

Assessment Report

Health Care

Tallinn University

2018

Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
GENERAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	4
1. ASSESSMENT REPORT OF THE HEALTH CARE STUDY PROGRAMME GROUP AT TALLINN UNIVERSITY	5
1.1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.2. STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME BY ASSESSMENT AREAS	7
1.2.1. ARTS THERAPIES (MASTER’S STUDIES)	7

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 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 evaluation of the Study Programme Group (SPG) of Health Care in Tallinn University.

The team was asked to assess the conformity of the study programme 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:

Mark Dunhill	University of Arts London, United Kingdom
Kristīne Mārtinsone	Rīga Stradiņš University
Hanke Leeuw	University of the Arts Utrecht, The Netherlands
Kari Bjørgo Johnsen	University of Bergen, Norway
Barbara Ābele	Art Academy of Latvia, Latvia
Tom McGorrian	Middlesex University London, United Kingdom
Žilvinas Lilas	Academy of Media Arts Cologne, Germany
Andres Tali	Artist, Estonia
Clara van Wijk	VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The assessment process was coordinated by Karin Laansoo (EKKA).

After the preparation phase, the work of the assessment team in Estonia started on Monday, 13 November 2017, with an introduction to the Higher Education System as well as the assessment procedure 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 the two institutions, who were part of the assessment process. 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 day, meetings were held with the representatives of Tallinn University. The schedule for discussion on site only allowed for short time slots to be available for team members to exchange information, discuss conclusions and implications for further questions.

In the following two sections, the assessment team summarise their general findings, conclusions and recommendations which are relevant across the whole SPG. 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. In formulating its recommendations, however, the assessment team has not evaluated the financial feasibility associated with their implementation.

General findings and recommendations

The Study programme of Arts Therapies is the only such programme in Estonia, and is the only programme in TU in which graduates receive a degree in Health Care. Its content and learning outcomes are formulated on the basis of a professional standard, which is under Psychology, as also referred to in the SER. It would therefore be necessary to assess under which study programme group (health care or psychology) this programme actually belongs to. In this assessment, the employers in the concerned sector should be more actively involved, and demand in the labour market should be assessed as well. After the assessment, it would be desirable to both describe theoretical basis of the profession and develop evidence-based practice in accordance with the traditions in professional environment.

Learning is process-oriented and provides students' growth. It is also facilitated by an individual approach to the study process that can be implemented due to small student groups. To enter the study programme, applicants need to

demonstrate completion of courses and preparedness for scientific research in health and psychology, as well as creative preparedness in the selected specialised area.

During the studies, a variety of teaching and assessment methods are used. The e-learning teaching methods could be used even more extensively. Attention needs to be paid to balance between practical work and credits' needs as the students seem to experience systemic difficulties with graduating within the nominal study time.

With regard to research, it would be necessary to develop a more coherent understanding of research designs and methodologies consistent with the approach used in health care field, in which a Master's degree is obtained.

As the study process is process-oriented, it is difficult for students to participate in exchange programmes and mobility does not seem to be encouraged by the teaching and learning practices. Still, more mobility would be advantageous. Guest lecturers have also visited the study programme, which is something that is specifically emphasized by students.

In general, the programme is characterized by enthusiastic, highly motivated students and teaching staff and administration. The dropout rate is low. Graduates of the programme are also very interested in development of the profession. There is a sufficient, good provision of resources, good study environment for the students, well-organized internship and cooperation with professional associations, contracts with many places of practice, and openness to innovations. Students highly value the study process and the lecturers. Lecturers are characterized by a good professional reputation and qualification.

Assessment report of the Health Care study programme group at Tallinn University

Introduction

Tallinn University (hereafter also referred to as *the University* or *TU*) is the third largest public university in Estonia and focuses primarily on the fields of humanities and the social and natural sciences. TU is a result of the merger of several higher education institutions (Tallinn Pedagogical University, Academy Nord, Estonian Institute of Humanities, Institute of History of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, Academic Library of Estonia) in Tallinn into a single institution, which resulted in the founding of TU as a public university on 18 March 2005.

TU is currently the largest university of humanities in Tallinn and the third biggest public university in Estonia. TU has more than 8,000 students (with 5.5% of them international), and over 800 employees, including over 400 researchers and lecturers.

According to the Development Plan for 2015–2020, the vision of the University is to play a leading role in promoting and developing an intelligent lifestyle in Estonia, thereby supporting both Estonian sustainability and the self-actualisation of individuals. The University sees its mission as supporting the sustainable development of Estonia through high quality research and study, the education of intellectuals, public discussions and the promotion of academic partnership. In its activities, the university adheres to the following basic values – openness, quality, professionalism and unity.

The strategic objective of TU for 2015–2020 is to consolidate its activities into five focus fields: educational innovation; digital and media culture; cultural competences; healthy and sustainable lifestyle; and society and open governance. Educational innovation (as the priority for the University) aims to support the development and implementation of 21st century learning culture in the Estonian education sphere.

The main responsibility for developing a focus field lies with the academic unit that has been formed as a result of consolidation of resources and activities, involving other academic units indicated in the implementation strategy.

The study programme Arts Therapies was launched at Bachelor and Master levels in 2007 and is the only study programme in the Health Care study programme group in Tallinn University. Until September 2015, studies were conducted at the Department of Arts Therapies that belonged to the Institute of Fine Arts. Within the framework of the structural reform of the University, the study programme Arts Therapies was moved to the School of Natural Sciences and Health (SNSH), founded in September 2015.

Table 1. Aggregate data about Health Care Study Programme (MSc)

	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017
Matriculation	20	20	20
Graduation	10	8	19
Dropout	1	-	1
Outgoing students (mobility)		1	
Incoming students (mobility)	-	-	-

Strengths and areas for improvement of the study programme by assessment areas

Arts Therapies (Master's studies)

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.

The Arts Therapies is an individual study programme, which in Estonia is set up only in the TU. The Master level study programme Arts Therapies is positioned as "inherently interdisciplinary by combining arts, psychology and health science". It is included in Health Care area, and it is the only study programme at the TU that is being implemented in Health Care Study Programmes Group. Previously, there was also a bachelor level programme, but it is currently closed.

Interdisciplinarity nowadays undoubtedly is a resource, but when it comes to a helping profession, where specialists work in health care sector and are listed in the register of medical practitioners (as was found at an interview with students), the question about which basic area / field the specialists are being prepared for, needs to be solved and, accordingly, designated what are their professional position, professional co-operation issues, levels of responsibility and boundaries.

The study programme is designed in accordance with creative therapists' professional standard, which is under Psychology. However, after completing their studies, the graduates receive a Master of Health Science degree and the programme is submitted for assessment as a Health Care programme.

It should be noted that in the SER, the programme in some places is referred to as belonging to Health Care, and in other places as belonging to Psychology. For example, it says: "Arts Therapies study programme and research and development are under the academic branch of psychology and behavioural

sciences of the School, together with the Master's studies in psychology and organisational behaviour" (p. 11).

And in another place: "The academic study area of psychology and behavioural sciences joins the expertise of arts therapies, but also psychology and organisational behaviour and applies them in studies and research. SNSH operates five study programmes in this academic field (with active admissions): psychology education at bachelors' and masters' level, organizational management, arts therapies and psychology education at doctoral level" (p. 12).

These examples show that the programme, which is being implemented at School of Natural Sciences and Health (with main purpose of "living healthy"), in SER mentions Psychology and Behavioural Sciences as its study area. It is therefore not understandable why elsewhere the Health Care studies are mentioned. One can venture a guess that it might be related to the registration of professionals in health care.

Interviewees also did not have clear answers about the direction they had chosen (which would accordingly include certain requirements). Answering the question of what is basic theoretical basis of the programme, both lecturers and students at interviews pointed out that it is solution-oriented theory. This theory comes from the field of psychology / psychotherapy, representing the systemic approach.

Getting to know contents of professional standard to the extent possible, it can be concluded that the requirements for the specialists' training are very high and wide. Study programme's objectives are formulated in accordance with the standard. Without analysing each section, a few examples. One of the objectives of the programme is "to achieve professional competence in the application of arts therapies on the psychotherapeutic, functional, palliative, diagnostic and recreative level of intervention (in the field of music therapy, visual art therapy, drama therapy or dance and movement therapy) and scientific approach to therapeutic practice". Among other things, one learning outcome of the study programme is to be "able to communicate with various client groups, present one's standpoint with argumentation in professional discussion and expand upon one's field related topics in the wider health care and societal context".

Since the study direction is health care (because the degree is in health care), it would be desirable to use (also) notions of the health care in creating the content. For instance, in health care, the group is traditionally understood as group of certain patients. In interviews with practice mentors, those who work in health care demonstrated similar understanding. Descriptions of the study courses and interviews with the lecturers and students showed that the content of studies focuses not on groups of patients but on age groups. Another example: for a description of the functioning, it would be possible to use World Health Organization (WHO, 2013). According to WHO, definition functioning is understood as umbrella term, which covers body functions and structures,

activities and participation - denoting the positive or neutral interaction between person's health condition and the contextual: environmental and personal factors and their impact on daily activities, involvement in life situations and functions of body systems (WHO, 2013). Term disability is used to denote handicap, activity limitations and participation restrictions as multidimensional model, that arise from the negative interaction between a person and his personal and environmental factors, which display live conditions. And other similar examples.

In SER, regarding foreign comparison it is mentioned that the programme is presented at European Consortium for Arts Therapies Education and compared with programme of Riga Stradiņš University, however, there is no more detailed explanation of how it has been done.

Development of the study programme and action plan is based on the TU Development Plan (2015-2020). Certain tasks, deadlines and those responsible for implementation are set. Action plan is shown in SER; its content, as demonstrated by interviews with lecturers, is understandable to the teaching staff. However, the above examples show that the programme's setting is not coherent and its analysis should also be included in the development plan.

At the same time, it should be noted that graduates of the programme are highly interested in development of the profession. Internal stakeholders - teaching staff and students, as well as graduates are interested and involved in development process of the study programme. It is emphasized that an important input to the development programme comes from internship sites (for instance, in the academic year 2016/2017, students completed internships in 33 organisations). However, in the future, cooperation with the employers (in the defined field of professional activity) should be further developed by external validation of the content of the study programme in different environments, as the graduates work in health care, social care (rehabilitation) and education as well as in private practice. This need was also evidenced at the interview. That is, at an interview with the employers, only one of its members was an employer, others were alumni / practice mentors working in different work environments. The feedback during the interview showed that the mentors are only partially informed about the joint tasks and study results of the study programme.

In order to enter the program, a number of criteria must be fulfilled, such as prior learning of medical and psychology courses (also preparatory courses are organized). SER highlights the need for "preparedness for health, psychology, scientific research, and creative preparedness in the selected specialised area". Studies are organised mostly once a month as five day study weeks and are process-based, gradually developing and strengthening professional competence. Also mandatory regular meetings of student co-vision groups are held between the study weeks.

The broadly defined learning outcomes and the required relevance to EQF level 7 undeniably sets very high demands to be completed within two years. Therefore,

homework, practice work and research work must be arranged procedurally systemically and evenly. Regarding the study organization, attention should be paid to the fact that students are given an additional year to complete their studies, mainly for research work. So, two years may not be enough to meet all the necessary requirements. At the same time, it must be taken into account that, choosing an intervention effectiveness research design can be objectively time-consuming. Interviews with students and teaching staff also confirmed that the balance between practical work and credits needs to be continued to be monitored.

Well-developed and supported placement practice / internship as well as supervisions and co-visions are helpful in reaching objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme. It is positive that there are clear requirements for practice, and there are contracts with many places of practice.

It is important for the professional development of students into health care professionals that they complete personal therapy (art therapy). It is positive that this is taken into account in the Arts Therapies programme and, through an agreement of the management of the study programme with certain specialists, it is available for students at a lower cost.

With regard to research, it would be necessary to develop a more coherent understanding of research designs and methodologies according to the field of science in which a Master's degree is obtained.

In terms of development of the curriculum, the distribution of credits between different elements of the programme has been adapted recently. Starting in 2016, general subject were reduced from 8 to 6 ECTS, core subjects went from 66-80 ECTS to 42-84 ECTS, professional practice went from at least 3 ECTS to at least 6 ECTS, free electives went from 16 ECTS to 6-36 ECTS. The thesis went from either 16, 24 or 30 ECTS to just 24 or 30 ECTS.

Strengths

- The content of the study programme is based on the professional standard.
- The study programme is presented at European Consortium for Arts Therapies Education.
- Detailed action plan is created for development of the study programme with set responsible persons and deadlines.
- It is defined, what should be the applicants' prior knowledge and skills in order to enrol in the program, as well as preparatory courses organised,

after which there is an opportunity to make an informed choice about studying.

- Lecturers analyse feedback from students and include it in the development of their study courses.
- There is well-developed practice / internship system and good cooperation with places of practice.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Given the broad range of prerequisite knowledge expected from the applicants to the Master's programme, the opening of a relevant Bachelor's programme might be considered.
- The description of the direction of the study programme is not coherent and consistent with the field. Therefore, it would be very important to evaluate to which particular field the study programme belongs to, and to formulate a more integrated view corresponding to a concrete field (including theoretical basis, understanding of clients / patient groups, process description, research, etc.).
- Created detailed mapping would help to compare learning outcomes against EQF level 7 (including issues which concern development of entrepreneurship skills) as well as professional standards and results formulated in study courses.
- The current volume of the study programme is difficult to implement within nominal study time, therefore mapping is required, with a special focus on how to integrate research more evenly into the study process. Overall, it would be good to consider revising the study programme so that the workload is more evenly distributed.
- External evaluators, for instance, employers, should be involved more. It is necessary to define and distinguish between employers and placement supervisors. The feedback from the employers could be treated in a more systematic way. Perhaps it would be advisable to allocate employers in different sectors and get feedback on each of the areas.
- Since this is the only health care programme in TU, the issue of resources and the issue of strategies for future development need to be addressed.
- Study programmes should be compared to other similar study programmes abroad.

- The Arts Therapies programme needs to define more precisely how its development fits into the SNSH objective, such as promoting a "healthy lifestyle". The strategies for the future development of the study programme from the institute's perspective need to be more coherent.

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.

The study programme has very good infrastructure and study premises. Lecture rooms are suitable for learning, both for group work and lectures. There is a provision of basic art materials and easels for art therapy students, requisites for dance and movement therapies students, and musical instruments (mainly percussion instruments). There is also a room for vibroacoustic music therapy, where data for research can be obtained.

It is possible to hold meetings at the art therapy lecturers' premises. The building also has areas where students can socialize and undertake individual learning and group work.

Stairs reduce the accessibility of the environment on all floors and could be a barrier for students with special needs. In an interview with the programme management it was clarified that even there are no students with special needs at the moment, it would be possible to use the lift in case of necessity and, accordingly, plan and carry out training in accessible rooms.

There is no library in the building where contact classes of art therapy students take place. However, at interviews with lecturers and students it was identified that databases are available using intranet connection, and e-books are used. Staff and students can use digital libraries.

Each student and lecturer has their own profile, which provides the necessary information about the study process. Several lecturers (but not all) post study materials / book fragments in the e-environment. Moodle is used as e-course environment; study materials are also widely available through the Study

Information System (SIS). In interviews, students confirmed that they use these resources. Staff and students generally find Moodle and SIS satisfactory.

Practice description as well as practice documentation and protocols have been developed, which are good resources for internship. The resources needed for research should be clarified.

There is no locally relevant description of the leading theoretical approach of the study programme – solution oriented therapy – in Estonian. In foreign textbooks, this approach is described relatively poorly in the context of creative therapy. Lecturers and students in interviews asserted that the used texts are mainly taken from the history of art therapy, for example, from a psychodynamic approach. In order to strengthen the sustainability of the programme, it is necessary to develop local textbooks.

Financial resources are centralized in SNSH, school management is responsible for the financial decisions. Arts Therapies programme financially is not a priority in the school, as noted by a management in the interviews. Teaching staff in an interview pointed to the need to raise funds through the projects.

Strengths

- The premises of the institute, learning and teaching environment as a whole are good.
- There is a provision of basic art materials and equipment for vibroacoustic music therapy.
- The study information system (SIS) is developed and filled with learning materials, the Moodle platform is used.
- Students can borrow art materials and equipment to use during an internship, as resources in the industry are often less sufficient than those of the programme.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- It would be desirable to extend the range of instruments for music therapy students (keyboards, string instruments, wind instruments, etc.).
- Attention should be paid to accessibility issues deriving from the study environment.
- E-materials could be used more widely.

- It is necessary to create basic literature (textbooks etc.), which would correspond to the local situation and would describe the theoretical approach that underpins the basic theory that is taught to students.
- Ways of attracting research projects should be considered and explored.

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.

In the study programme, students start their studies with different basic education, however, they have acquired a unified basis (as an introductory course), which enhances the possibility of mutual enrichment during studies from classmates.

The course descriptions are in the Study Information System (SIS) on the Internet and the students are familiar with them. As far it was possible to observe on site, and as seen in SER, the description includes the learning objectives of the course, a summary of topics, evaluation criteria, examination methods and feedback. Overall, the learning objectives are clear both for students and teachers.

During the studies, different teaching methods are used, including training of certain skills. In general, the students noted the balance between practical and theoretical content of the programme.

After a course students' feedback is collected and used for the development of study courses. Feedback is received both for the study course and for the lecturer, and overall it is good and serves as a basis for lecturers to improve the course content and methods. Students and graduates generally understand how

the feedback is implemented in the programme. At interviews they noted that they had observed improvements in line with the recommendations. Feedback is received both in writing and orally. In turn, at the interview with employers it was seen that they do not precisely understand or know learning outcomes.

Most of the course material is prepared by the teaching staff, however, there is no unified (integrative) textbook, which would be in line with the basic theoretical approach. Textbooks are being used that describe other approaches to art therapy (such as psychodynamic), which are relatively less directly applicable in real student practice and working conditions in Estonia.

Development of students' therapeutic abilities requires time and support. Studies are process-based, with great emphasis on work in small groups, work in supervisions and individual discussions with the students. Process-oriented studies cannot be considered as very flexible, but provide a good support for learners' individual and social development.

The study schedule requires highly detailed homework assignments, protocol forms and a systematic and formative examination of the study performance throughout the study process. Students noted that the balance of the contact teaching and independent work is half and half, which overall can be viewed as a relatively good ratio. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the student workload is uneven during studies, it is especially increasing during the practice and during the development of the Master's thesis.

As the study process is process-oriented, it is difficult for students to participate in exchange programmes and mobility does not seem to be encouraged by the teaching and learning practices. Based on interviews with students, it was seen that exchange for them does not seem attractive.

Practice process, documentation, contracts are developed. During the practice, students receive supervision at university, and there are mentors at the places of practice. In turn, the research course is broadly defined, including the art-based research that is not traditional in health care.

As it was possible to observe in the interview with the graduates, the competence (study result) after the end of the studies needs to be approbated and adapted to a specific work environment. For example, when working in a medical setting, clients are identified according to patient groups, whereas content of the programme focuses on classification of age groups.

Strengths

- There is a study programme administrator, who is in charge of the administrative and organizational tasks for the programme. This administrator stays in close contact with students and teaching staff.

- A variety of teaching methods is used during the study process.
- The small number of students makes it possible to individualize the students' development.
- The organization of learning process is supportive of the individual development of the students.
- There are developed places of practice and there is a fairly well organized process of supporting students during the internship from the university side (supervisions).
- Even though students often need more than the nominal study duration to finish their MA thesis projects, they produce theses of good quality.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- To involve graduates who work in different work environments and especially real employers in the evaluation of study results. To create mapping for the evaluation criteria and methods of study courses in relation to the defined outcomes of the course and in relation to the objectives and tasks of the study programme, and to review the distribution of the assigned homework.
- To further develop constructive feedback on student performance and progress in courses (in the process) by formulating work assignments and assessment methods at specific stages of work.
- E-learning opportunities could be used more systematically and effectively in teaching and learning.
- The research process for the development of a Master's thesis should be organized more clearly and more in line with the field. It is necessary to create detailed methodological materials for the development of Master's theses, which would also describe possible research designs relevant to the field and professional development.
- Workload distribution over the semesters needs to be harmonized.
- International collaboration and mobility should be encouraged more.
- The competence (study result) after the end of the studies needs to be approbated and adapted to a specific work environment. It is necessary to narrow down and define more clearly the field students are preparing to work in, and the programme needs to be adapted to specific requirements of the field (be it for example in health care, social care or education).

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.

Required information about teaching staff is described in the SER. Almost 50% of the full time employees have a doctorate degree, there is also a specific plan for doctoral studies for lecturers. Two lecturers have obtained qualification of a supervisor, and there are lecturers who develop their artistic abilities. The qualifications of the teaching staff are sufficient to ensure the study process. There is also a development of the potential of lecturers - in the academic year 2016/2017, four PhD candidates were admitted with one doctoral thesis dealing with the arts therapeutic methods to prevent suicidal behaviour.

As the programme enrolls students in three specialties, lecturers will know their workload only after an annual admission, which can potentially create uncertainty about their workload year after year. Age structure of the teaching staff is balanced.

Lecturers regularly improve their professional and pedagogical education both in seminars and conferences and are involved in organization of these events. It is planned to introduce professional (Art Therapy related) supervision to lecturers. In turn when it comes to academic careers and self-development, lecturers themselves indicate that they are relatively little involved in research projects.

Student ratings of nine lecturers (both full-time and those working with a commercial license agreement) are very high, which proves good teaching skills.

Lecturers co-operate with various professional associations in Estonia, are their members, as well as have their own practical / creative work experience.

At interviews it was possible to observe that the team of lecturers is united. As already mentioned, the programme is unique, so cooperation is possible only with foreign colleagues. The programme administrator is actively involved in international co-operation, the programme is a full member of ECARTE.

Guest lecturers from several countries have also attended the study program, and students at interviews pointed out this diversity and the opportunity to be enriched. In the future, more focused, results-oriented collaboration should be developed.

Strengths

- The teaching staff completes their qualification. Teaching staff members are very enthusiastic.
- The team of lecturers seems to be united. Professional qualification of lecturers is generally adequate, and they are skilled in conducting supervisions and developing artistic abilities.
- Students' evaluations of teachers are very high.
- Lecturers are involved in the work of both local and international professional associations and are recognizable in society.
- Teaching staff has regular meetings to discuss development of the programme and problems that have occurred. Communication between teachers and the head of department is good, as well as communication between teaching staff and students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Lecturers might be uncertain about the planned workload year after year.
- The study programme, which is defined as belonging to health care, should also involve lecturers who have received medical education in order to integrate the medical terminology for better multi-professional co-operation, which is defined in the results of the study program.
- The teaching staff should more often and in more focused manner be involved in the implementation of research projects, developing evidence based practise and creating teaching material that is in line with the real situation in Estonia; they should adapt the existing theories and describe them.

- It is necessary to develop teaching staff mobility.

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.

The admission procedure for the programme tests applicants' creative skills (based on their specialization of choice) as well as their motivation and therapeutic competences. Prerequisite for admission is that the student has completed a number of specific courses in psychology, psychotherapy and health care. Personal therapy is a mandatory for students of the study programme. Students can select a therapist from a list of available professionals and see them over the course of their studies (for a total of 30 hours) to resolve any personal issues.

Students can choose to take part in a year long preparatory course, in which basic subjects are taught and students find out if they are really motivated to follow the MA. The dropout rate is low, and learning motivation is high. This is to a large extent facilitated by preparatory courses, as noted by students and graduates at their interviews.

Many students experienced difficulty in finishing their thesis within the nominal period. Starting this year, the programme is offering students an extra year without charge so they can all finish their thesis projects.

Students can provide feedback via online surveys, written feedback forms prepared by teachers or orally. Both students and teachers indicated in the interviews that they prefer the oral feedback. Students are satisfied with the way their feedback is handled.

According to the SER, students are satisfied with the contents and organization of the curriculum (p. 8). At the interview the students expressed this satisfaction as well.

Students have to pay quite a lot of extra costs compared to other study programmes. The introductory year is quite expensive (around 800 euros according to students) and in the MA programme students have to pay for the mandatory personal therapy sessions (although they get a discount for certain therapists) and often have to buy their own materials.

Strengths

- The students are very enthusiastic.
- Drop-out rates are very low, students are motivated to complete their studies.
- The strict admission process ensures that student places are filled with capable applicants.
- The small size of the specialized groups creates a close community of students. Alumni indicated in the interview with the panel that they all stayed in close contact after they had graduated.
- Employment rate of alumni is relatively high. Employers indicated at the interview with the panel to be satisfied with skills and competences of arts therapies graduates.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- International student mobility is very low due to the specificities of arts therapies studies. This could be improved through involvement in more international partnerships and projects, to find programmes offering courses that might be suitable for student exchange.
- Alumni and their employers should be perceived as two groups that should be involved in the study process development in order to assess professional preparation and social competences.