

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

Institution: Eesti Ettevõtluskõrgkool Mainor (*Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences*)

Assessment committee:

Clare Morris, Consultant of higher education, QAA; UK – *Chair*
Ivo M. Matser, Twente School of Management Business School, The Netherlands
Danute Rasimaviciene, Vilniaus Kolegija, Lithuania
Toomas Kuuda, Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Estonia
Joosep Raudsepp, Tallinn University, student, Estonia

Coordinator: Maiki Udam

Dates of the assessment visit: 25-27 March 2014

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: /29/04/2014/

Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: /02/05/2014

Assessment committee approved the final version of component assessment with 5 votes in favour and 0 votes against.

Date: /02/05/2014/

I Summary of the assessment (mark with 'X'):

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Organisational management and performance	X			
Teaching and learning	X			
RDC	X			
Service to society	X			

Comments:

The panel found that EUAS is an institution with a strong entrepreneurial vision, which informs all its activities and is widely recognised both within and outside the university. The flexible models of learning which it has developed are well suited to the needs of both full-time students and those who are currently working, either in their own businesses or in other companies. The effectiveness of these models is clearly appreciated by students, many of whom would be unable to study for a diploma or Master’s degree under more conventional learning arrangements. The university has also forged strong links with the business community at both local and national levels; this enables it to deliver curricula which are current and relevant, and thus to produce graduates who are well equipped to serve the needs of business and the wider society.

During the visit the panel had an opportunity to engage with staff, current students, alumni and members of the business community, both on the main campus in Tallinn and at one of the university’s regional centres in Tartu. These meetings were

conducted in a spirit of openness and co-operation which reflects well on the university's management culture, and which gave the panel confidence that it was receiving an accurate and rounded impression of the institution.

The self-evaluation report, while thorough in covering all requirements of the accreditation process, did not in the view of the panel do justice to the nature of the institution which became apparent during the visit. The report presented a view of the university as somewhat bound up in rules and procedures. However, the panel found that in practice, while adhering to clear procedures in areas such as student assessment where this is essential, the university showed itself to be a flexible and responsive learning organisation.

Commendations:

- The university shows great clarity of mission and purpose, which informs all its activities and is well recognised by staff, students and the wider community.
- The university maintains an effective balance between the formal management systems as set out in the SER and the informal systems which operate on a day-to-day basis.
- The university demonstrates the features of a learning organisation, characterised by openness and transparency at every level
- There is evidence of strong and effective personnel management.
- The university's vision of practical and applied learning clearly informs and pervades all its teaching and learning activities.
- The university has developed a flexible approach to study which is ideally suited to the needs of its target market, and which ensures a good learning experience for students.
- The strong practical emphasis of teaching is well tailored to the current needs of business and industry.
- The Learning Management System provides an excellent infrastructure for the management of teaching and learning.
- A well-planned system for the support of RDC exists.
- The university makes use of many different channels to ensure that it has a positive impact on business and on society in general.

Worthy of Recognition:

The Learning Management System developed by the university is at the leading edge of good practice in the Higher Education sector, forming both an essential underpinning to the flexible provision offered to students and a competitive advantage to the university. The unique and innovative solutions provided by EUAS's learning management system should be the aspiration for other universities and higher education institutes.

Recommendations:

- The board and senior management of the university show a strong entrepreneurial vision; however, other staff, while showing a commendable commitment to the provision of an excellent student experience, could demonstrate a more entrepreneurial approach.
- While processes for programme development are strong, arrangements for encouraging and capturing day-to-day improvements to modules and programmes could be more systematic.
- Monitoring of the needs of society and the labour market in the planning of RDC activity could be more systematic.
- The university should further clarify its understanding of the research requirements for a University of Applied Sciences.
- The panel encourages the university to take a more systematic approach to the detection of plagiarism.
- The panel encourages the university to continue to explore all methods of increasing its visibility at a national and international level.

- II Assessment areas and sub-areas

1 ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE
<p>General comments:</p> <p>The evidence seen by the panel leads to the conclusion that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EUAS has developed a clear mission which is well understood by all stakeholders and informs all its activities. • Management of EUAS at all levels shows the desirable balance between clearly specified systems and flexibility which is characteristic of an effective learning organisation. • EUAS’s personnel management is effective and supportive both of the developmental needs of individuals and the requirements of the institution. • The management of finances and other resources is well planned and supportive of the needs of students and of the institution as a whole. • The Learning Management System developed by EUAS is outstanding and contributes significantly to the quality both of management and of the student learning experience.

1.1 General management	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
<p>Requirements:</p> <p><i>A higher education institution has defined its role in the Estonian society.</i></p> <p><i>The development plan and the related action plans of a higher education institution arise from the concrete purposes that are built on its mission, vision and core values, and that consider the country’s priorities and society’s expectations.</i></p> <p><i>Key results of a higher education institution have been defined.</i></p> <p><i>The leadership of a higher education institution conducts the preparation and implementation of development and action plans and includes the members and other stakeholders in this work.</i></p> <p><i>Liability at all management levels has been defined and described, and it supports the achievement of institutional purposes and the</i></p>					

coherent performance of core processes.

Internal and external communications of a higher education institution (including marketing and image building) are purposeful and managed.

The purpose of the institution is to support entrepreneurship in business and in Estonian society. This is implemented consistently, and there is extensive evidence of its effectiveness; for example:

- EUAS's programmes all include courses in entrepreneurship;
- students often start their own business, either during the course or after graduating;
- teachers have good links to business, and most have business experience; some are currently engaged in business activity;
- programme structures are very flexible and fit well with the needs of the students, many of whom are employed or running their own business and in addition have family responsibilities. This flexibility enables students to maintain a good work/learning/life balance;
- students, alumni and employers are convinced of the entrepreneurial strengths and activities of EUAS;
- all these groups of stakeholders are involved in developing the school and its programmes.
-

The ambitions and development plans of the institution are also consistent with its mission, and with priorities in Estonian society. However, while the actions mentioned in the Development Plan to address issues emerging the SWOT analysis are valuable as internal improvements, the panel believes that they could be more externally focussed, in line with the mission of the school.

The General Management section of the self-evaluation report gives the impression that EUAS is a highly formal organisation and relies solely on formal procedures in institutional planning. The hierarchy and the connections between different levels of planning are clear and follow an understandable logic. However, during the visit to the school it became clear that in the day-to-day activities of the board, senior management and academic staff a more informal approach is evident. The panel's conclusion is that the school is managed effectively, with a good balance between formal and informal organisation. Academic and non-academic staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and are willing to work together. All staff show themselves to be very student and service oriented, a fact which is recognised and much appreciated by students. Overall, the conclusion of the panel is that the organisation of EUAS is more effective than the self-evaluation report indicates, and that this is a strength of the school.

During the visit it also became clear that EUAS has a very open culture in which staff feel free to express their views. Their passion and commitment to the school is consistent, and the provision of a quality student experience is clearly their first priority. The impression received by the panel is that staff at all levels listen to each other and that the board and the staff are open to innovations and new ideas, no matter from where they arise. The conclusion is that EUAS is a learning organisation and is itself a good example to students.

Employees are also involved in the development of the school. Meetings to discuss these developments are systematically planned; twice a year all staff of the school meet for two days of discussion and workshops. Employees are committed to quality improvement and understand their role and responsibility in bringing this about.

It became also clear that the supervisory board and the executive board / rectorate have an excellent entrepreneurial mindset and competences. However, most of the teaching staff are more internally than externally focused, and while this is good in that they are concentrated on the needs of their students, it would be preferable if this could be combined with a more entrepreneurial outlook. The panel therefore recommends that steps are taken to embed this entrepreneurial mindset more fully throughout the organisation. This will contribute to the realisation of the future goals of EUAS.

A further recommendation relates to the marketing and PR of the institution. EUAS is justifiably proud of its students and alumni, and has both a unique position in the market and a unique proposition for society. All of these features could be made more widely known. The panel's recommendation is therefore that EUAS should make more effective use of marketing communications to increase awareness of the entrepreneurial value of the school. Use could be made of social media, blogs and press contacts in order to establish EUAS's position as an opinion leader in this area. This point is revisited in section 4 of this report.

The internal communication of EUAS is effective and well structured, via both formal and informal channels. For example, the small size of the institution means that it is easy for staff and students to have informal contact, and this has been further facilitated by the integration of a 'chat' facility into the learning management system (LMS).

Commendations

- The university shows great clarity of mission and purpose, which informs all its activities and is well recognised by staff,

<p>students and the wider community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The university maintains an effective balance between the formal management systems as set out in the SER and the informal systems which operate on a day-to-day basis • The university demonstrates the features of a learning organisation, characterised by openness and transparency at every level <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board and senior management of the university show a strong entrepreneurial vision; however, other staff, while showing a commendable commitment to the provision of an excellent student experience, could demonstrate a more entrepreneurial approach. 							
1.2 Personnel management	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition
<p>Requirements:</p> <p><i>The principles and procedures for employee recruitment and development arise from the objectives of the development plan of a higher education institution, and ensure academic sustainability.</i></p> <p><i>When selecting, appointing and evaluating members of the academic staff, their past activities (teaching, RDC, student feedback, etc.) are taken into account in a balanced way.</i></p> <p><i>The principles of remuneration and motivation of employees are clearly defined, available to all employees, and implemented.</i></p> <p><i>Employee satisfaction with the management, working conditions, flow of information, etc., is regularly surveyed and the results used in improvement activities.</i></p> <p><i>Employees participate in international mobility programmes, cooperation projects, networks, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Employees base their activities on principles of academic ethics.</i></p>							

EUAS's personnel management is strong and effective, both in relation to the administrative aspects of Human Resource Management, and in the Human Resource Development which is essential to a learning organisation. Procedures for recruitment, appointment and evaluation of people (both academic and non-academic) are clear, and all staff are well aware of these procedures, as became apparent during interviews. The procedure for employee evaluation is based on the '360 degree method', is very effective and an example of good practice. During the visit it became also clear that the system itself is subject to regular evaluation and continues to be improved in the light of feedback from staff. In the evaluation of employees attention is paid to individual and collective needs for staff development. A variety of development activities is made available and supported by the school: courses, programmes of study, conference attendance and membership of professional associations and networks. The impression received by the panel is that employees feel encouraged to develop and improve themselves; this perception forms an important aspect of EUAS as a learning organisation.

Staff satisfaction surveys confirm that employees are satisfied with remuneration, working conditions and facilities. The information systems of the school are regarded as excellent and support staff in doing their jobs effectively. A good deal of travelling is involved for staff who teach at a number of regional centres, which can be demanding in winter conditions, but this was not felt to place unreasonable demands on individuals.

Staff, particularly those engaged in RDC activities, belong to a wide range of national and international networks, and are encouraged and supported to take part in international conferences.

It was clear to the panel from its conversations with staff and students that the organisation and its teaching operate within a strong ethical framework.

Many teaching staff work part time, and most of these also have part time jobs elsewhere, either in business or at other institution. The impression received by the panel is that this has no negative or fragmenting effect on the school, but on the contrary contributes to its flexibility and breadth of outlook.

Commendation

- There is evidence of strong and effective personnel management

1.3 Management of financial resources and infrastructure	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements: <i>The allocation of financial resources of a higher education institution as well as the administration and development of infrastructure are economically feasible, and are based on the objectives of the development plan of an institution of higher education and national priorities (except private institutions).</i> <i>A higher education institution uses information systems that support its management and the coherent performance of its core processes.</i> <i>The working conditions of the staff, and the learning and RDC conditions of students (library, studios, workshops, laboratories, etc.) meet the needs arising from the specifics of an institution of higher education and the expectations of members.</i></p>								
<p>The financial arrangements of the school are transparent and well organised. EUAS is a private institution but, as indicated in the meeting between the panel and members of the Board of the parent company, its purpose is not to make money for the owners. Their intention, which they express strongly, is rather to add entrepreneurial value for Estonian society. Nevertheless, EUAS operates as a financially independent unit, though its continuity is guaranteed by the owners. The board and the school also believe strongly that students should have to pay for their education, in keeping with the entrepreneurial principle, though the existence of free educations at public and state universities has not made this approach easy. However, the panel’s meetings with students suggest that EUAS is well able to attract motivated students with an entrepreneurial attitude who are prepared to pay for the particular kind of educational experience which the school provides, though in line with Estonia’s general demographic position there has been some decline in numbers in recent years.</p> <p>The information systems operate very well at all levels, and facilitate measurement and reporting of a range of outputs, including evaluations of courses, staff surveys, surveys of alumni etc. While this is valuable, there were some indications from students that they find answering a large number of questionnaires with multiple questions can be burdensome.</p> <p>The Learning Management System (LMS) developed by EUAS is excellent. Used in conjunction with the e-learning system Moodle, it</p>								

enables students, teachers and administrative staff to operate very effectively and efficiently. The LMS has been developed in-house by EUAS to meet the needs of its students, and is subject to continuous improvements. In the panel's experience, it can be viewed as leading the Higher Education sector in terms of best practice, and therefore worthy of particular mention. The system is easy to manage and is very convenient for students and staff; in order to improve accessibility it is suitable both for desk tops and for mobile devices. It provides the backbone for the flexibility modes of provision offered by EUAS to its students, and is thus also a key component of the school's competitive advantage in the market.

Physical resources for the students are also impressive. Classrooms are well equipped and there are well-equipped facilities for creativity and design and for making videos, movies and webinars. The quality of the facilities and the choices made for investment in facilities and accommodation are consistent with the mission and the programmes of EUAS.

The most extensive range of facilities is situated at EUAS's main centre in Tallinn. The regional centres operate well with a focus on local markets, but do not offer the full range of facilities which are available in Tallinn. However, students at the regional centres also attend courses in Tallinn and are able to access the facilities while they are at the central campus. All students indicated that they had no criticisms of the standard of facilities or of their access to all the resources they need.

EUAS's systems also support the possibility of distance learning, which helps in creating flexible programmes and brings students from the regional centres together with staff and students based in Tallinn.

EUAS in Tallinn is located in the area known as 'Smart City', a good location in terms of access to potential business markets. Further business expansion planned in this area will create more opportunities in the near future.

Worthy of recognition

The Learning Management System developed by the university is at the leading edge of good practice in the Higher Education sector, forming both an essential underpinning to the flexible provision offered to students and a competitive advantage to the university.

2 TEACHING AND LEARNING
<p>General comments:</p> <p>In the panel’s judgement, EUAS offers students a learning experience which is consistent with the institution’s vision and mission, which meets the needs of students, business and society, and which is underpinned by resources, both physical and human, which are well-judged to meet the needs of students. In addition to the evidence cited below, this judgement is supported by data such as outcomes of student and alumni satisfaction surveys and employment rates for graduates.</p>

2.1 Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
--	---------------------------------	----------	---	--	---	--	------------------------------	--

Requirements:

A higher education institution has defined its educational objectives and measures their implementation.

A higher education institution educates students so they are nationally and internationally competitive.

The number of student places is planned in accordance with the social need and the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education.

The admission rules are consistent with the mission and purposes of an institution of higher education and support the formation of a motivated student body.

Students are provided with opportunities to study at a higher education institution regardless of any special needs.

EUAS has established a clear sense of purpose to deliver practically-based vocational education, and all its provision is informed by this

purpose; its mission is also well understood by students, staff and employers. This ensures that employers are well satisfied with the quality of the EUAS graduates whom they employ, as evidenced by their willingness to offer internships to students, and the fact that students have been offered paid posts on the basis of their performance during internship. For the same reason, rates of employment are high, and the team heard from a number of students and former students who either had started, or were planning to start, their own businesses. Students invariably cited the strong practical and entrepreneurial nature of the courses as their primary reason for choosing to study at EUAS rather than at a state university.

Planning of student numbers is in line with current demographic patterns in Estonia. In particular, EUAS manages its provision at regional centres so as to meet the needs of employment in those regions. EUAS is aware that completion rates of graduates are not as high as it would wish; to some extent this is due to the nature of the students, most of whom have work and family commitments in addition to their studies. The question of drop-out is being actively addressed; for example, the panel learned that recently different packages for the payment of fees have been introduced, in order to address students' concerns in this area. It is also possible for students to take academic leave and resume their studies at a later date, and they are encouraged to do this should they encounter personal problems.

EUAS has an open admissions policy which is implemented fairly and backed up by a thorough system of interviews and counselling, to ensure that applicants are placed in the most appropriate program of study. The admissions process is well documented to ensure equity between applicants at the different regional centres.

EUAS is aware that provision of international experience for students could be enhanced; however, to some extent the nature of the student body (mainly in permanent employment) makes it difficult for students to take opportunities for international exchanges. It is however clear to the panel, from its discussions with staff and students and from the course outlines which were viewed, that students are being equipped with knowledge and skills which would allow them to compete in an international market should they so wish.

The system of academic counselling is such that the requirements of students with particular needs, for example improvement of study or language skills, are provided for.

2.2 Study programme development	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
Requirements:								

A higher education institution bases its new study programmes on its purposes and the needs of the labour market, and takes into account the strategies of the country and expectations of the society.

Development activities related to study programmes are systematic and regular, and different stakeholders are involved in the development of study programmes.

Graduate satisfaction with the quality of instruction and employer satisfaction with the quality and suitability to the requirements of the labor market of graduates are surveyed and analysed; the results are considered in the development of study programmes.

The aim of EUAS to provide study programmes which have a thoroughly practical emphasis and encourage the development of an entrepreneurial attitude among students is the foundation of all programme development, and is reflected in the range of subject areas offered by the university – management, information technology and design being the principal disciplines in which courses are offered. This in turn reflects EUAS’s understanding of the current needs of business and of the country as a whole.

At the same time, planning of the structure of programmes and the mode of delivery of course material is informed by EUAS’s clear understanding of the nature of its student body, so that flexibility and choice are built in from the start. The regional centres in particular offer provision designed to meet the needs of the local economy. A key underpinning for this flexible provision is the LMS (see above) designed to make it easy for students and staff to track their progress through what, for part-time students, are often individually negotiated learning plans.

The ability of programmes to meet regional, national and professional needs is ensured by a two-way process, whereby employers and alumni contribute to programme design, while staff are members of professional and regional bodies which enable them to maintain contact with current practice and future demands. Programmes are then designed to reflect these inputs.

The process for design and approval of new programmes is clearly specified and understood by staff, and accords with that which was presented in the SER. The panel did feel, however, that processes for ongoing quality enhancement, once a programme is running, are less clear. While individual staff are keen to engage in improvement of their courses, to adopt new approaches to teaching and learning, and to benefit from student feedback, changes of this kind to programmes are only reported retrospectively to the relevant Curriculum Council. There is thus a danger that innovation and good practice may not be captured and disseminated across the university. The panel recommends EUAS to consider development of more systematic processes in this area.

Student satisfaction with individual courses is routinely surveyed, and the panel’s discussions with staff and students suggested that informal contacts ensure that most student concerns are addressed swiftly; students were able to cite a number of examples where they had seen prompt modification to courses in response to their comments. Alumni are surveyed every three years, and alumni who met with the panel indicated that those surveys are intended to discover whether the programme from which they graduated provided a good preparation for their chosen employment. A range of activities organised for alumni, such as free attendance at business-oriented events put on by the university, provide further opportunities for informal feedback.

Recommendation

- While processes for programme development are strong, arrangements for encouraging and capturing day-to-day improvements to modules and programmes could be more systematic

Commendations

- The university’s vision of practical and applied learning clearly informs and pervades all its teaching and learning activities
- The university has developed a flexible approach to study which is ideally suited to the needs of its target market, and which ensures a good learning experience for students

2.3 Student academic progress and student assessment	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
---	---------------------------------	----------	---	--	---	--	------------------------------	--

Requirements:
Student academic progress is monitored and supported.
Student assessment supports learning and is in line with learning outcomes.
A higher education institution has an effective system for taking account of prior learning and work experience.



The LMS enables student progress to be easily tracked. The panel learned that an extension to the LMS is currently under development, which would use a 'traffic light' system to indicate students who are making good progress (green), at some risk of falling behind (amber) or at serious risk (red). The intention is that this will facilitate early intervention for students who are experiencing difficulties, and will enable the university to address its drop-out rates, which it acknowledges are higher than it would wish. Other steps have also been taken to address this problem, which EUAS believes is related to the nature of its student body (typically in work and with family commitments). For example, more flexible payment systems for courses have been introduced, so that students now have a choice of three models of payment. Also, students are encouraged to temporarily suspend their studies rather than giving up altogether if they find that work or illness are making it difficult to keep up. The panel encourages EUAS to continue to develop these measures to improve retention.

Assessment requirements for each course are clearly specified in writing, and are related to the intended learning outcomes of the course. Students indicated that they are always well informed of assessment requirements. They are also well aware of the requirements of good academic practice and the need to avoid plagiarism whether accidental or deliberate. Staff indicated that plagiarism detection software is not routinely used, and the panel would encourage EUAS to consider adopting a more systematic approach to this issue. (See also section 3 below.)

Criteria for grading of individual assessment elements, and for the overall achievement required in order to graduate, are clearly understood by students. There are systematic processes available should they wish to challenge the outcome of an assessment, but due to strong support from staff and, with final papers, the feedback received while the work is in progress, this rarely occurs.

Students were particularly appreciative of the practical nature of assessment tasks, which frequently allowed them to use material relating to their own field of work, and in many cases to engage in studies which not only benefitted their own learning, but also contributed significantly to the businesses for which they work. In other cases, EUAS itself makes use of students to carry out, for example, development work on its IT systems, giving yet another demonstration of its characteristics as a fully integrated learning organisation.

The panel was able to meet with a number of students who had entered EUAS with some credit for prior experience, either certificated or not. The students confirmed that the system for achieving credit for prior learning is embedded in the LMS, so that applicants are guided through the provision of the necessary information via an online process. While this was certainly a challenging process,

requiring them to demonstrate that the necessary learning outcomes had been achieved, it was felt to be transparent and easy to follow.

Commendation

- The Learning Management System provides an excellent infrastructure for the management of teaching and learning

2.4 Support processes for learning	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
---	---------------------------------	----------	---	--	---	--	------------------------------	--

Requirements:

The organisation of studies creates an opportunity for students to complete their studies within the standard period.
A higher education institution provides students with counselling related to their studies and career.
A higher education institution supports student international mobility.
Modern technical and educational technology resources are used to organise educational activities.
Students are periodically asked for feedback on learning and support processes (the organisation of studies, assessment, counselling, etc.); the results of surveys are taken into account in improvement activities.

Based on the Self Evaluation Report and on the interviews held during the visit the panel believes that it has seen sufficient evidence that students are provided with all the support they need to successfully complete their course of study. EUAS’s flexible, practical and individual approach to studies was not only praised by students but also endorsed by employers. Students were extremely satisfied with the support processes and counselling services provided by EUAS, which were essential to establishing their individual learning plans. These services are available not only at the Tallinn campus, but also at the regional centres. While EUAS staff were open about the fact that completion rates within the normal period were lower than they would have wished, it is clear that they are fully engaged in developing strategies to address this problem (see above under 2.3).

The panel encourages EUAS to seek more opportunities for internationalization and mobility but also understands the specific features of their students, which might complicate these processes.

The panel was also convinced that student input is valued in the development processes of EUAS and constant feedback, both formal and informal, is gathered in order to improve their services and activities.

Finally, as already mentioned, we would like to specifically highlight the modern technical and educational technology resources, especially the learning management system, for its unique and innovative solutions which provide outstanding support for students and their learning processes.

3 RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RDC)

General comments:

EUAS engages in a wide range of activities which can be classed as ‘research, development or creative activity’; processes for supporting these activities are well defined, and the necessary financial, human and technical resources are made available. Staff participate in many national and international networks, and students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, have opportunities to contribute to research activity.

The panel believes, however, that there is room for EUAS to further develop its understanding of what should constitute RDC for an institution of its type, and to improve its processes for ensuring that its activities are in line with needs of Estonian business and society.

3.1 RDC effectiveness	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
------------------------------	---------------------------------	----------	---	--	---	--	------------------------------	--

Requirements:

A higher education institution has defined its RDC objectives and measures their implementation.

A higher education institution monitors the needs of society and the labour market, and considers them in planning its RDC activities.

As stated in the SER, the objectives of RDC activities are a direct result of those set out in the Development Plan. They are clearly defined as follows in the latest R&D strategy:

- “1. In EUAS is carried out high-quality research, development, and creative activity supportive of educational objectives through which EUAS provides science-based and applicable solutions to societal problems.
2. Research, development and creative activity is moving towards interdisciplinary and integration of different scientific disciplines.
3. Through R&D activities to enhance the quality of learning”.

EUAS measures the implementation of these objectives by collecting data on the number of articles, books, published presentations, and other publications, and the participation of lecturers as reviewers in the editorial boards of various scientific journals and in the work of expert groups (for example, in the organization committee of international scientific conferences). Both lecturers (at least, those with R&D obligations specified in their contract) and students are involved in RDC activities. The percentage of members of the academic staff whose contracts specify R&D as part of their duties has increased steadily over the years (the figure was 36% in 2013). The main areas of R&D activity are Management, Enterprise, Entrepreneurship, ICT in business, Creative industries, Formation of Social Environment, Design Studies and Educational Studies.

The results of RDC activities are reported as part of the yearly reporting process. However awareness among lecturers of the possibility of joining research groups needs to be increased. There was also some confusion apparent as to what activities could be categorised as RDC; lists available to the panel included such activities as delivering training days for businesses, which in the panel’s view does not constitute RDC. The panel therefore recommends EUAS to further develop its understanding of the kinds of RDC activity which are appropriate to an institution of this kind.

As it emerged at the meetings with representatives of the administration and lecturers in Tallinn and Tartu monitoring of the needs of society and the labour market is carried out mostly via contacts with companies based in Ulemiste City, informal or formal discussions with entrepreneurs (round tables), and alumni surveys. There is evidence that the needs which are identified through these informal channels are taken into consideration in planning RDC activities; however, the panel recommends that a more systematic approach to this monitoring should be developed.

Notwithstanding these recommendations, the panel is of the view that the level and nature of RDC activity at EUAS meets the requirements for an institution of its type; the recommendations are intended to help the university enhance and refine its approach to this area.

Recommendations

- Monitoring of the needs of society and the labour market in the planning of RDC activity could be more systematic
- The university should further clarify its understanding of the research requirements for a University of Applied Sciences

3.2 RDC resources and support processes	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
--	---------------------------------	----------	---	--	---	--	------------------------------	--

Requirements:

A higher education institution has an effective RDC support system.
A higher education institution has financial resources needed for RDC development and a strategy that supports their acquisition.
A higher education institution participates in different RDC networks.
RDC infrastructure is being updated and used effectively.

EUAS has an effective system for the support of RDC activity. The post of Academic/Scientific Secretary is central; she carries out the day-to-day administrative work needed to support the research groups, disseminating information about research opportunities, funding etc. There is also an educational technologist who supports work in educational research and development and assists with IT. RDC activities are organised and planned via research groups/units, each of which has a chair. This system was clearly explained in the SER, and during the meetings with lecturers, they expressed satisfaction with the support provided. The panel views the support system for RDC as commendable.

EUAS has the financial resources needed for RDC development and a strategy that supports their acquisition. There are four different sources for the funding of RDC activities: EUAS internal funding, European Social Fund funding, state & local government funding, The major part of the funding at the moment still comes from internal sources (in 2013 the RDC budget represented 13% of

the overall EUAS budget) but funding from other sources is increasing year on year. In.

EUAS and its staff participate in a large number of research and development networks. The university is a member of SPACE Network and EURASHE; it also participates in networks such as the Estonian Association for Quality, Estonian Association for Personnel Development (PARE), Estonian Association of Ethics Educators, Estonian Cognitive Behavior Therapy Association, European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology, Estonian Tourism Education Association (ETHL), Estonian Association of Designers; the international network European Future Vision, ITL - Information Technology Association, Eurasian Economic Club of Scientists (EELSA), and the Enterprise Learning Development Network. Faculty members use these networks for presentation and dissemination of their RDC activities.

The RDC infrastructure is being updated and used effectively. As stated in the SER, the R&D infrastructure now includes the IT and Creative industries laboratories, which offer state-of-the-art facilities and are also used for teaching purposes. Students and employees have access to a range of databases, and indicate satisfaction with the library resources. There is also good access to the libraries of other universities, and this is particularly valuable in Tallinn and at the Tartu regional centre.

As noted earlier, the parent organisation does not seek to make a profit from EUAS; members of the board who met with the panel stated clearly that any surplus created by the university will be re-invested.

Commendation

- A well-planned system for the support of RDC exists

3.3 Student research supervision	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
---	---------------------------------	----------	---	--	---	--	------------------------------	--

Requirements:
*A higher education institution includes students of all academic cycles in research, creative or project activity; and systematically surveys student satisfaction with their supervision.
 Professionalism, effectiveness and the workload of supervisors are reasonably balanced, which ensures the quality of research papers*

*and positive graduation rates.
Students are guided to recognize plagiarism and to avoid it.*

Student involvement in research, creative or project work through course papers and final theses was confirmed at the several meetings with EUAS Bachelor and Master students and Alumni. Surveys of satisfaction with the quality of supervision are conducted once per year and show very good results, with 68% of students reporting supervision as either good or excellent. Supervision is professional and effective, and staff workloads are reasonably balanced, which helps to ensure the quality of research outputs and positive graduation rates. In meetings with students during the visit, the panel learned that supervisors are very accessible and respond quickly to requests for meetings or advice.

Faculty employment contracts define the time to be devoted to research and development work. As stated in the SER, personnel selection and development at EUAS is based on qualification requirements for teaching and research staff. Activities contributing to risk management include regular development interviews, training seminars dealing with contemporary teaching skills, IT skills and professional competencies.

The issue of plagiarism is, as indicated earlier, dealt with very clearly in the university's Regulations. All students were familiar with definitions of plagiarism and the need to avoid it, and explained that they had received advice on matters such as appropriate referencing of academic material. EUAS does have software for the detection of plagiarism, but staff suggested that it is not routinely used. The panel recommends EUAS to make more systematic use of such plagiarism detection facilities.

Recommendation

- The panel encourages the university to take a more systematic approach to the detection of plagiarism

4 SERVICE TO SOCIETY

General comments:

EUAS offers a wide range of activities to engage with, and offer benefits to, business and society as a whole. Feedback suggests that these are perceived as appropriate, and they are well supported. However, EUAS’s visibility as a leader in entrepreneurial training could be increased, particularly in the international arena.

4.1 Popularization of its activities and involvement in social development	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
---	---------------------------------	----------	---	--	---	--	------------------------------	--

Requirements:
*A higher education institution has a system for popularising its core activities.
 Employees of an institution of higher education participate in the activities of professional associations, and as experts, in other social supervisory boards and decision-making bodies.*

EUAS is engaged in useful and effective cooperation with a wide range of companies and other organisations. The university offers a number of opportunities for exchange of knowledge and professional skills, including public lectures, seminars, conferences, dedicated training for individual companies and joint events with state institutions and local authorities. The volume of these activities is substantial, and all are targeted at the promotion of the entrepreneurial mindset, in keeping with EUAS’s mission.

As noted above, the practical and applied nature of EUAS’s provision is widely recognised within the business community and in Estonian society generally; this is in part due to its students and alumni who act, in their interactions with businesses, as effective ambassadors for the university and its approach to study.

The panel’s minor reservations in this area relate not so much to the activities of EUAS as to the extent to which it publicises them. The university has a stated ambition to become a leading entrepreneurial institution among the Nordic countries, but to achieve this it will need to encourage its staff to be more visible in all forms of media, and to have a greater international presence, for example in Finland. EUAS should continually be exploring opportunities to develop new services, to access new media outlets, and to participate with regional and national bodies, in order to raise its profile and promote its message.



<p>Commendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The university makes use of many different channels to ensure that it has a positive impact on business and on society in general <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The panel encourages the university to continue to explore all methods of increasing its visibility at a national and international level 							
4.2 In-service training and other educational activities for the general public	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition
<p>Requirements: <i>A higher education institution has defined the objectives regarding in-service training and measures their implementation. In-service training is planned in accordance with the needs of target groups as well as with the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education. Participant satisfaction with the quality of in-service training is regularly surveyed and the results are used in planning improvement activities.</i></p>							
<p>EUAS has a well-established programme of in-service training delivery for companies and institutions. It also engages with schools, offering lectures on economic matters for secondary schools. Other bodies with which it co-operates include the unemployment service and Enterprise Estonia, for which basic courses on business start-ups are offered, All of EUAS’s courses are accessible to members of the community via the so-called ‘step in and sit down’ policy. A range of surveys and other feedback shows that partners and clients are well satisfied with what EUAS has to offer.</p>							

Co-operation with other academic institutions also takes place, facilitated by the fact that a number of EUAS’s academic staff also hold posts in public universities. However, as noted under 4.1 there is always scope for the expansion of public-facing activities, particularly in the international arena. One possibility which could be explored is the setting up of research units in collaboration with particular sectors, such as Design, ICT or Media. EUAS also needs to bear in mind Estonia’s demographic trends, and offer re-training to older people so as to maintain a well-qualified workforce.

4.3 Other public-oriented activities	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
---	---------------------------------	----------	---	--	---	--	------------------------------	--

Requirements:
Public-oriented activities are purposeful, the results of the activities are periodically evaluated, and improvements are introduced based on those evaluations.
A higher education institution contributes to the enhancement of community welfare by sharing its resources (library, museums, sports facilities, etc.) and/or by organising concerts, exhibitions, performances, conferences, fairs and other events.

EUAS provides other forms of interaction with the wider society which are in keeping with its mission and the range of courses it offers. For example, exhibitions in connection with its design programmes are held in Tallinn and Viljandi, and have proved popular. In common with other Estonian universities, EUAS also opens its library resources to members of the public. Breakfast seminars and other opportunities for business people to engage in networking are well supported, and EUAS is constantly seeking new opportunities to promote events for the public.