thanks to additional funding, reaching 59.3 by June 2025.

Lecturers make up the largest proportion of employees with TA obligations, accounting for 75% of the total (at the time of writing, there are 21 junior lecturers, 23 lecturers and 9 senior lecturers – equivalent to 17.5, 19.2 and 9 full-time positions, respectively). In addition, 14 researchers, two professors and one analyst have R&D obligations. The number of researchers has increased mainly due to additional funding (primarily from the Estonian Research and Development Council (hereinafter TAN)), while the overall proportions have remained similar during the reporting period. The main tasks of academic staff are teaching and teaching excellence, research, development and innovation, social activities and organisational

development. The proportions of their main tasks are confirmed in the principles of academic staff career management (most recently in 2024). The proportion of research in the workload is highest for researchers, accounting for at least 70-80% of working time, and for professors, for whom the corresponding proportion is at least 50%. For lecturers, the contribution of research is smaller, but still significant – at least 20-40% of working time. The workload planning system is flexible, allowing managers and employees to agree on changes in the proportions of their main tasks. For example, a smaller teaching load may be agreed upon if a lecturer is involved in more R&D than prescribed.

R&D activities take place in most of the units of the academy. Most researchers work at the research centre I in the Internal Security Institute, but research is also carried out at colleges, the language centre and other units. Civil Protection R&D Centre has been established at the Rescue College, where R&D focuses on crisis resilience research. In addition, the academy has a Remote Sensing R&D Centre that develops applications for drone and satellite surveillance technologies in internal security services.

7.1. Targeting of research and development activities, quality definitions in the field of R&D and their fulfilment

The academy's strategic documents in the field of R&D and their implementation

R&D conducted at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences is linked to the academy's mission and strategic goals, which focus on supporting national internal security and social safety through research-based knowledge. The objectives and implementation of the R&D are based on the state's need for security policy, international developments, and the expectations of the government areas of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, which also include, to a significant extent, the needs of partner institutions.

The strategic planning of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences is based on [the Research, Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Plan 2021–2035](#) (hereinafter referred to as *RDIE*), STAK, [the Prison Service Strategy 2025–2029](#)(est) and [the Cashless State Programme](#)(est).

The RDIE development plan aims to increase research-based social development and contribute to the growth of innovation capacity at all levels. STAK defines the basic principles for the development of internal security, with R&D playing a key role in all areas of internal security. The activity 'Research, development and innovation activities of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences' under the programme 'Smart and Innovative Internal Security' considers it important that there has been an increase in both the proportion of research and evidence-based policy-making (significant increase) as well as the research and development capacity in the area of governance of the Ministry of the Interior, and a centre of excellence for research and innovation in Estonian internal security has been established at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences.

Until 2025, R&D activities were also guided by the academy's development plan for 2015–2025 and, thereafter, by the Ministry of the Interior's "[Research, Development and Innovation Strategy 2030](#)" (hereinafter *RDIS 2030*) and the academy's development plan for 2025–2035. *RDIS 2030* supports the development of the security and safety sectors through a knowledge-based approach, interdisciplinary cooperation and the development of practical solutions, and sets the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences the task of becoming a centre of excellence in the field of R&D and empowering internal security R&D.

Over time, the development of the academy's R&D has been closely linked to the expectations of the society and the owner, financial opportunities and institutional priorities, which is why the focus and consistency of the objectives have changed somewhat over time. The 2015–2025 development plan of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences focused on improving the quality of education, and the academy was mainly seen as a process supporting this. The ambitions set for increasing research capacity were rather modest, which was due to the expectations of the owner (primarily the compilation of higher education textbooks), limited budgetary possibilities and a shortage of research staff. At that time, STAK's focus was also on other priorities. However, it is important to emphasise that development has been gradual and requires time. In recent years, new opportunities have emerged, including targeted funding for research and development (TAN, 2022), which has created a strong foundation for increasing research capacity and overcoming previous limitations. *RDIS 2030* also places much greater value on the role of R&D in the development of the field than before.

[The academy's Development Plan 2025–2035](#) outlines the priorities for creating an environment that supports R&D. Based on the objectives of the development plan, the most important long-term R&D activities are planned in its implementation plan. R&D planning and monitoring are integrated into the overall strategic planning process of the academy, which creates the opportunity for R&D to be empowered consistently and systematically. The academy's general principles and focus areas for R&D have also been formulated, allowing it to concentrate on its main strengths and direct resources to the most effective activities. R&D is planned based on the existing strengths (the availability of internal security expertise), strategic security needs and the lack of relevant competence in the Estonian research landscape. In this way, the academy supports research-based decision-making and contributes to the development of society and the state.

Quality definitions in the field of R&D at the academy and their fulfilment

Most of the reporting period falls within the timeframe for the implementation of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences' development plan for 2015–2025. The development plan defined the following indicators for R&D: applied research, research publications, teaching materials, externally funded research, development and innovation projects, and the number of academic staff with doctoral degrees. In connection with preparations for evaluation, the quality criteria for R&D were specified in 2023–2024⁷:

- **scientific impact:** R&D is based on the needs of society, expands the boundaries of knowledge, highlights important trends and their possible impacts;
- **social impact:** the practical applicability of results, including

their contribution to policy-making, is a key objective for the academy;

- **sustainability:** includes the succession of employees engaged in R&D (with the aim of increasing the proportion of employees with doctoral degrees), the satisfaction of researchers with the organisation of research, and an increase in external funding.

Indicators for monitoring the progress of the academy's R&D activities have been established in STAK, its programme and the academy's development plan. The Strategy Department is responsible for monitoring their implementation. In the future, the plan is to improve the system so that the R&D Committee can perform its role of coordinating and monitoring R&D more systematically: once a year, the units will submit their research objectives to the committee, and a year later, their implementation will be assessed on the basis of the reports submitted. This procedure will help to better link strategic objectives with the activities of the units and strengthen the feedback and development process. At the same time, the minimum requirements for publication, participation in externally funded projects and dissemination of R&D results expected from the academy's employees are defined in Appendix 1 to the [Principles of Career Management for Academic Staff](#) at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences. The success of academic staff in R&D is assessed and guided in development discussions and appraisals (see section 2). As the academy's goal is to become a positively evaluated research and development institution, the volume and impact of research work has been given increased attention from 2023 onwards, and the relevant data is analysed twice a year.

Compliance with research ethics and handling of violations

In 2023, the academy adopted [the code of conduct for research integrity](#), which forms the basis for the institution's R&D. The academy is developing procedures for compliance with scientific ethics standards and the code of conduct for research integrity, including relevant internal regulations and guidelines. Compliance with scientific ethics is considered to be the cornerstone of research quality, which is why special attention is paid to it already in graduate studies (in research methodology courses) and targeted training is organised for employees to introduce and apply the principles of scientific ethics. In accordance with the Organisation of Research and Development Act, a research ethics system is being organised and the academy will be able to use the services of a centrally established research ethics committee.

7.2. Volume and structure of R&D revenue

Unlike evaluated research institutions, the academy, as an institution of professional higher education, is not entitled to apply for state-funded research grants. R&D costs are partially covered by the state budget (base budget) – as R&D is part of the academic staff's duties (the distribution of working time is set out in job descriptions), R&D activities are partly financed from the salary fund. Most of the academy's R&D capacity is based on funding allocated from TAN's competitive R&D funding round for 2022–2025, in the amount of 3.77 million.

With the support of TAN funding, new researchers joined the academy in 2022, based on STAK's objectives, whose research focuses on geopolitical factors affecting Estonia's security, including the dynamics between the European Union and Russia, China's international influence, and regional developments in the Baltic region. With the support of TAN funding, the researchers are also contributing to several important research topics, including social resilience and crisis management, as well as issues related to the digital state and social security. TAN also operates a remote sensing research and development centre. TAN funding has also made it possible to strengthen the R&D support system, including the creation of a new research coordinator position, which aims to support the growth of the academy's research capacity and prepare for evaluation.

R&D is also funded through participation in national and international programmes, provided that the objectives and content of the application rounds are at least partially focused on R&D. In the period 2020–2025, the academy has attracted nearly €2.7 million

⁷ References, if necessary: Estonian Academy of Security Sciences Research Capacity Development Work Plan (2023); Estonian Academy of Security Sciences Development Plan 2025–2035.

in international R&D funding. For example, an **EU Internal Security Fund** project (2023–2029; €1 million) that addresses radicalisation, terrorism and organised crime, including its financial dimension is being implemented. We are also part of the EUMA project, which aims to build a network of European Master's programmes in disaster risk management, under the **Union Civil Protection Mechanism** (2024–2025; €64,897). Through the HYBRIDC project, funded by **Erasmus+**, a joint Master's programme has been developed to combat hybrid threats (2022–2025; €400,000). On the technological front, a Frontex-funded project was implemented to develop a methodology for collecting and digitising evidence from land border violations using drones (2023–2024; €59,994). We are also partners in the newly launched **European Horizon** project GUARDIANS (2025–2029; €157,737), which aims to strengthen disaster emergency management across Europe by providing stakeholders with advanced, cost-effective technologies and innovative coordination strategies.

Domestic R&D cooperation includes both contractual research orders from partner institutions and joint projects with other research institutions. During the reporting period, their total volume was approximately €121,000:

- cooperation with the Estonian Military Academy (2024–2025) concerning broad national defence topics (€65,000);
- research project commissioned by the Estonian Rescue Services Agency (2024) 'Identifying the training needs of regional and national crisis managers in the management of civil protection operations by the Estonian Rescue Services Agency (€48,921.51);
- Project carried out in cooperation with the Estonian University of Life Sciences (2021) 'Planning and management of security of supply (RITA)' (€7,000).

During the period under review, R&D funding accounted for 9.4% of the academy's total budget.

7.3. Summary of the evaluation criterion "R&D goal setting and quality management"

STRENGTHS

Clear strategic framework and consistency in goal setting. The focus of the academy's research and development activities has changed over time in line with societal expectations and institutional opportunities. Whereas previously the focus was primarily on developing the quality of education with the support of R&D, now the owner's expectation to increase the academy's research capacity has grown stronger. The objectives of research and development are clearly linked to the academy's mission and national strategic directions (RDIS 2030, RDIE, STAK). The Development Plan 2025–2035 and its implementation plan link the focus areas and indicators of research and development into a unified quality management system.

Growing research capacity and quality-based management. The volume and quality of research activities have increased significantly in recent years. Cooperation between the R&D Committee, the Strategy Department and the research coordinator ensures the systematic planning, monitoring and evaluation of research activities. This creates a solid foundation for data-based decision-making and the implementation of research-based management.

Systematic adherence to good scientific practice and ethics. The academy has committed itself to good scientific practice, and the principles of scientific ethics are integrated into teaching and research. Training courses are organised and guidance materials are developed to support an ethical research culture and reliable research activities.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Sustainability and growth of research funding. R&D funding is largely based on targeted and project-based financing (e.g. TAN, European Union projects). New funding mechanisms and national guidelines, including RDIS 2030, have created a good basis for the academy to take the next step in promoting research and innovation in the field of internal security. There are plans to diversify funding sources, including strengthening project-based funding management, cooperation with the private sector and the creation of new partnerships to ensure the long-term sustainability of research activities. One prerequisite for diversifying funding sources is to sufficiently increase the level and volume of research in order to pass the national external evaluation and become a recognised research institution.

Strengthening the consistency and quality management of research and development activities. The priorities of research and development activities have changed over the years depending on funding decisions and the expectations of the owner. This has reduced strategic consistency and coherence with management decisions. In the future, it is planned to define a clear and consistent focus (two or three main areas) to ensure the strategic consistency of research activities and alignment with the RDIS 2030 objectives. Quality management will also be strengthened by systematically linking research quality criteria to management decisions and increasing the role of the R&D committee and the implementation of a regular feedback system in the evaluation of research activities.

8. Effectiveness and impact of research and development activities in society

Results of research and development activities based on data from the Estonian Research Information System (hereinafter *ETIS*).

The academy focuses on research and knowledge dissemination in the field of internal security in order to support well-considered decisions in the formulation and implementation of policy in this field. The trend in the publication of high-level research publications (ETIS categories 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.1) has increased in 2020–2025, with a total of 120 published during the reporting period (see Figure 11, Table 33). The main topics of the articles include the following:

- cyber security, information security and the human factor;
- Russian geopolitics, disinformation and security impact;
- Estonian business, entrepreneurship and economic research;
- European security and strategic interests;
- education, training and professional development;
- psychology, health and social behaviour.

During the reporting period, 29 articles in category 1.1 were published, mainly by the Internal Security Institute (18) and the Financial College (9). The publication of articles in categories 1.2 and 3.1 has increased the most. Most of the articles in category 1.2 (68%, or about two-thirds) were published in scientific journals issued by the academy. In this category, the Internal Security Institute published the most articles (58%, or 43 articles, 15 of which appeared in external publications). This is followed by the Police and Border Guard College with 12 articles (including 4 in external publications) and the Prison Service College with 9 articles (one of which was pub-

lished in an external publication). Pre-reviewed collection articles and book chapters (3.1) have been published mainly by the Rescue College and the Internal Security Institute.

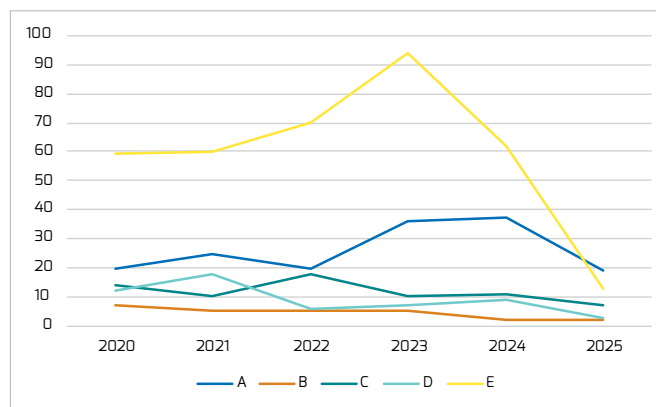


Figure 11. Publication trends in the period 2020–2025 according to ETIS as of 01.09.25. Legend: A – research publications (1.1–1.3, 2.1, 3.1); B – educational publications (2.4, 6.2); C – reports (2.5); D – other (2.3, 3.2–3.5, 4.1, 5.1–5.2); E – popular science and other articles published in the media (6.3–6.9)

Table 33. Publications by employees of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences in the period 2020–2025 (based on data from ETIS as of 01.09.25)

Publication classification (ETIS):	Total:
1. Journal article	
1.1. Scientific articles published in the Web of Science databases Science Citation Index Expanded, Social Sciences Citation Index, Arts & Humanities Citation Index and/or the Scopus database (excluding collections)	29
1.2. Scientific articles in other international scientific journals that have a registered code, international editorial board, international peer review, international distribution, and availability and openness to contributions	74
1.3. Peer-reviewed scientific articles in Estonian and other countries' scientific journals with a local editorial board	29
2. Book/monograph	
2.1. Monographs	2
2.3. Dissertations published in dissertation series (except manuscripts)	2
2.4. Higher education textbooks	8
2.5. Published reports on projects, commissioned research or analyses	70
3. Article/chapter in a book or collection / specific research publication:	
3.1. Articles/chapters in collections published by the publishers listed in the appendix (including Book Citation Index, Conference Proceedings Citation Index, Scopus refereed collections)	15
3.2. Articles/chapters in collections published by publishers not listed in the appendix	6
3.3. Specific scientific publications (dictionaries, encyclopaedias, atlases, identifiers, text-critical publications)	7
3.4. Articles/presentations published in conference collections not belonging to field 3.1	10
3.5. Articles/presentations published in local conference proceedings	2
4. Editing scientific publications	
4.1. Editing of collections and special issues of journals that meet the requirements set out in points 1.1, 1.2 or 3.1 or 3.2	14
5. Published conference proceedings	
5.1. Conference proceedings indexed in Web of Science	2
5.2. Conference papers that do not fall under section 5.1	12
6. Other publications:	
6.2. Textbooks and other educational publications	20
6.3. Popular science articles	85
6.6. Articles published in other magazines and newspapers	233
6.7. Other creative work	32
6.8. Short articles in scientific journals and collections	4
6.9. Book reviews	3
TOTAL:	659
including high-level publications (1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.1)	120

A significant part of the increase in the volume of articles in category 1.2 is due to two scientific journals published by the academy. Firstly, the journal **Security Spectrum: Journal of Advanced Security Research** (formerly Proceedings: Estonian Academy of Security Sciences; since 2013, it has been in ETIS category 1.2), which focuses on internal security and law enforcement in Europe and aims to contribute to broader academic and political discourse. The journal is managed by an editorial board comprising leading experts from academic circles, public sector institutions and international organisations⁸. The journal's management is working to ensure that Security Spectrum meets the criteria of the Scopus research database, which would enable the journal to be elevated to the highest ETIS category 1.1 in Estonia.

In order to develop Estonian of specific purposes and facilitate the dissemination of research results to the domestic readership, including promoting evidence-based decision-making in the national context, the academy has been publishing a **scientific journal in Estonian, Turvalisuskompass (Security Compass)**, since 2021. It is the second scientific journal in terms of volume to publish articles in category 1.2. The journal is aimed at both practitioners and researchers, for example in the Ministry of the Interior, other ministries and their subordinate agencies (the academy's partner institutions), the Government Office, Estonian universities and colleges, and secondary schools offering preliminary internal security training. In 2021–2022, Turvalisuskompass met the requirements for classification as a category 1.3 scientific journal in ETIS, but at the end of 2023, it was upgraded to category 1.2. The higher classification reflects the quality of the publication according to scientometric criteria and its inclusion in more scientific databases. From the perspective of employee self-development, Turvalisuskompass helps to gain experience in publishing scientific articles in Estonian, and it is often the first publication where scientific publishing begins. The Prison Service College has stood out as an academic unit supporting the professional development of employees, with its special thematic issue (2024/1) receiving both a research award and a project of the year nomination from the Prison Service, with which the Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs recognised the college, the academy and the journal for their thematic research activities.

These two journals help the academy ensure that research reaches those who can apply it – in politics, practice or further research. For example, an additional print run of issue 4 of Turvalisuskompass (a special issue on civil protection, 2023) was made for the participants in the Higher National Defence Courses. This issue also reached local governments.

The academy's next goal is to increase high-level publishing in internationally recognised (if possible, Q1) publications.

Based on the role of the academy, it is important to provide practical input to the field in terms of both policy-making and practice. Therefore, publications include many commissioned research **reports** or **reports on** analyses prepared on the initiative of the academy (ETIS 2.5), which are primarily aimed at policymakers and experts in the field. The Internal Security Institute has published the most reports (42, or 60% of all reports), followed by the Estonian Contact Point of the European Migration Network (12) and the Remote Sensing Research and Development Centre (10), both of which operate within the institute. The main topics of the reports published in the last three years have been crisis preparedness, new internal security and surveillance technologies, migration policy and international labour surveillance, infrastructure-related security threats, and legal and strategic frameworks for internal security. For example, the research report 'Implementing Alternative Service in Estonia's Defence and Crisis Capability Goals' (2023) sparked interest and discussion in the National Defence Committee of the Riigikogu. In order to take the knowledge to international level, the reports have been translated into English and distributed to cooperation partners at academic conferences and seminars as well as at meetings of practitioners.

As befits an institution of professional higher education, the focus is on creating new teaching materials, some of which have been commissioned by government agencies and are also used in continuing education. During the reporting period, eight higher education textbooks (ETIS 2.4), numerous other educational publications

(ETIS 6.2) and several field-specific publications, primarily on customs and taxation (ETIS 3.3), were published. Some examples of higher education textbooks published in recent years include:

- Customs Procedures. Koitla, H., Saar, I. (2022);
- Fire Safety Act. Annotated edition. Tikan, M., Tähe, T., Rannala, M., Kroonberg, R., Terrep, T., Valge, A. (2023);
- Law Enforcement Act. Annotated edition. 2nd revised and supplemented edition. Eljas, C., Kajo, K., Kask, O., Kirsimägi, S., Kiviste, J., Kohava, M., Kranich, H., Laaring, M., Pars, S., Punko, I., Pöllumäe, S., Roosve, T., Saarmets, V., Timberg, H., Vanaisak, Ü. (2025);
- Disciplinary proceedings against prisoners in prison. Handbook. Kaldoja, T., Hodakovskaja, O., Martisen, T. M., Altsaar, M., Tobias, K.-V., Annus, R. (2025).

Among the educational publications (ETIS 6.2), there are several examples that have had a significant impact both in Estonia and internationally. For example, in 2021, an international working group led by the Prison Service College compiled a [collection](#) of guidelines on ensuring dynamic security in prisons. This has served as the basis for reforming the penal institutions in the United States and Lithuania, and the materials have also been referenced in high-level research articles. In addition, several countries rely on [guidance materials](#) developed in a joint Twinning project between the Prison Service College, Finland and Turkey (2022) to organise the training of prison guards.

The academy considers it important for its employees to contribute their professional knowledge and experience to public debate. Therefore, they are encouraged to publish opinion pieces and popular science articles in order to increase the academy's social impact and strengthen its role as an expert in its field. A total of 357 such articles were published during the reporting period (ETIS 6.3–6.9).

8.1. Monitoring the performance of R&D

The results of R&D are monitored three times a year on the basis of quantitative indicators from various development plans. Since 2023 more specific monitoring based on R&D quality criteria (scientific impact, societal impact, sustainability has been conducted twice a year). Both the volume of R&D outputs and trends in their quality are assessed. The analysis is based on ETIS and project performance data and feedback from partner institutions. The data are analysed on the basis of scientific impact, societal benefit and sustainability, which in turn influences the formulation of strategic directions for R&D and the prioritisation of research topics. The information obtained is used to make management decisions and plan funding, personnel and infrastructure.

8.2. Dissemination, application and impact of R&D results

The academy combines policy, practice and academic research, which creates good conditions for applying and valuing new knowledge. The aim of the academy's R&D is to have a practical social impact: to solve sectoral problems, support policy-making, promote practice and encourage innovation in the field of internal security. The social impact of the academy's research is supported primarily by close cooperation with public sector partners, which include agencies within the remit of the Ministry of the Interior (Emergency Response Centre, Estonian Internal Security Service, Tax and Customs Board, Police and Border Guard Board, Rescue Services Agency), the Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and international partners (e.g. Frontex and CEPOL).

Examples include:

- report "Trends and Forecasts in the External Environment of Internal Security" (2024), which supports strategic foresight and policy-making;

⁸ <https://www.sisekaitse.ee/security-spectrum-journal-of-advanced-security-research/> (accessed on 28 October 2025).

- population survey “Estonian residents’ attitudes towards personal data privacy and security” (2021), prepared in cooperation with partner institutions;
- report “Tax gap assessment methodologies: current status and future tasks” (2022; ETIS 2.5) prepared in cooperation between the Financial College and the Tax and Customs Board, on the basis of which a machine learning-based methodology for assessing the corporate income tax gap was developed for the period 2023–2025. In 2025–2026, the methodology will be further developed to assess the VAT tax gap. The application of the methodology will make it possible to assess the amount of lost tax revenue and support the selection of audit targets;
- in international cooperation, the EUMA project will produce a book entitled “Geopolitical and Security Issues in Risk Management” (to be published by Springer Nature in 2025/2026), which is part of the Civil Protection, Disaster Risk Management, and Resilience series published within the framework of the project. The aim of the project is to create a network of European universities for Master’s studies in the field of disaster risk and crisis management, ensuring high-level training and coordinating the approaches of different European Union countries in preparing disaster managers.

The focus is on conducting applied research and analyses, the results of which are generally published in scientific articles or reports. Applied research is often conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior, other government agencies and international partners, and is also actively used in teaching and continuing education. Examples of joint research include the research project conducted with the Police and the Border Guard Board, such as ‘Possibilities for using unmanned aerial vehicles in Estonia to collect data from traffic accident sites’ (2022) and ‘Use of unmanned aerial vehicles, laser scanners and cameras to map accident sites’ (2024). Currently work is continuing to develop a methodology for collecting data suitable for expert analysis. In order to document the scene of a traffic accident (including collecting evidence of the circumstances), the PPA uses unmanned aerial vehicles based on its technological capabilities. The Prison Service College and the Prison Service are currently working on a joint project called ‘New Morning’, which is investigating the impact of partial changes to the daily schedule in prisons on the quality of inmates’ sleep, the number of offences and complaints in the morning, and the relationships between inmates and officials. The reports are primarily intended for experts and decision-makers in the field, but they are also used in official practice. They may be initiated by a national research commission (from ministries or agencies) or on the initiative of the academy.

In the field of applied development, the Remote Sensing Research and Development Centre is developing a test environment based on the Väike-Maarja training centre to develop unmanned systems, thereby offering cooperation opportunities to deep technology companies. The research and development centre also participates in NATO’s innovation accelerator DIANA. To promote business cooperation, the centre has signed memoranda with several defence industry companies (e.g. DefSecIntel and Triod) to enable bilateral cooperation projects in areas/topics of interest to both parties. At the same time, the academy has launched the International Centre of Excellence for Border Management initiative based at its Narva study centre, which aims to provide testing opportunities in the environment of the European Union and NATO’s external border and to initiate R&D projects to ensure border security. To achieve this goal, additional funding from the European Union is being sought through international cooperation, including the POSIDRONE consortium and a Frontex support measure application in cooperation with the Institute of Computer Science at the University of Tartu. Negotiations have been initiated to become a member of the Frontex Network of Centres of Science and Innovation. For the transfer of knowledge in the field of border security, an inspiration day for universities, government agencies and was organised at the Narva Training Centre in 2024, and a conference entitled “Borderless Border Management 2025” was held in cooperation with the Estonian Research Council.

The academy supports wide **dissemination of** research results and best practices among practitioners, policymakers and researchers. Publications are mainly published in **open access** journals;

the academy’s publications (including reports) are available free of charge on Digiriid. Research news is distributed via a mailing list with over 600 members, including employees of the academy and partner institutions in the administrative sector. In order to increase the visibility, applicability and reliability of research, the academy organises seminars, conferences, partner meetings and public discussions for stakeholders. Where possible, stakeholders are also involved in discussions that take place during the research process, for example in colloquiums. Since 2022, the number **of research events** has been one of STAK’s metrics; in the period 2022–2024, an average of 37 research events took place at the academy each year, and the trend is growing. The Internal Security Institute has been the most active in organising scientific events, with over 3,500 participants registered for its 49 events in 2024–2025. Results are also presented at traditional academic events, including scientific conferences and professional forums. International knowledge exchange is supported by active participation in European research and innovation projects funded, for example, by Horizon Europe and the Internal Security Fund.

Scientific results are popularised among the general public primarily through participation in public discussions, as mentioned above, highlighting the practical value and social impact of the results or drawing attention to bottlenecks that require further research to resolve. Academy staff also participate in various sectoral councils, such as the Prevention Council of the National Institute for Health Development.

8.3. Summary of the evaluation criterion “Effectiveness and impact of research and development activities on society”

STRENGTHS

The volume and applied focus of research activities. The number of research publications and applied studies has grown steadily in recent years. The studies support the development of internal security policies and practices by providing research-based input to ministries and partner institutions.

Thematic research centres as a focus for applied research. Remote sensing and civil protection research and development centres bring together scientific expertise in the field and offer practical solutions for the development of internal security. Through these centres, cooperation between state agencies, local governments and international partners has been strengthened.

Strong link between policy, practice and research. The academy's research activities directly support the development of public service by linking research to policy and legislation in the field. Cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs, as well as international organisations (e.g. Frontex, CEPOL) increases the practical impact and visibility of research.

Dissemination of research results and preservation of the Estonian scientific language. The journals Security Spectrum and Turvalisuskompass support knowledge transfer and the development of scientific language in the field. The academy's journal Turvalisuskompass in Estonian is aimed at Estonian researchers and security practitioners to support evidence-based decision-making. It also contributes to the development of Estonian scientific language and terminology in the field, helping to strengthen professional scientific culture and the dissemination of knowledge in society. Scientific communication in Estonian helps to maintain and develop professional terminology and supports a culture of evidence-based policy-making.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Increasing international influence. It is necessary to raise the level and volume of publications in high-level international publications and to expand participation in international research projects and networks. Adding the journal Security Spectrum to the Scopus database is an important goal in order to increase visibility.

Involving students in research and development activities. Although research topics are based on the needs of partners and a scholarship system is in place, the involvement of students in research projects and research groups must be strengthened to support the next generation of researchers and the integration of teaching and research.

Improving the transfer of knowledge and the application of research results. In order to develop knowledge transfer capabilities, new forms of cooperation are planned – research forums, sectoral discussion series and cooperation seminars – so that research results can be systematically applied in practice and policy-making.

9. Support system for research and development activities and career support for early-stage researchers

The aim of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences research support is to support employees in planning, implementing and disseminating the results of R&D, ensuring the quality of activities and the achievement of objectives. One of the goals set out in the academy's Development Plan 2025–2035 is a comprehensive approach to R&D and the creation of a functioning support system to empower academic staff. Feedback⁹ collected from employees in recent years has highlighted the need to improve the support system, and in 2025, a cross-unit working group developed comprehensive proposals for innovation to address this issue. Since autumn 2025, the coordination of research and development has been taken over by the new R&D Department¹⁰, which offers more comprehensive support than before.

In 2024, an intranet page called Science Portal was created, which brings together information about the academy's research activities and provides guidelines and references to materials necessary for research work. The aim of the Science Portal is to help better understand the essence of the academy's R&D, support employees in planning it and solving possible challenges.

I. Research planning and implementation phase

Research coordinators advise colleagues on publishing, ETIS, research proposals, funding opportunities, etc. Several training courses on improving the effectiveness and quality of research are organised throughout the year, covering topics such as writing research and opinion articles, using the Estonian Research Information System, public speaking, research ethics, publication strategy and research project development. The trainers are external experts or academy staff, mainly from the Internal Security Institute. Since 2022, training on writing and publishing scientific articles has been held at least once a year. In 2024–2025, two- to three-day writing camps including discussions, workshops and writing were held two to three times a year.

Research coordinators also provide support to employees who are being assessed during the year as they prepare for this. Through cooperation, it is possible to assess compliance with assessment requirements in advance and advise employees if necessary. The academy's library organises the availability of publications, research databases and information resources, offers individual information search advice, provides training in the use of databases and helps to find and obtain publications necessary for research and teaching (see section 3.3).

II. Dissemination of research results phase

9 The satisfaction of academic staff with the organisation of R&D will be systematically assessed from 2025 onwards. To date, ongoing qualitative feedback has been collected, including an in-depth analysis of the topic by the director of the Finance College in her Master's thesis and in a research article published on the basis of it (Randlane, K. 2022). The understanding of teaching and research nexus and the possibilities to support research on the example of academic employees at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences. Master's thesis. Tartu: University of Tartu; Randlane, K. 2023; Understanding of academic staff concerning the links between teaching and research, the challenges of research and the possibilities for support, based on the experience of an academic at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences. – Turvalisuskompass, 5(2), pp. 9–34).

10 For most of the reporting period, the Internal Security Institute was responsible for coordinating R&D and research support.

During this phase, support is offered for organising events in various formats (e.g. virtual information sessions on research work) either at the academy, online or in a hybrid form. Scientific colloquiums are held once a month to discuss current research issues with colleagues and partners and to develop a culture of academic debate. At the same time, the dissemination of research results at international scientific conferences is encouraged, for which financial resources are provided for in the academy's budget (preference is given to presentations at conferences that result in a publication, preferably in ETIS categories 1.1 or 3.1). The dissemination of results through newsletters and social media is organised by the Department of Marketing and Communication and the research coordinator(s). Science communication aimed at the general public is organised by the Department of Marketing and Communication. In 2025 it was agreed on the principles of research communication that form the basis for a systematic approach to the dissemination of research results.

The academy promotes knowledge and technology transfer by ensuring systematic mechanisms to support the creation and application of knowledge and technology-based value. This includes the transfer of R&D results and innovations to various areas of society and economy.

Knowledge transfer support assists employees primarily in organising events and offers training, including on topics such as media appearances and writing opinion pieces. Knowledge transfer is mainly promoted through reports (ETIS 2.5), applied research and events where research results and current topics in the field are discussed. The strength of the academy in knowledge transfer lies in the fact that events bring together researchers, practitioners in the field and policy makers. In autumn 2025, a separate position was created to support knowledge transfer in teaching and field practice.

In project management, support has so far been provided primarily by the central project coordinator and, in the case of **funding applications**, by the Financial Department. Support has been provided mainly during the project implementation phase (*post-award*) and in the form of guidance materials for participating in external projects. At the same time, an updated support model is being developed to offer more comprehensive support in preparing applications and implementing projects, including in matters of research ethics, data management and intellectual property, taking into account the need to resolve systemic bottlenecks.

In international cooperation, research coordinators and the external cooperation team provide **support** in finding partners for activities. This is complemented by good cooperation relations with the Brussels office of the Estonian Research Council, which helps to find foreign partners and establish contacts.

Internal funding measures have been used to support R&D. During the reporting period, funding measures were available for non-core, cross-unit and/or larger-scale R&D(I) activities, coordinated by the R&D committee. In 2024, a targeted measure for involving visiting researchers and the corresponding principles were developed

with the aim of developing the research capabilities of the academy's staff and promoting academic culture through systematic research cooperation with internationally recognised researchers. Within this framework, cooperation has been initiated with the University of Essex and expanded with the Estonian University of Life Sciences – for example, on topics such as illegal trade in Estonian seaports (led by the Financial College) and the olfactory sensitivity of service dogs in detecting prohibited substances (led by the Police and Border Guard College).

9.1. Summary of the evaluation criterion 'Support system for research and development activities and support for the careers of early-stage researchers'

STRENGTHS

Infrastructure supporting research activities. The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences has created infrastructure supporting research and development activities, which includes modern testing environments, laboratories and training grounds. These create important prerequisites for conducting applied research and testing and developing innovative solutions, and offer opportunities for interdisciplinary cooperation at both national and international level.

Professional and accessible research support. Since 2025, research and development support has been coordinated by a research support unit, which offers advice on preparing project applications, finding funding opportunities, using ETIS and communicating research.

A strong training and development system for researchers. Training courses on research communication, ethics and project management, as well as writing camps, are organised on a regular basis. The research portal brings together the information and guidelines necessary for research work, increasing researchers' awareness and independent capacity to act.

Support for academic succession and valuing scientific careers.

Valuing scientific work is integrated into the career management of the academic staff. Systematic support is being developed for employees starting research work, as well as flexible work arrangements that promote the completion of doctoral studies and the development of research careers.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Shaping the career paths of researchers and increasing the proportion of employees with doctoral degrees. It is necessary to involve more employees in research, increase the number of employees with doctoral degrees, and support the development of the next generation of researchers. More systematic support for doctoral students and young researchers is planned, including mentoring, training, and career support programmes. Flexible work arrangements and incentives to complete doctoral studies will help ensure the continuity of research capacity and the long-term research potential of the academy.

Developing a support system for research and development and strengthening strategic support for project management. Research support has so far focused mainly on project implementation, which is why a comprehensive and coordinated support system needs to be developed that would also cover the application preparation and strategic planning stages. It is planned to offer systematic advice on finding funding opportunities, preparing applications and budgeting, and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the research support unit, the Strategy Department and the R&D committee. This will ensure consistent and effective management of research and development activities and increase the success rate of project funding and the quality of research activities.





Annexes

[EASS Study Regulations](#)

[Estonian Code of Conduct for Research Integrity_2023](#)

[Estonian Research and Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Strategy 2021 2035_](#)

[Internal Evaluation Procedure of Curricula](#)

[Internal Security Strategy 2020 2030](#)

[Ministry of Interior Governance Area Science and Development Activities and Innovation Strategy 2030](#)

[Procedures for the Recognition Of Prior Learning And Work Experience](#)

[Remuneration Regulation of The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences](#)

[Statue Of The Curriculum](#)

[The Principles of Career Management of Academic Staff at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences](#)

[The Principles of Academic Ethics at the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences](#)

