

Assessment Report

Law

Tallinn University
Tallinn University of technology
University of Tartu

2016

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Introduction

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 to support 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 as recommendations.

Quality assessment of a study programme group takes place at least once every seven years based on [the regulation](#) approved by EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education.

The aim of the assessment team was the evaluation of the Study Programme Group (SPG) of Law in three universities: Tallinn University, Tallinn University of Technology and University of Tartu.

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 according 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.

Assessment panel composed of the following members:

Achim Albrecht (chair)	Professor, University of Westfalia, Germany
Hildegard Schneider	Professor, Maastricht University, Netherlands
Michelle Everson	Professor, Birkbeck University of London, United Kingdom
Madis Päts	OÜ Luberg ja Päts Law Office (Attorney at Law), Estonia
Kristel Siitam-Nyiri	Ministry of Justice, Vice-chancellor, Estonia
Susann Schultz	University Greifswald, student, Germany

The assessment process was coordinated by Joosep Raudsepp (EKKA).

After the preparation phase, the work of the assessment team started on Monday, April 25th, with an introduction to the Higher Education System as well as the assessment procedure by EKKA.

During the following days, meetings were held with the representatives of the Tallinn University (26th of April), Tallinn University of Technology (27th of April) and University of Tartu (28th of April).

On Friday, April 29th, 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.

In the following sections, the assessment team summarizes their general findings, conclusions and recommendations. In so doing, the team provides an external and objective perspective on the programmes and the contexts within which they are delivered. Ultimately, the intention is to provide constructive comment and critique which may form the basis upon which improvements in the quality of the programmes may be achieved.

General findings and recommendations

In general, all visited universities have strong provision in Law at BA and MA levels. Each University has a distinctive character and approach and have much to offer to students, to each other and to the development of law both nationally in Estonia and within the wider international context. Staff and students are well motivated and enthusiastic about the programmes and it is clear to the panel that both students and employers are satisfied with the quality of provision.

Employers and students at both institutions indicate that graduates of these programmes have been of good and improving quality and this reflects well on the developments of the programmes.

Although overall student numbers in Estonia are facing a demographic decline, the student numbers in the law study programme have remained stable – which is a clear indicator, that there is a high demand from the students' side.

All of the Universities provide quality education in law that prepares students for future employment and further study, yet they do so in distinctive ways.

Tallinn University Law School stands out in regards for their rather atypical student body, which supports life-long learning and non-traditional students. Especially with its master program, further qualifying Estonian professionals coming from police forces, fire brigades and other (public) professional bodies to broaden their studies, is a unique and necessary higher education approach which caters for the needs of the Estonian society.

In Tallinn University of Technology, its interdisciplinary character and the ability to integrate social science studies within a broader technological context is a clear strength, furthermore, legal provision in Tallinn University of Technology appears to be aligned to the University's mission and is building on the interdisciplinary strengths of the Tallinn University of Technology, seeking to establish an international profile and building a firm basis for research capacity.

The legal provision in University of Tartu is the stronghold of legal education and the practice of law within Estonia. The staff at University of Tartu School of Law are to be commended and recognized for their research qualities at international level. Also the alignment of the law study programs – especially the MA in law curricula – to the professional needs and demands of the legal arena (public and private), needs to be highlighted.

1. Assessment report of SPG at Tallinn University

Study programme group	Law
Higher education institution	Tallinn University
Study programmes	BA in law (in Estonian); BA in law (in English); MA in law (in Estonian); MA in International Business Law (in English)

1.1. Some characteristics of Tallinn University

Tallinn University (hereinafter referred to as *the university* or *TU*) is a public university that evolved as a result of a number of mergers between several research and development institutions in Tallinn (the Academic Library, Tallinn Pedagogical University, the Institute of History at the Estonian Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Ecology at the Estonian Academy of Sciences, and the Estonian Institute of Humanities). As a result, TU represents the largest merger project ever undertaken in Estonian higher education and has been known as Tallinn University since 18 March 2005.

The mission of Tallinn University is to support the sustainable development of Estonia through research and application of its results, the education of intellectuals, public discussions and the promotion of academic partnership. The university's vision is to be an innovative centre of research and education, which is academically enriching for its members, and respected not only in Estonia, but renowned internationally.

Tallinn University is clearly very popular amongst students, a fact attested to by virtue of its high student numbers and relatively good retention rates. Yet, tensions do exist between the maintenance of its original access mission to support atypical students – a mission inherited from its component institutes - and the demands now made of it within a modern university environment which, in particular, demands a research profile. Accordingly some tensions may be seen between research and teaching functions.

Statistical Data of the Study Programme Group

Number of students

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Bachelor's studies	Law (in Estonian)	207	171	213	210	208
	Law (in English)	0	59	115	189	242
Master's studies	Master in Law	74	80	102	115	113
	International Business Law				9	13

TOTAL	281	310	430	523	576
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Source: HaridusSILM

Number of admissions

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Bachelor's studies	Law (in Estonian)	120	48	86	71	56
	Law (in English)	0	59	71	100	102
Master's studies	Master in Law	29	34	53	46	45
	International Business Law				9	13
TOTAL		149	141	210	226	208

Source: HaridusSILM

Number of graduates

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Bachelor's studies	Law (in Estonian)	20	14	36	30
	Law (in English)	0	0	0	21
Master's studies	Master in Law	18	21	22	44
	International Business Law				0
TOTAL		38	35	58	95

Source: HaridusSILM

Number of interruptions

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Bachelor's studies	Law (in Estonian)	77	37	42	29
	Law (in English)	2	18	34	32
Master's studies	Master in Law	19	19	15	7
	International Business Law				1
TOTAL		98	74	91	69

Source: HaridusSILM

1.2. Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

The teaching programmes as presented within the self-assessment document are extraordinarily ambitious in scope, clearly positioning the Tallinn University as an institution which not only serves an access role within the local Estonian environment, but which is also seeking to develop itself as a regional 'international' hub. At the same time, the University professes research ambitions and is seeking to integrate research into its teaching.

It is slightly questionable whether the design of the Law School with an extreme stretch of topics – with a very early possibility of specialization on international topics in one of the BAs – and with the wide mix of different fields of interest from Human Rights to GATT and WTO to sociology, politics and management via Good Governance really makes for a streamlined and sharpened profile.

Commendations

- The panel believes firmly that Tallinn Law School currently plays an important role providing the legal education Estonia and we believe this role must be maintained in the future.
- Tallinn University is developing a sustainable financing and business model, and furthermore serves the need for the significant and underrepresented amount of Estonian society (non-traditional learners, active professionals, etc)

Overall recommendations:

- Clarify your mission and sharpen your profile.
- Build on the broader demand for legal services outside classical public legal profession.
- Emphasize your access mission. There is a clear need on the market for this kind of access oriented legal education provider. It must be stressed that an access mission need not be incompatible with an in-depth research profile.
- Continue with Finnish legal education but maintain good risk assessment as regards changes in requirements in Finnish legal education.
- Maintain international recruiting profile but provide clarity to students upon their admission that the law degree offered may not be a qualifying degree outside Estonia.
- Think about discontinuing International Business Law at masters level and start looking at international degree programs which build on the particular strengths of Tallinn University (e.g media and entertainment)
- The panel encourages Tallinn University Law School to establish a PhD programme. The Panel also supports Tallinn Law school to seek further cooperation with Tallinn University of Technology. In particular with regard to PhD programs, Tallinn University, Tallinn University of Technology and University of Tartu should investigate the possible of creating a joint PhD skills training network. (eg Bloomsbury post graduate skills network <http://courses.grad.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury/>)
- The panel encourages Tallinn University Law School to establish Transnational legal education provision/research within a transnational perspective (Baltic states, Central European states inc Russia, Scandinavia)
- There is a need for a revision of curriculum (see below)
- Staffing and governance strategy could also be improved (see below)

1.3. Strengths and Areas for Improvement of Study Programmes by assessment areas

1.3.1. Law (BA in Estonian; BA in English; MA in Estonian; MA in International Business Law)

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 development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

Comments

As it stands the curricula of BA and MA (both English and Estonian curricula) degrees may not cater appropriately for the needs of the local legal labour market. The panel believes that a certain lack of clarity within the curricula has arisen by virtue of structural reform and understandable pressure placed upon the faculty to engage with internationalization and interdisciplinarity strategies. The panel nevertheless now urges TLU to continue and intensify its visible and ongoing process of curricular reform and in particular to:

- Provide sufficient basic legal working skills in national law (both Estonian and Finnish)
- Rationalize its offer of specialist coursework (possibly reduce the offer of non-study options)
- Provide clearer named pathways throughout the curricula which reflect coherent legal specializations.
- Find a workable profile for the English taught master curricula (eg media and entertainment law)

The MA program in International Business Law (in English) is relatively new, thus making it difficult to draw thorough conclusions, yet internationalization of studies and staff seems to be one very important development goal of Tallinn University. The management of Tallinn University's School of Governance, Law and Society admitted, that in English MA program they have not been able to

attract so many students as they would like to. The reason for that may be, that the program is currently too wide for English MA. The university is changing its approach and making a new attempt, one possibility is to specialize more specifically. The panel welcomes this approach, yet we would like explicitly to recommend discontinuing business law at masters' level and start looking at international degree programs which build on the particular strengths of Tallinn University (e.g media and entertainment)

Strengths

- Clear effort to cater for both national and regional-international markets

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- Programmes are quite complex with a large number of courses: some streamlining is necessary.
- Integration of law within social sciences studies has some advantages. Above all students note that commencing their studies within broad social science studies provides good educational skills and insights, however the panel recommends that the school monitors such provision and does not allow it to water down the necessary legal basic skills. Interdisciplinarity should not infringe with employability.
- Build new communities at national and international levels, with media organizations etc, in order to form curricula design.

Resources

Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

Comments

Tallinn University is developing a sustainable financing and business model, and furthermore serves the needs for the life-long and non-traditional learners.

Teaching and learning environments in Tallinn University are modern and comfortable, university has a modern campus and well-equipped classes.

Students reported some problems with access to books and journals, especially in foreign languages (especially English). There is no library in the facilities in Helsinki, although students have the possibility to use University of Helsinki library, their awareness of different possible academic databases for study and research could still be raised.

Strengths

- Specific resources to cater for the diverse student body in Tallinn University Law School (for e.g childcare)

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- Insufficiency in library resources (especially in foreign languages).
- Improve the accessibility for legal (international and Estonian) literature in library – if necessary, via cooperation with other universities.

MA in International Business Law:

- The study resources for international business law programme are insufficient. Although the panel was informed by the faculty that students have access to relevant databases through the library of Tallinn University, meeting with the students lead to different impression. The panel suggests to review the available study resources and their access procedures and to find out the level of content which are accessible to them. Student must have access to relevant international databases (Westlaw; Lexus- Nexus; web of science etc.) and relevant textbooks, case studies etc (in English).

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.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

Comments

Based on the evidence written in the Self-Evaluation Report and from the meetings held with the teaching staff, students and administrators, it can be stated that the teaching at Tallinn University School of Governance, Law and Society is of a good quality, reflecting its historical basis within a local legal culture and its on-going mission to achieve internationalization of the university.

Strengths

- The panel commends the efforts made by permanent junior teaching staff to encourage the comprehensive use of modern teaching and resources (Moodle etc).
- The small number of students allows a close contact between students and teaching staff.

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- The panel encourages the teaching staff to learn from each-others experiences and share good practices. While most of the students were satisfied with teaching methods, some also noted that for certain teachers the common method of teaching and learning is using PowerPoint presentations. Varying the teaching methods benefits both staff and students.
- The panel urges the school to consolidate the improvements within teaching and learning through support for permanent junior staff. There could be more permanent junior teaching staff.
- Incorporate more "Mooting" and other competitions in teaching and learning.

MA in International Business Law:

- Teaching techniques within the master of business law are currently not sufficiently demanding. This may reflect a misfit between the International Business law program and the school.
- Some students noted that they would like more assistance with research

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).
- ✓ Recognized 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.

Comments

The panel has received the impression that the faculty of the school is imbalanced as regards the particular teaching needs of the school. Where the core reputation has derived from its local access mission, (specialize in Estonian MA level), current reform imperatives (interdisciplinarity, internationalization etc) may have led to an over reliance upon the importation of international faculty on a continued basis.

Strengths

- Clearly, staff is very international in character and is suited to teaching the programmes in English and within an international context.

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- At the moment the make-up of the teaching staff gives the impression that there is a strong stress on internationally renowned researchers teaching in the international business law field but that there are not enough permanent resources of staff catering for necessary reform and administrative needs. TLU should not neglect Estonian law courses and should focus on the added value that local staff have brought and can bring in the future in providing legal qualifications for professionals who are returning to university to add to their previous qualification.
- The Panel recognizes that possible tensions will arise between the teaching and research missions of TLU where future staffing policy privileges the core needs of taught programmes. The Panel nevertheless urges TLU to seek a suitable balance between its teaching and research needs. Above all, the Panel supports the efforts of TLU to hire local teaching staff who may not satisfy strict research-oriented hiring criteria.
- Careful monitoring of the mix of staff (professional-academic/local-international) in light of the changing overall strategic plan of the TLU (research versus teaching) is needed. Overall permanent and travelling staff should in the future be able to cater for all needs of the taught programs with a high percentage of affiliation to TLU if possible. The impression of a slight imbalance within TLU as concerns the mix of staff should be corrected accordingly.

As regard clarified future mission of the school, the panel urges:

- That local core Estonian teaching staff (BA, MA) should be supported and that strategy should be developed to maintain current (Estonian) staff. This is a community of staff that is made up of experienced practitioners and is recognized within its market field and must be maintained at even if only at a contractual level. However the panel would also strongly urge Tallinn University management immediately to reconsider its policy of only hiring permanent staff where international research profile is proven.
- To hire additional younger permanent staff. The panel particularly commends the work of Tiina Pajuste, Philip Graves, Samuli Miettinen. The impression derived from the dialogue with staff is that administrative, strategic and modification tasks are agreed by all but shouldered by too few when it comes to everyday duties of implementation. The panel believes that the staff of this calibre and quality is vital to the mission and success of the Law School. They provide continuity in the curricular reform oversight, high quality research and and a basis for the future leadership of the school (future professors). However the panel is concerned that this staff is vulnerable and their work load is too big. Panel urges that this workload be shifted to more shoulders.
- International staff is impressive and have a role to play in the future of the school. However the international hiring strategy should not be set in stone, the school should consider a development strategy which hires according to the changing needs of the curricula (eg media law etc)

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

The panel met with diverse group of students, who are motivated and have clear vision for their future. They were satisfied with the study programme and found the studying environment friendly and motivating. The students noted that

sometimes there is too much bureaucracy involved – e.g with internship documents.

The drop-out rates in Tallinn University seem to be related to the usual factor in Estonia – students often work while studying. MA program's drop-out rates are lower and they are more motivated to graduate.

Being a relatively new law school and also considering many prior mergers, the university is still trying to figure out, who their alumni is. Yet, Tallinn University has recognized the need to keep in touch with their graduates. The panel also met alumni, who are still actively cooperating with the university (e.g offering places for internship, organizing vocational training or teaching in the TU).

Strengths

- Support for mature, returning and access students is exceptional. Above all teaching staff are to be commended for their availability to and understanding for atypical student problems.

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- Overall administrative procedure could be more flexible (too much red tape). School needs to be more for the students not students for the school.
- Careers advice on admission, clarity about qualifying law degree
- There could be more support for finding and providing internships.
- Some students wish that the university should take their feedback more seriously and communicate with them more openly (e.g when the feedback is collected about teaching staff and their methods, students don't know if and how is this feedback used in the future)
- Create a list of internships for national and international students. Keep records of successful past placements.
- Establish a simple administrative process for student library acquisitions
- More administrators specific to the law school would benefit students
- Administrative procedural flexibility in order to cater for atypical students' needs (also with regard to academic deadlines).
- Help the international and national students to maintain and establish further contacts to different law student organizations (ELSA etc). Including the financial support for these activities and organizations.

2. Assessment report of SPG at Tallinn University of Technology

Study programme group	Law
Higher education institution	Tallinn University of Technology
Study programmes	Law (BA); Law (MA)

2.1. Some characteristics of Tallinn University of Technology

In Estonia, TUT is recognized as an internationally high-ranked research university, providing quality research-based education, accountable for the new generation of engineers, the spirit and quality of engineering culture in Estonia and promoting sustainable development of the society and growth of national welfare by the innovative services.

TUT provides opportunities for acquisition of higher education in line with developments of science and technology at all cycles in the areas of natural and exact sciences, engineering, manufacturing and technology, social sciences and in related areas. TUT fosters R&D in these areas, at the same time creating a synergy between different fields and areas. TUT is a leading engineering and technology education and research centre in Estonia.

TUT clearly paying particular attention to its interdisciplinary character and the ability to integrate social science studies within a broader technological context. Generally-speaking, the legal provision in Tallinn University of Technology appears to be appropriate to the University's mission and is building on the interdisciplinary strengths of the Tallinn University of Technology, seeking to establish an international profile and building a firm basis for research capacity.

Statistical Data of the Study Programme Group

Number of students

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Bachelor's studies	Bachelor in Law	524	510	419	354	286
Master's studies	Master in Law	258	263	247	231	155
TOTAL		281	310	430	523	576

Source: HaridusSILM

Number of admissions

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Bachelor's studies	Bachelor in Law	118	121	67	57	74
Master's studies	Master in Law	39	56	36	46	47
TOTAL		157	177	103	103	121

Source: HaridusSILM

Number of graduates

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Bachelor's studies	Bachelor in Law	44	67	68	76
Master's studies	Master in Law	38	31	39	43
TOTAL		82	98	107	119

Source: HaridusSILM

Number of interruptions

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Bachelor's studies	Bachelor in Law	117	110	52	72
Master's studies	Master in Law	27	28	32	72
TOTAL		144	138	84	144

Source: HaridusSILM

2.2. Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

Commendations:

- The panel commends the management of Tallinn University of Technology in their efforts to position TUT as the technical university of Estonia, the panel further commends and supports the management strategy established by TUT in particular with regard to the universities respectful financial, curricular and innovative orientation autonomy of their faculties and importantly institutes.
- The panel wholeheartedly commends the Institute of Law at TUT. In particular, leadership capacities are outstanding. In addition, the panel commends and supports the orientation strategy of the school and its efforts to establish true interdisciplinarity between law and technology (from multidisciplinary to interdisciplinary)
- The panel commends the outstanding community spirit within the Law school and between the Law school and stakeholders.
- The panel commends the very clear vision the school of law has in their strategic plan until the year 2020 with in the field of law in the TUT.

- The panel commends the market awareness and engagement of TUT law school in particular with regard to the start-up landscape and a politically responsive human rights centre.

Recommendations:

The panel considers that the major challenge faced by the law school is one of recognition within the local environment and visibility within the international and transnational environment. To that end the panel recommends:

- Consolidation of local recognition. The panel recognizes the determination of the school to maintain a local qualifying law degree (BA, MA) as a basis for its existence. To that end the panel urges the school to clearly communicate that it offers an effective toolbox of local legal skills ensuring employability.
- That the school with the support of TUT as a whole moves to ensure immediate recognition for its planned PhD programme. Seen from the international perspective, not only are all necessary research staff and facilities in place but also TUT represents a cutting edge of international law and technology research capacity.
- TUT law school should more actively market its research capacities to the public and private sector within Estonia.
- The panel commends the efforts of TUT law school to establish an international PhD skills education network. At the same time the panel would urge TUT to continue to seek cooperation within Estonia and maybe engage in a local PhD network in Estonia. (eg Bloomsbury post graduate skills network <http://courses.grad.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury/>)
- Related to the structural reform of the TUT (4 faculties in the future), the panel strongly recommends that the title of the relevant faculty should reference Law.
- The Panel urges the law school to continue to concentrate its strategy upon the integration of technology within the private commercial legal field even where it also engages in local and international projects to further the use of technology and public law.

2.3. Strengths and Areas for Improvement of Study Programmes by assessment areas

2.3.1. Law (BA, MA)

Study programme and study programme development

Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the

<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 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

Generally, the provision is well thought through, providing a firm basis for legal practice, but also setting the law in a far broader context of social science study and technological developments.

Strengths

- The primary strength of program design is that it is not a simple matter of technology and law but that it is committed to law in technology and its new developing fields.
- Generally solid programmes with sufficient opportunities for students to develop their chosen specialities
- (BA) Integration of technological aspects of law into the programme – this is necessary given increasing computerization of legal services at the global level.
- (BA) The programme seems to steer a good middle course between local and international needs for specific legal services.
- (MA) The three specializations are very well thought through, serving both practical legal labour needs (local and international) and the research aspirations of TUT.

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- The maintenance of the legal toolkit for the national legal market. TUT Law School has found its specific approach to legal education, combining law and technology. Yet at the same time the panel urges the school to ensure that it offers an effective toolbox of local legal skills ensuring preparedness and employability of graduates to local labour market.

Resources

Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

Comments

TUT has modern facilities with all necessary equipment guaranteeing good working and studying environment. TUT has central library, which is situated in a new building and is accessible also online. Both staff and students expressed satisfaction with the level of resources in TUT library, they also commended the assistance provided by the staff of the library.

Strengths

- The panel commends the accessibility of the TUT campus.
- Good resources (budget, facilities, library, etc)
- Tallinn University of Technology has very good resources for staff training. The panel commends TUT's staff excellence center, which provides great and necessary opportunities for staff development and training.
- TUT has also created modern and supportive environment for high level research
- Good technical resources and infrastructure
- Good support from the library staff

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- The number of international students is growing, thus it may rise an issue with providing enough dormitory places

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 organization 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

Modern and diverse teaching methods are used in teaching. Assessment of learning outcomes is holistic and transparent, furthermore the achievement of learning outcomes is constantly monitored in the teaching process.

The process of teaching and learning is well regulated by numerous academic acts and policies at TUT. The Curricula development takes into account the feedback from all the stakeholders (students, employers, academic staff).

Strengths

- Individual skype interviews with prospective international students
- Flexible teaching and learning methods
- Active mentoring
- Active and innovative learning methods and wide range of assessments are being used
- Taking part of international competitions
- International visiting faculty is properly integrated in local staff

Recommendations

- School should make more efforts to improve classical internship placements for local students.
- Ensure that the Estonian law degree continues to be valued within the local labour market. Make sure that the necessary legal toolkit for entering the local labour is not overlooked

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).
- ✓ Recognized 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 four chairs of Public Law, Law and Technology, Jean Monnet and Economic Law with their lecturers and visiting lecturers and also a large number of speciality related teaching staff are providing a very satisfactory staff – student ratio.

International, EU, and national legal topics as laid down in the curricula are suitably and sustainably catered for. Staff is composed of a sound mixture of academics, scholars with relevant international experience and practitioners with direct connections to the labour market.

Strengths

- The panel commends the management of TUT law school for their excellent leadership capacity
- There is good support for staff development – continuous trainings, sharing best practices, seminars from lecturer to lecturer etc.
- TUT law school also demonstrated flexible support mechanisms to their staff – especially considering participation in external projects, self-developments etc. Good opportunities are provided for teaching staff to take upon “study leave”.

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- As lecturers' competence is concerned, panel encourages to further strengthen connections of lecturers to industry, professional bodies and associations.
- There is a need for risk management especially in relation to retaining staff. The panel expresses its concerns whether TUT law school is able to retain its highly capable teaching staff – headhunting for teaching especially by foreign universities who are looking to expand their legal curricula might pose clear threats.
- Workload for staff also needs to be carefully monitored and managed. The panel recommends thinking about the implementation of a system of student assistants considerably helping with everyday tasks.
- Although there are appraisal systems in place, the panel felt that the promotion of prospects ought to have stronger emphasis.
- In order to satisfy future staffing needs as especially regards teaching in a local Estonian law degree that is also technologically savvy, a PhD program should be established.
- The professional staff in TUT law school is also valued in other institutes, where they are also teaching. Therefore it is important to closely monitor the proportion of teaching by TUT law school's staff in other institutes and ensure the staff of law school is properly remunerated for their services to other departments and institutes

Students

Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ 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

The overall satisfaction with the law curricula in TUT amongst students was high and the panel was pleased to meet with motivated students who showed their keen support towards the TUT law school. The students were pleased with the studying environment of TUT. They also commended the teaching methods used in different courses and found the staff friendly and approachable. The panel

noted that students were very satisfied with libraries and databases, which are accessible from campus and dormitory.

The panel also met alumni of TUT, some of whom are still very actively cooperating with the university. The alumni noted, that law school in TUT is very competitive, not in their comfort zone yet and trying hard to find their place on the market. Both students and alumni also pointed out that TUT is always encouraging students to do research in new and exciting fields.

Strengths

- Good integration of students in research
- Good feedback from students
- The panel urges the Law School in Tallinn University of Technology to continue building on existing strengths in recruiting appropriate international students (to relevant curricula)
- Accessibility of campus (especially for students with disabilities)

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- The panel encourages TUT law school to further enhance capacity for placing national and international students to suitable internships.
- To better communicate of the content of curricula to applicants during the admission process.
- To continue with their measures to reduce the drop-out rate (thesis seminars etc)
- To maintain ongoing review for reasons for drop out (as the student body is changing the reasons for drop outs might also change)
- The panel further encourages the faculty to promote student mobility

3. Assessment report of SPG at University of Tartu

Study programme group	Law
Higher education institution	University of Tartu
Study programmes	BA in law; MA in law; Information Technology Law (MA)

3.1. Some characteristics of Tartu University

The University of Tartu (UT) is Estonia's leading center of research and education, and as the national university, is vested by law with the task of preserving Estonian culture and society. The UT spearheads the country's reputation in research and the provision of higher education.

The University of Tartu stresses the importance of international cooperation and partnerships with reputable research universities the world over. It is the only Baltic university having joined the Coimbra Group, a prestigious club of renowned research universities.

The University of Tartu is a rapidly developing international research university, the centre of academic spirit in Estonia as a national university, and a leader in social development.

Statistical Data of the Study Programme Group

Number of students

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Bachelor's studies	Bachelor in Law	1344	1179	1015	885	836
Master's studies	Master in Law	615	584	525	442	431
	Information Technology Law	-	-	-	-	20
TOTAL		1959	1763	1540	1327	1267

Source: HaridusSILM

Number of admissions

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Bachelor's studies	Bachelor in Law	311	260	237	211	240
Master's studies	Master in Law	202	176	157	128	143
	Information Technology Law	-	-	-	-	20
TOTAL		662	577	604	565	611

Source: HaridusSILM

Number of graduates

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Bachelor's studies	Bachelor in Law	238	259	165	222
Master's studies	Master in Law	183	189	172	162
	Information Technology Law	-	-	-	-
TOTAL		459	483	395	479

Source: HaridusSILM

Number of interruptions

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Bachelor's studies	Bachelor in Law	312	277	238	188
Master's studies	Master in Law	74	64	68	39
	Information Technology Law	-	-	-	-
TOTAL		386	341	306	227

Source: HaridusSILM

3.2. Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

Tartu is clearly the premier university within Estonia with a long tradition of teaching and research. The academic atmosphere surrounding the city and the University of Tartu also needs to be highlighted. The panel strongly commends the University of Tartu for its efforts to make Tartu relevant within the modern and internationalized higher education environment. Similarly the university needs to be commended for its methods to modernize teaching and learning.

The law school at Tartu is and has been the stronghold of legal education within Estonia. It is vital that it is maintained as such for the purposes of the functioning of legal administration in Estonia. The law school of UT is the backbone of the legal administration and the practice of law in Estonia.

Throughout Europe it is clear that the teaching of law and legal research faces very particular challenges within the modernized higher education environment. Law can and may be seen as a social science. Equally law can and may be seen as forming a part of the humanities. However if law is to be law within its social environment, law must also be seen and recognized to be distinct from humanities and social sciences. Law has its own methodologies and traditions, and must be perceived as such within society. Therefore the panel makes the following strong recommendations:

- Law must be made visible at the very outset within the new faculty of social sciences, the university must consider whether it has paid sufficient attention to the continuing visibility of the study of law at the University of Tartu. At the very least, the name of the new faculty should reference law, besides social sciences and economics. It is an imperative that the law

- degree is awarded as a degree in law and not a degree in social sciences. Ideally the panel would urge University of Tartu to seek support from higher education legislators and administrators to establish LLB and LLM programmes in Tartu.
- Given the internationalization of the academic environment academic field, legal education has developed its own international perspectives. Law nevertheless continues to be rooted as a methodology within the international environment such that the school of Law at Tartu must retain full autonomy with regard to the structuring of its relations with the domestic and international legal environments. Autonomy must include the autonomy of the curriculum, the autonomy of research evaluation and budget.

At the same time the panel has received a very clear impression that in addition to its core services to the domestic legal market, the school of law at UT has made efforts to adapt itself to the internationalized market for higher legal education.

Staff are recognized for their research qualities at international level. Degrees are being developed which appeal to an international market. Here the panel recommends the following:

- The faculty should continue to offer human rights and IT law as fields of specialization for the international market.
- In addition however, and given the dominance of TUT within an international law and technology field, we encourage you to develop further synergies within the Tartu faculty of social sciences to offer possible future specializations such as law and economics, law and business, law and finance.

Finally University of Tartu is to be praised very highly for its provision and its governance structures, which foster and support innovation in its degree provision and for its quality and assurance structures, which similarly respond quickly and efficiently to student requirements and the demands of the legal arena (public and private).

3.3. Strengths and Areas for Improvement of Study Programmes by assessment areas

3.3.1. Law (BA; MA) and Information Technology Law

The distinguishing characteristic and strength of law as it is taught in Tartu to the domestic market is the purity of its legal methodology. This position must be maintained:

- To maintain and support the effective functioning the domestic law in Estonia
- To satisfy the demands of stakeholders within the law school and to ensure the employability of graduates
- To clearly distinguish the provision of legal education at Tartu from programs offered elsewhere.

The Information Technology Law programme is to be commended as regards to the efforts to raise its international profile and to improve the IT skills of lawyers within Estonia.

However the panel considers that this programme cannot compete directly with the law and technology provision currently being established within the Tallinn University of Technology. TUT has great advantages within the technology area since it can immediately integrate its legal approaches within the engineering environment. It is at the cutting edge of technological legal developments within Europe. At the same time, technology-oriented staff at Tartu are mostly external, meaning they are not the core contributors to the curricula and furthermore may not always be available

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

These are very well-structured and responsive programmes and are to be highly commended. The content and structure of the study programmes are consistent. Learning outcomes explained, defined and attainable. Feedback from stakeholders is taken into account when developing and designing curricula.

Strengths

- Clarity of provision structures
- Responsiveness to the needs for legal skills within Estonia and within the international setting
- Good provision of a strong research basis for the university.
- The panel commends the provision with regard to human rights especially as concerns raising the international profile of the University of Tartu

Information Technology Law:

- The programme prepares lawyers for work in an environment dominated by new technologies.

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- Given reservations expressed above with regard to IT law – a field in which the TUT is dominant – the panel recommends that the school of law builds on emerging synergies to increase its international academic profile and student marketability within possible new areas of study such as eastern studies (incl Russia), law and economics, law and business, law and finance.
- Maintain the good quality assurance structures which have grown up around the programmes in order to ensure their responsiveness.

Information Technology Law:

The Panel recognizes the efforts of the University of Tartu to integrate the expertise of other technical disciplines within University together with its technology-oriented teaching. Tartu is responding to a market need for the training of lawyers who can respond sensitively to the legal issues created by technological advance, and is to be fully supported in these efforts. The technology-oriented provision at Tartu is nevertheless to be distinguished from technology-embedded provision at Tallinn University of Technology. TUT legal provision is fully integrated within the technical infrastructure and technological development work of the TUT, and offers perspectives for legal research and legal learning in immediate response to technical innovation.

Lacking the degree of interdisciplinary embeddedness which is present in Tallinn University of technology, this program (Information Technology Law) seems to be a program designed to enhance the awareness of lawyers of basic technologies where they are mostly concerned with the application of law to the technological market (eg cybercrime...etc).

Therefore although we urge Tartu to continue with this provision the panel makes the following recommendations:

- Currently the structure and the composition of the curriculum is not fully standing for the name Information Technology Law (as it is currently stated), hence the recommendation to change the name of the curriculum

- to “Law and IT” which would more properly reflect the structure of the curriculum.
- Explore other areas of international legal specialization and in particular build on the synergies within the social sciences faculty.

Resources

Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

Comments

The School of Law of UT has its own buildings in Tartu and Tallinn. While the facilities in Tartu are modern and accessible, the learning environment in Tallinn (rooms, furniture, access for disabled persons, library resources) needs modernizing. Students have access to sufficient resources which support the achievement of objectives in the study programme. Sufficient supply of teaching aids is available.

Strengths

- Study materials and research facilities in Tartu campus are good (eg library, access to databases etc).

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- Current financial provision is insufficient. Two possible sources for this insufficiency:
 - Insufficient government funding related to student numbers in law
 - Insufficient development of private financing
- Budgetary autonomy within the social sciences faculty is necessary to maintain the character of legal education.
- Teaching staff salaries need be higher in order to retain internationally oriented staff.
- Centralized approach to the capacity of admission of students needs to be revised. School of Law should be consulted and heard in advance to

- admission process as to numbers and qualifications of prospective students in the different law programs.
- Lobbying within stakeholders for the increase of law student admission
 - To further seek additional (private) sources of funding
 - Tallinn campus needs to be refurbished in order to maximize income opportunities with regard to MA and internationalized markets. Considering the high competition for student places in Law (BA) programme in Tallinn and the needs of the students, there is a need for a modernized and bigger “branch” in Tallinn.
 - Budgetary autonomy should be maintained, the panel sees clear threats for cross-subsidizing especially when the Law School is structurally placed within the depths of Social Sciences department.

Information Technology Law

- Since the area of IT technology (and -law) is rapidly evolving, it is important to ensure consistent funding in order to guarantee changes in study programs, if necessary and up-to-date teaching staff
- To further seek private sources of funding

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 organization and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

Comments

The panel commends and encourages the University of Tartu to continue to implement its “standard of good teaching practice”. The process of learning facilitates the achievement of learning outcomes. Teaching methods used are modern and engaging (“mooting”, case studies, mock trials etc) and the learning outcomes are defined and attainable.

Strengths

- Traditional practice of taking high level practitioners as lectures and also incorporating young academics who are developing and refining modern teaching methods.
- Seminar based teaching, moot courts, interactive teaching methods are used

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- The implementation of this good teaching practice should also be monitored, in order to ensure the consistency of teaching standards
- Although teaching staff are provided with opportunities for self-development, they also ought to be further encouraged to participate in the trainings and courses University is providing.

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.

Comments

The panel met with internally motivated staff who are working in an ambitious unit. The cooperation and communication amongst staff is very good and the overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive. Also the teaching staff are actively contributing in the publishing and maintenance of an important local legal journal "Juridica", which provides additional value to the legal landscape in Estonia.

Teaching staff in the Information Technology Law study course is derived from many sources, such as the Institute of Computer Science, TUT and the Estonian IT College as well as resources from within TU.

Strengths

- A good mixture of leadership capacity and younger academics
- A strong combination local and international capacity
- Usage of modern teaching methods
- Flexible work environment for part time staff with individual time management possibilities
- Good administrative support
- Internally motivated staff, who are working well together within an ambitious unit

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- Need for a better research strategy which considers balancing research and teaching functions (allocating time, resources etc).
- Teaching staff salaries must be higher in order to retain internationally oriented staff.
- Hiring policy must also take into account the need to employ domestically relevant teaching staff. The Estonian publications must count as research publications. The important and valuable work of teaching staff who are providing comments to newly to be implemented laws, commenting on laws and rulings as such and composing textbooks should be taken into account as recognized publications with a suitable impact as is the case in other European countries. Otherwise staff might be discouraged to continue this most important and highly esteemed work. Criteria for hiring should be more flexible.

Information Technology Law

- Although all members of the faculty are offered opportunities to enroll in various trainings (language, didactics, research skills etc.), the panel had the impression that improvements can be made – a structured, strategic and statistically safe procedure to advance staff skills should be further established and its implementation closely monitored. The panel urges to implement and encourage a professional teaching staff development and feedback scheme as concerns possibilities of improvement in didactic and language skills, including practitioners on mandate contracts.
- As it is, a volatile group of lecturers coming from different institutions do add different perspectives and expertise to the ever expanding field of IT Law. However the panel recommends to rethink in terms of continuity this approach of 'buying in' expertise and concentrate more on an interdisciplinary approach with available expertise within TU

Students

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Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

Comments

The panel praises the extreme commitment and enthusiasm of the law students in the University of Tartu. They admitted, that one of the reasons they chose studying in UT was its good reputation and academic atmosphere. Students found that they have good dialogue with professors and everyone is taken care of.

Employment rate of alumni is high and UT has a very good reputation amongst employers.

The panel wants to emphasize that the students noted that there is a need to make the 'law part' of the awarded degree more visible for employability reasons. Graduating in social sciences and having to explain possible (foreign) employers and foreign universities their ownership of social sciences degree, poses difficulties. The alumni also expressed their worries to the panel about the structural reform and the possible consequence that the focus to the law will be evaporated.

Students, who are studying in IT Law MA program, have different background. Since the program is relatively new, the feedback from students is also preliminary. Nevertheless, the feedback has been good – students find the program interesting, teaching methods modern and practical and staff helpful. The program is flexible, allowing students who live and work in other parts of Estonia, while still studying in Tartu.

Strengths

- The study programme is providing a valuable legal toolkit to the graduates, which also reflects in good employment rates.
- Based on the feedback presented to the panel in the self-evaluation report and also on interviews held with students, the overall satisfaction with the study programme is very high.
- Good abilities to influence the curricula and their involvement in the management of the faculty
- Open University is fitting and filling the needs of lifelong learners.
- Well organized and active student body (ELSA, legal clinic etc.)

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

- Organize an active network of alumni (and circle of friends)
- Visiting practitioners teaching and language skills need some improvement
- The panel further encourages the faculty to promote student mobility as students tend to stay, study and work with internships locally because internationalization has just started and student mobility abroad has as to now no tradition and must be encouraged.
- More specialty related electives in English for Estonian students
- The faculty should seek for the opportunity to create more student places for the Open University.

Information Technology Law

- More electives for IT Law students