

# Decision Regarding the Assessment of the Environmental Protection Study Programme Group Tallinn University

18/06/2015

The Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education decided to approve the assessment report by the Assessment Committee and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Environmental Protection study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at Tallinn University in seven years.

Tallinn University submitted the following study programmes for evaluation:

- Environmental Management BA
- Environmental Management MA

## Assessment Committee

Laurent Counillon (Chair)	University Nice-Sophia Antipolis (France)
Olav Aarna	Estonian Qualifications Authority (Estonia)
Kari Keinänen	University of Helsinki (Finland)
Rik Leemans	Wageningen University (Netherlands)
Adrian Stan	Timisoara Dental Students Association, Student (Romania)

## The Committee's Comments on the Study Programme Group

### Strengths

- *The content of the study programme is consistent with its objectives and learning outcomes and the focus is on the assessment and management of environmental impacts (and risks).*
- *Courses in ecology and economics are well balanced in the study programmes.*

- *The teaching and learning environment, including aids and equipment (Experimental Labs, GIS), well supports achievement of the objectives of the study programme.*
- *Due to a large number of elective courses and a small number of students, the teaching process is flexible and supports the achievement of learning outcomes.*

### **Areas for improvement and recommendations**

- *The number of students has decreased significantly in recent years.*
- *To make the study programmes more attractive to students, it would be necessary to increase internationalization and to recruit more young teachers. It is therefore necessary to increase the number of international teaching staff and to increase the outward mobility of both teachers and students. The new Development Plan of the University for 2015–2020 provides good impetus for the necessary steps.*
- *Social and problem-based aspects should be included in the study programmes, which would fit the University's new focal area of a "sustainable lifestyle", for example, environmental psychology. The BA programme should be broader and/or combined with ecology, but the MA programme should be more specific.*
- *The study programmes should also address transdisciplinary and holistic approaches, e.g. a joint activity of science and society in solving environmental problems.*
- *Modern laboratories would allow the University to better combine research and teaching by involving external professionals in joint study projects, among other things.*
- *It is also recommended that collaboration with prospective employers be increased by involving them in joint projects, or by inviting them to become visiting lecturers.*
- *The University should find ways to increase the salaries of the teaching staff.*
- *The teaching staff should be more engaged in the development of their professional and teaching skills (especially with regard to the rapid growth of transdisciplinary environmental projects).*
- *The student dropout rate is relatively high. Particular attention should be paid to the reasons for dropping out and to finding potential solutions.*
- *It is necessary to increase practical elements in the study programmes to better prepare students for the working environment.*
- *It is recommended that the University develop a professional network of alumni.*

Further information:

Assessment Report

Minutes of the Session of the Quality Assessment Council (in Estonian)