

Assessment Report

Institutional accreditation and
assessment of Art's study
programme group

Estonian Academy of Arts

2017

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Introduction

Institutional accreditation is external evaluation which assesses the conformity of a university's management, work procedures, study and research activities and study and research environment to legislation and the goals and development plan of the university. This is feedback-based evaluation in which an international assessment committee analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the institution of higher education based on the self-assessment report of the institution and on information obtained during the assessment visit, providing recommendations for improvement and ways of implementing them. The goal of the process is to support the development of strategic management and quality culture in institutions of higher education.

Educational institutions must undergo institutional accreditation at least once every seven years.

Quality assessment of a study programme group involves the assessment of the conformity of study programmes and the studies and development activities that take place on their basis to legislation, national and international standards and developmental directions with the purpose of providing recommendations to improve the quality of studies.

The goal of quality assessment of a study programme group is supporting the internal evaluation and self-development of the institution of higher education. Quality assessment of study programme groups is not followed by sanctions: expert assessments should be considered recommendations.

Quality assessment of a study programme group takes place at least once every 7 years based on the regulation approved by EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education [Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education](#).

The aim of the assessment team was the institutional accreditation and evaluation of the Study Programme Group (SPG) of Arts in Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA).

The team was asked to assess the conformity of the study programmes belonging to the study programme group and the instruction provided on the basis thereof to legislation and to national and international standards and/or recommendations, including the assessment of the level of the corresponding theoretical and practical instruction, the research and pedagogical qualification of the teaching staff and research staff, and the sufficiency of resources for the provision of instruction.

The following persons formed the assessment team:

Professor John Butler (chair)	Chief Executive Officer, EQ-Arts; UK
Mark Dunhill	Dean of the School of Art, University of the Arts London, UK
Marjan Hester Groot	Associate professor; Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; the Netherlands
Emma Järvenpää	Student; Leiden University, The Netherlands
Žilvinas Lilas	Professor; Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln; Germany
Christine Pybus	Lecturer; CIT Crawford College of Art and Design, Cork, Ireland
Merja Salo	Professor; Aalto University, Finland
Maren Schmohl	Vice rector, Academy of Applied Design, Art and Media; Germany
Jari Kukkonen	Vitalonga OÜ, owner; Estonia

The assessment process was coordinated by Hillar Bauman (EKKA).

After the preparation phase, the work of the assessment team in Estonia started on Monday, 8 May 2017, with an introduction to the Higher Education System as well as the assessment procedures by EKKA, the Estonian Quality assurance organization for higher and vocational education. The members of the team agreed the overall questions and areas to discuss with each group at EAA. The distribution of tasks between the members of the assessment team was organised and the detailed schedule of the site visits agreed.

During the following days, meetings were held with the representatives of the EAA (Tuesday 9, Wednesday 10 and Thursday 11 May).

On Friday, May 12, the team held an all-day meeting, during which both the structure of the final report was agreed and findings of team meetings were compiled in a first draft of the assessment report. This work was executed in a cooperative way and the members of the team intensively discussed their individual views on the relevant topics.

This report has 2 parts:

1. Institutional Accreditation report;
2. Quality assessment of Arts study programme group report.

1. Institutional Accreditation

The Estonian Academy of Arts is a legal person in the public law and operates on the basis of the Constitution and Act of the Republic of Estonia, and its statutes. The Academy is Estonia's only public university that provides higher education in architecture, design, art and art culture, and it has operated continuously since 1914. What was once a modest institution, the School of Art Industry, has, over more than 100 years, become the multifaceted and modern Estonian Academy of Arts.

According to its statutes, the Academy's objective is to provide a contemporary higher education based on integrated studies, creative activity, research and development and to promote teaching, creative work and research and development. As an institution of education, research and culture, the Academy bases its activity on the principles of preservation and continuity of art culture and the fact that art culture is in constant change. On both the level of studies and research, the Academy is progressive and contributes actively to creating contemporary art.

In recent years, the Academy has not been able to completely fulfil its role in society. In hopes that a new building would be built, the old academic building was demolished in 2010 and individual faculties moved to rental properties in different locations in the city centre. Less than a year ago, in autumn 2016, the renovation of the new Academy building was being launched. Studies should commence in the building from autumn 2018. At that time, the faculties will once again move into one building and the Academy's position, as a promoter of visual culture in society will amplify. Furthermore, Tallinn's changing cultural geography leverages the move, as the Academy will be located in Kalamaja district of Tallinn, which is seeing rapid gentrification and where an increasing number of cultural institutions of the new generation are becoming concentrated.

The Academy has four faculties: Faculty of Fine Arts (current address Lembitu 10/12), Faculty of Architecture (in the St. Canute's Guild building Pikk 20), Faculty of Design (in the current headquarters at Estonia pst 7) and the Faculty of Art and Culture (Suur-Kloostri 11). Here, artists, architects, designers, art historians, art teachers, and heritage conservation specialists and restorers are trained. The Academy offers more than 30 curricula. Many of the Academy's curricula are the only ones that offer a higher education in Estonia, at the bachelor's degree, master's degree or doctoral level. Lifelong learning opportunities are provided by the Open Academy, with continuing education school, a Summer Academy, and art courses available.

The Academy has a well-stocked and constantly updated library that has been awarded research library status. A natural part of the Academy is exhibition activity. The main exhibition spaces at the Academy are currently the Academy Gallery, which holds exhibitions; the EKA G Gallery, which primarily presents the results of workshops: Raja Gallery of Department of Installation and Sculpture; ISFAG (Installation and Sculpture, Photography Autonomous Gallery; adjacent to the Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia, and the design and architecture

showroom at the Mektory Innovation Centre. Occasionally students also work with KUMU. The Academy's publishing house has become a significant publisher of art literature in Estonia.

Comments:

The Assessment Team (Team) take this opportunity to thank the Rector and the Academy for the positive and constructive manner in which they approached this evaluation exercise. The Team also want to express their thanks and gratitude to EKKA and particularly to Hillar Bauman, who coordinated the whole exercise in an exemplary manner and made our role much more manageable.

The quality of the SER was of a very high standard (comprehensive and informative) with excellent translation, which is critical in making the Team more confident in arriving at decisions and not having to interpret what is meant. The Academy responded to the requests of the Team for an extensive list of *Additional Information* with expediency prior to our visit.

The Team believe this is a very good institution on a journey to become an internationally competitive arts academy. It is a well-led Academy with a very loyal and supportive team of staff and students. The proposed move next year to the a newly renovated building will be a big step in the Academy and its management achieving the institutions mission and goals.

Summary of the institutional accreditation

	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			

Commendations:

1. The very positive and enthusiastic attitude of staff and management to utilise the move to the new building to bring about fundamental change for the benefit of the students learning experience, and interaction between staff from different faculties;
2. The employers are very positive about the students' learning experience and ability to situate their practice within the work place at a professional level;
3. The detailed budget strategy in line with the thorough, lengthy and inclusive process utilised for writing a comprehensive Development and Operational Plan and target goals of the Academy;
4. The international mobility of a high percentage of the students forms an important part of the learning experience and this is well supported by the Academy. The irrelatively small, but increasing number of students recruited internationally and incoming Erasmus students also enriches the learning environment;
5. The good conditions for teaching staff to actively pursue their professional practice and research, which is built into their working contracts;
6. The good examples of innovative teaching practices resulting from staff (especially junior staff) engaging in staff development and from a wide range of staff taking up opportunities for Erasmus mobility exchanges;
7. The strong and productive sense of community between staff and students, both national and international students feel very supported and value the close contact with the teaching staff and the strong sense of community that prevails within the Academy;
8. The initiative of creating labs and using them as central resources presents greater opportunity to facilitate *interdisciplinary*-practice, new developments in learning & teaching, and help promote practice-based research;
9. The Academy has given considerable consideration and has succeeded in addressing the needs of Society in planning its research strategy and engagement;
10. The Academy's strong and innovative collaboration with stakeholders from the communities, public institutions and business in the creative industries. Stakeholders are engaged within the curriculum as providers of student internships and workshops that are also used in a consultancy capacity during the forming and developing of curriculum.

Recommendations:

1. To critically evaluate the organisational structure of the Academy and Faculties to streamline and harmonise it, and to clearly define each of the

committee's: terms of reference/statutes, membership (including students at all levels), lines of communication and agendas;

2. To clarify and better define '*learner-centred learning*', so that it is understood by all stakeholders (students, staff & employers);
3. To strengthen inter and trans-disciplinary practice through closer cooperation between the Faculties and the relevant stakeholders, from inside (other Universities) and outside the academic sector (employers, professional organisations etc.), utilising the full potential of the new building;
4. To define qualitative indicators of success to complement the quantitative indicators and map these more closely to the Development and Operational Plans, with set targets for each indicator;
5. To establish the Quality Committee as an organisational structure (not its individual members) to give a clear sense of purpose and the formal means and rights to define more far reaching policies of Quality Management and Enhancement;
6. To articulate a clear and cohesive international strategy which goes beyond staff/student short-term travel and find the key drivers that will implement it;
7. To carry out staff development (including supervisor training) on practice-based research to fully engage the Fine Art, Design and Interior Architecture Faculties in research, what it is and what the outcomes could be to further develop research groups;
8. To develop a consistent approach to assessment across departments and mechanisms of establishing parity of marking between departments and faculties. The Academy should implement a system which ensures parity and adopt a more unified approach with common reference points for marking and assessment and the alignment of assessment criteria to the Learning Outcomes;
9. To improve the Academy and programme marketing material to increase international recruitment of students and staff, and carry out a rigorous market analysis that should also be established for the regular review of existing programmes as well as for establishing new ones;
10. To upgrade the IT systems to strengthen web-based management, information and e-learning platforms;
11. ¹Practice-based artistic research seems to be at an early stage of development as is the specialised field of Design where at present, artistic research is too narrow. It is evident through the documentation and through our meetings that there is little financial support given to practice based research and on further enquiry we understand the Ministry of Education does not give financial support to this research practice. The impact of this

¹ This recommendation is directed at the Estonian Minister of Education

action is very detrimental to the student learning experience. Research underpins the currency of the curriculum and new strategies in learning and teaching, it enhances the teacher’s knowledge, expertise and promotes job satisfaction, all to the benefit of the learner. An institution that is engaged at the cutting edge of research attracts the best teachers and post graduate students that places it at the forefront of the international arena. It also enables the programmes and Academy to generate considerable external funding, essential in today’s economic climate. This finance facilitates the creation of centres of excellence, both in people and resources/equipment, which again enables all learners to observe/share these experiences. Art & Design is a major contributor to the creative economy, which is internationally one of the fastest growing economies. To restrict this fields’ entry into the European Research Area has a far reaching negative impact on the Academy and significantly its learners, which is contrary to the Bologna principles. Therefore we recommend the Ministry reconsider its policy and support practice-based research, inline with many of its European partners.

1.1. Organisational management and performance

Area 1	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
General management		X		
Personnel management	X			
Management of financial resources and infrastructure	X			

1.1.1 General Management

Requirements

- ✓ *A higher education institution has defined its role in the Estonian society.*
- ✓ *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.*
- ✓ *Key results of a higher education institution have been defined.*

- ✓ *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.*
- ✓ *Liability at all management levels has been defined and described, and it supports the achievement of institutional purposes and the coherent performance of core processes.*
- ✓ *Internal and external communications of a higher education institution (including marketing and image building) are purposeful and managed.*

Comments

Estonian Academy of Arts (EAA) has developed a mission and vision that acknowledges the fact that is the only public art university in Estonia. EAA sees itself as being the main educator and developer of professionals in the field of art, design, architecture, art history, heritage conservation and art education.² According to the figures available to the Team, the Academy's four academic faculties offer 32 study programmes on all three levels. The Open Academy, its fifth faculty, offers several non-academic courses and Life Long Learning programmes to the public.

EAA emphasises that it considers it to be its responsibility to educate a large section of the art-related professionals of the country, contributing and shaping public discourse of the arts. It sees itself in a position to '*make society a better place*' and '*serve as a key force for progress in society*'.³ Several members of staff pointed towards this responsibility when describing the rationale for their study offerings.

EAA is listed in the 2017 QS World University Ranking among the 200 best art and design universities, which the Team recognises as a considerable achievement. Nationally it has collaborative ties with several universities as well as close relations with Tartu Art College. Internationally, it compares itself with several of the leading art and design universities, particularly in Scandinavia and the Baltics (Aalto University, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Vilnius Academy of Art), with whom it also has collaborative ties.

EAA has defined several '*core values*' which form the basis of its current Development Plan.

The Team noted, that these values place a strong focus on staff output, creativity and excellence. In line with the self-proclaimed '*student-centeredness*' of the institution, the Team recommends to similarly include student success, choice, creative output and successful careers as indicators of excellence when it further develops its values in the future.

EAA has formulated an extensive Development Plan (DP) for the period of 2016-2020 which reflects its mission, vision and core values. The link to the country's development priorities and the expectations of society is made evident in an

² SER: p.10 & Dev. Plan

³ SER: p.10

annex to the DP which addresses several national and sectorial Development Plans and Strategies.

The DP outlines 'Basic Values' (5), 'Strategic Objectives' (3), 'Main academic areas of responsibilities' (6), and 'Development Stimuli' (9).

The Team appreciates the broad scope of the DP yet feels that a future DP could benefit from a more focused approach. Also, the links between the areas were not always apparent to the Team.

The Team commends the institution

- for undertaking a thorough, lengthy and inclusive process for writing the DP.

It recommends

- to build this fruitful process into a transparent set of rules to use for similar exercises and the formulation of the next DP.

The DP is annexed with an Operational Plan (OP). Here 13 key development activities are listed, with 5-10 itemised actions attached to each. Each of the actions names units or people who will be responsible to deliver the result as well as a funding entity.

The Team found that:

- The number of itemised actions make the DP very ambitious.
- The itemised actions were not set on a time scale, making it hard to evaluate milestones, the need to change course or make adjustments or their completion.
- It wasn't clear how or whether all the areas mentioned in the DP were sufficiently addressed by appropriate actions in the OP.
- Particularly the move to the new building and a (new) form of '*interdisciplinary*' and '*cooperative*' way of operation⁴ seems not be addressed in sufficient detail in the OP.
- '*Areas of Improvement*' that are succinctly and pointedly stated at the end of each chapter of the SER are not specifically addressed in the DP (i.e. the '*Areas for Improvement*' for the management.⁵
- The Academy has specified in the '*Governance*' Section of the SER the need to restructure the Design Department 'in the near future' (which was echoed by several members of management and staff). This too, is not addressed in the DP or OP.

The Team recommends to:

- Map the OP more closely to the DP (for example by using a common numbering system). Appoint persons/units who are responsible for the main operational goals, not just individual actions.
- Add a time frame/milestone planning to the actions.
- Add resources and/or necessary regulatory changes (if applicable).

⁴ Operational Plan (OP) 1st strategic objective

⁵ SER: p.28

The institution has defined a list of Key Performance Indicators. These are mostly quantitative measures, grouped in three areas.

The Team recommends:

- To map the indicators more closely to the OP and its actions.
- To define qualitative indicators of success to complement the quantitative indicators
- To set target numbers for key quantitative indicators,

Overall the Development Plan with all its features should be a helpful instrument and roadmap for the institution to *support* and guide it in achieving its goals during the time period for which it is written.

The OP includes actions to which responsible persons/units are linked. The Team found that members of administrative and support staff had a good sense of purpose and felt well directed by their superiors in delivering certain actions. The Team also took note of several actions delivered by the leadership of the University such as measures to limit the workload of teachers and professors, rule on principles of staff salaries and define categories for budget division. The effort undertaken by the finance department to evaluate the costs of curricula and faculties appear to have resulted in a helpful tool to underpin and support future strategic decisions. The sense of purpose and direction among the academic staff and the academic council in fulfilling the OP was less obvious to the Team.

The Team encourages the leadership to support and direct the fulfilment of key actions of the OP in order to avoid frustration among staff and gain support for the next phase of development internally and externally. Annual reviews (*'Where are we now'*) and next steps, transparently communicated and internally publicised could be events to garner support and enthusiasm for the next year as well as strengthen the feeling of common purpose.

The Team found that most academic and management processes of the school are well defined by regulations and statutes.

Many members of staff appreciated the efforts of the new leadership to develop an *'inclusive'* and transparent style of management.

The Team noted that there are academic processes that rely heavily on verbal communication and interpersonal contact. One example is the diverse role of the course manager/coordinator who was seen by the teaching staff and the students as a vital link, dispenser of information, coordinator, support etc. for the day-to-day running of the academic programmes. The Team appreciates that this part of living academic culture but encourages the faculties to build less person specific processes.

However, the Team encourages the Academy

- To no longer regard itself as "*a small school*" (a definition the Team has heard from all levels of staff). The Team found the institution to be a sizeable organisation of considerable complexity.

The Team suggest

- To build on the effort the Academy undertook in preparing for the review by making lines of communication and decision making transparent to the Team - to develop them further and use them for further internal reflection and evaluation.

The Team specifically advises

- To critically evaluate the organisational structure of the faculties with the intent of streamlining and harmonising it.

While the Team is aware of and respects that the Academy combines different subject cultures and traditions, it feels the Academy would benefit from a simpler and more coherent organisational form on the level of faculties with clearly differentiated roles and responsibilities (i.e. Chair, Head of Department, Dean).

In regards to the move to a new building, the Team did get a sense that below management level there was not clear sense of the consequences of the coming changes - which in some cases will be quite drastic. On faculty level there appeared not enough information or clarity about the move to prepare for a smooth transition, establish new working routines and achieving the strategic goal attached to the new building.

Examples of results of staff satisfaction surveys that were available to the staff were quite low both in terms of response rate and satisfaction.

The Team appreciates:

- EAA's willingness to take such surveys and encourages it to continue with this exercise.

It advises that:

- a diversified, long-term effort (including recurrent public communication about the issues, feedback about steps taken etc.) is needed to address both problems and make the exercise meaningful for everyone engaged.

There are several new committees within the management structure, whose workings are generally appreciated by staff.

The Team advises:

- To evaluate the agendas for overlap,
- To further devolve responsibility below the level of the rector and to equip management committees or positions with means to assign resources when necessary in order to effect change.
- To define each of the committee's terms of reference/statutes, lines of communications and agendas clearly

The Team commends the instalment of a Quality Committee.

However, the Team felt:

- the committee as an institution (not its individual members) lacked a clear sense of purpose and the formal means and rights to define more far reaching policies of Quality Management and Enhancement for EAA.

This should be reviewed. It may be beneficial to consider to link it more clearly to the Council which oversees most of the academic issues.

EAA currently has very limited resources for PR, marketing and recruitment, currently only one full-time position. The Team saw many examples of very energetic efforts to publish the universities many achievements and in general inform the public about the universities activities. Yet clearly everyone acknowledged that the current resources are too limited to provide the public representation that many staff members and students would wish for.

Commendations

- Undertaking a thorough, lengthy and inclusive process for writing a comprehensive Development Plan;

Recommendations

- To build on the experiences in writing the DP into a transparent set of rules to use for similar exercises and the formulation of the next DP;
- To map the OP more closely to the DP (for example by using a common numbering system). Appoint persons/units who are responsible for the main operational goals, not just individual actions;
- To add a time frame/milestone planning to the OP actions;
- To add resources and/or necessary regulatory changes (if applicable);
- To map the quality indicators more closely to the OP and its actions;
- To define qualitative indicators of success to complement the quantitative indicators;
- To set target numbers for key quantitative indicators;
- To critically evaluate the organisational structure of the faculties with the intent of streamlining and harmonising it;
- To further devolve responsibility below the level of the Rector and to equip management committees or positions with means to assign resources when necessary in order to effect change;
- To define each of the committee's terms of reference/statutes, lines of communications and agendas clearly;
- To establish the Quality Committee as an organisational structure (not its individual members) to give a clear sense of purpose and the formal means and rights to define more far reaching policies of Quality Management and Enhancement for EAA.

1.1.2 Personnel Management

Requirements

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ <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>✓ <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> |
|--|

- ✓ *The principles of remuneration and motivation of employees are clearly defined, available to all employees, and implemented.*
- ✓ *Employee satisfaction with the management, working conditions, flow of information, etc., is regularly surveyed and the results used in improvement activities.*
- ✓ *Employees participate in international mobility programmes, cooperation projects, networks, etc.*
- ✓ *Employees base their activities on principles of academic ethics.*

Comments

EAA follows staff procurement procedures as defined by EAA's Council⁶ *Conditions and Procedure for Election of Teaching Positions*. The provided guidelines serve as satisfactory legal framework for hiring new faculty. The staffing needs are initiated by the respective academic units (Departments) in correspondence to the curricular needs and developmental plans of the EAA.

The Team found that the hiring procedures are clear, mostly well balanced, inclusive (a student representative is included as a voting member) and transparent: "*Provision 42. The personnel department shall publicly disclose the candidacy documents on the Academy's website*"⁷ The final decision in hiring professorial staff is being made by Academy's Council. The other academic ranks follow similar procedures, albeit through different hiring channels: research staff through the Research Council, lecturers at the Departmental Faculty Councils.

The visibility of the prospective staff positions is only partially public as Provision 19 of the document requires that only positions of 50% or more of appointment need to be made public. Since about half of all the teaching and research staff positions are part-time, this could lead to a situation when only half of the new vacancies have to be openly announced, and the rest being filled at discretion of the Rector or faculty Deans.

Language Proficiency requirement of the document obliges the prospective teaching and research staff candidate to conduct Estonian language at a minimum level of C2 and maintain English language proficiency minimum level of B2, therefore narrowing the potential hire pool to Estonia.

The Clause XIV. "*Filling a position by appointment*"⁸ of the document allows to fill vacant position by appointment if such a position is of "*temporary nature*", meaning no longer than 5 years thus entirely bypassing the selection procedures. Similarly "*Outstanding artists, practitioners etc.*" could be hired directly by the Rector at the behest of the Dean of the relevant faculty. In this case prospective faculty's academic aptitude is being decided by the Rector, respective Dean and a lawyer⁹. The appointee's conformity to professional requirements shall be evaluated by the Personnel Department in cooperation with the Dean of the relevant faculty and the jurist).

⁶ Regulation no. 1 3/3 of 23 February 2016

⁷ Conditions and Procedure for Election of Teaching Positions: p.14

⁸ Conditions and Procedure for Election of Teaching Positions: Section 77.2, p.18

⁹ Conditions and Procedure for Election of Teaching Positions: Section 79, p.20

Academic staff are routinely hired for an unspecified amount of time.¹⁰ Since performance of the staff is being periodically evaluated, mandatory every five years since 2010, employee circulation is achieved not on a contractual but rather on a performative basis.

A positive gender balance tendency has been developing over a few last years: *'Among academic staff, the share of women was 48.7% in 2013 (40 of 83 academic staff were female), 54% in 2014 (40 out of 74) and 55.7% in 2015 (44 of 79).*¹¹ However it is not clear what is the percentage of women Professors within the professorial staff.

The percentage of professorial staff seems to be awkwardly high in comparison to the national average: *'the EAA has the highest percentage of Professor positions: 34.18% (the indicator is 11.2% for UT, 11.37% for TU and 19.63% for EAMT).*¹² It is evident that EAA has twice as many Professors as the other Estonian Institutions of Higher education.

There are several provisions in staff hiring law of the Academy which specifically prescribe assessment and evaluation of candidates' past activities. The procurement law takes student feedback very seriously:

Chapter 37: *'A candidate who has repeatedly received negative feedback from students or has been in major violation of the code of ethics for Estonian researchers or the Academy's code of ethics shall not be allowed to take part in the hiring round.'*

Also,

Chapter 56.4: *'The Dean of the relevant faculty shall present a summary of the candidate's assessment results (experts' results, students' feedback and rating, assessment from the department and the research council).'*

47.[...]: *'The student government shall take into account the candidate's competence for carrying out teaching and developing [...] If the candidate has previously worked in the position of teaching staff or taught classes or given lessons at the Academy, his or her previous work and performance shall be evaluated.[...]*'

In addition, EAA has put into place a number of additional measures in assessing staff's performance:

1. Open assessment involving an assessment committee (including practitioners from the field, at the end of most subjects),
2. Curricula evaluation interviews with the Rector's Office (new initiative since autumn 2016, planned yearly),
3. Academic staff development interviews (yearly),
4. Analysis of student feedback (yearly),
5. Developing programs supporting academic staff professional development (yearly),

¹⁰ Term of the Contract: Chapter 2.2. para2– 'The Contract has been concluded for unspecified period according to Universities Act § 39 (1 and 4)

¹¹ SER: p.18

¹² SER: p.18

6. Academic staff recruitment procedures (on hiring),
7. Evaluation of teaching (every five years since 2010),
8. Auditing (both based on self-analysis or external reviewers).

The Team advises to balance evaluative, top-down measures in assessment of staff performance with opportunities for support and development. With a lack of robust financial incentives, drain of the talented teachers to the private sectors could become an acute problem for the school. EAA should find a less top-down and perhaps less punitive approach in staff performance measurement.

In 2015 the academy switched from hourly remuneration form to a per-credit ECST system. In the period between 2014 and 2017 the budgeted labour costs significantly fluctuate. The 2016 reduction in wages was quote: *'caused partly by internal changes in the remuneration procedure. While previously regular staff were able to enter into mandate contracts, contracts for services, and education services contracts, to perform additional duties, following the implementation of the new procedure regular staff are only entitled to additional remuneration for performing additional duties.'*¹³ In other words, additional remuneration which earlier was automatically built into the contracts became subject to necessity assessment and verification procedures.

The salaries of the teaching staff are substantially below their counterparts at other academic institutions. However, salaries were raised by 15-20% in 2016, in some instances even 30% , so the gap has substantially narrowed in recent years.

The factual salary which is represented by the *'average basic salary'*¹⁴ is lower than the *'total remuneration.'*¹⁵ For example, average teacher's position promises a 1223€ of monthly remuneration, of which 60% are basic salary. This means that more than 40% of the total remuneration is not guaranteed and is subject of special conditions, such as additional academic or administrative tasks research and involvement in 3rd party funded projects. This additional load is discretionary, therefore the average actual salary of the teacher is lower and amounts to 926€.¹⁶

Although the Academy has *Rules for Remuneration of Work*, through meetings with the teaching staff, the finance staff and responses in the Staff Satisfaction Survey, there was a consensus that there is *'a need to establish a clearer salary system'*¹⁷ The Team deems it necessary to implement a fair and transparent structure of bonuses and additional payments.

¹³ SER: p.19, Rules for Remuneration of Work,

¹⁴ SER: p.20, Table 7

¹⁵ SER: p.19, Table 6

¹⁶ SER: p.20, Table 7

¹⁷ SER: p.20, p.28 & p.101

The EAA has defined the various types of engagements which teaching staff is expected to conduct. This scale allocates a healthy load to research and artistic work and promotes a reflective and progressive educational framework. At a professorial appointment it is expected that Research/Creative work amounts to 50% of the total load. Teaching part is projected to be 35% and Administrative work 15% of an appointment.

EAA gauges employee satisfaction regularly since 2014. Despite the fact that there is an increased level in staff satisfaction from 2014 with 29% to 2015 50% satisfied respondents¹⁸ the results could be deemed inconclusive as the number of participants is too small to be representative and has furthermore decreased with the last survey: *'A total of 31.4% of employees took part in the satisfaction survey for 2014 and 28.7% of employees in the one for 2015.'*¹⁹

To the question *'I am satisfied with working for the Academy'* in 2014, 48,4% of respondents answered positively and in 2015 number dropped a bit to 39,3%. Surveyed employees expressed generally positive response to the information flow and the working conditions at the Academy.²⁰ Employee satisfaction with support structural units²¹ varies from IT 37,5% to International Relations 67,9%.

Dissatisfaction with salaries was expressed at different occasions throughout the review, both in interviews and the Self-Evaluation Report. Administration is well aware of this: *'academy employees did not give a high rating to the statement in the satisfaction survey that employees' remuneration depends on the fulfilment of the Academy's goals, personal effort and the performance of the work. In the open answers, respondents mentioned the lower pay rate compared to other universities and need to establish a clearer salary system.'*²²

In the SER there's a statement about: *'opposition between academic and non-academic staff'*²³, When speaking to the Team some members of staff expressed that they did not understand why surveys were taken and indicated their dissatisfaction about measures to limit pay for extra lessons or not pay for council work.

The Team noted that the Academy seems to address some of these tensions in its Development Plan.²⁴ *'We will implement in the Academy an inclusive management system which supports the collaboration of the units and reduces the administrative burden of the academic staff'*. The team encourages EAA to fully develop a harmonious, streamlined and non-punitive Quality Assurance system.

¹⁸ SER: p.21, Figure 6),

¹⁹ SER: p.21

²⁰ SER: p.22 , Figure 7

²¹ SER: p.22, Figure 8

²² SER: p.20

²³ SER: p.20

²⁴ Development Plan: 5.2

Compared to other Estonian universities, the EAA has been one of the international relations leaders in Estonia. The EAA is leading in terms of ratios when it comes to using the possibilities afforded by the Erasmus+ programme. In addition, the EAA provides opportunities to take part in the EEA and Norway Grants programme in the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility programme and coordinates and participates in the Nordplus (NP Higher Education and NP Horizontal) networks.

The EAA is a leading partner in fashion and textile working group at CUMULUS. The EAA has had numerous workshops and internships with such international companies as Camper, H&M, etc. The academy's teaching staff and employees have served on the steering bodies of international working groups and networks. More than 50% of the staff teach or take part in short trainings abroad. The EAA is also a home to the secretariat of the CIRBUS network.

However in comparison to 2013, in 2015 the number of international engagements has slightly dropped.²⁵ On the other hand, the number of 'mobile employees' between 2011 and 2015 has almost doubled.²⁶

Internal internationalisation shows room for improvement. At the moment there are seven foreign academic staff members, but fluent command of the Estonian language, a legal requirement upon hiring staff,²⁷ restricts admission of international teachers.

The Ministry of the Higher Education of Estonia states: '*Promoting the international competitiveness of higher education. In order to promote the international competitiveness of higher education, the share of foreign students enrolled in studies in Estonia will be raised above 7% in 2017 (6.8% in 2015), and the short-term academic mobility of students will be encouraged in order to raise it to 6% in 2017 (1.4% in 2015). The international appeal of Estonian educational institutions will be increased.*' Although in the past two years the Academy has considerably increased the number of international teachers employed, to achieve all the above targets EAA should consider further raising the number of foreign staff members.

EAA's is bound by Estonian law and various legal acts when it comes to academic conduct. The EAA's has based its legal framework on a principle of equal rights regardless of gender, origin, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, views, and abilities. Also, EAA's Quality Committee is obliged to take action in case there's any violation of this principle.

Adherence to academic practices is set forth in the Rules of Organisation of Study. The Procedure for Preparing and Defending Master's Theses set forth the use of the plagiarism detection system KRATT since 2014 (no incidents have been found).

²⁵ SER: p.23, Table 8

²⁶ SER: p.23, Table 9

²⁷ Conditions and Procedure for Election of Teaching Positions: p.4 Estonian language proficiency minimum level C2

Commendations

- Most staff hiring procedures are clear, open and follow legal framework;
- Staff hiring procedure integrates students voice;
- Good gender equality among staff, including academic staff;
- Staff development is part of the Development Plan;
- EAA takes part in external QA initiatives like Primus, Edu Tegu and etc;
- There's an evidence of increased management approval;
- Detailed staff satisfaction questionnaires and analyses;
- Robust participation in international academic and cultural frameworks. (Cirrus, CUMULUS, etc.);
- Increased staff international mobility;
- Good conditions for teaching staff to actively pursue their professional practice and/or research

Recommendations

- To capitalise on and formalise Staff Development further, by funding it independently of external initiatives and financing;
- EAA expressed, quote: '*Need to include central plan in budget for general training*'- this should also include the needs of academic staff;
- To review staff's remuneration for additional tasks and the composition of the base salary – needs to be made more transparent, accurate, better understandable and compatible across various sectors of the Academy;
- To address the high percentage of professorial staff. (Is it academy's goal to maintain such a high professorial percentage or a hindrance in a path of its development?);
- To address opposition between academic and non-academic staff;
- To raise response rate in survey on management satisfaction (the latest rate is 28%);
- To better define internal rules/regulations for process of ethics violation.
- Look closely at achieving sustainable staff salaries in line with other comparable Universities in Estonia;
- To articulate a clear and cohesive international strategy which goes beyond staff short-term travel and find the key drivers that will implement it;
- To implement the '*Reduction of the administrative burden*' to go beyond rhetoric and take shape of concrete structural proposals;
- To avoid over-intrusively manage staff's performance, as it dramatically effects staff satisfaction and motivation. EAA should find deeper, intelligent and less top-down and perhaps less intensive approach in staff performance measurement.

1.1.3 Management of financial resources and infrastructure

Requirements

- | |
|---|
| <p>✓ <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</i></p> |
|---|

plan of an institution of higher education and national priorities (except private institutions).

- ✓ *A higher education institution uses information systems that support its management and the coherent performance of its core processes.*
- ✓ *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.*

Comments

EAA's budget is prepared in accordance with the national law and the development plan of the institution: '*The budget is based on the Budget Strategy of the Estonian Academy of Arts for 2013–2018*²⁸ and the Budget Rules of the Estonian Academy of Arts'. EAA is going through a peculiar financial period as its budget is being dramatically affected by the sale of certain properties, a pending construction and subsequent relocation to a new facility. Two major budgetary tendencies which are consistent since 2005 are:

1. State support steadily grows from 2.9% in 2005 to 6.8% in 2017;
 2. Steady growth of EAA's revenues from 4.52 m€ in 2005 to 10.6 m€ in 2017.²⁹
- This represents an overall positive fiscal tendency.

This major factor aside there are a few tendencies which perhaps need some attention and slightly better balancing. For example: Academic Activity area (staff salaries department expenses etc.) are posed to shrink from 44.2% to 42.8% (2016 to 2017), Research and development as well from 10.9% to 10.8%, as well as Social Activity Area (student support) from 7.9% to 6.8% of the total budget, while at the same time Administration and Management Costs increased from 24% to 26.7%.³⁰

Also it is not entirely clear what exactly constitutes Administration and budget, as quote: '*The administration and management revenues and expenses represent all respective revenues and expenses of the entire organisation.*'³¹

For the year 2017 the earmarked budget for Administration and Management is 2.547.900€. ³² In comparison, all the other academic departments combined will receive 3.365.400€ It is not entirely clear what justifies such an allocation especially in a context of relative drop in funding of the other units. The Team is not sure if this is in line with EAA's strategic policies (Development Plan) or one-off case related to the relocation-related capital investment.

Overheads Fee³³ in 2017, the total budgeted amount of the overheads fee is 100.3 thousand (in 2016 – 90.6 thousand) euros, which is applied towards supporting the following central units of the administrative and management

²⁸ Council regulation: no. REK-03/4 of 12 March 2013

²⁹ EAA budget principles for the 2017 budget year: p.15

³⁰ EAA budget principles: p.11

³¹ EAA budget principles: p.11

³² 8.2 Distribution of State Activity Support by Individual Areas: 8.2, p.16

³³ EAA budget principles: p.12, §7

areas such as administrative Department, and Rectorate. Substantial amount of overheads are being generated by activities other than administrative department, perhaps it would be comprehensive to spread the overhead somewhat more evenly? For example, allowance to keep larger part of overhead would perhaps motivate faculty to be more active in conceiving of or participating in EU funded projects.

Also, the estimated increase in revenue of the *academic area* compared with 2016 amounts to 12.07%, the estimated increase in revenue of the *research and development* area is 15.61%, and the increase in revenue of the *administrative activity* amounts to 29.75%, the capital budget has increased by 307.89% (construction of a new building, sales of old properties). Revenue increase of close to one third in administrative activity should be considered rather anomalous. Sustainability and the sources of such a development are not entirely clear to the Team, whether this is due to management of a new construction or overheads fees.

Departmental budgets are based on a clear strategy³⁴ It is evident that the major factor (outside salaries of EAA budget principles for the 2017 budget year the regular staff) in crafting such a budget is the number of students. Departmental budgets however don't reflect maintenance of specialised laboratories. It is not entirely clear how funds are allocated in running such labs.

The expenses of the academic activity area include expenses for purchasing teaching aids, as well as expenses related to outsourced academic services for teaching purposes. The estimated amount of these expenses in 2017 is: '636.3 thousand (2016 – 760.8 thousand, and 2015 – 640.9 thousand) euros.'³⁵ It is not clear what percentage constitutes 'outsourced academic services' and what the purchase of equipment.

On 3 January 2017, the Government of the Republic of Estonia adopted a new funding model based on new performance indicators: (80%) of the funding provided to universities will be core funding, the remaining 20% to be performance-based funding. Out of these 20% the key requirements are students graduation in the nominal period of study (35% of weight) and students continuation of studies at a higher level or employment (20%). The Team is not entirely clear how the budgeting structure envisions achieving these targets.

This area of management requires some comprehensive measures as according to employee satisfaction survey, IT has the lowest ratings in the Academy of 37,5%.³⁶ Regarding enhancement of the IT system, the Finance Department expressed optimism in tangible implementation of modern IT system: '*In the new building there will be new IT systems for managing the property. The study systems and accounting system need renewal.*' Current IT penetration is minimal and for most part, effects document management: '*Information system trainings are held for new employees starting work – for example, use of the document management system WebDesktop, the EIS study information system (Estonian*

³⁴ EAA budget principles: p.9, Table 4. Principles of the budget for Academic Departments

³⁵ EAA Budget Principles: p.18

³⁶ SER: p.22, Figure 8

*abbreviation: ÕIS) and Google's Gmail service and related applications.*³⁷ EEA should consider allocating more managerial tasks to electronic means, also creating searchable database of taught classes and student works and etc.

Infrastructural status quo should be taken in a context of pending relocation to a new facility. As a purpose-build complex, the new Art Academy's building is supposed to better address working and learning conditions of the institution. As for allocation of finances to the various sectors of academy there's a peculiar tendency of reinforcing administration at the expense of the other units. When such areas as Academic Area experience a moderate growth and Administration and Management a dramatic growth, Research and Development Area, comprised of the following sub-areas: - Library, - Doctoral studies, - Publishing, - Research and development division, - Science Foundation, - Gallery, - Targeted financing areas, - Personal research grants has a projected budget cut from 466.300€ in 2016 to 415.800€ in 2017.³⁸ Gallery and the Library however won't be affected by diminished funding. Perhaps it would benefit the Academy considering reinforcing research and development, especially when, quote: '*Revenues earned from research and development activities are the second largest source of revenue.*'³⁹

Commendations

- There is a detailed budget strategy in line with the development plan and target goals of the Academy;
- The financial bookkeeping of the Academy was greatly improved and offers realistic and good insight into possibilities, now and for the future;
- For over a decade, academy manages to maintain a steady growth in revenues;
- Such departmental units of EAA as Open Academy, the School of Restoration and also Research and Development sector of the school manage to generate a healthy revenue;
- International mobility programme is robust and effective.

Recommendations

- To consider optimizing its management and administrative structure;
- To further overhaul the IT system to strengthen web-based management information platforms;
- To extend the IT system to deliver more access to digital content such as digital courses, learning objects, MOOCs, etc;
- To clarify the remuneration of additional tasks to be based on a clearly understood and agreed principles;
- To further reinforce (with budgetary allocations) personnel development
- To strengthen budgetary outreach by national and international procurement actions.

³⁷ SER: p.19

³⁸ EAA Budget Principles: p.15

³⁹ EAA Budget Principles: p.18

1.2. Teaching and learning

Area 2	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body	X			
Study programme development		X		
Student academic progress and student assessment	X			
Support processes for learning	X			

1.2.1 Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body

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.*

Comments

EAA has well defined educational objectives, and has used the Institutional accreditation effectively to identify its strengths and challenges. The SER document articulates the academies position in relation to teaching and learning within a national and international context.

While there are dramatic differences to the number of students applying to undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) courses, the admissions procedures appear to be robust and effective and steps are planned to either improve recruitment for existing courses, and or consider new course developments. There is high expectation among staff across all departments that the new building will attract more home and overseas applicants.

While there are some concerns regarding the % of students who complete their degrees the overall graduation rates and levels of achievement appear to above the national average. When questioned about this topic EAA explained the Government regulations regarding student funding and the impact this can have on student's ability to continue full time study.

Data presented in the SER gives an impression that the number of graduates gaining employment following their studies is relatively low. However, different panels heard frequent references to students developing their own start up initiatives and cultural projects that appear not to be sufficiently recognized by the Academy. While entrepreneurship is clearly identified as an important aspect of student learning it has only recently been established and embedded within the curriculum. However, it was not entirely clear to what extent the departments had been involved in developing the scope and content the workshops offered, and judging by the response of students this area of learning is still a work in progress.

Employers and alumni are well connected to the academy and make valuable input at various levels. The relatively small scale of the creative community in Estonia means that (as the team were frequently informed) 'everybody knows everybody' and it is evident that students benefit from being closely connected to subject based professional networks. This is particularly evident in the number and range of live projects and internships that are available to students throughout their studies – in addition to opportunities to participate in Erasmus exchanges and field trips outside Estonia.

The academic structure, and distribution of faculties and departments across a number of sites supports a high level of autonomy, and this limits the extent to which cross-disciplinary exchange and interaction can take place. The new building will obviously provide ample opportunity to redress this – but may also require a fundamental rethink in terms of the academic management of the academy.

'EAA supports the success of special-needs students at university, offering them flexible study formats and methods that enable different social groups (such as HEV and adult students, students switching to a different speciality, students resuming their studies, the unemployed) to be accommodated..⁴⁰ The old buildings that currently hold different facilities are not all wheelchair accessible, but the mobility of all students is considered in the plan of the new building.

Commendations

- Employers are generally very positive about the students learning experience and ability to situate their practice within the work place at a professional level;
- International mobility for many students forms an important part of the learning experience and this is very well supported by the academy. The increasing number of students recruited internationally and incoming Erasmus students also (for the most part) enriches the learning environment;
- Commitment of faculty staff to organize opportunities for students to participate in field / study trips in Estonia and further afield – with financial support made available to students where possible;
- Very positive and enthusiastic attitude of staff to use the move to the new building to bring about fundamental change for the benefit of the students learning experience, and interaction between staff from different Faculties.

Recommendations

- To clarify and better define '*learner centred learning*', generally this term was not well understood by students or staff. There was some evidence from students that they would appreciate more time and space in the curriculum to develop self directed work. This connects with a more general observation that the communication of information concerning the content and delivery of courses is inconsistent and is perhaps too reliant on informal communication from staff;
- It is acknowledged that identifying and applying benchmarks to establish comparable standards is not easy for the Academy with no obvious competition regionally or nationally. However, the panel recommends that the Academy examine examples such as the *Dublin Descriptors* as a guide to assist verifying quality standards;
- To better recognise and celebrate % of graduates that set up independent projects and commercial initiatives.

1.2.2 Study programme development

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.*

⁴⁰ (SER: pp.34-35)

- ✓ *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.*

Comments

The study programme development is based on EAA's purposes and the needs and expectations of society and labour market. For example the MA programme Interaction Design within the Faculty of Design was based on the high demand of persons with IT skills. Development activities systematically and regularly take place and involve teaching staff, alumni and stakeholders from outside the Academy.

While the academy is clearly endeavouring to introduce robust quality processes to ensure consistent standards this appears to have had a mixed response from staff. (As is common in many institutions where anxieties about 'top down' academic management frequently meet with resistance for both the right and the wrong reasons!). Faculties are independently responding to feedback from students, and the national and international cultural sectors to review and revise their curricula. Fine Art for example is in the process of creating a more open curriculum that allows more time for supervised self directed study – something that was commented on by students from the inter-media department. Departments within other faculties (Design and Art and Culture) have introduced new course content in recognition of changing demands and expectations of the cultural social and commercial contexts.

However, the quality of course descriptions, aims and objectives, content, teaching methods and assessment criteria vary considerably between faculties. Without course handbooks some panel members found it difficult to get a sense of the student journey as they progress through the course.

There is growing recognition that interaction and exchange between disciplines is important, but at present there does not appear to be a consistent approach to how this works in practice. Students can elect to join short or extended projects and workshops in departments other than their own – but it was unclear how this impacted on student's workload, and how this operates in relation to equal opportunities (for students who have time, family, financial constraints)?

While entrepreneurship is flagged up as an important aspect of students learning, it was not easy to find specific information about the form and content of this provision. A relatively high number of students benefit from opportunities to participate in international internships, however there does not appear to be clear published guidelines about the terms and conditions of these experiences and how these learning experiences are assessed and evaluated, or incorporated into

student's main study?

While basic course information is available on Moodle, many students rely on emails from staff to keep them informed and updated. It was also apparent that the department coordinators play a vital role in maintaining communication with students and being the first point of contact for pastoral care, and other non-academic matters that student's may require.

Almost without exception staff and students emphasised the small scale and close knit community of each department and faculty. Communication between students and staff happens in many informal as well as formal settings. The high number of sessional / part-time staff in some areas such as Fine Art raised questions about the extent that these tutors are able to be kept updated about institutional protocols and processes. Unfortunately it was not possible to verify this within the panel sessions.

There is widespread agreement that the ÖIS method of collecting feedback student feedback is not effective - face to face meetings and or paper based feedback is widely adopted in preference and students appear to respond positively. However, there was some evidence from students that a more anonymous approach could be effective - for example through having facilitated feedback sessions with a member of staff from another department?

Comments from Design students and staff suggest that the lack of contemporary theory is a weakness - alongside recognition that design education internationally is increasingly focused on conceptual skills and abilities.

Commendations

- There are good examples of innovative teaching practices resulting from staff (especially junior staff) engaging in staff development and from a wide range of staff taking up opportunities for Erasmus mobility exchanges;
- Strong and productive sense of community between staff and students;
- Willingness of theoretical departments to develop new and overarching courses for more practically oriented departments, and hence for large groups;
- Students views and opinions are sought and responded to on a regular basis.

Recommendations

- To review how course information can be communicated consistently and in a user friendly way to students - perhaps through a course/department handbook that explains how the course works at each stage and what options are available for students to choose electives, or other extra curricula activities;
- To review the relationship between theory and practice at each level, and how this could incorporate an introduction to research methods at BA level and research methodologies at MA level.

1.2.3 Student academic progress and student assessment

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.*

Comments

Based on the evidence that the Team has seen, heard and read, the students of EAA receive in general good academic support⁴¹. The close ties between the engaged, caring staff and students was clearly visible during the visit at the Academy. This strong student-teacher contact contributes to students' individual creative development and a strong sense of community at EAA, valued by both students and alumni. The dropout rate is low. The percentage of students discontinuing their studies in EAA has consistently stayed below the average percentage of dropouts in Estonian institutions of higher education.⁴²

EAA uses the information system ÕIS for monitoring the academic progress of students. The subject data is prepared and entered into the ÕIS by the teaching staff member responsible for the subject, who also generally assesses the achievement of the study outputs. As stated in the SER, the subject data must specify the assessment criteria and methods, and conditions for eligibility to take examinations and re-examinations. The grading scale and the procedure for administering examinations and tests are described in 'The Rules of Organisation of Study'⁴³

Although the rules for student assessment are in place, during different meetings it appeared that the methods of assessment feedback vary across the Academy. Mostly feedback is given verbally. The assessment team saw no evidence of written feedback for individual students. It is not clear what options are available to students if they disagree with the assessors verdict.

Nevertheless, students are very satisfied with the assessment and grading procedure. They especially value the close, informal contact with the teaching staff. From both the SER and meetings it appeared that students strongly agree the grading is characterized by mutual respect between teaching staff and student.⁴⁴

The final assessments tend to take the form of an extended critique in which external guests and or industry/professional experts join with several other members of staff to discuss individual students work. It was difficult to judge what formal arrangements determined these critiques, or how the learning

⁴¹ meetings with students and alumni

⁴² SER: p.39, Table 22).

⁴³ SER: p.39

⁴⁴ SER: p.39, Table 23

outcomes are used against the grading criteria in order to arrive at an agreed mark for each student. Although staff and students appear to be satisfied with the process the panel struggled to understand if and how parity and consistency of assessment can be maintained.

EAA has a well established system for RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning, also known as VÕTA). Although VÕTA counselling is theoretically in place, it is problematic in implementation. Almost half of the students (49%) find that they had not received enough counselling and support on the topic.

Commendations

- Students are very satisfied with academic support, assessment and grading procedure that is characterised by mutual respect between teaching staff and student;
- EAA has a low dropout rate (in 2015 ca.11%) that has consistently stayed below the average percentage of dropouts in Estonian institutions of higher education (in 2015 16%);
- A combination of theory and practice-based teaching and research is much valued by the students.

Recommendations

- To consider formalising the assessment process, and review the form and purpose of the critique as an effective and fair method of assessment;
- To consider the role of peer assessment, and the way students engage with the process as active participants in their learning;
- To introduce written feedback for summative assessment;
- To identify the source(s) of dissatisfaction of students regarding VÕTA counselling.

1.2.4 Support processes for learning

Requirements

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ <i>The organisation of studies creates an opportunity for students to complete their studies within the standard period.</i>✓ <i>A higher education institution provides students with counselling related to their studies and career.</i>✓ <i>A higher education institution supports student international mobility.</i>✓ <i>Modern technical and educational technology resources are used to organise educational activities.</i>✓ <i>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.</i> |
|--|

Comments

A good percentage of EAA students complete their studies within the standard period. In the last three years the percentage of students graduating on time has increased from 60% to 73%.⁴⁵ However, the percentage of Doctoral students finishing their studies within the regular completion time is low, being 14.3% in 2015. The Team was told that Doctoral students often work besides their studies, which postpones their graduation. EAA's aim is to decrease PhD students' graduation time from the current six years to four.

EAA has not developed a uniform counselling system yet.⁴⁶ Despite that, students are provided with various kinds of support. For the problems related to their studies, students mostly approach the teaching staff, Dean or the Head of the Curriculum. Since autumn 2016 EAA has added a position for a Psychologist/Career Counsellor in the Department of Academic Affairs, when students want to approach a neutral person. The Team was told that her/his services have been so in high demand that her/his workload might need to be shortly increased from part-time to full-time. For career-related questions students approach the Entrepreneurship Counsellor, also available in the Department of Academic Affairs since last year.⁴⁷ Students are informed about counselling on EAA's website and during introduction week every fall.

International students are counselled throughout their whole study process by the Department of International Relations. The Department of International Relations also counsel and train (student) tutors for supporting international students. International students are furthermore offered different opportunities to learn the Estonian language, but these opportunities are not always taken. Only a few students have availed themselves of the opportunity of intensified training in the official language at Tallinn University, enabled by the agreement between EAA and Tallinn University in 2014.⁴⁸ The reason for the low interest is unknown; it was not mentioned in the report, nor did it come up during the Team's meetings.

In the last five years, the enhancement of internationalisation has been one of EAA's priorities. The Academy's drive towards this goal is most visible in the support of international student mobility, which is exceptional and one of the strengths of the school. The students are offered scholarship opportunities to study and perform internships abroad in the framework of various international programmes, such as Erasmus+ and NordPlus. EAA students can also take part in the Nordplus higher education programme networks CIRRUS, Nordic Academy of Architecture, KUNO, EDDA and DAMA, international summer schools and short-term internships. In 2015 circa 10% of EAA's students took the opportunity to study abroad.⁴⁹ Students are informed about mobility opportunities through emails from the International office, or orally by the teaching staff. A large

⁴⁵ SER: p.30, Table 14).

⁴⁶ SER: p.41

⁴⁷ SER: p.41

⁴⁸ SER: p.35

⁴⁹ SER: p.43, Table 27

number of the students met by the Team have been on exchange, or are planning to go to study or have an internship abroad.

The extent to which EAA utilises educational technology as an organisational tool, or as teaching materials within Departments is difficult to judge from the SER or from the panel sessions. As already stated there is limited support from either students or staff to the OIS feedback tool, or for that matter to using standard online platforms to communicate course information. However, there is a clear sense that as the Academy approaches its relocation to a single modern building that these and other technologies will become more widely needed and be adopted. It was also evident from Team panel sessions⁵⁰ that younger members of staff in particular are developing new teaching methods and online learning technologies as part of their teaching practice.

Since 2012 students of EAA have been asked to provide formal feedback via the online feedback system ÕIS, but the response rate has been low. The issues have been the lack of anonymity and the form of the ÕIS questionnaire. Current feedback system includes long, wordy questions and does not leave much space for comments. Since 2013 students may provide feedback on paper as well, and in the academic year 2015/2016 the questionnaire was adapted in a way that it is possible to give short answers.⁵¹ Students' opinion on ÕIS is split; some find it useless while other are satisfied with its current form. EAA's staff recognise the problems of the ÕIS and are working on a better version.

In addition to ÕIS, student feedback is collected through questionnaires, annual surveys and informal meetings. Since 2015 EAA has annually conducted a student satisfaction survey. Students are asked to provide feedback on the functioning of education and support processes. Exchange students are asked annually to provide feedback on their experiences studying at EAA. In the autumn semester of 2015/2016 65% of the exchange students responded.⁵²

The informal meetings take place at the end of each semester, in each Department. Meetings are arranged so that students have the opportunity to provide oral feedback. This way of collecting feedback has proven to be effective. However, the Team was told that the data from these meetings could be analysed better.

The Team is satisfied with informal processes as long as there is evidence that information coming out of these meetings is acted upon and is used as an enhancement tool to improve the programmes and the student learning experience.

Commendations

⁵⁰ meetings with the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and some Departments such as Art and Culture

⁵¹ SER: p.44

⁵² SER: p.44

- Exceptionally strong record of international mobility for students;
- Both national and international students feel very supported and value the close contact with the teaching staff and the strong sense of community that prevails within the Academy.

Recommendations

- To increase the services of the Psychologist/Career Counsellor in the Department of Academic Affairs as there is a high demand and the current workload too high for the current contract;
- To improve the formal student feedback system, as the current official feedback system ÕIS does not currently fit the needs of the Academy and has raised issues of anonymity, which is largely the cause of a very low response rate;
- The Team recognises that collecting feedback informally through meetings with students is an effective method, but there has to be evidence (e.g. minutes and actions) that information coming out of these meetings is acted upon and is used as an enhancement tool to improve the programmes and the student learning experience;
- To formalise a process to demonstrate the Academy utilises and learns from the large amount of data gathered to inform the decision making process at institutional and programme levels.

1.3. Research, development and/or other creative activity (RDC)

Area 3	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
RDC effectiveness	X			
RDC resources and support processes		X		
Student research supervision	X			

1.3.1 RDC effectiveness

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.*

Comments

Research and Development (RDC) in the Academy is led by the Vice Rector for Research, Urve Sinijärv who is also Head the Graduate School and is responsible research funding. The operational management infrastructure for Research in the Academy⁵³ is divided into main programmes: 1) Graduate School & 2) Department of Research and Development (Academic library and publishing house and gallery).

The development and evaluation of research at the Academy is the responsibility of the EAA Research Council which, *advises and provides feedback regarding the functioning of the EAA research policy, prepares the Strategy for Research, Development and Creative Activity (RDC) and monitors fulfilment thereof, discusses the candidacy of research fellows funded by the EAA for regular posts, and organises cooperation in the research division*⁵⁴. The Research Council advises and gives feedback on developments and implementation of strategic goals identified in the latest EAA Strategy for Research, Development and Creative Activity 2016 – 2020.⁵⁵

This strategy identifies four key objectives for the five-year period:

- The Academy is the primary national and international centre of excellence for research by design in Estonia;
- The Academy's RDC is closely tied to the innovation chain and contributes to the creation and development of high value-added services, products, business processes and model;
- The Academy's RDC is of a high international calibre;
- The Doctoral study offered by the Academy is productive, high in quality at an international level.

The Academy's system for RDC is based on sector and State regulations and strategies. The main internal EAA research documents are the '*Procedure for executing R&D projects and providing services*' and the '*Procedure for Administering Intellectual Property*'.

The Academy has established the following as key indicators for research, development and creative activity (RDC)⁵⁶ and indicating influence on society:

- Number of research publications/creative works per academic staff member

⁵³ Development Plan 2016-20 (DP8.4)

⁵⁴ SER: p.46

⁵⁵ EAA Strategy for Research, Development and Creative Activity 2016–2020.

⁵⁶ Development Plan 2016-20

- with research obligations;
- Published textbooks, student and creative literature on various media;
- Solutions for system development, product development and environment development;
- International mobility of doctoral students, including:
 - share of foreign doctoral students,
 - share of doctoral students who have studied at a foreign university for at least one year,
 - participation by doctoral students at foreign conferences;
- Efficiency of doctoral student graduation and average length of doctoral studies;
- Number of (co-) supervisors and consultants from other universities, the private, public and third sector and the number of opponents from other countries in defences of doctoral dissertations;
- Overall number of doctoral defences by field;
- Internationally influential creative activity 13;
- Events meant for the public, including exhibitions and creative projects (number by each category, number of participants);
- Hours or number of ECPs per participant of continuing education trainings organised.

The Academy has a long history of supporting and producing high quality international standard research in the art history and cultural heritage fields.

A relatively recent research aim of the Academy is to develop artistic research, which *'allows the key areas of society and culture to be analysed, reflecting them through the creative processes. Artistic research at the Academy encompasses different means and methods in each field for creating knowledge: artistic research, design research, design practice research in architecture and urban design and practice-based research in conservation and cultural heritage'*.⁵⁷ In support of this research practice the Academy in 2012 has established Artistic Research Fellows and this requirement has been recognised by the Academy in the job descriptions of these posts.

Different fields of EAA (Art, Architecture) have different research outputs, which can make it difficult to compare how they are actually measured. While research is still Faculty based in cooperation with the Deans and led by senior researchers and Professors, in 2015, a framework for more coherent funding of research groups and laboratories began to be established by the Academy, including in architecture the EAA 3D laboratory - engaged in testing experimental architectural solutions. In 2016, the EAA Sustainable Design Lab was added - integrating sustainability research, applied development projects and provision of education. A third development the New Materials Lab is currently in the preparatory phase. The Team applauds these developments and believe they will help develop the distinctive research profile of the Academy.

The Academy's departments have developed excellent cooperative ties with key associations and companies, including companies in which the state has a holding

⁵⁷ SER: p.46

such as Baltika Grupp, Eesti Post, Forestry and Timber Association, State Real Estate AS, the Kanut Conservation and Digitalisation Centre.

The Team found the International Summer School (Tallinn Summer Academy of Art, Design, Architecture), which aims to bring external experts and international students to Tallinn, is another good example of high-level research engaging with the communities of Estonia. This summer school offers several projects, which aim to help society, e.g. by building transport objects for flooded villages.

EEA is involved with two peer-reviewed journals. *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi* (Studies in Art and Architecture) and *Ehituskunst* (Investigations in Architecture and Theory). The former is published twice a year, has open access and is acknowledged as of the highest quality in Estonia. There are contributions in English and Estonian and both are considered scientific publications and ranked in the national system. Approximately 1/5 of the articles is refereed. The Team were given examples of a range of the Academy's research publications and Doctoral dissertations (e.g. topics: Art; Design for up-cycling of materials; Restoration Research of Wallpapers in Interiors in three comparative countries; Study of Park Environments) and were convinced they were of an international standard. The Team noted that the % of internationally peer-reviewed research papers/outputs is still relatively low and recommends the Academy works hard to increase this to enhance its international reputation and profile.

The Team found excellent examples of research practice in the Design Faculty where there are great opportunities. The Faculty has a new research lab in which they are developing innovative technology, which is currently in strong demand by the industry. They also have joint research applications with Tallinn University. In terms of research perspectives for Design it seems important to recognise the theoretical urgency of art historiography and visual culture studies, and reflections on sustainable design and digital culture as well.⁵⁸ Joint research with technical partners in the field and applications of New Materials is of key importance internationally, and theoretical reflection can support and embed this in a wider framework. PhD researchers also give courses on the aims and results of their research to BA and MA students.

The Team did not really get a clear insight into the organisation of the Graduate/Doctoral School; research seemed to have been organised mainly in relation to the different study programmes. Although the team certainly got the impression that the supervision of PhD's is taken care of most carefully, we did not really learn about a coherent programme for the Graduate/Doctoral School. In this respect, the international CV of the Head of the Doctoral School, an Art Historian and specialised in the Early Modern Time, is beyond critique.

The Team found that research is manifested in the curricula and learning and teaching strategies to students at the different levels, but at BA level this is still at a developmental stage and there is a need to implement a clear quality

⁵⁸ SER, p. 47.

improvement process. At MA level project leaders give workshops to junior researchers.

Commendations

- The initiative of creating labs as central resources presenting greater opportunity to facilitate *interdisciplinary practice*, new developments in learning & teaching, and help promote practice based research;
- The Academy has given considerable consideration and has succeeded in addressing the needs of Society in planning its research strategy and engagement;
- Cooperation with companies for practicing designers is very good practice, as is the support given by the Academy for start-up companies by graduates;
- Having an in-house publisher works excellently for dissertations and provides good outward visibility to the research quality of the Academy.

Recommendations

- To carry out more staff development on practice based research to fully engage the Fine Art, Design, Int. Arch Faculties in research, what it is and what the outcomes could be to further develop research groups;
- To look closely at the prolific amount of publications on research methodologies and explore new and innovative approaches to artistic research [e.g. McLeod & Holdridge: *Thinking through Art: Reflections on Art as Research*, 2006; *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts* (Biggs and Karlsson: Routledge: 2011; Bolt: *Materialising pedagogies; Working Papers in Art and Design* vol4. Retrieved November 30, 2008) has been significant and this has been further discussed in *SHARE: Handbook for Artistic Research Education* (ELIA: 2014);
- To increase the % of internationally peer-reviewed research papers/outputs to enhance the Academy's international reputation and profile.

1.3.2 RDC resources and support processes

Requirements

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ <i>A higher education institution has an effective RDC support system.</i>✓ <i>A higher education institution has financial resources needed for RDC development and a strategy that supports their acquisition.</i>✓ <i>A higher education institution participates in different RDC networks.</i>✓ <i>RDC infrastructure is being updated and used effectively.</i> |
|--|

Comments

The Team believe a key strength of the Academy is that the development of the teaching staff creative activity is defined in their job-descriptions and recorded in

the Web-Desktop database.⁵⁹ The Team found that the Staff have a fixed % of their appointment for research (the % fluctuates according to their job and position)⁶⁰: *Professor* (p 8): Teaching 35%, Administrative work 15%, Research/Creative work 50%; *Senior Researcher* (p 5): Teaching 15%, Administrative work 10%, Research work 75%; *Lecturer* (p 8): Teaching 70%, Administrative work 5%, Research/Creative work 25%.

The Academy also has a sabbatical system giving staff time to carry out their research. There is a Department fund, which is shared amongst the group of staff and there is general Academy funding. There are joint research projects with other universities. Currently there are twenty research staff working in EEA, which is a high number for a relatively small institution, but they also have jobs in other institutions. Overall, the number of projects is limited because of the limited number of people who can design the projects and carry these out.

The Team found that teaching staff are supported in writing research bids⁶¹ (DP8.2) with guidance coming from the Administrative Department. The administration distributes information about available grants, help with budget plans and they work together with the finance department to support the drafting of applications. The establishment of research group support depends on topics of particular persons, their own ideas, and can also be formed around research PhD projects. According to the staff, this implied and guaranteed that competent persons are the leaders of research. Research is also related to heritage buildings. There are joint research schools with other universities as well.

The Team found that research is funded mainly from domestic research grants and international funding (including EU structural funds) and to a lesser extent from domestic Estonian contracts. Applied research is funded by both domestic contracts and contracts signed with companies combined with international financing. It is noticeable over the last few years there has been a drop in revenue from the RDC sector, which has been largely due to the change in the EU funding frameworks, the closures of several programmes and the unexpected temporary suspension in 2015 of the innovation unit measure aimed at cooperation between enterprise and R&D institutes.

The adequateness and effectiveness of RCD resources also seemed to depend very much on the department. Art History and Visual Culture, and Cultural Heritage knew the ways to get funded by official governmental bodies very well. The Team examined a number of dissertations as well as publications (see above) and found these to be of good quality. Some dissertations were written in English and this supports the EAA's international research profile. In this respect, there could be more feedback from international peer review. Funding for artistic research, in particular as regards Fine Arts and Design, appeared more problematic.

The Academy informed the Team that in order to stimulate artistic research, 'A

⁵⁹ SER: Table 1 p.9 and Figure 27 p.61

⁶⁰ Additional info 10.05.17 May by Vice Rector for Research Urve Sinijärv

⁶¹ DP8.2 & meetings with Vice Rector for Research and Staff

large part of the base funding is the EAA research fund, which has been used to fund the activities of artistic researchers and development of their research topics that are not covered by IUT or PUT. The research fund also supports research activities such as research expeditions, project self-financing, (laboratory) testing, popularising science, organising research conferences, translating research texts, academy stake in international artistic research organisations and networks and awarding a research publication prize'.⁶² Funding for practice-based research is supplemented by the Academy having to redirect learning and teaching funds to support this important area of research,⁶³ which is not an ideal situation, but the Team commend the Rector on this action.

A key issue for the Academy is the lack of recognition by the Estonian Ministry for 'practice-based' research and the lack of funding to support it. *'EAA wants to give practitioner's perspective to practice-based research, it has potential to become one of the leading research basics in the Baltic, even in the Europe. However: artistic practice-based research is not considered to be equal with the 'real', humanistic research, which makes it almost impossible to gain research grants in Estonia. Secondly, there are no external criteria for applying for these grants (criteria publications)⁶⁴* This area of research is fundamental to this type of institution where the vast majority of teachers and students are creative artist/designers and similarly the academic programmes reflect this practice. Research underpins the curriculum of the undergraduate and postgraduate courses and impacts on the learning and teaching strategies. For the Academy to be internationally competitive, to attract the best teachers and students, it has to be engaged in cutting edge research in the creative art and design fields. The impact of this lack of support by the Ministry is also restricting the 3rd cycle (Doctoral) programmes to the more traditional humanities programmes of Art History and Cultural Studies. This is not supporting the *Bologna Principles* the Ministers of Education from across Europe signed up to many years ago and disadvantages a very large number of students and teachers.

Commendations

- The Academy is recognising the need of staff to carry out research in allocating time within all contracts of teaching and we applaud the development of practice-based research;
- The reallocation of Academy core funds to generate practice-based research;
- The initiative to create research fellowships to stimulate research.

Recommendations

- Practice-based artistic research seems to be at an early stage of development as is the specialised field of Design where at present, artistic research is too narrow. It is evident through the documentation and through

⁶² SER: p.48

⁶³ meeting with the Rector

⁶⁴ meeting with Vice Rector Research

our meetings that there is little financial support given to practice based research and on further enquiry we understand the Ministry of Education does not give financial support to this research practice, which is contra to the Bologna principles. Therefore we recommend the Ministry reconsider its policy and support practice-based research, inline with many of its European partners.

1.3.3 Student research supervision

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.*
- ✓ *Conditions have been created for admission of international doctoral students and for studies abroad for all doctoral students.*
- ✓ *A higher education institution includes recognised foreign scientists in the provision of doctoral studies and the supervision of doctoral theses.*

Comments

The Team found that EAA includes students of all academic cycles in research, creative or project activity; and systematically surveys student satisfaction with their supervision.

Each student has two supervisors, one internal and the second has to be from outside the Academy. In support of the student there are two readers who, through guidance and feedback, prepare them for the second round, which is the defence of the thesis. The Team were informed⁶⁵ that the Academy does not train its supervisors but, after suggestions by the Team, on reflection stated that they think it might be a good idea.

The dissertations are peer reviewed at the final examination and artworks are included in a practice-based dissertation. These must comply to strict formal rules: 3 exhibitions, all documented, and a written text of 100 pages in relation to the work with concept, motivation, explanation of intention, work process etc.). Dissertation exhibitions are considered prestigious and hence organised in the most important exhibition spaces in Tallinn and elsewhere in Estonia (depending on the topic), an example the Team experienced with a Doctoral student presenting their exhibition at the Contemporary Art Gallery in Tallinn. This way, EAA students also stimulate Tallinn's artistic ecology as such and support credibility for funding the EAA to Estonian society at large. There was

⁶⁵ meeting with Vice Rector for Research

some concern about EAA keeping up with international trends and developments in visual art practices and the Team feels that this should receive attention.

The Team observed that the average time for the completion of a Doctoral student was six years, which is considerably more than the quality indicator set by the Academy⁶⁶ of four years. However this was reasonably explained to the Team as the students are forced to work to financially survive and this makes the extra time needed for dissertations not very surprising and there is currently no means to change this.

The Academy has a Code of Ethics for research and students are given guidance about ethics in research, it is also communicated when supervisors give feedback during the research process.

Doctoral and MA students are trained in research methodologies within MA modules and research ethics are introduced in the curriculum. New Doctoral students are trained in these aspects during a summer course. If they need support or guidance, (beyond their supervisor) Doctoral students can approach the Secretary for the Doctoral School and the Academy have appointed a research assistant to help them. It is also possible for the students to approach the Head of Research and Development Department, whose background is in art history. EAA students can receive mentorship from professionals in the field and pre-incubation for business ideas through the STARTER creative programme in the EETA entrepreneurial education programme.

Commendations

- The engagement of students of all academic cycles in research, creative or project activity;
- The presentation of dissertation exhibitions in the most important exhibition spaces in Tallinn and elsewhere in Estonia, giving the Academy a strong and needed visibility in society beyond its own premises;
- The support and guidance of research students, both academic and pastoral.

Recommendations

- To start a staff-development programme to train supervisors across the faculties, with special attention to those disciplines engaged in practice-based research.

⁶⁶ RDC Strategy 2016

1.4. Service to the society

Area 4	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Popularization of its activities and involvement in social development	X			
In-service training and other educational activities for general public	X			
Other public-oriented activities	X			

1.4.1 Popularization of its activities and involvement in social development

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.*

Comments

The goals of serving society are described in activities in the EAA Development Plan 2016 – 2020 approved in February 2016. Contributing to the society's development academically and creatively is one of the three strategic goals of the Academy. The EAA serves society through creative, research and academic activity. The EAA has set goal and corresponding approaches for providing education that conforms to the needs of society.

The Academy has established a Communications Department responsible for popularising its core activities and it employs several channels like newspaper, television, radio, social media, weekly newsletter, for reaching its target audience. Access to, and relationship with, the media is very good, which results in the institution being highly respected in society and very visible.

The Academy organises numerous exhibitions and shows that are well known in Estonian society. The EAA departments take part in worldwide festivals, fairs, exhibitions and conferences. The EAA students have had good success in participating international competitions.

The Academy makes itself known to high school students through systematic communication like visiting schools and participating in fares like *Teeviit*.

The Academy promotes student entrepreneurship in co-operation with Tallinn City Council at *Balti Jaam* market.

Representatives of the EAA have been invited to serve on committees e.g. in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications and they also take part in the Councils of the Cultural Endowment and juries for creative competitions. Employees of the Academy participate in the activities of numerous professional associations, like Estonian Union of Interior Architects, the EAL, Estonian Designers' Union, Estonian Artists' Union. The Academy has long traditions and has a well recognised position in Estonian society.⁶⁷

Commendations

- Society benefits from the various public events, performances and exhibitions the academy arranges;
- Employees of the Academy participate in the activities of numerous professional associations, like Estonian Union of Interior Architects, the EAL, Estonian Designers' Union, Estonian Artists' Union;
- Despite the size of the Academy, it has dedicated resources and personnel for popularising its core activities;
- The Academy's strong and innovative collaboration with stakeholders from the communities, public institutions and business in the creative industries. Stakeholders are engaged within the curriculum as providers of student internships and workshops that are also used in a consultancy capacity during the forming and developing of curriculum;
- Teachers, students and alumni contribute at the national and international arena, and EAA students have had good success in participating in international competitions;

Recommendations

- To explore the potential of targeting the large Russian speaking population.

⁶⁷ 'From the School of Arts and Crafts to the Academy of Arts', editor Mart Kalm 2014

1.4.2 In-service training and other educational activities for general public

Requirements

- ✓ *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.*

Comments

The Academy established the *Open Academy* in 1997 for contributing to the life-long learning opportunities in line with the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy. The possibilities for lifelong learning include continuing education, professional in-service training and retraining, preparatory education (called Prep Academy as of 2017), the Children's Academy, in-house training commissioned for organisations, the international Summer Academy from 2017 and various kinds of projects.

Flexible study formats are used to create the best conditions for students who are acquiring a higher education while working, and take into account the educational needs of special-needs people and at-risk groups.⁶⁸

Participant satisfaction with the quality of in-service training is regularly surveyed and the results are used in planning improvement activities. Because online feedback system was underutilised, paper feedback was restored. There are examples of reacting to student feedback e.g. renewing design course and co-operation with faculties were improved in the Pre-academy.

Commendations

- The Academy has managed to gather 80 teachers for the *Open Academy* of which 10 are from the Academy;⁶⁹
- Alumni take active part in *Open Academy* activities;⁷⁰
- The *Open Academy* has been successful in marketing and reaching its numerical targets for participation. Last year there were 600 students;
- The income target for the *Open Academy* in 2020 is 250,000 €. Due to effective marketing this target was already reached last year with an income of 248,000 €;
- The efficiency of marketing the *Open Academy* is monitored systematically;⁷¹
- The student feedback for the *Open Academy* has been positive;

⁶⁸ SER: p.57

⁶⁹ meeting with the Head of Open Academy

⁷⁰ meeting with the Head of *Open Academy*

⁷¹ meeting with the Head of *Open Academy*

- The *Open Academy* will have modern facilities of 1200 – 1300 square meters in the new building.

Recommendations

- To set more challenging goals for the *Open Academy* for 2020;
- To target the potential of the Russian speaking population of Estonia. According to the Head of the *Open Academy* the current participants are 90% Estonian speaking and summer courses in Russian speaking areas in the Eastern parts of Estonia are planned.

1.4.3 Other public-oriented activities

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.*

Comments

The Academy organises numerous exhibitions and shows that have a long tradition and are well known in Estonian society, e.g.: ERKI Fashion Show celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, TASE introducing young talent in the Baltics having 5,000 international visitors annually and 8,500 people participate annually in open lectures arranged by the Academy.

It is clear to the Team that the public-oriented activities are purposeful and make a valuable contribution to the communities, but what is not clear is that the results of the activities are periodically evaluated and the Academy uses this evaluation as part of an enhancement strategy.

Commendations

- The Academy has a long tradition, is well recognised and has a valuable role to play in Estonian society.

Recommendations

- Due to the current situation whereby the Academy is scattered and located in temporary locations around the city it is hard to share its activities, resources and infrastructure with the habitants of the local communities, but it is hoped that this can be better managed in the new building;

- To evaluate the impact and outcomes of the activities to seek ways to develop and improve them.

2. Arts study programme group assessment

Introduction

The Academy has four faculties: Faculty of Fine Arts (current address Lembitu 10/12), Faculty of Architecture (in the St. Canute's Guild building Pikk 20), Faculty of Design (in the current headquarters at Estonia pst 7) and the Faculty of Art and Culture (Suur-Kloostri 11).

Study programmes and student numbers:

Faculty	Curriculum	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Faculty of Fine Arts	Animation	13	18	26	33	34
	Fine Arts	87	90	81	85	77
	Photography	29	26	28	25	22
	Scenography	34	29	21	17	18
	Fine Arts BA	163	163	156	160	151
	Animation	16	17	17	20	18
	Fine Arts	64	58	63	62	56
	Scenography	10	12	8	2	1
	Fine Arts MA	90	87	88	84	75
	TOTAL	253	250	244	244	226

Faculty of Design	Ceramics	20	22	16	19	21
	Creation of Enviroments	0	0	0	0	27
	Fashion Design	25	26	33	33	32
	Glass Art and Design	10	10	12	14	18
	Graphic Design	57	56	60	61	58
	Jewellery and Blacksmithing	41	36	37	44	38
	Leather Art, Accessory Design and Bookbinding	20	19	23	22	23
	Textile Art and Design	21	18	16	19	24
	Product Design	26	27	29	33	35
	Design BA	220	214	226	245	276
	Design and Applied Art	68	71	72	70	73
	Graphic Design	6	7	3	1	0
	Product Design	18	17	17	16	12
	Design MA	92	95	92	87	85
	TOTAL	312	309	318	332	361

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Faculty of Art and Culture	Art History and Visual Culture	36	34	30	23	22
	Cultural Heritage and Conservation	36	37	30	34	32
	Art and Culture BA	72	71	60	57	54
	Art and Cultural Anthropology	13	10	5	1	1
	Art History and Visual Culture	18	21	24	28	29
	Cultural Heritage and Conservation	29	31	37	35	35
	Teacher of Art	29	30	25	23	16
	Art and Culture MA	89	92	91	87	81
	TOTAL	161	163	151	144	135

Faculty of Architecture	Interior Architecture	42	39	41	47	43
	Architecture BA	42	39	41	47	43
	Architecture and Urban Design	106	107	103	105	97
	Architecture integrated study	106	107	103	105	97
	Interior Architecture (MSA)	22	27	29	33	25
	Interior Architecture (MIA)	0	0	0	0	8
	Urban Studies	28	26	19	15	16
	Landscape Architecture	14	9	6	4	0
	Architecture MA	64	62	54	52	49
	TOTAL	212	208	198	204	189

Open Academy	Media Graphics (est)			12	12	10
	Graphic Design	58	50	34	18	8
	Media Graphics (rus)	36	26	24	28	33
	Interior Decoration	57	42	42	31	23
	Fashion Stilistics	45	39	32	28	18
	Fine Art	42	39	24	14	7
	TOTAL	238	196	168	131	99

Doctoral School	Architecture and Urban Planning	1	0	0	2	6
	Art and Design	21	22	22	19	18
	Art History and Visual Culture	14	17	18	16	17
	Cultural Heritage and Conservation	10	12	10	10	12
	TOTAL	46	51	50	47	53

	Bachelor Study	735	683	651	640	623
	Integrated Study	106	107	103	105	97
	Master Studies	335	336	325	310	290

	TOTAL	1176	1126	1079	1055	1010
	Doctoral Study	46	51	50	47	53
	TOTAL with doctoral study	1222	1177	1129	1102	1063

	Design and Engineering (joint curriculum)	26	39	52	51	45
	MA with joint curriculum	361	375	377	361	335
	TOTAL with joint curriculum	1248	1216	1181	1153	1108

2.1. Study programmes of the Faculty of Architecture: Interior Architecture (BA, MA)

Study programme and study programme development

Standards

- ✓ *The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.*
- ✓ *The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.*
- ✓ *Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.*
- ✓ *The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.*
- ✓ *The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.*

Comments

The curriculum structure, content and technical standards of the UG and PG study program are well within the 'satisfactory' range of the academic framework to advance the knowledge and practical skills relevant to, or directly applicable to the interrelated fields of interior architecture and space design. As such, the study programme complies with EU and national initiatives in promotion of

creativity and competitiveness.⁷²

The core academic modules at UG and PG level follow the project led and student centred educational model advanced by EU's Bologna Process and European Higher Educational policies⁷³ and the programme of study follows a logical structure that takes account of appropriate and relevant contemporary developments in the field.

A recent external student project, *The Forest Megaphones* received wide international recognition and demonstrates the ambition of the department "The forest megaphones (thematic student projects Z.L.) and the Department's approach to constructing a forest infrastructure was covered in more than 200 publications in Europe, South America, North America and even Australia, Korea and Japan."⁷⁴

The structure and content of modules with the BA and MA courses provides a meaningful framework to enable students to demonstrate their learning and achieve their individual and collaborative potential.

Despite the fact that the Department is relatively young, quote: '*In 2014, nearly all the teaching staff was replaced at the department*'⁷⁵, it is clear that under new leadership the departments curricular focus and methodology is robust, original and focused on the contemporary practice.

There is an expanded social value in IA's curricular approach albeit not easily convertible to a successful job placement. By focussing on contemporary design strategies such as sustainability, use of local materials, and responding to environmental and societal needs, demonstrates a strong social relevance to the outcomes of the study programme.

As evidenced in the staff panel meeting, the department has responded to the uncertainty of graduates employment prospects, by providing the necessary conditions to foster knowledgeable, creative, and self critical graduates who have sufficient transferable skills to take up employment (including self employment) opportunities. Although undeveloped, the department has aspirations to promote PG and PhD level research.

As was evident through the SER, and especially through conducted interviews with students and alumni, student satisfaction within the UG and PG course structure and content is overwhelmingly positive. As with other departments summative assessment is delivered through critiques with a staff team including external subject experts. This helps to connect students learning to '*real world*' contexts and appears to be well received by students. Having reviewed

⁷² ET2020 National Report (Estonia): General Principles of the Cultural Policy until 2020) and also Entrepreneurship Growth Strategy (MoEAC).

⁷³ Bucharest Communiqué, 2012: "https://www.ehea.info/cid101043/ministerial-conference-bucharest-2012.html" HYPERLINK "https://www.ehea.info/cid101043/ministerial-conference-bucharest-2012.html")

⁷⁴ SER: p.67

⁷⁵ SER: p.66

assessment grading the department chose to replace differentiated assessment with undifferentiated assessment, meaning numeric grades are being replaced with pass/fail plus the comments. The results seem to be positive.

Student feedback is received through open discussion in regular department meetings, *'The students' feedback on study methods is discussed in the curriculum development council and at weekly development meetings.'*⁷⁶ The formal student feedback procedure known as ÕIS seems to suffer from the same shortcomings as stated by majority of other departments in the Academy. Namely, quote: *'The multitude of methods for asking feedback causes confusion'*. Also: *'The students do not provide sufficient feedback in the ÕIS; the department is of the opinion that they are afraid to do so under their real name. Therefore we are planning to soon start gathering anonymous proposals concerning the curriculum.'*⁷⁷ This is a live issue and it appears that there are some solutions on the way, though it remains uncertain if such anonymous proposals will have any constructive impact.

Outside formal meetings students commented that they have good communication with the Head of Department and faculty members are easy to approach if they have issues to discuss. It is also clear that the department administrators/assistants play a key role in supporting day to day communication with students.

IA is well aware of post-studies feedback, specifically about importance of keeping alumni involved. It organises *'Coffee Morning: Migrant Workers'* where alumni share their experience of studying and working abroad. This appears to be an excellent initiative that could be expanded into a more regular format.

As a small department, IA is quite efficient and flexible in adjusting its own curricula. Also, as it was evident through the talks with faculty and students, students' needs are well taken into consideration.

Internal feedback, albeit less formal, is present and as students have stated in the interview, is quite effective. One student told that after students expressed their doubts to the Head of the Department about the grading criteria of the course, adjustments were immediately implemented.

The programme is in par with the international programmes in the fields of transformation design, design thinking, design interactions and etc. It is however less related to classical Interior architecture. Therefore, a change to the name of department would benefit the programme.

At this point as part of workshops conducted by international guests and through individual tutoring. The regular courses are being taught in Estonian.

Commendations

⁷⁶ meeting with students

⁷⁷ meetings with staff and students

- The programme is pro-active, innovative and inspiring in supporting student learning. It creates the conditions for students to work independently and in teams to engage creatively with real-life spatial design challenges from the beginning of their UG studies;
- Provides a structured learning environment that promotes environmental sustainability in the context of wider societal needs;
- Active involvement with external partners through national and international projects.

Recommendations

- To further develop learner-centred and project-based education reinforced through deepening of the role of the laboratory (Material Lab) and workshop type of academic engagements would be highly beneficial;
- To strengthen inter and trans-disciplinary practice through closer cooperation with other Faculties and the relevant stakeholders from outside the academic sector;
- To consider increasing the credit value of outside-the-programme practical engagement (internships), which is currently minimal at 3 ECTS points, to recognise the value of internships to the student learning experience. However the Team acknowledges this load complies with the internal regulations of the Academy;
- To deepen the relevant entrepreneurship skills of the students. It is necessary to provide an entrepreneurship course relevant to the profile of prospective graduates of the programme;
- To formalise its research capacities (Doctorate of Arts), in order to strengthen its academic, research and international standing. The existing laboratory Material Lab is a good starting point;
- To find a working model of internationalisation of the studies. Erasmus intake of foreign students so far provides only one dimension of this.

Resources

Standards

- | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ <i>Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.</i>✓ <i>There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.</i>✓ <i>Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).</i>✓ <i>Resource development is sustainable.</i> |
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Comments

The Team met the staff and students in their current accommodation, which

although relatively small had good ambience and provided a good, central learning environment.

The SER provides a very limited description of material and equipment resources in the department and there was little opportunity to clarify the situation during the Team meetings. However, it is clear that the department is anticipating shared access to equipment and facilities in the new building, *'With regard to the newest tools, we are expecting the arrival of the HTC Vive virtual reality glasses in order to experience the virtual reality environment that has been gaining popularity in the world.'*⁷⁸

The new Materials Lab which was mentioned in the SER and the Team meeting is an interesting new development in the context of an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and research. It was however not possible to learn more about the functional status of the lab as Senior Researcher Kärt Ojavee, leader of the lab was not present in the meeting.

Such resource area, as faculty's remuneration according to the SER and on-site interviews, one could assess the situation as critical, *'The exceptionally low salaries of teaching staff at the EAA also aggravate the situation.'*⁷⁹ The SER points at this problem at least 8 times. Also small resources bite into the department's ability to conduct meaningful research, *'The small budget prevents conducting even minimal research at the department.'*⁸⁰

There are however a few positive developmental aspects in regard of resource usage:

1. The department will start offering 'zero courses' for new entrants, where the students of the upper years can obtain their first teaching experience. *'We aim to start using mentorship in a more systematic manner'*, which the Team believe is a good initiative, though if there's a lack of qualified MA level students to teach (and due to low applicant numbers could very well be so) the BA students who take these courses could raise objections.
2. Another example of high impact approach using limited resources is *'The forest megaphones project'*, again the Team think this is a good example of achieving an international impact using extremely limited resources.
3. The decision to start a Material Lab is a right step worthy of additional support.

The Team thinks that one way the department should perhaps consider a bit more seriously is engaging in attempts to acquire more outside funding (local Estonian through Ministry of Culture and Innovation or EU funding channels).

The Team could evidence that the laboratory equipment is limited but it is used effectively, in common with the equipment available in other academic units of the Academy.

⁷⁸ meeting with programme team

⁷⁹ meeting with programme team

⁸⁰ meeting with programme team

Commendations

- Space design and interior architecture are professional focus areas of the department. As was evident from on-site visit, the department is able to organise its spatial set-up in a sensitive and effective way.

Recommendations

- Although identified as a strength, the department could be even more creative in utilising existing resources;
- To capitalise on the specialist 'New Materials Lab';
- To facilitate more social spaces (kitchen) and also student work places allowing the development of student projects.⁸¹

Teaching and learning

Standards

- ✓ *The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.*
- ✓ *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- ✓ *Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.*
- ✓ *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- ✓ *The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*
- ✓ *The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.*
- ✓ *Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.*

Comments

The ethos of the department comes across clearly in BA and MA course documentation and the course aims are expressed through appropriate learning outcomes at each level of study.

The 3-year BA curriculum is comprised of a wide spectrum of challenging content ranging from modules in 'Argumentation and Rhetoric' and 'Spatial Semiotics' to 'Wood Technology and Materials' and 'Fire Safety'. However, there is sufficient flexibility for students to focus on more self directed projects that allow for *learning-by-doing* through modules such as 'Speciality Workshops' and 'Speciality Projects,' (39 ECTS) . Students also have opportunities to gain work experience

⁸¹ meeting with students

through internships, and entrepreneurship training sessions. The Team were both impressed and surprised to hear about a very challenging introductory character and community building field trip project that is organised for new 1st year students.

It was evident in the panel session that BA students consider that the curriculum content is contemporary and includes a broad range of subject specialist knowledge '*there is a good balance between teacher led projects and self directed projects*' and '*workshops offer a good format for trying out new things*'.⁸² MA students confirmed that the course provides more freedom to pursue personal topics and tutors often recommend individuals who can advise about specialist fields of knowledge. Students also confirmed that good technical advice and support is available to access equipment and facilities.

Students have many opportunities to participate in workshops or electives outside the department, that often take place between semesters. The extent to which students participate in projects and extra-curricula opportunities is left up to the individual. When questioned about competing workloads, staff considered that there is sufficient flexibility within the curriculum for it not to present a problem? The student response was less clear. The most popular workshops are within technical areas such as Screen print, ceramics and glass – however, there are also theory based electives to attend.

Beyond stepping out of the department for electives students commented that there are limited opportunities to see the work of students in other departments – and that if this was made more possible '*our work would be better*'.⁸³

The IA department is proactive in supporting student learning, and the course content reflects contemporary spatial design practice from a practical, contextual and theoretical perspective.

Commendations

- The new department has created a supportive and challenging learning environment in which students are active agents in their own learning;
- Clear department ethos and identity with committed and engaged staff team;
- External 'live' projects enable students to engage in professional practice throughout the course – and especially BA stage 3 and MA level.

Recommendations

- To consider how the new building can facilitate collaboration with other departments (e.g. Architecture);
- To consider how the workload for students who engage in electives and additional voluntary projects impacts on core learning in their subject specialism.

⁸² meeting with students

⁸³ meeting with students

Teaching staff

Standards

- ✓ *There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- ✓ *Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.*
- ✓ *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).*
- ✓ *Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.*
- ✓ *The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.*
- ✓ *Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.*

Comments

The IA department is made up of a small team of permanent, qualified staff who offer a complimentary range of subject expertise. As described in the SER the department was subject to significant change in 2014 with the arrival of a new Head of Department who appointed a new team of young staff who are actively engaged in professional practice. The small core team is supplemented by a wide range of visiting tutors and industry professional, including foreign visitors 'We have International guest tutors for workshops, some Finnish.'⁸⁴ In some cases MA students are also involved as teaching assistants.

While the department depends on a roster of visiting tutors to deliver the curriculum, this also offers considerable flexibility in matching staff to appropriate aspects of the syllabus, or in some cases responding to student feedback where an individual tutor does not prove to be satisfactory.

The small scale and relative autonomy of the department creates a close community and staff appear to work very closely as a team. Local, national and international professional and institutional contacts appear to have a very positive impact on the student experience – as evidenced through numerous opportunities for students to engage in external 'live' projects as part of their learning.

⁸⁴ meeting with staff

While staff are actively engaged in professional practice it was clear from the panel session that they do not feel encouraged or supported by the academy to establish or develop their individual or collaborative research.

Erasmus mobility funds are available for staff to visit other institutions and there is adequate support for staff who wish to update or develop new teaching methods.

The SER makes frequent reference to the low level of staff salaries relative to other HE institutions in the region – and the impact this has on recruiting and selecting new staff '*The exceptionally low salaries of teaching staff at the EAA also aggravate the situation*'.

The small core staff team is agile and responsive to the students needs. There is a strong sense that the department has a clear mission and commitment to respond to regional and national priorities and opportunities while striving to be at the forefront of Spatial Design practice at an international level.

Commendations

- Motivated and pro-active staff team provide challenging opportunities for their students (introductory 1st year project is a very good example);
- Staff are all active practitioners, and their professional practice informs their teaching;
- Staff are open and accessible to students.

Recommendations

- To cultivate opportunities for staff to establish research groups (across departments) and improve the research culture across the Academy.

Students

Standards

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ <i>Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.</i>✓ <i>The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.</i>✓ <i>Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.</i>✓ <i>As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.</i>✓ <i>Employment rate of alumni is high.</i>✓ <i>Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.</i> |
|---|

Comments

The BA program maintains the most competitive admissions standard (with a competitiveness factor of 7.6 in 2014 and 2015 – 7.2) in the EAA.

The drop-out level of 11% in 2014 and 9% in 2015 is above the average level in the whole academy and signifies a healthy status of the graduate student body. The Department didn't expressed a clear policy in regard to the reduction return of drop-outs, instead referring to the level of income as a significant contribution to the level of student drop-out in Estonian education.

MA however needs a substantial overhaul as the numbers for both admission and drop-out significantly lag behind the ones of BA and are below EAA's average target.

In the interview students expressed satisfaction with a project-based teaching method, which in their opinion is fun and motivates their full involvement. Also all of them expressed favourable opinion about workshop as part of the curricular format.

The student feed-back mechanism apparently is not functioning smoothly as without guaranteed anonymity, in the Department's opinion, such a feedback is quite meaningless, *'The students do not provide sufficient feedback in the ÖIS.'*⁸⁵

On the other hand, dysfunctional student feedback could have dire repercussions on faculty staff hire, *'The students' feedback is an important indicator upon re-electing a teaching staff member'*⁸⁶, misleading feedback could lead to the removal of worthy faculty.

The Students Advisor has been identified as the student's person of choice in the situation where there is a case or need to clarify or arbitrate academic issues. Also all the students favourably referred to the Head of Department as an effective contact point. Students however expressed reservations about the effectiveness of the Student Council.

Student employability is not being clearly presented in the SER, neither did it lead to clear evidence through the respective meetings with students and alumni. This could be partially due to perhaps a rather short track record of the department (entirely overhauled in 2014) or due to the experimental nature of the programme and/or also due to a relatively small and saturated Estonian market. In this regard, the Department states: *'The level of professional employment of the graduates of the department has always been very good and students often work at a professional bureau or independently design small-scale projects already during their studies.'*⁸⁷

The Department clearly sees the future employment prospects of their graduates to lie not with *'a furniture store adviser or a kitchen furniture designer'*, because such employment would, *'does not facilitate the inner development of a young designer'*. Therefore, the position of the Department is bold and rather

⁸⁵ meeting with the programme team

⁸⁶ meeting with the programme team

⁸⁷ meeting with the programme team

unorthodox, *'is rather recommended to work as a waiter/waitress or a chef, because the experience received from there and the sense of so-to-say real work is much more beneficial in the light of future prospects'*. Wording aside, attempts to expose students to the type of social fabric other than that they were trained for, could be beneficial if it doesn't come as a point of professional arrival rather than just a transitory state.

The physical access for the student with disabilities is noted as one of the key shortcomings which need to be taken proper care of, *'As the department trains spatial specialists, it is obligated to ensure access to spatial education also for people with physical disabilities.'*⁸⁸

Internationalisation is promoted by the Department primarily as visits abroad, *'The department strongly recommends that students work abroad during their school holidays.'*⁸⁹ The international student body in the Department encounters two major problems:

1. The primary instructional language is Estonian;
2. As it became evident through the interview with department students, foreign students are misled by the current name of the department Interior Architecture. *'I personally started discussion to start process of changing the name of the department. I asked Language Commission of Estonia to allow the name Spatial Design.'*

To improve the learning conditions in the Department students suggested a social area/kitchen. In general, they expressed a wish to *'humanise'* the Academy environment.

Commendations

- The student body is highly positive about the department;
- Students feel that their wishes are taken seriously, they also feel being part of the decision making process in the department.

Recommendations

- To address the unacceptably low number of MA applicants;
- To allow the Department to change its name (to Spatial Design) this has yet to be permitted despite the fact that this title more accurately reflects the teaching philosophy and course content of the departments UG and PG courses. This issue needs to be addressed.

⁸⁸ meeting with programme team and visit to the resources

⁸⁹ meeting with programme team

2.2. Study programmes of the Faculty of Design: Jewellery and blacksmithing BA; Graphic Design BA; Ceramics BA; Glass Art and Design BA; Fashion Design BA; Leather Art, Accessory and Bookbinding Design BA; Textile Design BA; Product Design BA, MA; Media Graphics BA; Creation of Environments BA; Design and Applied Arts MA; Design & Crafts MA; Design and Engineering MA/MSc; Interaction Design MA

Study programme and study programme development

Standards

- ✓ *The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.*
- ✓ *The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.*
- ✓ *Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.*
- ✓ *The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.*
- ✓ *The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.*

Comments

The Faculty of Design is the largest Faculty of EAA. Roughly one third of its students are enrolled in the Faculty. According to the SER it offers 10 BA programmes and 6 MA programmes (although it was difficult for the Team to ultimately confirm these numbers as there seem to be various modes of naming and counting courses especially among the MA programmes).

The diverse and dispersed nature of the Faculty becomes visible in the organisational chart of EAA. Currently the Faculty boasts 8 departments, one of them comprising of two chairs, several workshops linked to individual departments as well as three studios that are linked to the Faculty as such. Most 'traditional' study programmes (all of them BA), that have been offered for a long time, are linked eponymously to a discreet department. Newer programmes, which have been added to the Faculty's portfolio more recently (notably the MA Programmes, the BA Creation of the Environment (Part-Time) and the BA Media Graphics (Russian)), are linked directly to the Dean. According to a chart made available to the Team, there are 13 Curriculum Councils currently active in the

Faculty. As the SER states (and the Team agrees): "The internal fragmentation of the Design Department needs a solution in the near future."⁹⁰

The organisational fragmentation is reflected in the design of the BA study programmes (or the other way round), many of which are narrowly divided along traditional lines of material-specific crafts. Despite some attempts in recent years to foster interdisciplinary practice and more cross-over through joint lectures or joint electives, the ultimate identity of programmes as well as the self-identification of staff and students for the most part is that of a specific craft ("Leather", "Glass", "Textile" etc.).

All of the programmes are quite small in terms of enrolled students (between 20-30 at the lower end and 60 at the upper end). Despite some variations in individual years the Team noted that many if not all of the BA programmes have been struggling for years with competition numbers and enrolment figures which on the whole are below the target number of EAA.

According to the University's data only 54% of graduates are working in their speciality, many of them working below the average income level in Estonia.⁹¹

Small, narrow programmes pose economic challenges to EAA and are at odds with demands for more broadly educated designers from the world of work and industry.

In interviews with staff members and members of the Council the Team heard that employment chances and market demands are taken into account when opening new programmes. A document (2.3 Example of how EAA developed curriculum *Creation of Environment*) provided to the Team however showed little evidence for this.

A restructuring of the Organisational Chart should seek to integrate in the Faculty organisation and identity the group of programmes that have been taken over from the Open Academy, are offered in part-time mode or in the Russian language. The Team noted that these programmes (along with the new programme 'Interaction Design') were sometimes 'forgotten' in texts, charts and documents.

The Team advises the Faculty to acknowledge that it has in fact become much more diverse in recent year and the new programmes which have been added (part-time, Master, joint programmes etc.) must be brought on equal footing with the 'older' programmes and similarly become part of a new identity of the Faculty.

Students and alumni stressed the willingness of the staff to institute changes and show themselves very open to demands and suggestions by students, yet a more vigorous approach and support by leadership and the Senate may be necessary to initiate and support the more difficult changes laying ahead. An involvement by the management seems crucial as the Faculty itself has not been able to address similar suggestions made by an external review in 2006.

⁹⁰ SER: p.81

⁹¹ SER: p.80

Commendations

- The deep experience with and rich tradition of traditional arts and crafts are an asset to the Faculty and EAA. It should be developed into a more contemporary offer to become an even stronger national and international magnet for specialised artists and designers on Master level (as well as non-formal education like summer classes etc.) while offering general, design skills to a larger number of students on B.A. level;
- the Team noted that the (full-time) programmes offered at the moment include strong elements of an international dimension, strong ties to industry and employers as well as opportunities for internships and real/life projects.

Recommendations

- To plan an organisational restructuring led and supported by EAA's management. The guiding principle of a reorganisation should be organisational simplicity and transparency;
- To carry this process out thorough SWOT analysis, taking into account the external perspective in form of the Faculty's broad network of partners and contacts from industry, employers, alumni and as well as its international educational partners;
- To implement a rigorous, self-critical review and redesign of the B.A. programmes which places students' needs at its centre;
- To carry out a more rigorous market analysis that should also be established for the regular review of existing programmes as well as for establishing new ones;
- To further develop the field of digital and new media design in general on the B.A. level and this should be considered as a new area of growth and demand if appropriate resources are available.

Resources

Standards

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ <i>Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.</i>✓ <i>There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.</i>✓ <i>Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).</i>✓ <i>Resource development is sustainable.</i> |
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Comments

Teaching and learning environments are currently tight in space but according to the teaching staff sufficient for achieving the aims of the study programmes.

The new building will obviously provide a better suited environment and will offer stimuli for change.

In interviews with heads of Financial unit systematic approaches were described, how financial investments are managed for guaranteeing teaching aids, equipment and materials.

Observations and interviews on library services gave evidence there is sufficient supply of textbooks and there is access to other sources of information.

Commendations

- There are ideas and on going discussions, how physical environment in the new building will support interaction between disciplines and study programmes. With good planning, the new building could become an asset for more co-operation and interdisciplinary practice that the Faculty desires.

Recommendations

- To have explicit plans in place, on how to use joint resources without losing the benefits of having small teaching groups, when considering the dropping number of students enrolling.

Teaching and learning

Standards

- ✓ *The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.*
- ✓ *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- ✓ *Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.*
- ✓ *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- ✓ *The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*
- ✓ *The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.*
- ✓ *Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.*

Comments

Teaching and learning in this faculty is very much craft-based, as is seen already in the organisational structures and names of different faculty units.

The Team appreciates the importance of preserving traditional, material-based arts and crafts. The strong material-based approach provides a wealth of knowledge, skill and tradition. Without doubt there is a demand for these assets, by national and international students and by highly specialised artists and commercial producers around the world. Traditions, skills and knowledge should not be lost. However, it cannot subscribe to the argument offered by some members of staff, namely that the current situation is in fact a strength of the Faculty. In contrast, the Team strongly feels, that on B.A. level most students would benefit from a broader, more interdisciplinary approach providing an introduction to concepts and processes of design and the possibilities to specialise in different materials/areas.

The comprehensive format of the M.A. '*Design and Craft*' could offer some examples for the design of a few broader B.A. programmes that include several related practices.

There has been very little academic research produced by the staff teachers which means that in most areas teaching is not based on research.

A broader and more streamlined form of study programmes could help the Faculty to develop a coherent approach to (practice-based/artistic) research, (which EAA aims to develop more strongly), e-learning and internationalisation.

Connections to Estonian partners and companies are close and good and there is plenty of co-operation with them.

Commendations

- Students were clear, that one of the Academy's strengths is individual feedback on progress of studies and learning outcome;
- Practical and theoretical studies are well interconnected. In addition to labs and workshops there are projects initiated for binding theory and practice together;
- Alumni and other relevant stakeholders are involved in study programme development;
- There is VÖTA system in place for recognising prior learning and experience and for supporting student mobility.

Recommendations

- To review the programme study group focussing on students' needs to become functioning '*creatives*' in a rapidly changing national and international markets, taking to heart its own analysis of the external situation (provided in the SER and echoed by many staff members as well as students and alumni);
- To broaden the impact of the Student Council activities;
- To stabilise the programme schedules, whilst maintaining the flexible process of teaching and learning, as students found that some sudden changes in timetables are difficult to manage especially for MA students;

- To introduce a more systematic strategy on how to use e-learning, currently at an early stage of development, to fully utilise its potential;
- To more systematically embed internal and external benchmarking for developing the assessment of learning outcomes.

Teaching staff

Standards

- ✓ *There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- ✓ *Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.*
- ✓ *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).*
- ✓ *Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.*
- ✓ *The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.*
- ✓ *Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.*

Comments

The staff have adequate qualifications and are highly committed to teaching, which the Team evidenced through the interview with eight staff members. Many have extensive experience and are recognised professionals of their fields.

Students are pleased with the teaching skills of the staff and in the meeting with nine students from different programmes and levels emphasised their direct, informal contacts with Professors and staff. Especially those who had experience of bigger universities or were foreign students appreciated the personal tuition they received in craft-based laboratories.

The teaching staff have collaboration within EAA but there are differences in the amount of interdisciplinary studies and projects between curricula, as was told in the meeting with staff. However, interdisciplinary practice is one of three main strategic objectives in EAA Development Plan.⁹²

⁹² Development Plan: IV.1

The staff have extensive contacts outside EAA and they are utilised in for example fashion design teaching, which was demonstrated in the meeting with staff members and the interviews with employers and partners.

EAA has an impressive amount of collaborative partners among Estonian educational institutions and international networks.⁹³

The staff have good international networks which are used for inviting foreign experts and visitors to teach, but economic constraints which result in low fees and wages have a negative effect on this.

Staff development: There is support such as English language courses available, but no module of pedagogical studies. The staff feel they need specific IT-courses which are tailored to the needs of design teaching, not the general IT-courses that are offered now. Participating in staff development courses is voluntary, based on individual choice.

The staff have yearly review/development meetings (December – January) with their Head of Department and individual development plans are discussed and confirmed at these meetings. Timing allows changes to be made for the next academic year. The staff are very pleased with this practice.

Commendations

- Small units and direct contact between students and staff are highly appreciated by both parties. The atmosphere was described as friendly and welcoming, especially by foreign students;
- Personal Development discussions and Plans for teachers;
- Dedicated teachers and staff;
- Both students and teachers appreciate craft-based teaching and learning practical skills.

Recommendations

- To organise tailored courses of IT, pedagogy and design thinking to staff members, instead of the current general courses. The design staff need courses which take design as their starting point.
- To introduce more focused entrepreneurial studies;⁹⁴
- To plan to use the new building as an incentive for more interdisciplinary working and practice;
- To make design thinking, theories and practise-based research systemically included into all curricula, at both BA and MA levels. Currently this is not embedded in all the courses.

⁹³ SER: p.90

⁹⁴ SER: p.90

Students

Standards

- ✓ *Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.*
- ✓ *The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.*
- ✓ *Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.*
- ✓ *As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.*
- ✓ *Employment rate of alumni is high.*
- ✓ *Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.*

Comments

Data provided by the institution shows that, as with all EAA programmes, student numbers in the programmes are small: most of them have less than 25 students enrolled in 2015, some between 25 and 50 and only one BA and one MA programme more than 50 students. The competition for admission in all but one BA programme is well below EAA's target number of 4. In four of eight full-time programmes it is 2 or below.

The Team encourages the institution to evaluate the benefits which would result from fewer, larger programmes both in terms of added value to student education and economically.

The drop-out rate in the BA programmes is on average below 10%, well below the national standard. The drop-out rate of the largest programme, the MA Design and Crafts, is higher, as is the rate in the part-time BA programme 'Creation of the Environment'. Both programmes deviate from the 'standard model' of the Faculty (i.e. a the 3 year B.A. curriculum narrowly focused on one discipline) and the Team advises to evaluate the reasons for this closely.

There has been an increase in students graduating within the standard period in the last years in the B.A. for which the institution mostly gives credit to exterior forces, namely a change in national policy. The fact that the institution itself is less successful in raising the standard graduation rate is reflected in the fact that the rate for both Master and Doctoral graduation has not changed in recent years. The standard completion rate for doctoral students is 14%.

During the visit the Team met with several alumni, a few master students yet only one BA student of the first year.

All of them were positive, in parts enthusiastic, about their studies, particularly about the engaged staff with whom they were in very close contact and constant communication. They pointed to the openness of staff to react to their feedback, adapt study plans to their wishes or interests and be there for all their concerns.

Students were satisfied with the assessment. They found that there were '*no surprises*' in assessments and felt satisfied about feedback from staff or modes of complaints.

M.A. students valued interdisciplinary courses of which '*there could be more*'.

M.A. students said that there was frequent ad hoc planning and changes of their schedule which made their own planning sometimes difficult.

M.A. students value the close connection they have to the business community, sometimes via live/real projects. Alumni and students said they (had) benefited from entrepreneurial skills in the curricula.

Due to the narrow selection of students the Team met, it cannot make a statement about the satisfaction of B.A. students with content, form or methods of study.

All of the students were positive about the international dimension on their programmes, be it in the form of study content, engage with international students in the Faculty, study with incoming international lecturers or their own ability to participate in exchanges or visits to universities in other countries. Two of the MA students the Team met were full-time international students who greatly valued their study experience at EAA and compared it very favourably to their previous studies in their home countries.

The employment rate of graduates from the Design Faculty is 71%, yet only 54% work in their profession. As the Faculty states in the SER: '*The completion for entrance examination reflects not only demographic decline but also the expectations of prospective students with regard to working and success after studies. Thus specialities must set new development goals and the curricula in the Faculty of Design must also develop.*' The Team thoroughly concurs with this conclusion and recommends it considers internships and elements on entrepreneurship.

Employers say they are regularly invited to contribute in discussions of curricula development and/or assessments.

Both alumni and employers speak highly of the education and value the graduates as employees also in comparison with international applicants. They value their practical competence, international experience as well as an experimental, theory-driven approach.

Commendations

- Close contact between staff and students;
- The International Dimension of the programmes;
- The low drop-out rate of students;
- Staff are very open to react to student feedback.

Recommendations

- To work closely with the employers, professional bodies and students on how to improve the employment rate of the students in their area of study;
- To find ways to improve the completion/graduation time taken by students at all levels;
- To develop the marketing/promotional material to improve the recruitment numbers at all levels;
- To stabilise the timetable for students especially at Masters' level.

2.3. Study programmes of the Faculty of Art and Culture: Art History and Visual Culture Research BA, MA; Cultural Heritage and Conservation BA, MA

Study programme and study programme development

Standards

- ✓ *The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.*
- ✓ *The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.*
- ✓ *Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.*
- ✓ *The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.*
- ✓ *The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.*

Comments

Responses and feedback to the questions during the session was excellent. The process was well prepared and anticipated without giving the impression that they had to say particular positive things or did not dare to say things. The

Student panel was large and very informative with representatives of all levels (BA, MA, PhD, alumni). So was the staff panel. They all seemed to be energetic and active in their field, and motivated to make the best of it. In addition, their performance was supported by informative and good looking brochures to advertise the programmes to a wider and general audience, as well as to potential students.

Given the fact that the two components of this group are very different (theory and historical v practical heritage conservation), it must be admired how they collaborate when they had to work under one programme. Where possible, they try to find a cross over with other disciplines as well and attune programme elements to each other's wishes (mainly: art history providing general courses for cultural heritage and for other faculties).

They seem to be in a rather luxurious position of getting research funds from the Estonian National Heritage Council. They closely collaborate with members of the Board of the Council as advisers and it benefits both the Council (as one of the future employers) and the programme for internships and practice-based research after heritage monuments. This confidence was reflected in their attitude during the interviews. When compared to the Fine Arts group, they seemed to feel backed up by higher management and by other institutes. They also seemed to be confident that they do useful things and make this visible to the public in heritage monument projects.

Art History and Visual Culture has added Visual Culture to its name in order to show that it wants to be contemporary. This is a positive sign and there were some PhD research projects which supported this direction. We hope that the label Visual Culture will further stimulate the programme staff to keep their programme updated in theoretical sense as well. The programme seems to be quite practice focused and research after contemporary art from theoretical perspectives could support the Fine Art section, which lacks 'useful' embedding, as well.

However, we also like to comment on the following aspects:

There are not many students (*10 BA and 10 MA*). For *Cultural Heritage and Conservation* this can be justified because the tools and workspaces which are needed are limited. *Art History and Visual Culture* in a way compensates the small groups for their own more practical study programme by giving overall lectures of a theoretical and historical nature for different programme groups of the Academy.

The programme does not seem to be very international. They hope to find a solution for this by starting an English MA by September 2017. The Cultural Heritage programme is active internationally by organising international workshops with neighbouring countries. The Team commend the programme for these activities.

It appears that Cultural Heritage at EAA has a different profile than comparable programmes at Tartu while there is also collaboration with Tartu.

Commendations

- The organisation of the entire programme seems to function very well. Partners communicate easily, future employers are part of the community, and there are many exchanges between institutes and programme courses. Internships are well managed and in tune with needs in Estonia and more particular in Tallinn;
- They have their research well defined and work with external stakeholders in research projects as well;
- There is a clear format for theory-based dissertations and there is constant feedback by peers and staff during PhD research projects and on the dissertations. The dissertations the Team examined were of a high quality.

Recommendations

- To improve the programme marketing material to strive to increase international recruitment of students and staff;
- To design programme marketing in one basic format with personalised subdivisions for the whole Academy.

Resources

Standards

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ <i>Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.</i>✓ <i>There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.</i>✓ <i>Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).</i>✓ <i>Resource development is sustainable.</i> |
|--|

Comments

The students we interviewed were satisfied with the available tools and equipment. According to an alumnus, tools had improved when compared to c.10 years ago. When they need special equipment which is not in-house, they collaborate with Tallinn Technical University. The building they currently occupy is a charming house environment and has workspaces for all sub-disciplines of conservation and restoration but they do not feel sorry to leave it for the new Academy building next year.

Students found that written course material such as texts were well communicated in the course modules and there was a small specialist library in-house.

Commendations

- As a community, they work together and support each other very well.

Teaching and learning

Standards

- ✓ *The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.*
- ✓ *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- ✓ *Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.*
- ✓ *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- ✓ *The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*
- ✓ *The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.*
- ✓ *Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.*

Comments

The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development even to the point of making individual curricula.⁹⁵ The process of teaching and learning is flexible and takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes. In the interviews of staff and students it turned out that close connections to real practisers and employers were utilised right from the beginning of the studies and were kept up both in formal and informal ways, like common study trips at home and abroad. Alumni, employers, teachers and student community form a supportive professional field for newcomers, good for sharing information and experiences.

Teaching methods and tools used in teaching were relevant and thanks to foreign funding, the conservator studios had been able to acquire new special equipment.⁹⁶ The site visit proved that the Faculty has a clear idea of their resources, and have found ways of relying on outside partners where needed.

Practical and theoretical studies are very well interconnected, the faculty being probably the most academic in all EAA. The Faculty operates research groups, knows how to raise funding for them, and has good international research

⁹⁵ SER: p.108

⁹⁶ SER: p.102

connections. Most EAA doctoral dissertations come from this faculty, which has a clear leadership role in EAA academic research.

Teaching and learning in this faculty meet very well the required standards and the faculty has a clear and well-defined role In Estonian academic world and society.

However, there is a lack of interest in this area among the applicants, evident in the student admission indicators.⁹⁷ The faculty should promote their activities and cultural significance more actively to renew the interest of applicants.

The Faculty expressed strong critique of some EAA support structures.⁹⁸

Commendations

- Leading role in EAA research activities, with highest number of finished PhDs;
- Clear position in its own field in Estonia;
- Well-developed curricula covering all three levels from BA to PhD;
- Active academic community stretching out to society.

Recommendations

- The faculty expressed strong critique of some EAA support structures,⁹⁹ this critique should be taken seriously and resolved;
- To fine tune the learning goals of the Academy's curricula in accordance with an international standard (e.g. Dublin descriptors), mapped to all its programmes.

Teaching staff

Standards

- ✓ *There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- ✓ *Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.*
- ✓ *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).*
- ✓ *Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.*

⁹⁷ SER: p.107

⁹⁸ SER: p.105

⁹⁹ SER: p.105

- ✓ *The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.*
- ✓ *Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.*

Comments

Ambitious standards for teaching staff are listed.¹⁰⁰ The site visit meeting with the teaching staff gave a strong impression that these standards are met. The teachers are highly qualified, active and merited researchers who have well-developed international networks - but too little resources to utilise those networks fully to the benefit for their faculty and careers.

All teaching staff have adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and also enlarge and update the contents on new, relevant areas. A recent example of this is the new MA programme for Visual Culture, starting in September 2017. As was explained during the site visit meeting with the teaching staff, the programme is based on the special skills, interests and expertise of the faculty teachers.

There are examples of good teaching practice, like training possible new teaching staff among graduates, to compensate for teaching resource shortages which are affecting especially the architecture study area.¹⁰¹ Teaching staff also include students in their research activities. This has been found to be the most motivating teaching method for both sides.¹⁰²

The regular teaching staff have achieved good responses in student feedback which is one indicator of its competence.¹⁰³ No critical word about the teaching quality or content was heard during the site visit meetings with staff and students.

The teaching staff have good professional and academic connections to their fields. Both the SER and meetings did confirm that they do collaborate in teaching and research within EAA (theory courses, thesis supervision), and with outside partners like employers and staff members of other Estonian institutions, like Tallinn University.

International relations are suffering from lack of resources to invite foreign teachers and researchers.

Commendations

¹⁰⁰ SER: p.105

¹⁰¹ SER: p.106

¹⁰² SER: p.106

¹⁰³ SER: p.106

- Research projects have been successful in bringing in both equipment, international relations and co-operation, to the benefit of the whole faculty.

Recommendations

- To address and resolve the teaching staff's complaints about the excessive standardisation of teaching staff work load.¹⁰⁴ This topic was not discussed during the teaching staff meeting but it should be openly dealt with the EAA leadership, since it apparently affects the working atmosphere of the Faculty.

Students

Standards

- ✓ *Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.*
- ✓ *The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.*
- ✓ *Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.*
- ✓ *As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.*
- ✓ *Employment rate of alumni is high.*
- ✓ *Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.*

Comments

Students appeared to be very satisfied. Most of them chose the EAA because of the reputation of the programmes (BA and MA) as being both theoretical as well as practice-based. Some students came from Tartu, another came to EAA from a large University in Tallinn which she found too impersonal. There was one student from Finland who found her ideal programme that she was looking for at EAA.

Students we spoke with found the programmes contemporary and current. Constant feedback about courses is taken into account and the courses are updated all the time. There are up-to-date workshops from experts and there are guest lecturers in Art History.

The Team found the teaching methods of the lecturers are up-to-date. Students can profit from the network of teachers. The conservation department works with real artworks when carrying out and training their research.

They like to meet with students from other departments when they follow courses on general topics; these courses are the opportunity for such meetings.

¹⁰⁴ SER: pp.106-107

One student commented that such courses made her feel more anonymous and welcomed that because her main programme operates in a small community.

Commendations

- The real strength from the point of view of the students is that the Faculty and programmes appear well organised and are of a small scale.

Recommendations

- To make the MA programmes more international, but the SER and the Team's meetings indicate that the programme team are aware of this and hope to get more foreign students with a new English MA starting September 2017;
- Practical heritage research must not overshadow more theoretical research in the field of Contemporary Art History and Theory. The history and theory staff is not just there to support heritage research but must also keep its own profile.

2.4. Study programmes of the Faculty of Fine Arts: Photography BA; Art BA, MA; Animation BA, MA; Scenography BA, MA

Study programme and study programme development

Standards

- ✓ *The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.*
- ✓ *The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.*
- ✓ *Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.*
- ✓ *The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.*
- ✓ *The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.*

Comments

Based on interviews and evidence in the SER the Team were satisfied that the programme is a-tuned to the labour market in Estonia. Particular recognition being given to the Animation Department which has established an international profile.

The study programme meets professional standards, however a lack of aspiration is suggested by the non-existence of benchmarking,

The programme was coherent. The Team sought to establish the effectiveness and implementation of a '*one curriculum framework*' referred to in the SER, from all interviews, there was a consensus that greater synergies had been achieved between Painting, Sculpture and Graphic Arts departments and that new student intake next academic year will be as one cohort. However the relationship, synergy and integration of Scenography with the other subject areas needs clarification, as does Scenography's relationship with the Theatre School.

It was apparent from the interviews that the Team undertook that there were multiple possibilities available for developing and honing the student's practice through existing practical courses, with technical training well supported through workshops and excellent internship schemes augmenting content and scope of the programme.

There was student dissatisfaction that independent self-directed study was not sufficiently supported until the later stages of the programme, in some departments¹⁰⁵ and that it should be introduced earlier to allow the full scope of autonomous learning to be achieved appropriate to BA level.

Through the Team interviews it was apparent that all the stakeholder groups in respect to this Faculty were content that their views were taken into account, particularly the subject specific representative from the employers group who felt they could influence the Academy in relation to practice based PhDs and curriculum development. However the students felt that their opinion sought through OIS questionnaire was not effective. The students in this and other faculties stated that the questions on the OIS did not seem relevant and informal channels produced better results.

The Team noted that the Faculty is addressing its relevance in line with Contemporary Art practice. The study programmes are currently addressing obstacles to cross-disciplinary practice within the Departments: Painting, Print and Sculpture, by introducing a common entry point for the 2017/8 cohort.¹⁰⁶ The Programme should facilitate a general Fine Art ethos, where students can be skilful generalist or specialist.

The modules and their content combine and conform to a coherent whole, and there seems to be good communication between staff with an understanding of what was being delivered by their colleagues. The placement of modules within the programme appears logical for its current delivery 2016/7.

¹⁰⁵ meeting with students

¹⁰⁶ SER & meeting with Heads of Study Programmes

However the size and content of modules could be re-evaluated in light of the new common BA entry point planned for 2017/8, to align both with the desired trans-disciplinary practice of Sculpture, Painting and Print as one curriculum, allowing the students to gain a more holistic non compartmentalised view of their personal studio/workshop activity as one practice. This may require larger studio modules especially in the latter stages of BA.

Professional practice/entrepreneurism is delivered in the programme¹⁰⁷ and the module '*The Creative Entrepreneurship*' is mandatory for BA and MA students. However the Team asked questions about entrepreneurship to all groups we interviewed and there were no consistent answers between students, faculty staff and Heads of Study as to how entrepreneurship was delivered within the programme.

Staff felt that one of the unique selling points (USP's) of the Faculty was the good skills-base students acquired, which had been corroborated by international exchange students.

From the Team's meeting with students, it was clear that they felt that directed learning and independent study were not well balanced, although the tasks/assignments allowed for an open approach, they felt that they wished to develop their own personal practice through more self directed work.

Outside the studio environment there were good examples given of interactions outside of the Academy, students from Graphic Arts Department working with designers, MA students collaborations forming initiatives into the professional communities and student internships.

Testaments from the various groups concur that most feedback is given informally but effectively. Graduates are tracked for two years after graduation to ask about their experiences, what they thought was lacking. Alumni and students are consulted informally, staff feel that students do not like using the questionnaire and prefer to give direct feedback to them. The students felt that no changes had been made as a result questionnaire. Academic staff had autonomy in suggesting changes to curriculum, their proposals had to be discussed with the Professors and Dean, but no suggestion had ever been rejected.

International Benchmarking had not taken place, perhaps due to the fact that no national institution was inherently comparable, the Dean measured quality against Tallinn University of Technology.

The Team feel strongly that due to the Faculties unique position in Estonia, international benchmarking¹⁰⁸ is a necessary exercise they should engage in as a quality comparison exercise. It is recommended that the Faculty compares and studies similar high performing institutes looking for examples of best practice.

¹⁰⁷ SER: 2.1.2.

¹⁰⁸ meeting with Deans

Currently there is an opportunity for international students to participate in one study programme taught in the English language in MA Animation, however the Faculty's academic staff believe that opportunities will soon exist to begin studies through English in other areas at MA level. The academic staff feel the new building would represent a great opportunity to increase recruitment to these programmes.

MA Animation students commented that not all of the course material was provided in English and some consistency was needed.

The SER shows that the Faculty has a very active incoming BA Erasmus cohort well supported with greater supervision to enable them to join the BA courses which are taught in Estonian.

Commendations

- Improving synergies between Departments and a single cohort of entrants planned for next year 2017/8 in BA;
- Autonomy of academic staff to make annual improvements to the curriculum in consultation with students and management;
- Cohort of full time students in MA Animation has a strong international profile;
- Excellent possibilities for students to participate in internships;
- Very good examples of opportunities created for the students to showcase and network with the professional world TASE festival, Portfolio Café, Narva Art residency;
- Excellent embedding European mobility into the programme.

Recommendations

- To better ensure synchronisation of curriculum with Theatre School to allow students from the Theatre School to work collaboratively with Scenography students;
- To map international benchmarking across the Academy's programmes - there was evidence that the Faculty did not emulate, measure or compare its quality programmes against other international examples of best practice and innovation.

Resources

Standards

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ <i>Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.</i>✓ <i>There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.</i> |
|--|

- ✓ *Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).*
- ✓ *Resource development is sustainable.*

Comments

EAA are experiencing a temporary, widely spread logistical problem operating over a number of sites, with consequences to the streamlined availability of faculty workshops, equipment and lecture theatres, the situation will be rectified when the new building will be completed next year. In the SER it states that EAA plans to make changes to the budget distribution to allow workshops to be funded from the EAA's central budget, and during the interviews the Deans told the assessment team they hoped for centrally managed and resourced workshops in the building. The Team were not allocated time to visit the facilities at Lembitu 12, ARS building, Raja Street and Narva mnt, to assess the suitability of the Fine Art learning environment, but the Team found the staff were philosophical about the situation and students did not make the panel aware that the situation hindered their progress.

However in respect of special needs students felt more consideration of individual student's special needs could be addressed rather than always for the common good.

The Academy is not investing in new equipment until the new building is complete.

Senior Staff request centrally managed and financed workshops. Equipment which has been bought for specific projects rather than from a central budget is not universally accessible.¹⁰⁹

Good facilities and software are available in the Faculty to improve digital skills and English Language Workshops.¹¹⁰

Teaching and facilities in the department of Animation and Photography seems to be freely accessible on request to students other Fine Arts students not specialising in those areas.

The HEI appears to be complying with standards under very difficult circumstances.

Commendations

- A willingness and anticipation among all staff in the Faculty to share facilities and have open shared labs with other Faculties in the new building to facilitate inter-disciplinarity;
- A positive attitude students and staff at all levels to a challenging logistical situation

¹⁰⁹ meeting with Deans

¹¹⁰ meetings with Students & Deans

Recommendations

- To ensure students studying under the current situation are supported to receive the best learning experience and are not disadvantaged in this interim period.

Teaching and learning

Standards

- ✓ *The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.*
- ✓ *The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.*
- ✓ *Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.*
- ✓ *Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.*
- ✓ *The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.*
- ✓ *The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.*
- ✓ *Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.*

Comments

The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development. The courses have small group sizes which are highly conducive to strong supportive and individual learner experience both through peer learning and through invested one to one tuition. It was apparent that the students and staff had a mutually respectful relationship.

All the recognised different forms of teaching were utilised in the faculty, seminar critiques, workshop, and lectures all in line with the learning outcomes. Staff use student field trips at the highest level to assist the students understanding through encounter.

Teaching and learning modes are sufficiently flexible to enable students to achieve the planned learning outcomes, the approach across the Faculty supports traditional and new media delivery, students are encouraged and supported to have an open and transferable approach to concept and diverse making.

The programmes utilise Erasmus teaching exchanges very well to provide a variety of input of diverse methodologies to stimulate the learning environment. Faculty staff are actively involved with mobility both on teaching exchanges and as conferences delegates with many staff having an active personal artistic practice.

The Faculty uses Internships to enhance and broaden the student's experience of their field, their interpersonal skills and increase confidence in dealing with the professional world/industry outside of the Academy.

Practice and theory are interconnected however this area would benefit greatly from lecturing staff being supported to engage in Practice-based Research, this will enhance and embed theory and practice as one activity in all aspects of the course.

There is no clear link between learning outcomes and assessment criteria, the Faculty are not using any recognised matrix system and there is no parity system being used between Faculties to establish what constitutes the same standard in different areas. Summative assessment is largely done through verbal feedback and can often take the form of a critique which varies widely in length and depth across departments, very few consistent approaches are used.

There does not seem to be a staff assessment policy or forum that shares approaches to assessment or an Exam Board.

Students and academic staff explained that verbal feedback varied in amount/depth between departments and that learner experience was different in this regard with some students experiencing very long critiques. Students felt that written feedback on their work would be useful.

Commendations

- Staff allow students an open approach to their work and students feel supported in their practice, as evidenced during interview with students;
- Good examples of peer learning and innovative approach at MA level in New Media Evidence;¹¹¹
- There are small class sizes and staff provide close individual attention to students;¹¹²
- Excellent participation of Faculty students and staff in European mobility programmes and reciprocal intake of students and use of teacher exchange to augment teaching diversity on programmes and courses.

Recommendations

- To develop a consistent approach to assessment across departments and mechanisms of establishing parity of marking between departments and faculties. The Faculty should implement a system which ensures parity and adopt a more unified approach with common reference points for marking and assessment and the alignment of assessment criteria to the Learning Outcomes;
- To examine the balance between directed work, e.g. project & assignment and self directed/motivated work. There was consensus in the student

¹¹¹ meetings with Students & staff

¹¹² SER: and meetings with students & Academic Staff

interviews of dissatisfaction in the balance and to allow a greater time allocation to the development of a self generated personal practice,¹¹³

- To align the Learning Outcomes and assessment criteria to a recognised matrix (i.e. the Dublin Descriptors & ELIA Subject Descriptors).¹¹⁴

Teaching staff

Standards

- ✓ *There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.*
- ✓ *Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.*
- ✓ *The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).*
- ✓ *Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.*
- ✓ *The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.*
- ✓ *Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.*

Comments

An evaluation of members of the teaching staff takes place every five years, it takes into account: the quality of their teaching; research, development and creative work; teaching skills, and international mobility.

There is a monitoring system in EAA to evaluate staff performance,¹¹⁵ which takes the form of an activity report of the last five years output and is assessed by a committee, that includes a student member.

In respect to novice teachers there was no mention of a mentoring system relating specifically to the Faculty but in the main body of the SER¹¹⁶ there is a reference to a mentoring programme as an area for improvement.

The age profile of the teaching staff averages in mid/late 50's. There is an

¹¹³ meetings with Students and Alumni

¹¹⁴ meeting with Heads of Study Programmes & Academic Staff

¹¹⁵ SER: p.17

¹¹⁶ SER: p. 28

extremely high percentage of current academic staff who are alumni, although some have also taught elsewhere.¹¹⁷ It is neither the norm nor considered desirable in the HE sector to have such a high proportion of alumni as academic staff.

There are very few non-nationals on the teaching staff in the Academy well below the sector norm, this lack of diversity is compensated by 25% of the faculties course are taught by foreign staff,¹¹⁸ these are largely through exchange teaching arrangements. The problem with the recruitment of staff¹¹⁹ was primarily due to uncompetitive wages affecting the Academy's ability to attract enough national or international applicants for academic posts. In the SER¹²⁰ it states that the Academy aspires to greater Internationalisation, aiming to increase its courses taught in a foreign language, but the Team think a greater diversity of backgrounds within the staff cohort would be a considerable advantage.

Commendations

- Teaching staff participate in and feel supported by management in areas of staff development and conference attendance;
- Staff create opportunities for students to visit internationally significant discipline specific events internationally. (e.g. Venice Biennale) and the Department subsidises students;
- There is an excellent staff student relationship evident in the Faculty.

Recommendations

- To develop, recognise and support practice-based research, intervarsity research collaboration, inter-disciplinary or Faculty research groups;¹²¹
- To introduce a staff development forum for sharing best practice around key areas of teaching and learning such as assessment processes.

Students

Standards

- | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ <i>Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.</i>✓ <i>The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.</i>✓ <i>Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.</i>✓ <i>As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.</i>✓ <i>Employment rate of alumni is high.</i> |
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¹¹⁷ Additional material: Alumni of academic staff

¹¹⁸ meeting with Heads of Study Programmes

¹¹⁹ SER: p.69

¹²⁰ SER: p.17

¹²¹ meeting with Deans

✓ *Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.*

Comments

In response to the decline in student applicants and recruitment, the Faculty has been engaged in publicity exercises in secondary schools and their staff are actively promoting at open days, however the Faculty staff felt they did not have support with good marketing material available to them. They were critical of the web-site and the specialist marketing material.¹²²

The Team think it is in the Faculty's best interest to be more pro-active and committed to recruitment with such poor competition rate and a falling demographic. The Faculty should further implement flexible study paths, to entice mature students and appeal to a more diverse cohort of students from minority groups. Adapt programmes to be delivered through English at MA level to encourage applications from abroad. There is also an opportunity to recruit and re-engage those who have dropped on the expectation of the new building.

The support services offered by the MA and BA Co-ordinators are excellent and highly praised by students and the counselling works well, but is over subscribed, the students reported that special needs assistance was in place for general situations but not as effective on an individual basis.

The Faculty complied well with almost all the requirements in relation to students and the student experience. There is a need for pro-action in Recruitment.

Commendations

- MA and BA Coordinators who act as a 'one stop shop' for student support and guidance are highly praised by students;
- Permeable Art School - Graduates and Post graduate students active within the city forming collectives, establishing pop ups, e.g. Sound Art Collective Contributing to the cultural life of the city;¹²³
- Good examples of using alumni as recruitment agents/ambassadors.¹²⁴

Recommendations

- To increase application and competition rates for places onto the Faculties programmes. The Faculty should develop a broader range of programmes taught through foreign language to attract full time international students. Cooperate with the excellent Open Academy in recruitment initiatives.¹²⁵

¹²² meeting with Programme Staff

¹²³ meetings with Students, Alumni and Academic staff

¹²⁴ meeting with Heads of Study Programmes

¹²⁵ meetings with Heads of Study Programmes & Academic staff